## Reverent Fear of God

Reverent fear is fear that emanates from a profound feeling of

respect for someone. It can stem from love and/or a sense of awe. If we have a relationship with God and we want that relationship to grow, He tells us in His Word we should respect His power and authority because we know He is holy and all powerful, and we should have a desire to please Him.

This principle is very near and dear to my heart. Years ago, at the beginning of my faith walk, I had some interesting observations. Clearly, as I am writing this, I am realizing the Lord sent me certain scenarios back then so I would quickly grasp the concept of reverent fear early on because of its importance.

I noticed that there was an extended family member who would do some things that were very out of integrity (as far as I was concerned, and I believe God had the same thought). For example, He had no problem buying a new thermostat to replace his current one, and then take the old one back in the new box and say it was defective. What was called to my attention was the fact that not long after this type of behavior, something in his life would go wrong. There were a number of similar scenarios, and I always noticed that a problem would plague him afterwards. It seemed very clear to me even back then that these were not coincidences.

The Bible is filled with messages guiding us to have a reverent fear of God. As our relationship with Him grows, we feel His loving presence in our lives. Hopefully, we develop a desire to spend more time with Him to get to know Him even better. As we think about how blessed we have been, and we know how powerful He is, we are clearly being steered in the "reverent fear" direction. God can do wonderful things, but there is also a side of Him that will come down hard on us if He senses we are taking advantage of Him or showing an unappreciative heart. I have come to firmly believe once we have a close relationship with the Him, we will see how He shows us in His Word there are no gray areas when it comes to integrity. We will get a sense of conviction when we have crossed the line if we are truly tuned in to His will and His standards.

Here are some examples of how the Bible talks about this type

of fear (it is important to remember God is the same God, yesterday, today, and forever so this message would apply to us today, but with examples from our own lives in our own language):

1 Sam. 12:14 says, "Now if you will fear and worship the Lord and listen to his voice, and if you do not rebel against the Lord's commands, and if you and your king follow the Lord your God, then all will be well. But if you rebel against the Lord's commands and refuse to listen to him, then his hand will be as heavy upon you as it was upon your ancestors."

"Sin whispers to the wicked, deep within their hearts. They have no fear of God to restrain them." Ps. 36:1

"Happy are those who fear the Lord. Yes, happy are those who delight in doing what he commands." Ps. 112:1

“My child, listen to what I say, and treasure my commands. Tune your ears to wisdom and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight and ask for understanding. Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. The you will understand what is means to fear the Lord, and you will gain knowledge of God.” Prov. 2:1-5

"I gave the responsibility of governing Jerusalem to my brother,

Hanani along with Hananiah, the commander of the fortress, for

he was a faithful man who feared God more than most."

Neh. 7:2

Nehemiah was a man who was devoted to God. He was in charge of rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem when those who had been held in captivity in Babylon returned. Nehemiah was very familiar with what it meant to have a reverent fear of God. He also prayed continuously. It is extremely inspiring to read the book of Nehemiah in the Bible. It clearly illustrates how beautifully and naturally a reverent fear of God was in Nehemiah’s life. It also allows us to see how praying first was of utmost importance in his life and that God responded to him in amazing ways.

When we turn to the reverent fear of God within us it can pertain to something relatively simple (such as my example above) to something deeper. Another simple example would be if we were to go into a store and purchase something for $8.00. I give the cashier a $10 bill and he gives me change for a $20 bill. Sometimes human nature may lead some to keep it and say “Oh, it’s a big store. They won’t miss it.” Those with a reverent fear of God would have a fear of doing that because they believe God sees all of their behavior, and they would fear the retribution should they keep that money.

Another practical example could be if we say something to someone and realize we should not have said it. Depending on our relationship with the Lord, we may even hear Him say (through our thoughts) that we need to go to that person and admit what we did wrong and apologize if the situation warrants that as well. Those with a reverent fear of God will utter a “Yes Lord,” and proceed to take the appropriate action. The matter is then closed. God, as He tells us in His Word, looks upon that quite favorably as He is a very forgiving God.

If you sense that this is something you need or want to develop, it is a good idea to get back to the GRASP principals. Take inventory of your heart and your mind and see if something does not feel right as far as your relationship with God and what He may be putting on your heart on which you need to work .

You may want to refer to the sections on Repentance and Avoidance of Sin (under the GRASP section) and Righteous—Being “Right” with God in the Appendix for more on developing a reverent fear of God.