

“Fearing God” Lesson 3

Fearing God

Various Scriptures

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Doug: Well, let’s get started. I’ll lead us in prayer. I want to pray for Bruce also as we begin. And I would ask everybody to put their mikes on mute. If you have a question raise your hand or shout out. I’d be happy to handle questions during the course of this. Now why don’t we begin with everybody on mute, and I’ll start with prayer. Thank you.

Father God, we come before You with expectant hearts, that You would meet us through Your word. Lord, we pray that our hearts and our minds will be focused on You, that we would set aside the distractions of this world during the time that we’re together in fellowship with You. Lord, we also ask Your blessing upon Bruce this week and next week, as he goes through some of the medical tests and checkups that he is having. Be with him. Continue to strengthen him in body, spirit and mind. Be present with him. We pray all this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

And thanks to all for being here. We’re going to continue our study of the fear of God which we began several weeks ago with an introductory lesson, and then with two of the official lessons. We’re on lesson 3. And I think most folks have the outline in front of them. We’ll spend the first part doing a little of a review.

And again, when we talk about fear, the fear of God, we’re not talking about the fear of the world, or being afraid of snakes or spiders or scary movies, or even other things like the fear of failure. The fear of God really conveys the sense of awe and reverence that we have for God Almighty—the Creator, the Sustainer, the Redeemer of the universe.

This is a fear that may at times physically manifest itself. On the one hand we want to turn and run from God sometimes, because He can be fearful. At the same time this is a fear that draws us towards Him; it causes us to turn towards Him and be drawn into His gracious embrace. So the fear of God is something that is unique and different than other fears that we typically experience in our lives.

And we learn from the Scriptures, as we can see from our first Scripture reference, that this is something that is to be blessed. In Hebrews the writer of Hebrews in verse 28 of chapter 12 says, *“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.”*

So here you have the writer of Hebrews saying, you know what? The fact that we have a God that we can stand before, trembling in fear, with reverence and awe, that’s something that we should be thankful for. That’s a great blessing to us. And God is worthy of our awe and our reverence. He’s sovereign, right? Our God is wise, He’s just, He’s merciful, He’s gracious. He is holy. All of God’s amazing attributes lead us to bow down to Him with Biblical fear. And we’re to be thankful for this, and not take it for granted.

quite frankly, it’s so easy to take that for granted—that we have a God that is to be feared—and what a wonderful blessing that is, as the Scriptures tell us.

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Now Item 2 on our outline is really a review of some of the things we’ve talked about over the last couple of weeks, so I’m going to touch upon those briefly here. First is that *the object of our fear is God Himself*. And that manifests itself in a number of ways.

First, His presence, His mere presence, is, as the outline says, awful; it’s full of awe. We see God’s glory and our sinfulness, right?

Think about Moses at the burning bush. He hid his face and he was afraid to look at the bush when he saw God. And this was just God manifest in a common physical occurrence with a fire in a bush, what we call a *theophany*, when God presents Himself to us in some sort of a physical manifestation. This wasn’t God Himself in all of His glory. It was just in a way that he could simply comprehend and Moses could simply see Him. Even that was fearful to Moses, right?

Now think about Isaiah’s vision in chapter 6 of Isaiah. He says, *“Woe is me!”* He recognizes his sinfulness and he sees the glory of God. And that causes him to be fearful. *“Woe is me!”*

Now think about the Transfiguration that we read about in Matthew 17. When Peter, James and John saw Jesus transfigured,—not in His full glory but just in a glimpse of His glory,—the response was that they fell on their faces terrified, the Scripture says. The word is there and it shows up in different translations. But the best word is *“terrified.”* It wasn’t that they were just surprised or stunned; they were terrified, because they were getting a glimpse of God Himself.

Think about John in his writings to the churches in Revelation. At the very beginning John sees the Lord amongst the lamp-stands. And he fell on his face as if dead in fear. So again, at a glimpse of the Lord he falls.

