***Fear God  
  
RV183-01***

Our subject is "The Angelic Pronouncement." This is segment number four based on Revelation 14:6-7.

The single greatest act of self-destruction that mankind imposes upon itself is that of trying to live without God. That is the sadness of all sadnesses – a human being who tries to live without God. This is done, first of all, by saying that God does not exist, or it is done by saying that we're not sure He exists, or it is done by simply ignoring Him and His message in Scripture.

**Adam and Eve**

It was Adam and Eve who began this pattern of self-destruction by choosing to act independently of God's directions. They would not listen to what He had to say about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They decided to follow the bad advice of Satan. They took Satan's advice, which was to go it alone, and in the Garden of Eden that day, they originated the popular song title, I did it my way. They did it their way, and the rest of us are all paying the price for that foolish act, trying to live without God. That's where it began – in a perfect environment with people who were absolutely sinless.

It all began because those who knew doctrine, those who knew the Word of God, decided to ignore it; to walk alone; and, to take the bad advice of Satan. That same advice is transmitted to you and me in dozens of ways every day of our lives. That is the same advice to which we have to say, "We're not going to listen to it. We're not going to obey it. We're not going to be part of the crowd. We're going to walk and live with God."

The contempt which was demonstrated by our first parents has continued with added intensity, of course, to this day. Mankind has created its own gods made in their own sinful image. It has made its own doctrines, and substituted human reason for biblical revelation, even within that part of mankind which is devoted to the Bible – that part of mankind which gives respect for the Bible as the Word of God. Satan has perverted the message from liberalism on the one hand; through Roman Catholicism on the other hand; and, down to the end result of the charismatic movement today. In each of these major movements, Satan has perverted a critical bit of truth, and the result is self-destruction to people.

There's no limitation on the extent of human arrogance in thinking that one can live without God. You only have to look around this auditorium now, and see these empty chairs to understand that we don't have to go too far to find people who think they can make it without God. They sit at home today, thinking that they have something tremendously important to do. They even tell us that they don't feel too well.

Years ago, a college professor told me that most of the world's work is done by people who don't feel too well. I have since found that to be true, because I never feel too well, and I don't even look too well. Yet the world keeps spinning, and the work keeps going on.

In this future, seven-year tribulation period that we've been studying, following the removal of all the living and dead Christians from the earth, things will be no different during that tribulation period when it comes to ignoring God and ignoring His word. As always, during that period, the Bible is going to be perverted, and primarily the gospel of salvation will be perverted. The spiritually dead person always wants to go to heaven his way, which inevitably conflicts with God's way. People in the tribulation who refuse to learn doctrine will be out of step with God, and they will destroy themselves in the lake of fire.

John tells us that before the tribulation period is brought to a close by the Second Coming of Christ, an angel will give one final worldwide presentation of the eternal gospel of salvation. We have read about that in Revelation 14:6. John says, "I saw another angel flying in the atmospheric heavens, having an eternal gospel to preach, to those who live on the earth, to every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people." The God of grace is going to give everyone one final chance to stop walking alone; to stop doing it their way; to stop listening to Satan's man, the antichrist; and, to turn to the truth of the Bible and to the living Christ.

However, most who live in the tribulation will reject the free gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and His payment of death on the cross for their sins. They will then stand before a holy God, clothed in their self-created, human-good righteousness. What appears to these lost people to be a garment of sufficiency and beauty is seen by God as nothing but filthy rags. Isaiah 69:6 tells us that. Human righteousness, again I emphasize, is totally different from God's absolute righteousness. God's absolute righteousness is not merely an extension of human righteousness so that what you can't do on your own, God will do for you. That is wrong. If you interject any human righteousness, you are doomed. The sad part about that is that once a person is entrapped with that idea, that they must do the best they can and then God will carry through for them, it is nearly impossible for them to change their mind on that. It really takes, as it always does, God the Holy Spirit coming in and removing the blindness.

