

The Love and Fear of God

Posted by [Jake Kail](#) on Oct 1, 2011 in [Spiritual Growth](#) | [0 comments](#)

We have been looking at different areas in the Christian walk where there can be a tendency to go to one extreme or the other. In this post I want to discuss the balance between the love of God and the fear of God.

The Love of God

It is certainly right to emphasize the love of God. His love for us is absolutely foundational in our relationship with Him. It is the love of God that compelled Him to send His Son to the earth to die for the sins of mankind (See John 3:16). Without a revelation of God's love for us it is impossible to love Him, for "we love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). As we grow in understanding and experiencing God's amazing love for us, we will be able to love Him and love others.

Jesus' sacrifice on the cross reveals to us that God's love is not mere lip-service. God did not just tell us that He loves us; He showed us. He also reveals His love to us in personal ways as we encounter Him. When we have an encounter with God, it becomes apparent how intimately involved He is in our lives and how much He truly loves and cares for us.

The apostle Paul prayed that the Ephesian church would be able to "comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:18-19). God's love, revealed to us in Christ Jesus, is so big that it surpasses all knowledge!

The Fear of God

Some would say that because God is love we do not need to fear Him. This could not be farther from the truth. Intimacy with the Lord is founded on God's love but it is also based on the fear (or reverence) of God. Psalm 25:14 says, "The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." The Lord will reveal His secrets to those who fear Him; to those who have a reverential awe of Him. Not only is God love, He is also holy and just, and He is worthy to be feared.

The fear of the Lord is an awareness of His presence that keeps us from sin. The Bible says that it will turn us away from "the snares of death" (See Proverbs 14:27). If we do not cultivate the fear of God in our lives we can begin to have a complacent view of sin, and soon we may become entangled by it. We should have a hatred toward sin and not make any agreement with it.

To be clear, we are not to be *afraid* of God. But as we approach Him we must keep in mind that He is God and we are not. As the writer of Hebrews states, “let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:28-29). Surely the American church needs a restoration of the fear of the Lord!

The Balance

It is important that we have a proper balance between the love of God and the fear of God. These are not opposed to each other, but rather work hand in hand. We are exhorted in Scripture to consider both the goodness and severity of God (See Romans 11:22). We must not focus only on one to the exclusion of the other, or else we will have a skewed perception of God. When Jesus taught us to pray, He said that we should approach God as a loving Father (“our Father in Heaven”) but also with respect and awe (“hallowed be Your name”).

I pray that God will give us a greater and greater revelation of His love, that we may be rooted and established in it. I also pray that we will grow in the true fear of the Lord, serving Him and walking in obedience to His ways!