



ON THE FEAR OF GOD

Dennis Kevin Gregory

If there one thing that this life has taught me, is that bringing up scripture to make a point in a discussion is fraught with peril and will most likely end up causing bitterness and anger among the participants. The reasons for this are complex and are out of the scope of this short treatise. I've actually witnessed long time friends become distant and unloving in such instances. This is indeed a very sad fact because in almost all cases, the *intent* of your warm hearts is just the opposite.

This now said, I intend to forge ahead anyway in hopes that my friends, family and the public at large, will see this as not something that I am 'preaching' to them about; for I readily admit that many of those who choose to read this are far more versed in scripture and smarter than I. My prayer is that they see it as what it truly is: something GOD inspired me to write on.

An Excerpt from **The PIT**.

Scene description:

A long and grueling discussion of the nature of pride has just finished. It has been gut-wrenching to say the least. All finally agree with the conclusion that **PRIDE** is by far the worst of all sins. An impressive reading of an abundant number of divine verses along with vexing cross examinations, have made this conclusion inescapable.

Lucifer, along with his despicable family members, is not happy with the direction of the discourse. You can see him beginning to seethe. Several guests bring up the point that we have to address the fact that having 'pride' today is indeed *a good thing* that we cannot live without; even though it has been proven beyond a shadow of a doubt to be so lethal and can actually, have mercy, **prohibit our salvation!** The question now becomes: what can possibly replace the impetus for positive action and that good physical feeling that having pride gives us?

Dennis is now forced into a corner to come up with a solution to this dilemma; as many of the guests in the outer seats are yearning for an answer.

Dennis: [stands and begins to explain the answer] Since even the very best of Preachers can have different interpretations of the same verse, I have found over and over again that the reading of the Word, without study and prolonged prayer for clarity, can often leave the reader, as it has with me, somewhat baffled and a bit unsure of exactly what to think. That said, before I open up the floor again, for I can see the anxiety in your eyes, I would like to say a few words on this concept of the '**fear of the Lord**'. I pray that my words will bring this concept into more focus for each of you. In other words, break it down some more. Let's keep in mind that it will become our number two weapon in our *life long* fight against Lucifer and his decrepit family.

My best guess is that the very word '**fear**' itself is at first, a turn off to many of you. We all wisely 'fear' many things in life; as do I. For example, while I am in pretty good shape and can no doubt defend myself, I would not get into the ring with Mike Tyson, for '**fear**' of him knocking me clear into next week! [audience laughs] I also '**fear**' that one day all my life's savings will somehow disappear; leaving me with very little resources to manage my life for possibly many more years to come. I also '**fear**' that some disease may befall me one day stripping me of my health and well being and leaving me bed ridden for the rest of my life; depending on loved ones for the basics things; like going to the bathroom, brushing my teeth, and cleaning myself.

Such things actually happen to many people in life and there is absolutely NO reason why they cannot happen to me as well. Is everyone still with me? [audience appears at full attention, but very quiet]

Socrates: [comments from his seat] Once again, you have our full attention. Proceed without further delay!

Dennis: Very well my friend. [continues]

As I was saying, we need a far better understanding of what is meant by ‘**fear**’ in all these divine verses. For it is surely not the same ‘fear’ that I just described in various life circumstances. In addition, I am certain that many such similar ‘fears’ exist in your lives as well. I will bet that many of you ‘fear’ losing your jobs, or ‘fear’ that your teenage daughter does not get pregnant, or ‘fear’ that you might get robbed on the way home one day, or ‘fear’ that your diabetes does not get any worse. The picture is clear; life has many ‘fears’. But, as we shall soon see, the word ‘**fear**’ as in ‘*fear* of the Lord’, **thank GOD**, means something else entirely. [says a quick prayer]

Lord, I need your help once again.

ON THE ‘FEAR’ OF THE LORD

Good people, if I may repeat myself, the ‘**fear of the Lord**’ used in all those divine verses is not at all like the various ‘fears’ described a minute ago.....no, not at all. ***For if it were exactly the same concept***, there would seem to be a very basic contradiction in how we all understand some of the indisputable attributes of GOD: that He is Infinitely Kind, Infinitely Loving, Infinitely Good, Infinitely Just, etc.

For if it **were** the same concept, it would then logically follow that my ‘fear’ of Mike Tyson, is exactly the same as my ‘fear’ of the Lord; that my ‘fear’ of losing my health, would be exactly the same as my ‘fear’ of the Lord; that my ‘fear’ of losing money, would be exactly the same as my ‘fear’ of the Lord; that my ‘fear’ of losing my job, would be exactly the same as my ‘fear’ of the Lord; that my ‘fear’ of the Right-Wingers , who themselves are pure masters of ‘fear’, from launching yet another war, would be exactly the same as my ‘fear’ of the Lord.