How many times have I seen, in the faces of people, who I knew by their beliefs were on their way to the lake of fire, that they must change the basis of their confidence from the fact that they're doing something good that God will accept, and which He will complete for them. When you speak to them, their eyes glaze over; the brain goes numb before your very eyes; and, then you learn how true the principle is that nobody goes to heaven unless God says, "I want you," and unless He puts His hand on your shoulder and says, "Come in," and unless God the Holy Spirit touches your eyes, and those blinders flick back. Then you react with horror as you see yourself, and you look over the edge, and you see what's waiting for you in the lake of fire, and suddenly your mind is capable of believing the gospel. Few people in the tribulation will move in that direction.

**Fear God**

In Revelation 14:7, the proclaiming angel warns against a wrong attitude toward God, and about trying to live without Him. John says, "And he (this proclaiming angel) said with a loud voice, 'Fear God.'" This angel has proclaimed this eternal gospel, the gospel of salvation by the grace of God as a gift from Him, which is why it's an eternal gospel – because that's the way it's always been from Adam on down. And suddenly, after proclaiming that gospel, isn't it interesting that that message is now ringing in the ears of all humanity? They've all heard it, and they've all seen the angel. This is not nightly news TV at the time. It will be a personal experience.

Then what does the angel say? The angel says, upon giving this message, that their response should be to fear God. The Greek word is "phobeomai." "Phobeomai" means to exercise respect toward someone. It's just as simple as that. Here it means to have a wholesome aversion to displeasing God. Let me tell you something else about this word. In the Greek Bible, it is in the aorist tense. The aorist tense in the Greek Bible refers to any point in time. This says, "At any point in time, respect God." Can you see how much sin would be avoided in the lives of people if, at every point in time, they really had a respect for God?

It's active. It's middle form in the Greek, but it's active in meaning. That means that you're to do it. This is not something someone else can do. Only you can put yourself in the place of someone else. Only you can treat that person with respect. Only you can enter into their experience, and only you can treat God with respect.

Furthermore, in the Greek Bible, this is in the imperative mood, which is a command. There is no option. You can say. "Yeah, well, I'll try to be nice to God. I'll try to respect Him. I'll try to fix this property, and give some money to Him, but most of the time you're on your own. The Word of God says, "Fear God. Have a healthy respect for God."

Now you know what that means. You know what it is to have a healthy respect for people who can do you injury. You know what it is to have a healthy respect for people who have authority to make decisions that are going to affect your life adversely. You know what it is to look upon a person with respect, and with some sense of concern, and reticence, and fear.

The Hebrew word for "fear" is associated in the Old Testament with the concept of "dread." For example, in Deuteronomy 2:25, this Hebrew word for "fear" is "yirah:" "This day I will begin to put the dread and the fear of you upon the peoples." There's the Hebrew word "fear," comparable to this Greek word. And notice that it's associated with the concept of dread. God is saying that he's bringing the people into the land, and when the Jews come into the land that has been promised to them, the people who are living there are going to have a fear that is bordering on the dread. All of us understand when we say, "Oh, I dread to do that." That's the kind of and attitude toward God that we're talking about. This is an enormous dread when we conceive of doing evil, or when we have done evil.

"This day I will begin to put the dread and the fear of you upon the peoples everywhere under the heavens who, when they hear the report of you, shall tremble and be in anguish because of you. God told the Jewish people, "When I bring you into this land, I will put a fear that will be in the form of a dread upon all the people who are living there, and anybody who hears any information about you is going to recoil in respect. It is the holiness and the power of God that creates in us this sense of dread and terror toward God.

This is illustrated in Psalm 119:120: "My flesh trembles for fear of You." And there is the Hebrew word again: "My flesh trembles for fear of You, and I am afraid of Your judgments." Now that's put very well. What are we afraid of God for? Why do we dread God? Why do we stand in a wholesome respect toward Him? Because we're afraid of His discipline. If you've got any sense at all, you should be afraid of His discipline. You should be afraid of His judgment upon you for what you're doing. And when you decide to do it your way and walk it alone, you are inviting an enormous disaster into your life.

The concept of fear in the Psalms is also associated with this reverential law. Notice Psalm 33:8: "Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him." There it is. To fear the living God is to be in awe of Him.

