

The Fear of the Lord

Psalms 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth forever.

What does it mean to “Fear the Lord”? Does the word fear mean something that would cause one to cower or flee in fright, or something different such as reverence and awe? A closer study of the scriptures can help distinguish what sort of fear a Christian should have verses what an unrepentant sinner might have.

Strong’s Old Testament Bible Dictionary: Fear:

3372 Hebrew “Yare”: To fear, to revere, be afraid, dread, be in reverence,

3373 Hebrew “Yare”: Fearing, reverent, afraid, fearful

6343 Hebrew “Pachad”: A alarm, dread, fear, great terror

1674 Hebrew “Dagah”: Anxiety, care, fear, heaviness, sorrow

7461 Hebrew “Raad”: Trembling

4032 Hebrew “Magowr”: In the sense of fearing, a fright, fear, terror

Old Testament Examples:

Proverbs 3:7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear (3372) the LORD, and depart from evil.

Psalms 103:11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear (3373) him.

Proverbs 1:25-26 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear (6343) cometh;

Jeremiah 48:42-43 And Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the LORD. 43 Fear (6343), and the pit, and the snare, shall be upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith the LORD.

Vine’s New Testament Dictionary: Fear:

Greek “Phobos”, A. first had the meaning of flight, that which is caused by being scared; then, that which may cause flight, fear, dread, terror, always with this significance in the four Gospels. B. Reverential fear of God, as a controlling motive for life, in matters spiritual and moral, not a mere fear of His power and righteous retribution, but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him, a fear which banishes the terror that shrinks from His presence.

Greek “Deilia”: Fearfulness, (2 Tim 1:7) That spirit is not given us of God, The word denotes cowardice and timidity and is never used in a good sense as Phobos is.

Greek “Eulabeia”: Signifies caution, then reverence, godly fear, in general apprehension, but especially Holy fear “That mingled fear and love which combined, constitute the piety of man toward God”.

Greek “Phoberos”: Causing fear, terrible

Greek “Deilos”: Cowardly, timid

Greek “Entromos”: Trembling with fear

Greek “Aphobos”: Denotes “without fear”, and is said of serving the Lord (Luke 1:74), of being among the Lord’s people as His servant (1Cor. 16:10), of ministering the Word of God (Phil 1:14), of the evil of false shepherds.

Greek “Phobeo”: A. Put to flight, to fear, be afraid. B. Reverential fear.

Greek “Eulabeomai”: Be cautious, beware, act with reverence produced by holy fear (Heb 11:7) moved with Godly fear.

Greek “Ekphobis”: Frightened outright, “I exceedingly fear”, “Sore afraid”.

New Testament Examples:

1 Timothy 5:20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear (Phobos).

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear (Phobos): because fear (Phobos) hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear (Deilia); but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (Deilia).

Hebrews 5:7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared (Eulabeia).

Hebrews 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Eulabeia).

Hebrews 10:26-27 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful (Phoberos) looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

Hebrews 10:31 It is a fearful (Phoberos) thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Matthew 8:25-26 And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. 26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful (Deilos), O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful (Deilos), and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Mark 9:6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid (Ekphobos).

Acts 7:32 Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled (Entromos), and durst not behold.

Luke 1:74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear (Aphobos),

Philippians 1:14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear (Aphobos).

Ephesians 5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence (Phobeo) her husband.

Acts 10:2 A devout man, and one that feared (Phobeo) God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear (Eulabeomai), prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Book of Mormon Examples:

1 Nephi 7:48-49 And the righteous need not fear, for it is they which shall not be confounded. 49 But it is the kingdom of the devil, which shall be built up among the children of men, which kingdom is established among them which are in the flesh:

2 Nephi 6:78 I know that the words of truth are hard against all uncleanness; but the righteous fear them not, for they love the truth and are not shaken.

Moroni 8:18 Behold, I speak with boldness, having authority from God; and I fear not what man can do; for perfect love casteth out all fear, and I am filled with charity, which is everlasting love; wherefore all children are alike unto me; wherefore I love little children with a perfect love; and they are all alike, and partakers of salvation.