

WHY FEAR THE TRUE GOD?

Note to the speaker:

Help audience to appreciate that as servants of Jehovah, we have the obligation to fear him. Make clear what is involved in demonstrating such fear and the benefits that accrue from doing so

BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES EMPHASIZES NEED FOR FEAR OF GOD (5 min.)

In Ecclesiastes, King Solomon painted a realistic picture of the human situation (Ec 1:13, 14; 2:22, 23)

After showing vanity of life, he highlighted the only way to achieve real, lasting joy (*w97* 2/15 10, 13-18)

Must fear God and keep his commandments (Read Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14)

Solomon's experience taught him that centering life on Jehovah and His worship is the only course that brings lasting happiness and truly helps us cope with anxieties of life

Failure to fear God and show respect for right principles is cause of moral breakdown and rise in crime and violence

Only those who fear God and keep his commandments will survive God's judgment hour (Ec 8:11-13; Re 14:6, 7; *w95* 10/15 9-10, 12)

WHAT FEAR OF GOD IS AND HOW TO DEVELOP IT (13 min.)

Fear of God involves awe and profound reverence for Jehovah and a wholesome dread of displeasing him (*w01* 12/1 14-15; *w01* 7/1 5-6; *g98* 1/8 26-7)

Person fearing God will endeavor to use knowledge in right manner

Such fear will move him to act wisely, to make wise decisions (Php 2:12)

He will not want to do anything to profane God's good name

We demonstrate proper fear of God by avoiding "the works of the flesh" (Ga 5:19-21)

Appreciate that his laws are for our welfare (*w01* 12/1 20)

They protect us from spiritual and physical danger

Even sanctions for violating them are for our good

Fear of God is developed by focusing on spiritual matters

Diligently read and study Bible daily (Jos 1:7, 8)

Value Bible books as letters from God; study and meditate on them earnestly and frequently

Make full and diligent use of publications provided by Jehovah's organization (*w01* 7/1 11)

Regularly attend and participate in Christian meetings

Apply Scriptural knowledge, never failing to do what God wants (Joh 4:34)

Appreciate that we can hide nothing from God, "with whom we have an accounting" (Heb 4:13; Lu 8:17)

Knowing that Jehovah sees all is incentive to observe his commands (Ps 11:4; Pr 15:3)

Can protect us from course that could lead to trouble

Since God is real to us, his authority causes us to have fear

To illustrate: When individuals stand before a human judge, they have a certain fear in view of his position and authority

Fear of God, however, is not solely because of God's power to punish wrongdoers, and it certainly is not due to a dread of hellfire

Such a morbid feeling would discourage us, destroy our hope

The fear of incurring God's displeasure stems from appreciation of his loving-kindness and goodness (*w95* 3/15 10; *it-1* 818)

Knowledge of Jehovah's qualities and all he has done and will yet do for us fuels our desire to please and obey him (Jas 1:17)

BENEFITS FROM HAVING FEAR OF JEHOVAH (10 min.)

The fear of God keeps us alive spiritually

Based on faith, it is tied in with love for God and trust in him

We therefore have no fear of approaching God in prayer (1Jo 4:18)

By praying regularly, we keep close to Jehovah and feel secure

Godly fear drives out fear of man (Ps 112:7; 118:6; *w95* 3/15 19)

Moves us to put Jehovah first and to do right without fear of what others think

Fearless prophets of God did not engage in wrongdoing, even though it was popular (Jas 5:10)

Eliminates morbid fear of death caused by man (*w95* 3/15 20)

The prophets had faith in Jehovah's power to resurrect (Heb 11:32-35)

Awareness of God's power and our faith in resurrection enable us to have courage to overcome fear of man

Fear of God protects us by helping us to avoid bad conduct (*w95 3/15 18*)

Because God was real to Joseph, he refused to sin against him (*Ge 39:9; w01 12/1 22*)

If God is real to us, we will be helped to resist temptation

This will rid us of vexation and calamity (*Ec 11:10*)

Fear of Jehovah produces happiness (*Ps 112:1*)

Keeps us ever appreciative of all Jehovah does for us

If we are humble before Jehovah and accept his standards, we will be rewarded with everlasting life (*Pr 22:4; Ec 8:12, 13*)

KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE GOD WE FEAR (15 min.)

Obedience to God's commandments proves we love and fear Jehovah (*1Jo 5:3; w01 12/1 16*)

MORALITY: God of love outlines moral standards that promote highest good for those who follow them

Back up godly fear by demonstrating hatred for what is bad (*Ps 97:10; 1Co 6:9, 10; Re 21:8*)

Avoid excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages (*Ro 13:13; w02 4/15 17*)

Abstain from sexual immorality (*Ac 15:20, 29; 1Th 4:3*)

Be honest, do not steal or lie (*Eph 4:28; Col 3:9; Re 22:15*)

Make any changes needed so as to conform to standard of righteousness God has established (*1Pe 4:3*)

Preserve clean course, and manifest godly wisdom (*Jas 3:17*)

NEUTRALITY: Adhere to principles of Isaiah 2:2-4; John 18:36

CHILD TRAINING: Train children from infancy, for God wants our young ones to fear him (*Pr 10:27; 22:6*)

Be consistent in giving discipline, thus proving your love (*Pr 13:1, 24; 22:15*)

Apply theocratic counsel God gives us (*Eph 6:4*)

PURSUE PEACE: Should be grateful that we can associate with peace-loving fellow believers (*Ps 119:63; 133:1*)

Maintain good relations with other Christians (*Ro 14:19; 1Th 5:13*)

Endeavor to "be peaceable with all men" (*Ro 12:18; Jas 3:18*)

PREACH KINGDOM GOOD NEWS: We must not keep knowledge of God to ourselves (*Mt 5:14-16; 24:14*)

Often requires that we give priority to the time spent preaching, but we do it out of love for God and fear of him (*Heb 13:15*)

We want others to learn of prospect of everlasting life and requirements for it (*1Ti 4:16b*)

KEEP PROVING THAT YOU FEAR GOD (2 min.)

Put Jehovah first in your life

Learn his ways and principles, and obey him above all others (Read *Ecclesiastes 12:13* again)

In fear of God, keep preaching despite persecution (*Joh 15:20; 2Ti 3:12*)

Continue to have wholesome fear of Jehovah for all eternity

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read or commented on)