So, those who see God's power and action enforcing His holy laws know that He is to be respected. When you see God's hand working and enforcing His laws, that's when you learn that He is to be respected. Exodus 14:31 says, "And when Israel saw the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord, and in His servant Moses." If you're a rational person, and you see the hand of God executing the laws of God, you would have a healthy respect.

**Homosexuality and Lesbianism**

It is very clear in the Bible that God has passed the death penalty upon the sexual depravity of homosexuality and lesbianism. There's no question about it. The death penalty is stamped upon that vile act. Under the theocracy of the Jews, where God ruled the nation, that was enforced by the nation as the death penalty. In our society today, we do not have grounds for civil government enforcing the death penalty for that, but God still enforces it. And while the news commentators get all up in the frap if you say that the judgment of AIDS is the discipline and judgment of God upon this evil act, nevertheless, that happens to be true. God is doing His own executing.

You would think that within that community of perversion, people with rationality would stand back, and they would stand in awe of the God who is carrying through the execution of His own laws, and would say, "We better change our ways." But do they know? No. The rising tide in this nation is to tolerate, tolerate, and tolerate? This is even in the recent article on the Boy Scouts. The Boy Scouts will not, by policy, allow a moral depravity to exist in the scout organization, and therefore a scout leader who is a homosexual is not considered suitable leadership material. And what happens to the Boy Scouts out here in Los Colinas? They have to deal with a lawsuit in order to prevent a homosexual from leading boys. Thank God that they have won it. Even the girls want to get into the Boy Scouts. I guess that is so they can call it the Boy-Girl Scouts. I don't know what they would call it.

This is how the liberal world works. They get new terminology to describe stupid things. On certain college campuses, there is a term now which is called being "politically correct." And on certain college campuses, you can be dismissed if you are not politically correct. That means that you use terminology you shouldn't. For example, if you talk about somebody who is short, that's no longer politically correct. Do you realize that? You must say that they are "vertically disadvantaged," and you better learn it if you're going to walk around on college campuses. You have to say, "There's Sam. He seems to be vertically disadvantaged." I couldn't help thinking, "How do we speak about fat people?" Horizontally disadvantaged?

Where does this madness end? The world, walking without God, always demonstrates how stupid man by nature is. When God comes in and forces His rules and His commandments, you would think that people would have realization to be in awe of Him; to respect him; and, to be in fear of Him.

When Moses was writing the last book of the Law, the Pentateuch, the book of Deuteronomy, he was trying to tie everything up. He was about to die. The people needed this information, as a new leader was going to take over. One of the things that he stressed to them in Deuteronomy 10:12 was their basic duty as human beings. This applies, in fact, to every human being. Moses said, "And now Israel, what does the Lord, your God, require from you but to fear the Lord, your God?" And there's the word again – that deep, dreadful, reverential awe: "To fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." That is the basic duty of mankind – to treat God with a reverential respect. And how do you do that? You obey His commandments.

Now how in the world can you obey commands that you don't even know? How in the world can you walk with God, and not alone, if no one has ever taught you the principles of doctrine? There is this sea of ignorance that exists out in the general community of mankind. People have a wonderful time when they get hold of the Bible and interpret it on their own.

A political speaker at a rally recently was speaking to black people, and he wanted to say things that would gain some sympathy for him. So, he went to the first of the Song of Solomon, where Solomon's speaks of his bride, his fiancée, this beautiful girl. The whole book of the Song of Solomon is about marital love. This girl is bemoaning the fact that her brothers have made her work out in the vineyards, and out in the sun, so that her beautiful white skin has suntanned dark. In those days, they didn't have lotion like we do to help us along in that. In those days, they didn't have summer camp to help us with our tans overnight. But she hated it, and she was bemoaning the fact.

Well, this poor political pundit at this rally was applying that to Solomon. He said, "See, Solomon was black, and Jesus came through Solomon's line, and He was black." That's what comes of folks sitting around and talking about the Bible: "What do you think, Sam? Susie? Joe?" Then he went to the book of the Revelation, in the first where we have the description of Christ – that symbolic description: "And his hair was white like wool." And this man said, "You see, he was a black person, even though the next verse says, "And white like snow." So, it is obvious that he's talking about color, and not appearance.