So those are just some examples where God’s actual presence, as much as we can handle since we’re human beings, is fearful. It’s awful; it fills us with awe and reverence.

Now we also see in letter B. that His name itself, that the name is dreadful. Now again, take dreadful in the appropriate manner. It can cause dread; it can cause awe; it can cause fear, all of those things combined. But with God just His name is completely unique.

Now we see God revealing Himself more and more throughout the Scriptures. And when you think about God proclaiming Himself back to the burning bush, He declares His name as Yahweh—I AM. And that’s a further revelation of who He is, as He appeared to His people thus far.

Again, we have a 400-year absence at the point where Moses met the burning bush, 400 years of silence. Prior to that God had certainly revealed Himself to the patriarchs—to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others—as God the Sovereign Creator. That was the focus of His revelation—Creator and Covenant Giver. But then in Yahweh—I AM—He reveals Himself even more fully. And that has a whole new characteristic of God as Redeemer added to it. But it causes fear and it causes Moses to tremble.

In the Psalms David proclaims that our loving obedience causes us to fear God’s name. When we heart-fully obey the Lord, His mere name is going to cause us to have Biblical fear, right?

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Oftentimes for me that’s been a good measure. Sometimes I think of obeying the Lord, and sometimes I’m just obeying my own pride. And a good measure for me sometimes is to think about the name of the Lord and how I respond to that in my obedience. What does that do to me? It’s a test for my own heart, right?

And then one of my favorite examples of this is the whole idea of again the name I Am. It’s Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane in the book of John. The multitudes come to arrest Him. And what does Jesus say? They ask Him who He is. And He says, “*I am He.*”

And what does the crowd do? What do the multitudes do? They fall back just at the name of God; they fall back. So the very name of God is dreadful; it’s awful, filled with awe. And we see this throughout Scripture.

And then in item C. we see *worship*. The worship of God is full of fear and is dreadful. David prays in Psalm 5 that his worship, David’s worship, would be worship in fear, in awe and reverence of God.

Look at the apostles where Jesus walks on the water. He walks on the water and He comes into the boat, and the apostles worship Jesus. They were filled with fear at this Person who had mastered creation. It was the Creator Himself, so rightly did they worship. But they worship in fear when they realize who this Jesus is.

You know, how different is this from our worship,. Right? When we worship we want to be entertained, or we want to have our felt needs met. We make it about us and not about God, right? We come before the Lord with Starbucks, and not fear. I can’t get through worship unless I’ve got my Starbucks, so we put our coffee carts out and everything.

Now we need to pause sometimes and think about this. Are we coming before the Lord in worship with fear and reverence and awe of who this is that we’re worshipping?

Now Charles Swinnock, one of the great Puritans, he had this quote. And if there’s nothing I’ve picked up from Bruce over 30-plus years of mentoring, when we first met we were actually reading the same book about the Puritans. And that’s how we knew we had a connection. So we both go to these quotes often.

Charles Swinnock was a great Puritan and he said this about worship and fear. *“Worship comprehends all that respect that men oweth and giveth his Maker. It is the tribute which we pay the King of Kings, whereby we acknowledge His sovereignty over us and our dependence on Him. All that inward reverence and respect, all that outward obedience and service to God, is included in this one word ‘worship.’”*

How different from our modern concept of worship! It’s our obedience, our reverence, our awe, our dependence. That’s what’s wrapped up in worship—giving to God the glory due His name. That is done with fear and trembling.

All right. And lastly in our review this idea of *service* for God is dreadful or fearful. In Psalm 2:11 it says, *“Serve the LORD with fear.”* Now that Psalm is about rulers serving the LORD in fear. But I would suggest that it really applies to all of us whether we are rulers, or whether we are homemakers, or whether we are janitors or bakers or bankers, or whatever it is that we might do.

Everything we do we should be doing with awe and reverence to the Lord, knowing that we perform whatever it is that we do before an audience of One. We may think that

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we’re doing whatever it is that we’re doing for those people around us. But our primary audience is God Almighty. And that should make us pause and think about what we’re doing and how we’re doing it. Are we in fact serving Him, however simple that service might be? Are we serving Him with fear and reverence?

