

# POD Teaching Session 2 Module B

## What is the Fear of the Lord?

### Learning Objectives:

- To learn what is NOT the Fear of the Lord.
- To gain a Biblical definition of the meaning of fear, awe, and reverence.
- To put you in a place where you can write your own description or definition of the Fear of the Lord.

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The Fear of God is distinctly separate from all other fears. It is in a category all by itself. It is in fact not one of our fears, but it is “His fear” (Exodus 20:20). It is as different as heavenly wisdom is different than earthly wisdom and divine love from natural love.

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### Setting the Stage:

**God appears at Mount Sinai (Horeb) Exodus 19:16-20** So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all **the people who were in the camp trembled**. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder. The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.....vs 25 Moses came back down to the people ..... NASB95

**Then God spoke the Ten Commandments to the nation vs. Exodus 20:1-17: Then Exodus 20:18-20** All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, **they trembled and stood at a distance**. Then they said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die.” Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him (**His Fear KJV**) may remain with you, so that you may not sin.” ..... vs. 22-23 Moses repeats the first two commandments.

**How did they respond to this experience? *Fear of dying, trembling, quaking, scared out of their wits.***

**What was Moses revealing to them when he said “Do not be afraid” ? *The kind of fear that would drive them away from God and not want to be in His presence, a paralyzing fear, unhealthy fear, the fear of man wanting an intermediary such as Moses instead of God.***

What was the test? *A test of obedience to His commands and His authority.*

Did they fail the test? *Yes*      How? *See Exodus 32:7-10 Golden Calf/idolatry!*

Why was God testing them? *To show them that without a healthy Fear of God they would sin*

Why did they fail the test? *Because at that point in time they didn't have a proper fear of God*

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## What is NOT the Fear of God?

**Note:** "FEAR NOT" is a command from God repeated over 90 times.

### 1. Fear of the Lord is NOT the fear of man:



**Proverbs 29:25** The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted. NASB95

**Hebrews 13:6** so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?" NASB95

**Psalm 23:4** Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. NASB95

**Matthew 10:28** "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." NASB95

What does it mean to fear man? What does it look like? *Fear of Failure, Fear of Rejection, Getting our significance from what we do, seeking the praise of man, getting security from the ways of man. Trying to get our needs meet from the world/man apart from God*

Fear of man is a form of idolatry? Why or why not? *Our fears literally master and rule over our choices, our actions, and our reasoning.*

Ponder this: It is either the fear of God OR the fear of man that will possess your heart.

Fear of the Lord is obedience to the first of the ten commandments "You shall have no other gods besides me" (Ex 20:3)      It means we give God total pre-eminence; that we never put anything in our lives before Him or beside Him; no influence, no person, no motivation, no earthly thing between us and God.



The fear of man delivers people into disobedience. God himself will ensure that we come face to face with every one of our fears, out of His love for us  
He refuses to allow us to be mastered by something else.

## 2. The Fear of the Lord is NOT a natural fear:

These fears are used to protect ourselves and our loved ones from a “perceived” harm. We are born with only two natural fears, the fear of loud noises and the fear of falling. The rest of the fears are LEARNED responses from the ENVIRONMENT or taught by parents or others (like the fear of ghosts and etc... )

## 3. The Fear of the Lord is NOT an unnatural fear:

These have their origin from the fallen world, and a distorted view of God and reside in our “flesh”. The demonic can be active in attempting to create these fears in your life.

Unnatural fears are what we call phobias. Phobia is described as “A persistent, irrational fear of a specific object, activity, or situation that leads to a compelling desire to avoid it”. These unnatural fears cause strange behavior like claustrophobia, panic attacks, extreme shyness, compulsive disorders, a sense of torment, the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15), etc. **They can lead to paralysis, fleeing and isolation.**

As of last count there are over 650 phobias and more being added every year.

<http://www.phobia-fear-release.com/list-of-phobia-definitions.html>



**2 Timothy 1:7** For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.KJV

**Romans 8:15** For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” NASB95

**1 John 4:18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

**Romans 7:18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not. NASB95

## 4. The Fear of the Lord is NOT a religious fear taught by man.

**Isaiah 29:13** Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: KJV



**Matthew 23:27-28** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like white washed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” NASB95

This kind of fear does not come from God, it comes from the world which is Satan's counterfeit; it affects only the outer conduct (a façade) of a person but not the heart and therefore does not produce the kind of free relational obedience God desires. It produces instead an attitude of "performance based acceptance" (i.e. man pleasing).

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Our fears can literally master and rule over our choices, our actions, and our reasoning's.