People who do not know the Word of God are in a self-destructive force. They can't even begin to walk with God. It is sad when Christians who can walk with God, by being taught the Word of God, choose to absent themselves, and be someplace else, and put themselves in self-destruction, as if they can make it. Just wait till they face the Grim Reaper. Just wait till they face the fact that their 70 years that ticked out, and their bonus time is almost up as well. Then everything comes into perspective as to where they should have spent their time, and how they should have used their lives, and what their attitude of reverence toward God should have been.

**The Consequences of Fearing God**

So, what is the consequence if you have the good sense to decide, "Yes, this is true, and I am going to be a person who has a reverential trust and fear of God?" There are several things that the Bible tells us of the consequences of fearing God.

1. **It Keeps you from Doing Evil**

If you fear God, it will keep you from doing evil. It's just that simple. Exodus 20:18-19: "And 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. Here is Moses up on Mount Sinai. The code of the Law is being given to him, and it's surrounded with these catastrophic pyrotechnics of nature.

Verse 19: "And they said to Moses, 'Speak to us yourself and we will listen, but don't let God speak to us, lest we die.' And Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid, for God has come in order to test you, in order that the fear of Him may remain with you.'" Why? "So that you may not sin." A person may be free and easy about sinning. And I mean sinning in all those heartless, mean, spirited ways in which even Christians can sin in the way they treat other people. Those who have a fear of God and respect for God are going to think twice.

The book of Proverbs also stresses this principle in Proverbs 16:6: "By loving kindness and truth, iniquity is atoned for; and, by the fear of the Lord, one keeps away from evil." How true.

1. **The Basis for all Wisdom**

The fear of the Lord is the basis for all wisdom. Wisdom is taking facts and information and doing the right thing with it. That's wisdom. It is taking information and doing the right thing with it. Psalm 111:10 points this out. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. Once you have a healthy respect for God, you have taken your first step toward being a smart person. The world is filled with ignorant intellectuals. The world is filled with trivial people.

They were having an interview with some famous movie stars the other day, and I happened to be watching the TV. And I can stomach a lot. I practice stomaching terrible things for personal stability, but I couldn't stomach that. These trivial people were displaying themselves as something great, parading around in front of an adulating crowd. And they have no wisdom, because what they say; what they think; and, how they live shows that they don't fear God.

Who has good understanding? Those of you who do His commandments – not those of you who are unaware of them or ignore them. You may add to this Proverbs 15:33: "The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom. Before honor comes humility." If you want God to honor you, then fear Him, and practice that humility which is befitting those who know Him.

1. **Divine Viewpoint Knowledge**

The fear of God is the first principle of divine viewpoint knowledge. Proverbs 1:7: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction."

1. **Personal Happiness and Personal Prosperity**

The fear of the Lord is the source of personal happiness and of your personal prosperity. If you want to accumulate some riches, it has to start with a healthy, reverential dread (fear) of God who is holy. Psalm 34:9 says, "Oh fear the Lord, you his saints. For to those who fear Him, there is no want." That's a great promise. That's one of those 7,000 promises you can use now – only now. You can't use them over on the other side in heaven. Those who treat God with a reverential awe, and act accordingly, and you don't try to walk it alone, He's going to provide for your essential needs. This is the promise of logistical grace. He provides what you need to make it.

Psalm 112 presents this same concept. The fear of the Lord is the source of personal happiness and prosperity. Psalm 112:1-3: "Praise the Lord. How blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments. His descendants will be mighty on the earth. The generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever." Isn't this different? If you listen to Bob Tilton, the TV carnival conman of all time, it's when you send your money into him as a little seed that will grow into prosperity. That's not what you find in the Bible. The Word of God says that it is this respectful fear of God that produces for you your prosperity. Riches are in the house of the person who fears the Lord. That's how you become wealthy – by fearing God, and getting your eyes off yourself.

Psalm 128:1-4 add to this: "How blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways (obeys his doctrine). When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands, you will be happy, and it will be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house; tour children like olive plants around your table. Behold, for thus God will do for you to preserve your physical life."

