

## Fearing God - Lesson #1

Various Scriptures - (see separate sheet)

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**Bruce:** Let's get started, folks. I want to thank you for your kindness and your support, and it's wonderful to be with the family again. The world may try to separate us, but we can always come together in the Spirit. And it's so good to see you physically.

Well, let's pray. Gracious heavenly Father, in this study of Your glory and Your majesty, we have much to learn of our responsibility of what it means to be fearing God because of who You are; not because of what You do, but because of who You are in all of Your glory. The one thing I've noticed in the Scripture, Father, is that the Bible does not try to prove Your existence; it assumes Your existence. And so Father, we just pray that we don't try to prove You; we just try to accept You. But Father, we pray that You would open our eyes, that we might behold You more clearly, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Last week we had an introduction into fearing God. We looked into many of the Greek and Hebrew words and the Aramaic words that taught us what it means to be fearful of God and to be fearing Him in a present-day reality. So we're still building on that foundation, because in future weeks we'll be getting into what is our response, and how do we actually fear God practically speaking? And how do we do that on a daily basis? That will be the next couple of weeks. But for right now we're still building a foundation on who God is in all of His glory, and why it is that we need to be fearing Him on a daily basis. What does that mean in our lives as it impacts our faithfulness?

As we saw last week, the fear of God is a sweet and blessed work of the Holy Spirit, where God gives His grace to His children. Fearing God is not something you can just conjure up and say, "I'm going to start fearing God today. I read something today and I'm going to fear Him." That's a gift that God gives us; it's a function of God's grace. The Scriptures refer to it as a sweet and blessed work of the Holy Spirit.

Now what does that mean in general speaking terms? The fear of God means to reverence, to awe, to tremble because of who He is, not because of what He does. So much of the time we spent time talking about what God does or what we expect Him to do or what we want Him to do. What we're going to study in the next couple of weeks is who is God? And what does our response need to be? Remember, wisdom is the application of knowledge. And the beginning of knowledge is the fear of God. And so we want to base our response to the Scripture based upon who God is. And our wisdom will be the application of that knowledge and we will apply that to our lives. And we'll discuss that in weeks ahead.

There are a couple of verses that I just want to review with you from last week that we talked about. The first one is Jeremiah 32, verses 38-41. The fear of God is the result of the new birth. Listen to this wonderful covenantal statement that God makes to His people.

Jeremiah 32: *"They will be My people, and I will be their God. I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear Me for their own good, and for the good of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them. I*

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*will never stop doing good to them. And I will inspire them to fear Me, so that they will never turn away from Me. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will surely plant them in this land with all My heart and soul."*

Now notice. This is something that God does. It's not something that we manufacture; it's something that God is because of who He is and what He does.

Notice this first of all. *"I will give them singleness of heart and action."* The cause-and-effect relationship is *"so that they will always fear Me for their own good."*

Why is it that we need to learn to be fearing God? It's for our own good and the good of our children.

Notice the covenantal statement here. *"I will never stop doing good to them. And I will inspire them to fear Me)*—again a consequence,—*"so that they will never turn away from Me."*

I find great comfort in the fact that God alone is the One who will prevent me from turning away from Him, because He implanted within Me the Holy Spirit. And we have the Holy Spirit in this covenantal relationship. And we need to fear Him so that we will not fall away from Him. And God takes that responsibility for us. *"I will inspire them to fear Me, so that they will never turn away from Me."* What a great comfort that is!

Oftentimes when people talk about the Lord Jesus Christ, they talk about His love and His mercy and His grace, and those are certainly critical ingredients. But listen to this in Luke chapter 12, verses 4 and 5. When we talk about fearing God, here's what Jesus says about that. People say, "Fearing God is imbalanced. It means that you need to be doing something. You need to discuss more of His love." We've just proved in the Scripture that God's love for us that gives us the fear; it's an expression of His love.

But notice what Jesus says. *"I tell you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that can do no more. But I will show you Whom you should fear. Fear Him who after killing the body has power to throw you into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him."*

Now those are the words of Jesus. Now we need to have a balanced perspective of the holiness of God. It is certainly a loving holiness, but it is also a judicial holiness. And so we must remind ourselves that Jesus is the One who is telling us that we need to fear Him, and Who we need to fear. The reason we don't fear God enough is because we fear man too much. And the more we fear man, the less we're going to fear God. We just need to replace that.