We must learn how to conquer our fears. God has called His children to be overcomers. Gaining a healthy fear of God will help you recognize your unhealthy fears. To deal with unhealthy fears we need to repent, take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ and take authority over the spirits which operate through lies, temptations, deceptions and accusations.

**Beware !** Our common enemy is at work right now trying to prevent you from grasping the essence of this teaching. He hates spiritual transformation. The reality of spiritual warfare will be woven into all seven of the teaching sessions. It is that important.

**2 Corinthians 10:4-6** For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. NKJV

**Revelation 12:11** "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death."

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## The Biblical definition of Fear, Awe, Reverence using NT Greek and OT Hebrew

**Fear:** Phobos, Strong's **G5401** (47 times in NT) = fear, terror, dread

**Phobeo, Strong's G5399** (110 times in NT) = from G5401

- 1) to put to flight by terrifying (to scare away)
  - a) to put to flight, to flee
  - b) to fear, be afraid
    - 1) to be struck with fear, to be seized with alarm
      - a) of those startled by strange sights or occurrences
      - b) of those struck with amazement
    - 2) to fear, be afraid of one
    - 3) to fear (i.e. hesitate) to do something (for fear of harm)
  - c) to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience

**Philippians 2:12** So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence  only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear (phobos) and trembling (tromos); NASB95

Tromos Strong's G5156 = **1)** a trembling or quaking with fear **2)** with fear and trembling, used to describe the anxiety of one who distrusts his ability completely to meet all requirements, but religiously does his utmost to fulfill his duty.

**Hebrews 4:1** Therefore, let us fear (phobeo) if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. NASB95

### Old Testament use of fear:

#### Yare, Strong's H3372 (314 times in OT)

- 1) to fear, revere, be afraid
  - a) (Qal)
    - 1) to fear, be afraid
    - 2) to stand in awe of, be awed
    - 3) to fear, reverence, honour, respect
  - b) (Niphal)
    - 1) to be fearful, be dreadful, be feared
    - 2) to cause astonishment and awe, be held in awe
    - 3) to inspire reverence or godly fear or awe
  - c) (Piel) to make afraid, terrify
- 2) (TWOT) to shoot, pour

#### Yirah, Strong's H3374 (45 times in OT)

- 1) fear, terror, fearing
  - a) fear, terror
  - b) awesome or terrifying thing (object causing fear)
  - c) fear (of God), respect, reverence, piety
  - d) revered

**Ecclesiastes 12:13** The conclusion, when all has been heard, *is*: fear ( H3372) God and keep His commandments, because this *applies to* every person. NASB95

**Psalms 111:10** The fear (H3374) of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments*; His praise endures forever. NASB95

**Is the Fear of God “Reverence/Respect”?** Yes, but there are 13 reference in all of scripture and most of them are in reference to man where as there are 350 references to the Fear of God (i.e. 175 times more)! Reverence is used of God only **twice** and both times in connection with also fearing Him (PS 89:7 and Heb 12:28). It is far more than reverence; it is a **literal** fear, which at times includes trembling and quaking.

**Hebrews 12:28** Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear\*.

\*G2124=*eulabeia*: KJV

- 1) caution, circumspection, discretion a) avoidance b) a reasonable shunning
- 2) reverence, veneration a) reverence toward God, godly fear, piety 3) fear anxiety, dread

**Is the Fear of the Lord “Awe”?** Yes, but not that which man knows. Awe is mentioned only three times in all of scripture (KJV) (a few more in NASB (9), NIV (16)). Now let scripture define your concept of awe as you put away your own concept of what you may think ‘awe’ is.

**Psalm 4:4** Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. KJV The word ‘awe’ in Psalm 4:4 means ‘to quiver’ and is translated “be afraid, disquieted, fret, quake, shake, tremble, troubled”.

**Psalm 119:161** Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word. KJV This word is a different word in Hebrew and means ‘to be startled by a sudden alarm’; hence to fear in general. It is translated ‘be afraid’, (be in) fear, make to shake.

**Psalm 33:8** Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. KJV Here, ‘awe’ is yet another Hebrew word but like both of the others it focuses of fear and trembling, to shrink, fear (as in a strange place).

**The awe we are to have Biblically should make us be afraid of God and His judgments, afraid to defy his commandments, and fearful to keep going our own way. The true awe of God should turn us off of our own way and away from our purpose and cause us to stand before Him, to listen to what he has to say. This is not some sentimental idea of mere respect or even wonder. It is an awe that expresses our reaction to His majesty, to His power, and to His holiness.**

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### So then, what is the Fear of the Lord?