Proverbs 14:27 points that out: "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life that one may avoid the snares of death." Those who fear God are not going to be engaging in certain sins – sins which are self-destructive to your physical life. I mean, that's self-evident. The Word of God says, "If you avoid those things that I forbid, it's going to extend your life. You listen to me about foods you shouldn't eat, and it will extend your life. You listen to me about the lifestyle that you should live with some exercise and energy, and it's going to extend your life.

Proverbs 19:23 says, "The fear of the Lord leads to life so that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil." The fear of the Lord keeps us from picking up diseases. That's what he's saying. And you will sleep untouched by that evil.

Look at Proverbs 10:27: "The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened." That's pretty clear. Walking in a reverential awe of God will preserve your life, and it will extend that life.

Take a look at Psalm 33:18-19: "Behold the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His loving kindness (meaning His grace), to deliver their soul from death, to keep them alive in famine."

1. **Help in Time of Need**

The fear of the Lord provides access to divine help in time of need. When you need help that only God can give, the fear of the Lord will give you that access. Psalm 145:19: "He will fulfill the desires of those who fear Him. He will also hear their cry and will save them." God does not hear the cry of a lot of Christians. God ignores them completely because they do not live with Him. They do not act with a reverential awe and trust of Him. They seek to live without God. And when they get in trouble, God says, "Fine, you wanted to go it alone; you wanted to do it your way. Have a good time." God is just and God is fair, but He is nobody's patsy. The fear of the Lord is what gives you that access to help when you need it, when no one else but God can carry you through a situation.

1. **The Mark of those whom God Favors**

The fear of the Lord marks those whom God favors. Psalm 147:11: "The Lord favors those who fear Him, those who wait for His loving kindness." When you see somebody who has a healthy respect for God, you can also look at someone who is a favorite with God.

1. **It Prevents Economic Abuse of Others**

The next thing that the fear of the Lord does is it prevents economic abuse of others. The Jews were terrible about this – economically abusing the helpless; the widow; and, the orphan. Who could do that but someone who does not fear God? Take a look at Leviticus 25:14-17: "If you make a sale, moreover to your friend, or buy from your friend's hand, you shall not wrong one another, corresponding to the number of years after the Jubilee, you shall buy from your friend. He is to sell you according to the number of years of crops in the proportion to the extent of the years, you shall increase its price, and in proportion to the fewness of the years, you shall diminish its price. For it is a number of crops he is selling you. So, you shall not wrong one another, but you shall feel your God, for I am the Lord your God."

Here's another Jew. He's in desperate condition. He needs to raise some money, so he wants to sell his crops, and you are to treat him fairly. You look at the timetable and you say, "Aha, it is five years to the Jubilee year." Every 50 years in Israel, all debts were canceled. Every 50 years, whatever property you had sold comes back into your family. So, no family could ever be property poor, and nobody could ever be indebted forever. This was a beautiful system – every 50 years. But you were not to take advantage of somebody, in saying, "I'll give you a price less than it's worth," knowing that in five years, all of this is going to be wiped out. You are to treat a person fairly according to the number of years that he has left. You don't abuse people financially because they're helpless. You can add to that Nehemiah 5:1-9.

1. **People who do not Fear God cannot be Trusted**

People who do not fear God, you should learn, cannot be trusted. If you find some Christian who doesn't mind doing things that are evil, and who doesn't mind abusing the helpless, he is not to be trusted. Genesis 20:11: "And Abraham said, 'Because I thought surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife." When Abraham has to find some help financially, he is fearful because he comes into the presence of Abimelech the king, and he says, "There's no fear of God with this man, and he will kill me so he can take my beautiful Sarah into his harem." People who do not fear God cannot be trusted. And Abraham understood that.

1. **Those who Fear God Avoid Negative Volition**

Those who fear God do not turn away from Him in negative volition toward His Word. Jeremiah 32:39-40: "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always for their own good, and for the good of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good. And I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me." Those who do not treat God with negative volition (they obey His Words) are those whom God treats with great blessing.