So what is the object of our fear? The object of our fear is God Himself. Look at Genesis 31 verse 42. *"If the God of my fathers, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac had not been with me, you would have surely been sent away empty-handed. But God has seen my hardship and the toil of my hands, and last night he rebuked me."*

Now notice the words *"fear of Isaac."* That's a description of God Himself. Notice the word *fear*. We can translate that. *"If the God of my fathers, the god of Abraham and the God of Isaac had not been with me."* That's a known description of the character and nature of God, saying that His name is Fear. And so we need to take that very seriously, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac. It's God Himself that he is referring to. It's a reference to His majesty and to His glory. And because of His majesty and His glory we

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need to be able to have a response of appropriately fearing Him with reverence and awe and obedience.

Look at some of the verses. Nehemiah chapter 4 verse 14. Of course I have a series of verses here, friends, that are going to help us understand how people responded when they saw the presence of God. When they experienced that they saw Him in very unique ways. I'm not saying that we will necessarily have that same experience. But we can have that same response. And that's why we're studying who God is in all of His glory.

So take a look with me at Nehemiah 4:14 as the first example. *"After I looked things over I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, 'Do not be afraid of them. Remember the LORD who is great and awesome. And fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your home.'"* In other words, the prophet Nehemiah was saying, "Remember the LORD. That's the One whom you fear because He is great and awesome." The reason we don't fear Him enough is because we fear man too much.

Again from Nehemiah, chapter 9 verse 32. Notice the description of who God is. *"Now therefore, O our God, the great, mighty and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling to Your eyes, the hardship that has come upon us, upon our kings and leaders, upon our priests and prophets, upon our fathers and all of your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until now, until today."*

Notice the description: *"the great, mighty and awesome God."* He's not trying to prove God; he simply assumes that God is there. And he's not trying to defend Him; he's saying to accept Him. And that's part of our understanding of what it means on a daily basis to respond to Him in reverence and awe.

How about Isaiah chapter 8 verse 13? This is another example not just to cause us to see who God is, but also to cause a sincere and proper response. Isaiah 8:13: *"The LORD Almighty is the One you are to regard as holy. He is the One you are to fear; He is the One you are to dread."*

Here's what John Bunyan says about this statement from Isaiah. *"We need to set His majesty before the eyes of your soul, and let His excellency make you afraid with godly fear."*

Now the word *afraid* there does not mean fearful in the sense of scattering. It means a sense of recognizing who He is and who we are not. And so why is it that God needs to be the fear of His people? Take a look at Genesis chapter 28, verses 10-17—Jacob's ladder. Again I'm just giving you some examples of how people responded when they saw the presence of God. So turn to Genesis 28 verse 10.

*"Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. When he reached a certain place he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth with its top reaching into heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.*

*"There above it stood the LORD and He said, 'I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land in which*

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*you are now living. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All people on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.'*

*"When Jacob awoke from his sleep he thought, 'Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.' He was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.'"*

And then notice chapter of the same book of Genesis, verse 30. *"So Jacob called this place Peniel, saying, 'It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.'"*

Now notice that. He experienced God face to face, and his life was spared. In our culture today because of experimentalism and antinomianism, which is against the law, against the Scripture, some people say, "Well, I've seen God." The Scripture says that no one can see God and live. So when somebody tells you that you've got to be very, very cautious about what to say, because it's contrary to what the Word says, because no one can see God and live. And noticed what Jacob experienced. "I saw God face to face, and yet He spared my life."

You'll also notice Daniel chapter 10. Daniel's vision of his salvation is another example. I'm just trying to build a case for us, folks, to help us understand what it is to respond when we see God face to face. We will see Him face to face by faith in the Scriptures. And those examples in Scripture help us to understand the awesomeness and the majesty of God Himself in who He is, let alone in what He does.