**Psalm 111:10** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments*: his praise endureth for ever. KJV

**Proverbs 1:7** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. KJV

**Proverbs 8:13** The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverted mouth, I hate. NASB95

**What people know of God is often one dimensional. It is only grace, grace, and more grace. They know not of His severity and His judgment. The early church knew and experienced both His goodness and His severity. Thus, they walked in a power and a holiness that is uncharacteristic of the modern church. (Remember Ananias and Sapphira)**



**Romans 11:22** Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

**Hosea 13:4-8** Yet I *have been* the LORD your God since the land of Egypt; And you were not to know any god except Me, For there is no savior besides Me. I cared for you in the wilderness, in the land of drought. As *they had* their pasture, they became satisfied, and being satisfied, their heart became proud; therefore they forgot Me. So I will be like a lion to them; like a leopard I will lie in wait by the wayside. I will encounter them like a bear robbed of her cubs, and I will tear open their chests; there I will also devour them like a lioness, as a wild beast would tear them. NASB95

**Hebrews 10:29-31** How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. NASB95



**Hebrews 12:5-11** and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. NASB95



**The true fear of God is actually our refuge from coming under his judgment that is why the true grace of God must teach our hearts to fear Him.**

**Proverbs 14:26** In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, and his children will have refuge.

## Here are some attempts by others to define or describe the fear of Lord:

**Note: “the Fear of the Lord is better described than defined.”** Jerry Bridges “The Joy of fearing God”

*The fear of God includes understanding how much God hates sin and fearing His judgment on sin even in the life of a believer done in love (Heb 12:5-11)*

*The fear of God is respecting him, obeying him, submitting to his discipline, and worshipping Him in awe.*

*The fear of the Lord is total acknowledgment of all that God is which comes through knowing Him and His attributes. (www.GotQuestions.org)*

*We must always have in our minds a reverence of God’s majesty, a dread of his displeasure, and an obedient regard to his sovereign authority over us: this fear will quicken us to our duty and make us circumspect in our walking. Thus stand in awe, and sin not, Ps. 4:4. Mathew Henry*

 **The Fear of the Lord is the consciousness of His presence. When we have the fear of God we are astutely aware that the Lord is not only observing and watching our actions, but is in fact the inspector and observer of the innermost thoughts in our heart.** from Where is the fear of God? Losing the treasure of the Lord Charles von Hammerstein.

*The Fear of God is designed to have us not flee from God, but rather to have us flee from what causes God to be angry with us, from that which displeases Him pg 40 Hammerstein*

*It means to put God first in our actions and ways and not to go the way of sin.*

*Fear of the Lord is an awareness of His presence that keeps us from sinning.*

*The fear of God is trembling before the authority of God, and the dread of his power and glory.*

*The fear of the Lord is that indefinable mixture of reverence, fear, pleasure, joy, and awe which fills our hearts when we realize who God is and what he has done for us. Sinclair Ferguson*

*The gift of Fear fills us with a sovereign respect for God, and makes us dread nothing so much as to offend Him by sin. It is a fear that arises, not from the thought of hell, but from sentiments of reverence and child like submission to our heavenly Father. It is the fear that is the beginning of wisdom, detaching us from worldly pleasures that could in any way separate us from God. “They that fear the Lord will prepare their hearts, and in His sight will sanctify their souls.”*

**See: “The love and fear of God” article by Kail in the resource guide, also see “Fear of the Lord defined/described” and “Holy Fear of the Lord statement” by Umberger and finally take time to read Jer. 32:17-23 for a good description of God and what should cause fear of Him.**

Now over the next several days/weeks, take our discussion and what you have learned and begin crafting your own personalized description of the Fear of the Lord, updating it as you continue to pursue God and the treasure of His fear :

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**REMEMBER: 1 Cor. 8:1 “Knowledge puffs up but love builds up”. Studying the Bible is important, but the goal is never knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ means that we learn from Him, fellowship with Him, and obey everything He commands us. Love is the goal thru obedient holy living.**

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**APPLICATION NEXT STEPS:** As you review this session in your own personal quiet time, with your POD mates and others, ask yourself; What is God saying to me? and How am I going to respond? Begin now to look for opportunities to start sharing what you have learned with others. That is disciple making. Take advantage of the transformative power of prayer, journaling, writing out personal application/next steps, and memorizing key scriptures. Also, be sure to read the articles and one or more of the books mentioned in the resource guide at the end of each of the seven sessions.

**KEY TAKE-AWAYS AND MY PERSONAL APPLICATION/NEXT STEPS:**

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**Scripture I will commit to memorize from this session:**

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- 2.
- 3.