HEAVEN FORBID SUCH THINKING!!!

What then does this phrase '**fear of the Lord**' really mean?

Adrienne: [stands to interrupt] Dennis, I am really glad to hear what you're saying, even before you've finished. I cannot tell you how many times I've been turned off by people telling me that I need to '**fear GOD**'. There is something about that phrase that simply isn't right to my mind; at least the way it is always told to me. I was never sure that those that insist in saying that, themselves have no clue as to what it really means. For me, it always comes across as my being told to '*kneel down and cower before GOD for all your sins*'! I of course am not **opposed** to doing that, as I have far too much love for GOD, but I somehow never believed that that is what He truly wants us to do. Sorry to interrupt you, but am I making any sense? [sits]

Dennis: [still standing, responds] More sense than you probably know! [now looking at the rest of the guests] Who else feels as Adrienne does?

Joe: [comments from his seat] Adrienne is right. It really does come across that way most times; and does turn a lot of good people off in the process.

Liz: [comments from her seat] I agree. It doesn't sit well with me either. It always makes me feel like I'm the worst sinner who ever lived!!

Claudia: [comments from her seat] For me, that phrase always made me think that I am supposed to 'shake in my boots' because of His certain severe punishment for all the sins I've committed. As you can probably tell, the phrase '**the fear of the Lord**' always made me very nervous and just wishing to be somewhere else; as in anywhere but Church!

Jocelyn: [comments from her seat] I too agree. Every time I heard the phrase **'fear of the Lord'** it always made me feel like I was due a few backlashes! I know I'm a sinner, and I really do try my best to do the right things, but when I hear that phrase, it makes me just want to be far away from the person saying it! I hope you understand where I'm coming from because I really do want to be closer to GOD and to have my kids feel the same way. PLEASE continue with your thoughts, as I feel you may be telling us something we **dearly** need to hear.

Mother Theresa: [comments from her seat] I will pray that the Lord continues to guide you in this, as I am feeling the pain in the hearts of the guests who are yearning for a better understanding of that phrase.

Albert Einstein: [comments from his seat] You've touched a real nerve amongst many of us! I myself am anxious to hear what it is you have to say on this. I've been noticing the recent nervousness on the face of Lucifer. Without question, you're on to something!!! Speak on, my friend!

Dennis: [exuberant at the responses] With the Lord as my guide, I will continue.

It is indeed great to hear that many of you feel the same way I did when I first heard the phrase **'fear of the Lord'**; as it did not sit well with me either. It always reminded me of those fire and brimstone Pastors that preach salvation by scaring the heck out of you.

We will now, GOD willing of course, take a very different look at this phrase. As always, I know of no better way to authenticate my own thoughts as to find where they exist in Holy Scripture, for they have very little value, if any, on their own. Let us turn to the very first part of the first sentence in Psalms Chapter 111 Verse 10 (NIV):

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom"

It is this divine definition that I base my understanding on what the phrase **'fear of the Lord'** really means.

What a PERFECT place to start our new look at this phrase. To begin, one can clearly see that there is nothing scary or punitive in this phrase. Far from it! Without a doubt, it is not at all like **any** of the 'fears' we find in our lives as described just a short while ago.

Adrienne, your 'fear of the Lord' has absolutely **nothing** to do with your kneeling and cowering. Claudia, your 'fear of the Lord', will **not** make you 'shake in your boots'. Liz, your 'fear of the Lord' does **not** imply that you are the world's worst sinner. Jocelyn, your 'fear of the Lord' will **not** make you feel like you are due a few backlashes. As you can see, it is a **far** different concept than you first thought. The divine words found in Psalms Chapter 111 Verse 10 confirm this for each of you!

Can I get an **AMEN?** [the guests in the outer seats clap and loudly say **AMEN!!**]

Dennis: I feel like dancing!! [spins and does a few smooth dance moves, then regains his composure]

Let us recap.

We now know what the phrase '**fear of the Lord**' is NOT. For it is not like any of the 'fears' we know of in this life. That is now proven. The question then becomes, what **IS** it?

I will need for you to once again use your minds and your imaginations for this description. It is not a static concept and therefore nothing you will find in any dictionary. It actually **lives and breathes** as a function of you. To obtain a proper understanding of the phrase '**fear of the Lord**', it will require your mind to do something that is both necessary and impossible at the same time. It is simple; and I am certain you will all be amazed by it.

Try this: in your minds, first think of all the things you are capable of and are very good at. For example, Liz, I know that you have a lovely voice.

Liz: [interrupts from her seat] My voice? I've been your admin for several years. I would have thought that you would say that I have very good administrative skills!