Let's go to Matthew chapter 28 verse 4. We see fear in the presence of angels. *"The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men."* If the angels evoke fear, what more should God produce in us? If they evoke fear just because they are angels, then what about God? We should have much more fear produced in us for more than just the angels.

How about Mark chapter 16, another example? *"At the end of the tomb they saw a young man dressed in a white robe and sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed."*

*"'Don't be afraid,' he said. 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He is risen; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.'"*

If His most gracious and merciful appearances produced fear, how much more when He shows us who He is in all His majesty and glory! In other words, we spend so much of our time talking about the graciousness of God, which is true; our God is merciful. But when He shows us these merciful appearances in the Scripture it should produce in us nothing other than reverence, awe and majesty for who He is. But how much more should we worship Him when we respond to Him with fearfulness and reverence when we see Him in all of His glory in the Scripture. These are just some examples to help us see historically how people responded when they saw the presence of God.

**Dan:** Bruce, I'd like to interrupt for a second. Whoever is calling in from 561, it sounds like they're doing their laundry, and that's all I can hear—the whooshing of water. If they could mute, whoever is calling with the area code 561.

**Bruce:** Thank you.

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**Sig Tragard:** I just sent them a text message to ask them the same thing, Dan.

**Group Member:** Maybe Amy can mute them, as opposed--

**Amy:** You know what? I just tried to do that and I could not. Oh, wait.

**Bruce:** It sounds like it's gone away.

**Amy:** Okay, I muted him. Thank you.

**Bruce:** Thank you. Another example for us to consider would be Daniel's vision of salvation in Daniel 10, verses 10-17. Now again, folks, I'm just trying to build a foundation for us to have proper responses as we look at what our response needs to be. He's basing this fact upon the biblical evidence of how we need to respond to God with reverence and awe and fear and worship. So we're just trying to give you some examples Biblically to help you understand building this case. Let's take another example; it will be Daniel 10.

I think that another example would be Daniel 10. *"The man touched me and sent me trembling on my hands and knees. He said, 'Daniel, you are highly esteemed. Consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you and stand up. For now I have been sent to you.' And when he said this to me I stood up, trembling.*

*Then he continued. 'Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief priests, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future. But the vision concerns the time yet to come.'*

*"While he was saying this to me I bowed my face toward the ground and was speechless."*

But notice his response. *"I bowed my face to the ground and was speechless. And one who looked like a man touched my lips. And I opened my mouth and I began to speak.*

*"I said to the one standing before me, 'I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I am helpless. How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe."*

Now I'm not suggesting, friends, that this means that this ought to be our response. I'm trying to build you a foundation of seeing how Biblical people, when confronted with the awesomeness and majesty of God, that their response was one of fear and reverence and awe and majesty. I'm just trying to build a case for this. What is our response when we talk about how do we worship? How do we pray? How do we live our lives? I'm just building a case to give us some examples Biblically, so we can have our evidence based upon the Scripture, not on our own presumptions.

*His presence is also dreadful.* The word *dreadful* means "unexplainable." It's beyond our comprehension. His own presence is dreadful because of His majesty and His greatness.

Go to Job 13, verses 20 and 21. *"Only grant me these two things, O God, and then I will not hide from You. But withdraw Your hand from me, and stop frightening me with Your terrors."*

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Now Job was just saying, “Lord, I want to worship You, but I need some help. I can’t do this by myself. I will not hide myself from You.” He’s describing His greatness and His majesty. He’s overcome by the sense of the majesty of God.

When you’re studying the Scripture, and the Holy Spirit is pleased to speak to you through the Word, what is our response? Did you ever get the idea that there is just a sense of majesty as God is dealing with me personally as He’s teaching me His word through the Holy Spirit? You see, Job is describing His sense of majesty that he has with God. And he’s saying, “I don’t want to be frightened anymore. And do not destroy me because of the terrors that I experienced because of Your majesty,” again just describing a response to the presence of God in a very physical way.

Another example for us would be Revelation chapter 1 verse 17. *“When I saw Him I fell at His feet as though dead. Then He placed His right hand on me and said, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.’”*

Notice the response. *“I fell at His feet as though dead.”* We need to take Scripture more seriously, folks, because that’s the way in which God reveals Himself to us. It is the means by which God has chosen to reveal Himself to His chosen family. And our response to the Scripture needs to be consistent with some of these examples in the Scripture with people who had direct revelations of God.