1. **Leaders are a Source of Blessing**

Those who govern men in the fear of the Lord and who rule with righteousness are a great source of refreshments and blessing. In the political realm, those who rule on the basis (who govern on the basis) of the principles of the Word of God are those who should receive your support. Does the private life of a person make any difference for holding public office? You betcha it does. A private life without integrity is a lifestyle – not just a little quirk. It is indicative of what this person will do in positions of higher authority. That lack of integrity will carry right over. So, this is very clear in the Word of God. Those who govern on the principles of God's word are going to be a great refreshment and blessing to those whom they govern.

2 Samuel 23:3-4 point this out: "The God of Israel it, the Rock of Israel spoke to me: 'He who rules over men righteously, who rules in the fear of God, is as the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, when the tender grass springs out of the earth through sunshine after rain." What a beautiful poetic picture that a political leader can be like sunshine after rain. Most of them are nightmares in the midst of a storm.

1. **Respect for God**

The early Christians were characterized by this spirit of a fear of God. They had a healthy respect for the Creator God. Acts 9:31: "So, the church throughout all Judea and Samaria and Galilee enjoyed peace, being built up, and going on in the fear of the Lord; and, in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

1. **God has Power over our Lives and Eternal Destiny**

God is to be feared because he has power over one's physical life and one's eternal destiny. Luke 12:4-5: "And I say to you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear. Fear the one who, after he has killed, has the authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him." Of whom is he speaking? He is speaking about God. We shouldn't fear somebody who can take your physical life, but you should be more fearful of the one who, after your life has been taken, can also cast you into the lake of fire.

1. **Government Leaders are to Fear God**

Those who are placed in positions of civil authority are to be men who fear God, or they should not be placed in that authority. You are not a person who fears God if you break the laws of God. Exodus 18:21: "Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain, and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands; of hundreds; of fifties; and, of tens." When Moses had to extend the civil authority and the structure for the Jewish people, God said to Him, "Don't pick somebody who does not fear God, and who does not maintain personal integrity with the laws of God."

1. **The Fear of the Lord Prevents Abuse of the Physically Handicapped**

The fear of the Lord prevents heartless abuse of the physically handicapped. Leviticus 19:14: "You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind. But you shall revere your God. I am the Lord." You do not treat the physically handicapped in a heartless way. So, stop complaining about those handicapped spaces being right in front where you want to park, and that you have to walk the long way around.

1. **Respect for the Aged**

It is the fear of the Lord that that preserves a respect for the aged. And I want you to learn this one very well. Leviticus 19:32: "You shall rise up before the gray-headed, and honor the aged, and you shall reveal your God. I am the Lord." So, when you see the aged, please stand in their presence respectfully. You don't treat those who need your kindness and your assistance in an indifferent way.

1. What does fear of the Lord do? God's great desire for His children is that they would so fear Him that they would indeed obey His commandments. In Deuteronomy 5:29, Moses reiterates this principle: "O, that they had such a heart in them (God said), that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them, and with their sons forever." Like a parent wishing that his children would just learn to do right, so God, as our heavenly Father, says, "If they would just listen to My commandments, and if they would just do right, how I could bless them, and what a blessing it would be to their children.
2. **Obedience Prevents Physical Illnesses**

Failure to fear the Lord leads to disobedience of His commandments, and results in the chastening and physical illnesses that He imposes as discipline. In Deuteronomy 28:58-61. God says, "If you are not careful to observe all the words of this Law which are written in this book, to fear this honored and awesome name, the Lord your God, then the Lord will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, even severe and lasting plagues, and miserable and chronic sicknesses. And He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. Also every sickness and every plague, which is not written in this Law, the Lord will bring on you until you are destroyed."

You health nuts can take a point here. Here's one way to really stay healthy. Failure to have an awesome fear of the Lord that results in disobeying His commandments will bring physical chastening upon you. You can count on it.

1. **Bible Doctrine**

The fear of the Lord is developed through the learning of Bible doctrine. That is self-evident. Deuteronomy 31:9-13: "So, Moses wrote this law, and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel. Then Moses commanded them, saying, 'At the end of every seven years, at the time of the year of remission of debts, at the Feast of Booths, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this Law in front of all Israel, in their hearing. Assemble the people: the men; the women; the children; and, the alien who is in your town, in order that they may hear, and learn, and fear the Lord your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law. And their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess."

