

Fear and Trembling, Joyful Service

Scripture

“Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.” (Ps 2:11 NKJV)

Devotion

Something seems amiss when we put the terms fear and trembling in harmony with Joyful service. However, the Scriptures do just that. Therefore, our definitions must be different than those given in the Word.

When the Bible says fear the Lord, it is not talking about servile fear. We are not to fear as a slave fears his master’s whip. Instead, we are to have filial fear like a child for his father. It is natural for us to love our fathers dearly, and yet we respect them because they have the responsibility and ability to correct our misbehaving.

We must love our Heavenly Father, but at the same time tremble at His majesty and power. If we only love the Lord and acknowledge none of His fatherly duties, we act presumptuously for this is not our God. This service without fear breeds hypocrisy because one is secure in his mind, but has no regard for judgment. He will tend to a form of godliness, but excuse his own sins.

On the other hand, if we fear God as a Father who judges and corrects our behavior, we will see our sins and will always be humbly dependent upon His grace. We will lovingly serve because like when our earthly fathers love us even when we disobey, our Heavenly Father loves us eternally because Christ’s righteousness has been imputed to us.

Now this does not give us a license to sin. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things [done] in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” (2Co 5:10 NKJV)

The ability to see God striped of His judgmental authority calls one’s faith into question. Because we read, “the fear of the LORD [is] the beginning of knowledge, [but] fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Pr 1:7 NKJV) “In the fear of the LORD [there is] strong confidence and His children will have a place of refuge. The fear of the LORD [is] a fountain of life, to turn [one] away from the snares of death.” (Pr 14:26-27 NKJV)

My dear friends, I trust that you love our Heavenly Father. Let us also make sure we reverence Him. For the Scriptures are not kind to the one who takes the Lord lightly.

“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. And again, “The LORD will judge His people.” It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Heb 10:26-31 NKJV)

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” (1Jo 5:21 NKJV)