

Part 58: Wise Fear of God

Spend some moments in silent prayer asking God for the grace to experience God's presence as a focus in our fears and anxieties. Did you enjoy your time with God this past week?

Fear of God as the beginning of wisdom.

We have been looking at fear as a possible response to imagining what can go wrong and threaten us. We live presuming that what we fear may happen in spite of the fact that we have no 'proof' to that effect.

Now, by the same token, if we can present our imaginations with aspects of God's commitment to us, accepting the fact that they too are not 'proven', (which, by the way, is what faith is: Hebrews 11:1), we may then begin to respond fully to the God whom we cannot see, rather than the evil that threatens us.

These are some of the aspects we can feed on:

- God cares about me more than I can believe possible.
- God accepts me totally right now, just as I am.
- God longs to see me free but respects my choices.
- God is totally committed to me.

At home you can add to this list your own aspects of God that you know in your head but, as yet, do not feed on in your heart. What need I fear if this God is with me and defending me? Just as a child can be fully at peace in the love and care of its parents, so it is that with God as our loving Father we literally have nothing to fear.

1 John 4:18 says 'There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The person who fears is not made perfect in love'.

Any fear we experience throws us back on to our experience of the love of God. If we are in touch with that love as a lived reality, it will cause our fears to evaporate. If, however, God's love is just a good thought and devoid of experience, our fears will persist and even grow.

'If God is for us, who can be against us?' (Romans 8:28–39)

Meditate on this passage for 20 minutes. How do our fearful images stand up to the reality of God being totally for us?

Journal and share in the group what you feel to be appropriate.

Fear of the Lord can thus be described as that sense of awe and reverence at the reality of God's total commitment to us which leads us to trust God, to desire to be constantly in touch with and to obey God.

This week, relate the certainty of God's care to situations of fear and anxiety. Does your reaction to fear affirm what you say about your relationship with God?

You may also like to add to the above list aspects of God that you know in your head but as yet do not feed on in your heart.

Our experience of God will develop and mature as we explore who we are in him and absorb it in our personhood.



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