You know, we can’t take our service to the Lord lightly. We may be joyful. We’re certainly joyful in our service, as we’re commanded in Scripture, but we can’t be cavalier or casual. So we want to take our service to the Lord seriously, in fear and reverence.

All right. Now we’re going to move to the primary focus of lesson #3. Now this idea of the written word of God is to be feared. And I have to be honest. Now this has special meaning for me.

Again, as I said, I’ve been mentored by Bruce for over thirty years. And there are a couple things that stand out over those decades. But one of the things that I really have learned from Bruce is to never, never approach the Scriptures lightly.

Now you have to come to the Word with reverence. You have to handle the word of God with care and reverence. You cannot just try to take shortcuts, whether it’s preparing for a Bible study or preaching, or even your own personal meditations. We come to the word of God with reverence, with awe because it’s God’s word. So we’re going to look at this this week. And you’ve got the outline and the Scriptures that are there before you.

In Psalm 119:18 it says, *“How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your word.”* And then we find other Psalms that talk about listening to God. Psalm 34:11:

*“Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.”*

Or Psalm 111 verse 10:

*“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
All who follow His precepts have a good understanding;
To Him belongs eternal praise.”*

When you put those together what you really see is that the fear of the Lord is equal to the written Word, God’s word written. This is how we hear God. And those very words should cause us to have awe and reverence, to fear God appropriately, to have Biblical fear, right? So they’re equivalent. This idea of the written Word and God’s fear, they should come together.

Now in the Scriptures there is this rule and director of our fear and awe of God. If you read through these, and we will, we’re going to see how they all connect. We’re going to look at a couple verses in Deuteronomy and then we’ll look at these other Old Testament verses.

Deuteronomy 6:1-3 and then verse 24. *“These are the commandments, decrees and laws that the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.”* So this is Moses talking to Israel. *“So that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live, by keeping all His decrees and commands that I give you.”*

So it’s God’s word, God speaking through Moses. These aren’t Moses’ commands; this is God’s word; it’s keeping His commands. *“So that you may enjoy long life. Hear, O*

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Israel, and be careful to obey, so that it may go well with you, and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you.”

And in verse 24 of chapter 6: *“The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees, to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive.”* So you see that connection. It sets the boundaries; it’s the rule and director. It tells us why and how we should be fearing the Lord because of His word, because He has given us this commandment to do so.

Okay, he continues in Deuteronomy 10:12. *“And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear your God, to walk in His ways, to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul?”*

So that one little verse unpacks this idea of fearing God’s word. It’s obeying His word, it’s walking in His ways. It’s loving Him because of His word, doing all that with our heart and our soul.

And then in Deuteronomy chapter 17 verse 19: *“It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life”—God’s word,—“so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God, and to follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees.”*

So again we see that it’s by reading God’s word and following God’s word that we learn to fear Him. That’s our guidepost; that’s our instruction book in the fear of the Lord.

2 Chronicles: *“Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard: ‘Because your heart was responsive, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard what He spoke against this place and people, and because you humbled yourself before Me, and tore your robes and wept in My presence, I have heard you,’ declares the LORD.”*

So here is a people that heard God’s word and came to Him in fear, and that’s how they know they heard Him, because they came to the Lord in fear with a humble heart. Notice the word in those two verses, that word *humble*. It’s repeated twice. We’re going to talk more about humility, but that is so, so important. They had been coming before the Lord with a humble heart.

Then this verse in Isaiah, 66 verse 5: *“Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at His word. Your brothers who hate you and exclude you because of My name have said, ‘Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see Your joy.’ Yet they will be ashamed.”*

So there’s a sense of hypocrisy. They’re really not following the word of the LORD. They’re really not using the word of the Lord, God’s commands, as their guidepost. They’re saying one thing, but their hearts are elsewhere. And God is reassuring them that they’ll be put to shame. And we have to take that to heart ourselves.

