

Reverence for God

1. Introduction

a. Moses – Exodus 3:1-6

- i. God commanded reverence
- ii. Spoke to him as a friend
 1. We want that
 2. We get “chummy” with God
- iii. Doesn’t change who the Friend is
 1. God is holy
- iv. Holy expectations:
 1. Gets angry at Moses’ doubting
 2. Starts to kill Moses for not circumcising his son
 3. Ultimately disqualifies Moses from Promised Land
- v. Friendship with God didn’t justify familiarity or irreverence
- vi. God expects reverence

Case in point:

b. John – Revelations 1:9-18

- i. John was friends with Jesus
 1. Spent time
 2. Saw Him transfigured
 3. Served 60 years in the ministry
 - a. Should older Christians still be feeling reverence?
- ii. Seeing who He was = reverence, fear, falling down as though dead
- iii. Friendship with God was never meant to negate reverence

2. Combine study = Reverence and fear

a. Tendency to explain away “fear” as “reverential awe”

b. Fear vs. “Reverential Awe”

- i. Always explained away fearing God
 1. Paternal example
 2. “No fear in love”
- ii. Vocabulary of fear
 1. Hebrew – Fear mixed with reverence
 2. Greek – phobeo – fear
 3. There are other words for respect or reverence
- iii. Job’s experience
 1. Job 38:2
*Who is this that darkens my counsel
with words without knowledge?*
 2. Beast Examples:
 - a. Behemoth

- b. Leviathan
- 3. Alligator story
 - a. Kasey Edwards of Okochobee, FL
 - b. Grew up around gators – wasn't scared
 - c. Attacked and thought, "This thing is so much more powerful than me."
- 4. Lion Example
 - a. No one says, "I just feel some reverential awe"

- c. Fear Commanded
 - i. Old Testament

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

Isaiah 8:12-13

Jeremiah 32:38-40

- ii. New Testament

Luke 12:4-5

Acts 10:34-35

Philippians 2:12-13

Acts 9:31

- iii. Fear is commanded and expected!

- d. Fear what?

Romans 8:15-16

*For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of son-ship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." **16**The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.*

I John 4:18

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

- i. Not fearing punishment
- ii. Fear **who** God is! – Psalm 86:11
- iii. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego example
 - 1. Hebrews 12:28 – God is a consuming fire
 - 2. We don't need to fear his wrath

3. Beginning of Wisdom

Proverbs 9:10

- a. Right Perspective
 - i. Sinner in the presence of Holiness!
 - ii. Finite in the presence of Infinity!
 - iii. Nothing in the presence of Everything!
 - 1. Conversion
 - 2. People studying
 - a. Act like it is not a big deal
 - b. There is no grace where there is not first fear!
 - c. Revelations 14:7

*Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had **the eternal gospel to proclaim** to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and*

people. He said in a loud voice, "**Fear God and give him glory**, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."

- d. You need to fear God!
 - i. Quit dragging your feet about sin
 - ii. Get serious about obeying God
- iv. Effects
 - 1. Purifies – burns away sin, worldliness and impurities
 - a. Coal on Isaiah's lips
 - 2. Clarifies – burns away distractions
 - 3. Humbles – burns away pride
- b. New Beginnings?
 - i. A call to repentance
 - 1. Some of need a John experience again
 - ii. God's affectionate response
 - 1. God's command to fear Him
 - 2. God's comfort to those who fear
- 4. Danger of not fearing God
 - a. We run a very real danger of becoming irreverent
 - i. Individually
 - ii. Corporately

Malacchi

- b. Issues in Malacchi
 - i. Irreverent attitude towards God's love – 1:1-5
 - ii. Irreverent attitudes towards worship
 - 1. Second-hand sacrifices – 1:7-8
 - 2. Cheated in giving – 3:8
 - 3. Contemptuous attitude – 1:12-13
 - iii. Irreverent Priesthood – 2:1-9
 - 1. Leaders
 - 2. Royal Priesthood
 - 3. Became priest by fearing God – 2:5-6
 - iv. Irreverent Intermarriage – 2:10-12
 - v. Irreverent in Marriage – 2:13-16
 - vi. Irreverent Questioning of God – 2:17
- c. Israel had lost its reverence for God
- d. Their attitude was:
 - i. Contemptuous
 - ii. Bored
 - iii. Faithless
 - iv. Hopeless
 - v. Are you feeling this way? Could it be you've lost your reverence?
- e. Challenges for church
 - i. Irreverent approach to worship

1. Late
2. Fellowshiping in the café
3. Parents controlling kids
- ii. Sniffing Contemptuously at Spiritual Things
 1. Discipling
 2. House Churches
 3. Leadership
 4. Evangelism
- iii. Irreverent Words
 1. Gossip
 2. Divisiveness
 3. Marriage
 4. Parenting
- iv. d
- f. God rejected the Israelites because they had an irreverent attitude
- g. Personally confess publicly
 - i. Personal worship
 - ii. Role as an evangelist
 1. Preaching
 2. Execution of duties
- h. God restored those who embraced fearing Him!

Malachi 3:16-18

5. Conclusion

- a. Challenge to re-embrace fearing God – As a church and as individuals
- b. As a Church:
 - i. Reestablish reverence in Church life
 1. Worship
 2. Serving
 3. Relationships
 - ii. Restore a sense of reverence in all that we do!
- c. Personal Practicals of Restoring Fear
 - i. Paralyzed in His presence – **Challenge Isaiah Experience!**
 1. Stop!
 2. Read a story
 3. Sit and be overwhelmed by his presence
 - ii. Tremble at His word – Isaiah 66:5
 - iii. Get together with those who fear God – Malacchi 3:16
 1. Spoke to each other
 - a. Confession
 - b. Pure Heart – I Corinthians 7:1
 2. God listened
 3. God wrote their names down

4. Talk today!!

I Peter 1:17

*Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in **reverent fear**.*

d. Promises of fear

Ps 103:11-17 (NIV) For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who **fear** him... As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who **fear** him... But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who **fear** him...

Ps 33:18 (NEB) The Lord's eyes are turned towards those who **fear** him...

Ps 115:13 (NEB) The Lord will bless all who **fear** him, high and low alike...

Ps 145:19 (NEB) He fulfills their desire if only they **fear** him; he hears their cry and saves them.

Ps 34:7 (NEB) The angel of the Lord is on guard round those who **fear** him, and rescues them.

Tampa Bay Church

Let us drive irreverence far from us

Let us fear God for who He is

Let us embrace the kindness and sternness of our God as we march towards Judgment Day

There,
along with men and women from all ages
who feared His name,
God will richly reward our reverence!