And so how is it when God speaks to us? Do we fall on our feet as though dead? What is our response to the Scripture when God reveals Himself to us?

Notice another example in Daniel 10 verse 8. *“So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision. I had no strength left. My face turned deathly pale and I was helpless.”* And then verse 16 of Daniel 10. *“Then the one who looked like a man touched my lips and my mouth, and I began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, ‘I am overcome with anguish because of this vision, my lord, and I am helpless.’”*

Now again I’m not saying that this needs to be our response. I’m just saying that it’s discovering the majesty and the glory and the greatness of God and having a response to it. My whole point of all of this foundational work, friends, is just to help us to develop a sense of what my response is when the Lord is pleased to speak to us through the Scripture.

Now here is one of the ways in which we can apply this. Notice that people see themselves as they really are. When they’re confronted with the vision of who God is, not just what God does, they have a vision of themselves and see themselves as they really are. I just read you Daniel chapter 10 verse 16. He saw himself as helpless. That’s a response. He saw his own vileness; he saw his helplessness.

How about Isaiah chapter 6? *“‘Woe to me,’ I cried. ‘I am ruined, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips. And my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.’”*

Now you may be familiar with this passage. In Isaiah chapter 6 it’s God appearing to Isaiah. *“And they said, ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD God of hosts!’”* And the first thing that we respond to when we see God correctly is that we ought to see ourselves as we really are.

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And notice: Isaiah saw himself in two different ways. *“I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips.”* He saw his own vileness and he saw his nationalistic vileness.

Now when was the last time that we ever thought about the vileness of the country in which we live and the things that are going on? You see, Isaiah is suggesting that. Not only am I unclean, but the people with which I live in my nation are unclean.

When was the last time that we asked God that we repent for America? There are some things going on in our culture now, friends, that are directly opposed to what God would have us be doing, as revealed in the Scripture. And so we may need to be saying, “Lord, can You forgive me not only for myself, but forgive my country?”

Now I served my country with honor and duty and loyalty. But there are certain things going on right now that I’m very much ashamed of. And so I say “Lord, would You help me understand this? And so how can I be a responsive agent in the midst of all this? I ask that You would forgive my nation.”

I think our national repentance is important for us as a country, because when we see God in all of His holiness not only do we see ourselves correctly, we also see our country correctly. Right now we’re going down the tubes. There are just some things going on that I’m just very, very concerned about in the next generation.

So Isaiah saw his own corruption. But he also saw his nationalistic corruption.

Now I give you one more. How about Peter in Luke chapter 5 verse 8? *“When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ feet and said, ‘Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.’*” You see, when we understand who God is, the first thing we ought to see is to see ourselves correctly.

I mentioned last week in the study of James, when a nation goes through persecution, the book of James is a good one to read about. It says that we have to have a correct view of God and a balanced view of ourselves. The only way to have a balanced view of ourselves is to have a correct view of God. And that’s why we’re studying this series on fearing God. We want to see who He is, not just what He does.

Peter had a greater sense of the disappropriation that existed between himself and the Lord. In other words, he saw God in all of His glory and then saw himself. And his response was very, very simple. *“Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man.”*

Now fortunately, because of God’s grace, when we say, “Lord, I’m a sinful man,” He draws us to Himself in forgiveness and love. And that is part of His covenantal arrangement with us that we read about.

But the revelation of God’s goodness is when we realize that not only is there greatness in God, but also goodness and mercy. In other words, there’s balance. We need to see a correct view of who God is. We see not only His greatness, but also His goodness and also His mercy.

How about Hosea chapter 3 verse 5? *“After the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king, they will come trembling to the LORD, to His blessings in the last days.”*

Now the word *tremble* there means just “to hold in reverence, and to be in awe of.” How often do we expect God to be a God of blessing? He certainly is a God of blessing.