And then in Exodus, I won’t read this whole passage—Exodus chapter 9, verses 20-25.

Transcriber’s Note: Exodus 9:20-25, NKJV. *“He who feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses. But he who did not regard the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field.”*

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“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.’ And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt.

“So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field.”

Doug: But what you have here is the hail. There are nine plagues, and then the final plague, the tenth, the death of the firstborn. In this particular plague of the hail what you see is that there are some people that heard God’s warning through Moses and Aaron. They feared God’s word. They realized that these guys aren’t just speaking for themselves; they’re speaking for God. And some of these people, these Egyptians, obeyed. So this isn’t just the Israelites; these are Egyptians who obey. They feared the Lord; they feared that Word. They chose to obey and hid their livestock.

And we know the implications of this, because later in Exodus we read that as they’re leaving Egypt, it’s a mixed multitude that goes out from amongst Egypt. It’s not just Israel. There are other people with them; a mixed multitude goes. Some of these people feared the Lord, heard His word and obeyed, and were grafted into the covenant community. So we see another example of how Scripture is the ruling guide. We need to listen to God’s word.

You know, we may have to think about how we come to Scripture. What’s our posture when we come to Scripture? Do we just recognize God’s word written and simply regard it as interesting words on pages? Or do we come to it in prayer? Do we read the Bible as we read other books? Or do we hold the Scriptures in trembling hands with reverence, on bended knee? Do we open our Bibles to get a quick fix? Or do we pause to reflect on exactly what those words we are reading or hearing, what they are?

About a year-and-a-half or two years ago I heard a great sermon. And the preacher was pointing out and challenging in his sermon. And I forget the exact passage he was preaching on. But he was challenging those of us who were listening that we really needed to keep our noses in the Word, that we needed to read God’s word. And he was contrasting that with what he sees so often today, where we all read devotionals where there is one little verse of Scripture, and then there are three paragraphs about the Scripture. He said that we spend more time reading somebody else’s thoughts about the Scripture than we do the Scriptures themselves.

And I found that so convicting. And please understand; I’m not saying that devotionals are bad; that’s not what I’m saying. But his challenge to us was this. Where do you spend more time, in the words of the writer of the devotional or in God’s word itself, His own words?

And that really convicted me. How much time do I spend in God’s word? Or am I reading about what others have to say about God’s word? And so we need to come to His word and trust that that’s our guide.

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Now letter C., *the reasons to fear God’s word*. Why do we fear it? Well, first and foremost, why do we fear God’s word? *Because they are the words of God*. They are the words of God.

We look at that passage in Habakkuk—chapter 3 verse 16. *“I heard and my heart pounded; my lips quivered at the sound. Decay crept into my bones; my legs trembled. Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us.”*

So the prophet heard God’s word and it caused him to tremble. His heart pounded; his lips quivered, right? He felt like he was decaying. But he’s going to wait patiently.

This is God’s word. Again, it’s not just poetry. It’s not just history. It’s not just narrative. It’s the actual word of God. So when we come to it with a right heart something happens there.

Or this second verse, Psalm 29, verses 1-4:
*“Ascribe to the LORD, O mighty ones,
Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name.
Worship the LORD in the splendor of His holiness.
The voice of the LORD is over the waters;
The glory of God thunders.
The LORD thunders over the mighty waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful;
The voice of the LORD is majestic.”*

What a wonderful verse to bookmark when we start to prepare for a Bible study or we start our own devotions, to remind ourselves that these are not just words on a page, but they are the very word of God, the powerful and mighty word of God.

I’ll be honest, and I’m not going to ask for a show of hands. But I’ll share my own experience with you; I’ll be honest. I’ve never heard the audible word of God, and I’m thankful that I haven’t. Everybody says that would be a neat experience, to actually hear God speak to you and say, “Doug, go do this.” I haven’t heard that.

