



[Romans 3:18](#)

(18) " *There is no fear of God before their eyes.*"
New King James Version

The fear needed is not a servile, cringing, and enslaving terror, but a mixture of [love](#), admiration, and respect for what He is. He is a Father who pities His children; a Ruler who looks on the one who is poor and of a contrite heart; a Physician who heals the body, cleanses the spirit, mercifully forgives, and gives sound counsel so that His children can work out their [salvation](#) with fear and trembling.

When the [fear of God](#) enters a man's evil heart, godly knowledge, understanding, and [wisdom](#) can begin to grow. Why? Because in making better choices, the person begins to break his enslavement to his own evil heart, from which comes all the defiling corruption that leads to death, as [Jesus](#) shows in [Matthew 15:18-20](#):

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.

By nature, man is focused on his sense of self-importance, so [pride](#) dominates his attitudes and therefore his choices. The corrective is something that will humble, and it begins with him being able to compare himself appropriately with the greatness of [God](#). Man will live either to serve himself or to seek to serve and please God. It will be one or the other because no man can serve two masters ([Matthew 6:24](#)).

When [Moses](#) goes before Pharaoh in [Exodus 5:2](#), he says, "Let my people go." What is Pharaoh's defiant response? "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go." That was his problem, and it remains

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a major hurdle for us too. We must come to know the Lord. From this, a simple [truth](#) arises: Not knowing God promotes irreverence of God, as Pharaoh clearly shows. Thus, not knowing God promotes disobedience. Knowing God, on the other hand, promotes the fear of God and humility before Him and thus obedience.

Knowing God in His sovereignty works to remove every ground for man to rely on himself and boast. Salvation is of the Lord; it is by His [grace](#) through [faith](#). Man wants to think that he is contributing greatly to his redemption and salvation, but John tells us we are born, not of the will of the flesh, but of God ([John 1:13](#)). If we understand God's sovereignty, it leads us to praise Him for the glory of what He is: He is our salvation! In addition, we desire salvation for the very purpose of humbling ourselves before Him that we might glorify Him. This means that we can wisely turn only one way: We must choose to submit to His will.

The exercise, the actual use, of humility in daily life is a choice. Each time we submit to God's instruction, we are humbling ourselves before Him. Once we know what God's will is, we must still deal with choosing to use humility by submitting to it. Is that not what God says in [Deuteronomy 30:19](#), that we must choose life rather than death? "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live." Fully accepting God's sovereignty provides us the proper comparisons so that we can wisely make right choices.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[Fully Accepting God's Sovereignty, Part Three: The Fruits](#)

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