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But do we take those for granted? We need to be so grateful for the way that God does not treat us as our sins deserve. God does not treat us as our sins deserve. We understand justice, mercy and grace. It's important for us to understand all three of those. Justice is getting what we deserve. Mercy is not getting all of what we deserve. And grace is getting what we don't deserve. We need to keep those in balance and see ourselves in relationship to who God is in all of His glory.

And in Jeremiah chapter 5 verse 22, when we understand God's goodness and have a sense of His greatness, that will produce in us a reverence for God and His majesty and glory. An example would be Jeremiah chapter 5 verse 22. *"Should you not fear Me?", declares the LORD. 'Should you not tremble in My presence? I made the sand a boundary for the sea, an everlasting barrier you cannot cross. The waves may roll, but they cannot prevail. They may roar, but they cannot cross it.'*"

Now notice. There's a sense of awe of His goodness and graciousness, but also of His majesty.

And now notice Job's response when he saw God. "My ears have heard of You, but now my eyes have seen You." In other words, he saw himself as he really was.

One of the first responses we should have is that when we see God clearly we have a balanced view of who we are. We need to have a clear view of who God is in all of His glory, his majesty and His compassion, in all of His grace and His covenantal arrangements; we need to understand all of that. But at the same time we need to know that's the basis of a balanced view of ourselves. I'm a sinner saved by grace. I'm a sinner saved by grace. I'm a sinner saved by grace.

We need to have a right view of ourselves. And that's what we're seeing in some of the responses, like in Job. *"My ears have heard of You, but now my eyes have seen You."* The phrase "my eyes have seen You" means that "I now understand You." And the Scripture says in Psalm 119, *"Open our eyes, LORD, that we might behold You in all of Your glory."* We see it by understanding.

And then lastly Jeremiah 33 verse 8. *"I will cleanse them from all their sins they have committed against Me, and forgive them all their sins and rebellion against Me."* That's the prayer that I pray for my country, that He will cleanse us of all of our sins that we have committed against You, and that You will forgive us all of our sins and rebellion against You.

As I see myself more and more as I study the Scripture, friends, I see myself not only in my own vileness, but also in the vileness of my own country which I love dearly. And I pray for God to restore us back to Himself, to draw us closer to Himself. And may He forgive our nation for all of its abuses. But that all comes as a response to our understanding of who God is in all of His glory. Any questions or any comments that you want to discuss for a moment?

**Don Maurer:** Bruce, can you hear me?

**Bruce:** Yes, Don.

**Don:** Okay. Why is it, in your opinion, that not only in the country as a whole but in the church we seem to lack this fear of God today?



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**Bruce:** Don, that's a great question. I wish I had a strong answer. My basic answer would be this, Don. I think we've lost the sufficiency of Scripture. In other words, we talk about Scripture being the authority, and that's easy to say. But is it sufficient for all aspects of our faith and life, the decisions that we make? In my mind, Don, we've lost the sufficiency of Scripture in the pulpit. And my understanding of the Scripture is that the ministry starts in the pulpit when people preach the word of God. It's there for a reason. And so my quick answer, Don, would be that I think we've lost the sufficiency of Scripture in the church. Does that make sense?

**Don:** Yes.

**Bruce:** Other comments, please?

**Roberta:** What's the first step that we in the pews can take to help that to turn around?

**Bruce:** That's another great question, Roberta; thank you. Her question was, what can we do in the pew? Well first of all, I think it's our response to the glory of God and His majesty and His awesomeness when people begin to see it in their own particular lives. I would offer one consideration. It would be that individually we need to be salt and light. Salt is a preservative; it slows down corruption. And light exposes sin. I think those are the two things that we can do in the pulpit, just by living out our lives as salt and light.

But also I think that we need to appeal to our leadership in the church. I think that Scripture teaches us that when we approach elders that we do it with dignity and respect. But I think we can approach them appropriately by the leading of the Holy Spirit and just talk with our leadership about where your heart is. Let them know where your heart is and what you're learning. Perhaps the Lord can use us that way. Be salt and be light in your own individual lives, and hopefully that will turn some things around in our individual churches.

I also think that we need to pray for our pastors and our leaders.