But the reality is that God’s word in the Scriptures are the exact same thing, in fact more powerful because we’ve had them confirmed over the ages by the witness of the saints. We need to tremble. We need to understand that this is the same word of God that created the universe, that spoke over the waters. The Scriptures aren’t just some quaint or interesting or even wise words. They are the words of God Himself.

There is another Puritan who wrote, *“If a man believed the threatenings of the word of God he would tremble and fly to the promises of refuge.”* So if we really understand God’s word and we tremble at the warnings, it’s going to cause us to fly to the promises, those gracious and merciful promises. So then the words of God both judge and save. But we can’t understand those words apart from understanding the judgment they carry. God Himself is speaking.

You know, the fact that these are God’s words is getting me thinking. Again, many of you may have been to the National Archives in Washington, D.C. You know, it really is an amazing experience to go in. And you see the founding documents of this country. You see the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, the Constitution. It is truly

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amazing. And you also see how elaborately they are cared for so that they don’t deteriorate, so that they can be preserved for future generations.

Now they’ve got these very precision-engineered cases that they’re housed in. They’ve got special lighting. They’ve got special temperatures that are being maintained. And obviously they’ve got armed guards and lots of other security systems that are in place. I was there once and the guards were adamant. I mean, they were as forceful as I’ve ever seen guards at any national monument on the Mall, making sure that people stayed in line and stayed in their place. If you stepped out of line they were all over you. They take this very, very seriously.

But for all of that, and as important as those documents are, their value pales in comparison to the Bible. It pales in comparison to the Bible. You know, look at that Bible that you might have in front of you right now. Look at it. Those great founding documents are nothing compared to the Scriptures because the Scriptures are the very word of God. And that’s why we come before it with awe and reverence.

We take it for granted because we all have the great blessing of having the Scripture available to us. We probably all have multiple copies of the Bible. But when you talk to our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world that don’t have that privilege, they will attest to how amazingly valuable having the word of God is to their hearts, to their souls, to their fellowship. So we can’t take that for granted; we cannot take that for granted.

Now we also understand that we are to look at the word of God with fear and reverence because of *the subject matter*. The verse on our outline is John chapter 12 verse 48. “*There is a judge for the one who rejects Me and does not accept My words. That very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.*”

These are the words of life and death. We know the Word became flesh—Jesus. And He is the Judge of all. We know that also; He’s the Judge of all. He created all; He’s going to judge all. Yet the Scriptures are the mirror that we have to look at to understand that.

And what do we see in that mirror? Do we see something of the truth of our lives, living in obedience to the Word? Or do we try to keep that at arm’s length?

You know, it’s interesting what Martin Luther said. “*The Bible is the cradle where Christ is laid. But that same Christ is both Judge and Redeemer, fearful and merciful.*” So we’ve got to understand that judgment and that message of the Scriptures.

In Item 3 there we’ve got a number of verses to look at. It’s important because *the Bible contains the truth*. All truth and all faithfulness, that’s what’s in the Scriptures—truth and faithfulness.

So we look at Matthew chapter 24 verse 35. “*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.*” What we have in that Bible that we hold in our hands, that will not pass away.

Daniel 10 verse 21: “*But first I will tell you what is written in the book of truth. No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.*”

The book of truth. Daniel is saying, hey, God’s word that He’s given us through Moses even at that time was the book of truth. That’s going to be our guide; that’s going to be our plumb line.

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Revelation 19 verse 9: *“Then the angel said to me, ‘Write! Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb.’ And he added, ‘These are the true words of God.’”* So the Bible is full of truth and faithfulness.

All right. Psalm 19 verse 9:

*“The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.”*

And then we’ve got Proverbs chapter 13, verse 13.

*“He who scorns instruction will pay for it,
But he who respects the command is rewarded.”* Again, truth and faithfulness are contained in the Scriptures.

You’re all familiar with “Amazing Grace” and John Newton who wrote that wonderful hymn—the converted slave trader. He said, *“The Bible is the grand repository of truth. It is the complete system of divine truth to which nothing can be added, from which nothing can be taken.”*

You know, we can’t look beyond the Scripture for truth and for faithfulness. No, we can’t find it in our jobs. We can’t find it in our families. We can’t find it in our loved ones or our social status, or any of the things that the world holds as valuable. Truth is only found in the word of God.

