



## Daily Verse and Comment

### [Psalm 2:10-11](#)

(10) Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. (11) Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

### [Psalm 34:11](#)

(11) Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

*King James Version*

A hundred other verses say essentially the same thing: We must have the fear of [God](#) in us. Nevertheless, many persist in believing that, in Christianity, the fear of God has been replaced by [love](#) for God.

There is no doubt that God wants us to fear Him. Notice that [Psalm 34:11](#) says that the fear of God is a quality that we must learn, indicating that we do not have this characteristic in us by nature. The fear of God, then, is different from the fears we normally have in life. Thus, it must be learned.

Fear is a powerful motivator. Our normal understanding of fear spans from being a mild apprehension or awareness of anxiety all the way to outright, bowel-moving terror. As an extreme, it creates the "fight or flight" response. Why, then, does a loving God want us to fear Him? Would He not rather want us to snuggle up to Him with no thought of fear?

Many people have that conception, but it is a mistaken one. We must not forget that God is not a man; He is *God*. He reminds us in [Isaiah 55:8-9](#) that He does not think like a man. Yes, He wants us to love Him, but even in that love the sense of fear should always be present.

Recall that [Psalm 2:11](#) commands, "Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling." To a Christian, fearing and rejoicing seem to be an odd couple. Paul writes in [Philippians 2:12](#) to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Ordinarily, we associate "trembling" with fear, of being frightened. What is there to fear and tremble about in taking salvation to its conclusion?

[Deuteronomy 6:4-5](#) says, "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." Within a Christian setting, we are much more comfortable with this command to love, yet notice verses 1-2:

Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may *fear the LORD your God* to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

Immediately preceding and following His command in verse 5 to love Him, He also affirms that we are to fear Him (see verses 2, 13). The sense of verses 1-2 is that this fear is produced *as* we keep His commandments, not before! Clearly, fear of Him and love for Him cannot be separated from our relationship with Him.

[Isaiah 8:13](#) adds another interesting aspect. "The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread." Surely, we might think that someone as close to God as Isaiah did not need to fear Him, but here God commands Isaiah to fear him. Why? Because the fear gained within the relationship with Him always motivates movement in the right, godly direction, regardless of the intensity of life's circumstances.

What about [1 John 4:17-18](#)? Does it not contradict the assertion that our relationship with God should contain godly fear?

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in [this](#)

[world](#). There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

This passage does not contradict in the least, once we understand the kind of fear the apostle John is writing about. The clue to this fear appears in verse 17 in the term "boldness." John is referring to being bold in spite of the circumstances we face from life in this world once we are converted. The love of God works in us to dispel the fear of disease, oppressions, persecution, and death, but it does not drive out the fear of God. If it did, John would be contradicting what the Bible says elsewhere about the necessity of continuing to fear God. Christianity has not replaced the fear of God with the love of God, as many wrongly believe. Instead, the two work hand in hand.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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