**Tom Hansz:** There you go.

**Bruce:** Pray for your pastors and your leaders. That's going to be critical. But this is not something we can make happen ourselves. It's something only the Holy Spirit can do.

**Tom:** Bruce, this is Tom. I agree that prayer is the critical thing we need to start with; it's to pray. But as you're discussing the condition of the church, it seems that today too many churches are designed to be places that get together and feel good, and not necessarily to hear the word of God and be motivated by the word of God. Like you say, we need to get out and be the salt and light, not among our fellow Christians, but to get out with the people in general so they see Christ, so they can see somebody that's different and ask, "What's the difference?"

Well, it's Jesus Christ. They need to hear the gospel. They need to change. And we tend to be more withdrawn and we like to stick together. And hey, we're okay because everybody here is saved and we're just doing fine.

**Bruce:** Next week in our study we're going to talk about some applications about worship. One of the things that has to impact our worship is our understanding of who God is. In other words, do we worship God with fear and trembling, or do we worship Him with rah-rah and hoo-ha? (*Laughter*) There's a big difference. I think that if we're going to have the right response to fearing God it's going to show up in our worship. Our

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worship is going to be more God-centered and less man-centered, more God-focused and less people-focused. It's not about what we want to hear; it's what we need to hear. All of those things are involved in the worship of the church.

And I also think that that's why prayer is so important for us, praying for our pastors and our leaders. The Lord may be pleased to help us as congregations and families to recognize that. But worship has got to be impacted by our fearing God, and we'll talk about that next week.

**Tom:** Thank you.

**Nancy Cochran:** Bruce, earlier you said that the more we fear man the less we fear God. Could you speak more to that. Especially in today's world I fear men and I fear these horrible things that are going on all around us. But I didn't see that as indicating that I am fearing God less.

**Bruce:** I think that you just summarized it yourself, Nancy, when you said that you're fearing men less because you're fearing God more. We really have to say this. In whom do I put my trust? My trust is not in man; it's going to be in God. But that's something we have to work at.

I would suggest that you go and read the book of James. He gives some very good insights into how one does that, because he's writing to a group of people who have been dispersed all over Asia Minor and are being persecuted. And he says that you've got to prepare yourself.

I think that we need to apply the full armor of God in Ephesians 6, which is important for us. But we need to realize that we're in a spiritual battle. Our battle is not with men and governments; it's Satan and his adversaries. It's spiritual warfare. And I just think that we have to remind ourselves. In whom do I put my trust? That becomes a daily function. But I think you're right, Nancy. The more we fear man, the less we're going to fear God.

My standard question is, what are you going to do with what you just learned? What did you just learn today?

**Don:** That when people encountered God they feared Him.

**Bruce:** Exactly right. And the question is, is that my response, fear meaning reverence and awe? Is that my response when God reveals Himself to me in the Scripture? That's what I'm trying to work on in my own life. When I read the Scriptures I say, "Lord, am I really responding correctly, in holy awe and reverence that impacts my life? Am I fearing You on a daily basis?" Thank you, Don. Anyone else?

**Dan:** Hey, Bruce. I think also that having a clear view of ourselves as we have a clear view of God draws us to repentance. You know, we see the vileness that is in us. And we need to hate that sin that is in us to the point of repentance. And so I feel that the more we have a greater understanding of God, we see that vileness inside of us.

**Bruce:** Absolutely. Most people think of repentance as a one-time event upon entering my salvation. Repentance is a daily activity and lifestyle, because the more I see God clearly, the more I see my vileness. And I need to repent of that. Repentance is an ongoing activity, a work of grace.

**Roberta:** Could you say that more slowly? Repentance is—

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**Bruce:** A daily activity and a work of grace. In other words, it's not just a one-time event that grants me my salvation and gets me into heaven. It's a daily activity; it's an expression of God's grace. I see myself in comparison to who God really is, and I see myself as Isaiah did. Woe unto me! Repentance is a daily activity. It's one of the great disciplines of the Christian life. Repentance is a daily activity of the grace of God. Yes, please? Hey, Nancy.