But every day we’re tempted to look elsewhere for truth. And it’s really tough in this world. You know, you turn on the TV and you see the talking heads, and they’re going to tell you that they’ve got truth. Truth is only found in the Scriptures. So we’ve got to use that again as our plumb line. We’ve got to use that as our plumb line.

And then Item 4 here on the outline. *All transgression and sin begins in wandering away from the word of God.* It all begins by wandering away. Psalm 17 verse 4:

*“As for the deeds of men, by the words of Your lips
I have kept myself from the ways that are violent.”*

So the Psalmist is saying, “The only reason I stayed away from sin is because I stuck with Your word. By the word of Your lips, God, that’s how I stay away from sin.”

Proverbs 4, verses 20-22:

*“My son, pay attention to what I say;
Listen to my words.
Do not let them out of your sight;
Keep them within your heart,
For they are life to those who find them,
And health to a man’s whole body.”*

In Jeremiah chapter 44, verses 16 and 17: *“We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD. We will certainly do everything we said we would. We will burn incense to the Queen of heaven; we will pour out drink offerings to her, just as our fathers, our kings, our officials did in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. At that time we had plenty of food and were well off and suffered no harm.”*

So here you have the people of Israel doing the exact opposite of what they should be doing. They’re not going to listen to the message from the Lord. They’re just going to

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keep doing what their fathers have done. They’re going to keep following tradition, and not God’s word.

And then Mark chapter 8 verse 38. *“If anyone is ashamed of Me”*—this is Jesus speaking—*“and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His Father’s glory with the holy angels.”* That’s because all faithfulness and truth is contained in God’s word.

You know, if I have my nose in the Scriptures daily, over time it seeps into the core of my being and my consciousness, and it’s always there. So when I find myself in circumstances that might be challenging, God’s word is in my heart to direct and comfort me, to correct me.

Spurgeon said this. This is good; I think it really applies to our day. This is Spurgeon speaking. *“My love of consistency in my own doctrinal views is not great enough to allow me to knowingly alter a single text of Scripture. I have great respect for orthodoxy. But my reverence for inspiration is greater. I would sooner a hundred times over appear to be inconsistent with myself than be inconsistent with the word of God because of all truth and faithfulness being found there.”*

We need to be very, very careful about how we measure our thoughts and our words. You know, so often we fall into the trap of valuing our opinions or our experiences, or quite frankly a political stance in this election season, over the truth of Scripture. We have to be really careful. We would be wise to speak less and spend more time in the word of God to protect ourselves from error.

Again, another quote from the Puritan William Bridge. *“Meditation on God’s word will keep your hearts and souls from sinful thoughts. When the vessel is full you can put in no more. If the heart is full of sinful thoughts then there is no room for holy or heavenly thoughts. If the heart is full of holy and heavenly thoughts by meditation on God’s word, then there is no room for evil and sinful thoughts.”*

So Bridge is saying that if we fill our lives, our hearts and our minds with God’s word, it’s going to be less likely that the challenges and the sins of the world are going to be able to crowd their way in, because there’s not going to be any room left for them.

Another divine wrote, *“You are either in the Word and the Word is conforming you to the image of Jesus Christ, or you are in the world and the world is squeezing you into its mold.”* It’s really one or the other.

Now again, we can think that we’ll spend a little bit of time; we’ll read a few verses, and that will be enough. That will be enough of a quick fix to sustain me. But the Scripture says otherwise. It says that we are supposed to immerse ourselves, to fill our hearts and minds with God’s word, to wear it on our foreheads. It is supposed to be the food of our souls. And then there is no room for anything else. So we’ve really got to be careful with that.

