

Fear God? Does anyone really do that anymore? I thought God is a God of love—how could he possibly ask me to fear him and love him at the same time? A very good question—especially since the Bible, itself, says, “*God is love, and he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.*” Then, to top it off, two verses later it says, “*There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear: because fear has torment.*” (1 John 4:16,18).

One of those contradictions, in the Bible, no doubt. “Where’s a Fundamentalist?! I want to show him this one!” —Not so fast, my friend. Take your time, and read this carefully, first. First, ask yourself:



Do you fear daddy, and have Daddy's Fear?

In the innocent world of childhood, it is natural for a child to have a simple fear of his or her father. Daddy is sometimes the disciplinarian. Daddy tells what's right from wrong. In fact, Daddy (to a very young child) may be very hard to understand. One thing a healthy child knows of a good father, however: Daddy loves them. For this reason, the child learns to willingly submit to the parent's correction for, as the saying goes, "Father knows best."

What the little tike does not understand is that Daddy also has fears. Daddy fears that Johnny may turn on the oven when no one is looking -or, Sue may tumble out of the window, or run out into the street, to be hit by a car. Daddy fears for their safety. The children can't understand it all, yet -but, they do know one thing: Father loves them. So, they learn to defer to Daddy's rules. Pain, lovingly administered (i.e. spankings) give Johnny a weapon against temptation. When a wayward thought now enters his mind ("Jump out the window! Play Superman!") he has an answer:

"No! Daddy wouldn't like that! I'll get a spanking!" - Little realizing the life saving results his obedience has rendered him. As Johnny grows older, his fears will become, more and more, "Daddy's fears," and less a, "fear of Daddy".

The above illustration applies very well to God's love for us, and a healthy fear of Him. The Bible says clearly, "The fear of God is to hate evil," (that's Daddy's fear -Proverbs 8:13) and, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..." (that's Johnny's fear -Psalm 111:10).

Why does God hate evil? The answer may be seen in, the Bible's explanation of why He gave the Old Testament Law:

it's because of love. As the apostle explains:

... he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

For this reason, "You shall not commit adultery. You shall not kill . . . steal, . . .lie, . . ."

He who loves does no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 13:8-10

So the Law (God's rules) were given to let His children know His will. The stronger the fear of God, in an individual, the better able they are to obey. As the scriptures say, "Don't be wise in your own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil." (Proverbs 3:7)

As God's children grow in relationship to Him, they grow more and more into, "Daddy's fear," and less and less in the, "fear of Daddy". -Yet, because we are the creature, and He the Creator, this transfer is never complete as we grow in awe of His majesty, and are amazed that He would share His glory, with His children (II Peter 1:3-4). This is the everlasting good news (the gospel).

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on earth...

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him. . . .

Revelation 14:6,7

Any person, or nation, scoffing at "Daddy's fear," -will suffer the consequences which He is trying to protect us from. The longer the delay, the more awesome the conse-

quences (Ps. 92:7!). As He said through the prophet Isaiah, of those refusing the fear of God:

I will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: . . .

Isaiah 66:4

Or, as the Lord warns, in the New Testament:

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Matthew 10:28

In other words, peer pressure will not excuse us. He will not accept the victim defense, "My friends made me do it!" Each of us will give account for ourselves -and this raises other serious questions, "What about the monkey on my back?" "What of my pet sins, and weaknesses(?)

". . .and, didn't Jesus say something about being, "born again?"

Right. "Except a man be born again," Jesus said, "he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) All along, in our discussion, we've been referring to God as, "Daddy," but such is a very privileged relationship. Paul shared its intimacy with the Roman Christians. Said he of God's Spirit, "The Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are the sons of God." (Romans 8:16)

When a person is truly born again, God's Spirit takes up residence inside. Each of us, created in God's image (Gen. 1:27), has the stamp of God within us, already. We normally call this the, "conscience".

The spirit in man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

Proverbs 10:27

Like a traffic cop, sitting at the corner, the conscience sets off a red light when it has been violated. When Jesus enters the believer's heart, however, the "traffic cop," leads the motorcade, welcoming Him in.

For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father [Daddy!].

Romans 8:15

It is at this point that the, "fear of Daddy," starts to become, "Daddy's fear". The outsider has become the insider. The law keeper, now has the Law Maker within.

Now, it's a whole new ball game!

Before, I could only look at the Law and strain to obey. Now, the Law Giver lives within, and causes me to want to obey. "For it is God Who works inside of you both to will and to accomplish His good pleasure."

(Phil2:131) Thus, for the born again Christian, it really is true that, "the fear of the Lord is to hate evil." -And what you truly hate, you most naturally avoid. Again, this is the "gospel" (the "good news"). In Old Testament times, when Israel had only the Law to guide them, the prophets foretold of its coming, much in the same way Christians preach about Christ's second coming, today. Said Jeremiah of the

new covenant (New Testament):

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

. . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jeremiah 31:31,33

(Unfortunately, some Jews missed the fact that God also wanted to share this gift with the entire world. See Genesis 12:3, Isaiah 49:6...)

A new covenant, and new testament: Testaments are only in effect after the death of the Testator (the one making the will) -but, this suits us perfectly, since the gift being shared here, will benefit His children most fully for eternity.

Why wait over a millennium, and for the blood of thousands of sheep, and turtle doves, as a stop-gap payment for sin -before springing this spectacular benefit?

Why? Because we are slow learners, and because, we needed real life examples (in this present, physical, world) of the effects of sin and God's judgment on that sin. Eternity, my friend, is a long time! The closest parallel we have in comprehending its scope, is the span of history, behind us. Thus, God used ceremony and time to our advantage; giving us a living example of the serious consequences of "sin" (doing things our own way). "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord." (Romans 6:23). Yes, and that is Whose death we are speaking about, when we speak of the death of a "Testator." Who else, but God Himself, could make available all we have discussed here? Who else, could refurbish man's soul, so that we could move from being outsiders, struggling with the Law of God, to insiders, enjoying the heart of God?

Jesus says,

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Revelation 3:20

Come, open your heart to His, today, in prayer:

"Lord Jesus, thank You for making it possible for me to walk with You. Please forgive, and cleanse me of, my sin, and come into my heart.

Save me, now, and make me Your very own. Thank You, Lord Jesus. Amen."

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