Dennis: [looking quite serious] What administrative skills?

Liz: [exasperated, jumps up with her hands on her big hips] **WHAT DID YOU SAY??**

Dennis: [now smiling] I was just having fun with you. Relax! You're a terrific admin with the skills to match.

Liz: [smiling back] You know I'm gonna pay you back for that one! [sits]

Dennis: [smiling, continues] Back to our task at hand folks: think of all your good skills and abilities and then compare them to what you know GOD can do; like creating life itself, creating the Heavens and the Earth, bringing rain and sunshine, thunder and earthquakes, etc., etc., etc. Trust me on this. I'm really very serious about this exercise. Please do it in earnest. I will give each of you a few minutes for your minds to do the comparison.

Such an exercise, if attempted seriously, will quickly leave your minds both blank and weary..... [a few minutes elapse as everyone attempts it] What say you good folks?

George: [responds from his seat] Wow! My mind went blank quickly, just as you said.

Adrienne: [responds from her seat] So did mine!

Liz: [responds from her seat] Mine too! You're also right; as my mind got tired fast! What does this mean?

Jocelyn: [responds from her seat] Blank!! And fast!

Eve: [responds from her seat] Nothing.....a blank nothing. I really did try. Even the second time.....nothing but a quick blank. It's also tiring, as you said.

Darryl: [responds from his seat] I love challenges, especially mental ones. However, I didn't even get to first base on this one. I know I understood the instructions well enough, but could not somehow get a real start! And yet, my mind is quickly tired!

Joe: [responds from his seat] I'm not sure my mind ever got started! It was like something that ended before it even began!

Bart: [responds from his seat] I'm with Joe. I tried, but did not even seem to get started!

Albert Einstein: [responds from his seat] You are asking for us to analyze the infinite. Bart and Joe are therefore correct. There is not even a starting place in such an endeavor! I believe I have an idea of where you're going with this. Please continue. It's getting interesting!

Dennis: [now surging with enthusiasm] Thank you all for indulging me on this. Whether you realize it or not, you have all just gained immense wisdom in a few minutes! You've just taken your first step in understanding what the phrase '**fear of the Lord**' truly means. For you forced your own minds quickly into a total blank, in the absolutely vain attempt to understand the power of GOD, which of course is impossible. What then does this all mean?

The Lord knows the smallness and weakness of our minds. He knows that the only way for us to even **begin** to understand Him, is for us to realize **for ourselves**, just how small and weak our minds truly are; compared to Him. The **effect** of that tired and blank mind or ultimate confusion, is the '**fear of the Lord**' that we read of in His Words. For it is the beginning of true wisdom of Him with the receipt of such wisdom being the treasures spoken of in Isaiah Chapter 33 Verse 6 (NIV):

"He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure":

This is without question, a lot to grasp. Let me now restate this in simpler terms.

As we use our minds to contemplate about GOD, even for but a few minutes, we quickly realize the total futility of comparing the very best of what we can do against HIS Magnificence. When we do this, we should be totally AWED at what it is we are contemplating. Every thought of Him, about Him, to Him, from Him should leave us in total AWE, as in jaws dropped in disbelief, making crystal clear the relative weakness of our own best abilities in the process.

Summing it up:

The more we think about the Magnificence of GOD, the smaller we become in our own minds to ourselves. And when we become small in our own minds, we will then realize that we are indeed weak. And when we *admit to ourselves* that we are weak, we allow the infinite power of Jesus Christ to be perfect and rest upon us just as it plainly promises in 2nd Corinthians chapter 12 verses 9 and 10:

"But he said to me, *My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness*. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. **For when I am weak, then I am strong."**

The '**fear of the Lord**' now becomes what happens to our minds and bodies when we simply '**shutter at the thought**' of who **HE** isagainst the very best of who we are.

For in so doing, we see just how small and weak we truly are **to ourselves**, as we desperately try in vain to understand just how great **He** is!

This thought process also leaves us with a **physical feeling** that is unmatched. For GOD will now replace the good feeling that having pride gives us with something far, far better as a reward for our efforts to love and understand Him.

It is the most powerful use of our minds, where the result of this futile effort is treasures beyond words, for the power of **Christ**, will now rest upon US.

So the next time you do something that you are proud of, instead of incorrectly giving yourself credit, think of our new definition and get that glorious feeling that comes from knowing that your wonderful accomplishment was a **gift from GOD** and makes you feel terrific!!!! **Believe me, this works!**

I will now leave this discussion on the '**fear of the Lord**' with a few words from St. Augustine; that I believe sums it all up quite beautifully:

“Thou awakest us to delight in Thy praise; for Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it repose in Thee”

I've spoken of much. The floor is now open. [sits]

WHAT SAY YOU????