So as we conclude this third lesson on the fear of God, and specifically this particular lesson on the fear of God in His word, as we go through the week ahead, I would encourage all of us to slow down and to pray, to really ask the Lord to impress upon our hearts the reality of His divine word. And then take the time not only to mark, but to intimately digest the Scriptures. Be still and listen; this is God speaking through His

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word. They’re not just words on a page; it’s God’s word. God Almighty speaks to us through His word. And so I would just encourage us to slow down and take that extra time to ensure that we understand what’s in that Book. Or perhaps it’s on our phone in an app.

Regardless of how we’re looking at God’s word, understand what it is. It’s not just pixels on a screen, or it’s not just ink on paper. It’s God’s word. So if we slow down and we pray, and we take the time before we read the Scriptures to say, “Lord, I want to hear You speak,” and then we work our way through it, I think we’ll all be amazed with what we see God doing. But we have to hold God’s word with reverence, with fear, with awe.

All right. So here we are at the end of Lesson 3. Any comments or questions from the audience out there?

Don Maurer: Doug, I wanted to say a couple things. First of all, in 2 Peter 1 Peter talks about how amazed he and James and John were at the Mount of Transfiguration. “We didn’t follow cleverly devised fables, but we saw Him.” And yet he said, “Yet the word of God is even more sure.” That’s really powerful, because we think, oh, if we could have only been with Jesus! That would be wonderful, and oh, how our faith would be so great! But Peter says that the word of God is even more sure than what we experienced. And I also think that what you said in this lesson is very important. This really underscores to me the importance of the doctrine of inerrancy. If you have a low view of Scripture, then you’re not going to regard it as the word of God and you’re not going to meditate upon it and fear before it.

Doug: I would suggest both inerrancy and sufficiency.

Don: Yes.

Doug: It is both truthful and fully sufficient for all of our needs. Now it may not walk to the grocery store and buy me the loaf of bread that I need. But for all my real needs, the needs of my spirit and my eternal needs, it is fully sufficient. So yes, I agree with you. And that’s a great example from Peter. Again, we so often want the experience. But God has given more than that; He’s given us His word. And we can experience His word in a way that is just unbelievable.

Don: And you talked about our brothers and sisters in China or other parts of the world who don’t have the word of God. But that was the condition in the Middle Ages before the Reformation.

Doug: Yes.

Don: And people who tried to get the Bible translated into English or whatever, like Tyndale, were killed for it. So, as you said, we dare not take this Word for granted.

Doug: No. Having the word of God in our hands, in our language, that’s what turned the world upside down. Amazing!

Nancy Cochran: Hey Doug, one of my favorite passages is:
*“Thy word have I hid in my heart,
That I might not sin against Thee.”*

Doug: Right.

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Nancy: And you know, so many of the passages that you were talking about today are exemplified of that. And I really love the phrase that you just used—that you’re either in the Word or you’re in the world.

Doug: Mm-hmm.

Nancy: I want to ponder that one more, but it’s so true.

Doug: Yes. It’s so easy in our busy lives to set aside the Scriptures and not take the time. But what greater priority could we have?

Nancy: That’s right, because as you said, that’s the way He’s speaking to us.

Doug: Yes, it’s God’s word. Other thoughts, comments, questions from folks? All right, I don’t hear any out there. Again, I’ll close us in prayer. but thank you so much for being here this week, for taking the time to spend some quality time in God’s word. Keep Bruce in your prayers as he goes through these medical tests and his checkups over the course of the next few weeks.

Let me pray for us. Again, Father God, we come before You with awe and with reverence, for You have allowed us to be Your covenant children. Lord, You’ve given us the privilege of studying Your word. Impress it upon our hearts. Hide it away in our hearts so that we would be prepared. Lord, give us a special sense of awe and reverence when we come to Your Scriptures, when we hold that Bible in our hands. And help us to understand that it’s not just a book; it’s not just ink on paper. But it is You speaking to us. So Lord, help us to slow down, to pray, and to be prepared to hear Your voice speaking to us. We thank You for that, and we ask this all in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

Don: Amen. Good job, Doug; thank you.

Doug: All right. Thanks, everyone. Have a great rest of your Tuesday.