**Nancy Tragard:** Hi.

**Bruce:** Good to see you, dear.

**Nancy:** Thank you. I'm curious about what a normal day looks like out in the world when you're fearing God. To me, to keep the knowledge of His presence with me is one thing. But to keep His fear with me all day long through my normal seasons, your being with people and working downtown, or working wherever you're working, I don't know what that looks like. I'm not sure that I want to know what that looks like. I think repentance is really important. But I also think that I need to reflect grace, joy and forgiveness toward others, and not reflect a fear of God in my everyday life.

**Bruce:** Well, that's well said. Remember that the word *fear*, generally speaking, means reverence, awe and dignity. I hold Him in reverence and awe. That's what it means to fear Him. It doesn't mean that you're afraid and that you're going to cower down behind a tree; it doesn't mean that. It means that I'm going to hold Him in reverence. So if something happens in my life I hold Him in reverence for that because God works all things for good to those who love Him.

**Tom:** Amen.

**Bruce:** And I hold Him in reverence for all the ingredients that come into my life.

**Tom:** I think it's important to keep in mind that the fear of God is not a feeling, it is an attitude. It is something that is developed in us by the reading of Scripture and by daily prayer. Then as we give up ourselves and open ourselves more to Him, more is revealed in us than our sin, and we can just be glad that we are in His hands. But it's in knowing that the whole price has been paid for us. And as we go out we can be the ambassadors we need to be in sharing Christ, showing Christ, and not so much talking about the fear. But the fear is our attitude that begins all the work that we do.

**Bruce:** The word *fear* means reverence and awe. And so Nancy, that's what we need to do. We'll get more into this in the weeks ahead as we talk about our response to this. How do I live out this reverence and awe for God?

I would offer one consideration. As my dad told me years ago, no griping, no complaining, no blaming. In other words, don't blame other people, I'm not griping about other people and I'm not complaining. So no complaining, no blaming and no griping.

I would start with that in my own life. I need to work on that as an expression of my reverence for God. So when something happens in my life I'm not going to blame somebody else for it. When something happens in my life I'm not going to complain about it. When something happens in my life I'm not going to gripe about it, because I'm trying to live out my reverence for who God is in all of His glory by realizing that He is in charge of all of my life. So I try not to gripe, complain or blame. I would offer that for consideration.

## Fearing God - Lesson #1

**Nancy:** I guess I would think that the important thing about that is yes, I think that's the attitude that we should have. But I also think that it has a tremendous amount to do with self-evaluation. Be honest with yourself. In this knowledge I feel like griping. I'm not going to because it's not the right thing to do. But why do I feel like griping? Where is that coming from? And how can I change the root at which that comes from? And when it comes to trying to act a certain way, let's stick to where the change really takes place.

I always feel like what the church does with repentance is that you ask for forgiveness and you're taken care of. Repentance means to turn around. It's a lot of work. It means to change, which is a lot of work! So I just think that we need to start way down deep within ourselves and with a lot of self-evaluation, to reflect how to get to being able to celebrate the greatness and the grace and the love of God. But we've got all these things inside that we don't take care of. But we learn to act this way because we should be looking this way, when I think it's a lot deeper than that.

**Bruce:** There's no question about that, Nancy; you're absolutely right. That's why when we see God correctly that we have a balanced view of ourselves. It starts with a balanced view of myself. Very well said; thank you very much.

If there are no other comments, I sure appreciate you tuning in. I hope that this is not too laborious in going through these verses. But I'm just trying to build us a foundation of letting us come up to the point of now what do I do when I begin to realize the need to fear God on a daily basis? That means holding Him in reverence in all the things that He does in my life, and all the things that He is in my life. How do I respond to that? We'll talk about that in the weeks ahead. So bear with me folks; it only gets better.

**Nancy Cochran:** Thank you.

**Bruce:** Thanks very much. The Lord bless you. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for Your mercy and Your grace. We thank You for Your forgiveness. We thank You for Your majesty and for Your glory. Father, we pray that You would help us see ourselves as we really are, that we would have a balanced view of ourselves so that we can reflect on what it means to be salt and light to a lost generation. May You receive all the glory, in Jesus name. And all the family members said,

**Group:** Amen! Thank you, Bruce.