They're are on the verge of going into the Promised Land, and what does God stop and say one more time? "Learn doctrine, and don't try to go it alone. Do not try to live without Me. Have a reverential dread, fear, and respect for Me so that you will not ignore My word. I know Christians who are so dull-minded that they think they can make their own rules about dealing with God. They think that they can just call an evil by some other name. That's what one of the prophets of the Old Testament said: "You call evil, good; and, good, evil. That's what some Christians do. They do something that is just downright heartless, mean, and evil. And they say, "Oh, that's good." God says, "No, it isn't. And I'm not going to take your opinion in dealing with you on the matter." Do not think that you make up God's opinions for Him.

1. **Preservation from Idolatry**

The fear of the Lord will preserve you from idolatry. Joshua 24:14-15: "Now therefore, fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the river in Egypt, and serve the Lord. And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourself today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your father served, which were beyond the river; or, the gods of the Amorites, and whose land you are living, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua says, "Let's get it straight, folks. There's a God that we should fear and respect and worship and trust in, and there are gods that we should not trust in. And he says, "You make up your mind. You have lots of gods to choose from. If you want to go beyond the river Euphrates where our father Abraham came from (the Tigris-Euphrates Valley), then go ahead and worship those gods. He turned his back on them all. Or, on the other hand, if you want to worship these gods of the Amorites, you have them right under your nose, and you see the filthy things they do. You see their phallic cults. Which do you want to do? Well, as for me, boys, I'm going to worship the Lord my God.

This is a splendid statement on the part of Joshua: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." It is the fear of the Lord that preserves us from idolatry. Oh, you breathed a sigh of relief: "Thank God that here's one that I don't have to worry about. The only idol that I worship is my wife, and I don't really mean it, but I don't have to worry about idolatry." But unfortunately, the New Testament slips in a zinger, and says, "Covetousness is an act of idolatry," and it's the one sin in the Ten Commandments that's up in in the head. Isn't that interesting? All others are external but mental attitude sins are always the worst. And this is the one sin that broke up the apostle Paul. He said, "I'm blameless." Then he got to thinking about all the things he coveted, and he said, "My God, I'm just as bad as any other Jew who's doing this stealing, and the adultery, and lying, and false witnessing, and all these other things. I don't do those things, but boy, am I shot-through with mental attitude sins! And Paul came up short, and was startled to realize that he was on his way to the lake of fire. Idolatry is more than just worshiping some image. It is making anything else a substitute for God, and you walk with that instead of with Him.

1. **Preservation from Military Conquest**

The fear of the Lord preserves the nation from military conquest. How often we in America have learned that lesson? 2 Kings 17:39: "But the Lord your God you shall fear, and He will deliver you from the hands of your enemies." This is true. It is true for a nation, and it is true for an individual soldier in combat. A soldier in combat who has maximum Bible doctrine stored in his human spirit has almost an invisible shield about him, because he is so sensitive to divine leading that he does the right thing on the field of battle, and his life is preserved.

1. **Infinite Mercy from God**

The fear of the Lord secures infinite mercy from God for those who fall into sin. Do we ever need to remember that promise? The fear of God results in infinite mercy when we do stumble, and we do violate His precepts? Psalm 103:8-18: "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness. (That's the Old Testament word for 'grace.') He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His loving kindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the East is from the West, so far He has removed our transgressions from us. Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him, for He Himself knows our form. He is mindful that we are but just. As for man, his days are like grass. As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over, it is no more, and its place acknowledges it no longer. But the loving kindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to those who keep His covenant, who remember His precepts to do them.

The fear of the Lord brings the same response from our heavenly Father as when a child who is disobedient to you brings when that child demonstrates his reverential trust and respect for you. When a child reacts like that, you treat him one way. When he reacts with indignant rebellion and contempt, you treat him in a different way. A Christian who sins and responds with fear for the Lord makes the confession. He doesn't make any bones about it; no pretense; and, no cover up. That is the person that God picks up and very quickly restores, heals, and blesses. It is foolish to try to live without God. It is madness to live without a deep, reverential fear of the Lord. May this never be true of us.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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