

**JOHN BEVERE**

**The**  
**Awe**  
**of**  
**God**

A 6-WEEK SERMON SERIES

**Lesson 1: Holy Awe**

## Lesson 1: Holy Awe

### Outline:

1. The Hidden Virtue
2. Contrasting Fears
3. Holy Fear Defined
4. Benefits of Holy Fear
5. Close

## The Hidden Virtue

### What if you were told of a hidden virtue, that in essence, is the key to all of life?

- It unlocks the purpose of your existence
- attracts the presence, protection, and providence of your Creator.
- It is the root of all noble character, the foundation of all happiness and provides needed adjustments to all inharmonious circumstances you may face.
- To firmly embrace this virtue will lengthen your life, procure good health, ensure success and safety, eliminate lack, and guarantee a noble legacy.

### Do these words sound too good to be true?

- These promises were written by the wisest man to ever live, and he wrote them under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

### Here's a brief account of his story.

- As a child, he was trained in and embraced this virtue, growing strong in noble character and developed keen insight.
- He excelled quickly in leadership and eventually became a ruler of millions.
- He possessed astounding wisdom and very little was too difficult for him to understand.
- He wrote thousands of wise sayings and composed hundreds of songs.
- This wise man achieved success and fortune like no other.
- Kings, Queens, and people of influence would travel great distances to be in his presence, hear his insights, and to witness the excellency of his team and all they built and accomplished under his leadership.

### But as time passed . . .

- This noble leader turned away from what fueled his achievements.
- He became wise in his own eyes and deemed it no longer necessary to heed the wisdom of this virtue.

- As a result, he lost his way and spiraled into a pit of depression, pessimism, and cynicism.

### He made statements such as:

- “Everything’s boring, utterly boring – no one can find any meaning in it.”
- “History merely repeats itself as there is nothing new under the sun.”
- “What is wrong cannot be made right.”
- “What is missing cannot be recovered.”
- “The day you die is better than the day you were born.”

### The good news: his story doesn’t end in the depths of despondency.

He writes 7 times in one form or another: “Remember Your Creator.”  
And the final statement in his despondent book...

#### Ecclesiastes 12:13 | NLT

Here now is my final conclusion: **Fear God and obey his commands**, for this is everyone’s **duty**.

**Duty:** all, everything, whole, entirety.

### The prized virtue is none other than *the Fear of God*.

#### Fear

- For years people have strived to eradicate it.
- President Franklin D. Roosevelt calls attention to it: “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”
- Voices across all platforms shout that we need to find ways to overcome fear
- we can find hundreds if not thousands of self-help books designed to do exactly that.
- clothing with the words “No Fear” printed boldly across them.
- We seem adamant in our quest to eliminate all fear from our lives.
- This crusade seems sensible, noble, and prudent, and while on many fronts it is, the truth is, *not all fear is bad*.

### So why the obsession?

- I believe it stems from lumping all fears into one big category under the label of “harmful.” **But is this assumption accurate?**
- First, it is important to acknowledge that there are indeed **destructive fears**, even when they seem sensible.
- On the other hand, **constructive fears** produce beneficial wisdom.
- And yet, constructive fear, although beneficial, left unchecked can also be perverted and diminish our lives.

## The real question we should be asking is, “What do we fear most?”

- It’s a wise question, and if properly answered, it puts all other fears into perspective and enhances our lives—both now and eternally.

Holy fear’s importance so vastly trumps all other virtues, that Scripture identifies it as:

- **Jesus’s delight** (see Isaiah 11:3 NKJV)

And even more astounding:

- **“The fear of the Lord is His (God’s) treasure”** (Isaiah 33:6 NKJV).

**Stop and ponder this for a moment: Holy Fear is God Almighty’s delight and treasure.**

- Solomon didn’t fully realize the value of godly fear, even though he taught it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit!
- Prior to his fall, godly fear wasn’t his *treasure*, or his *delight*—so it was easy to draw him away!
- In stumbling, experiencing folly, and finally recovering, he more fully grasped the magnitude of its power.

**Holy fear is God’s treasure; it should also be ours!**

## Contrasting Fears

### The Common Counteractions Toward Fear

- Leaders often say, “The fear of the Lord only applies to Old Testament times, but as Christians, we’ve not been given ‘a spirit of fear.’” (See 2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV)
- “We are told in the NT, ‘There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.’” (See 1 John 4:18 NKJV)

**But, not only did NT writers record these words, they also penned other statements:**

- “Work out your own salvation with *fear* and *trembling*.” (Phil. 2:12 NKJV)
- “Beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in *the fear of God*.” (2 Cor. 7:1 NKJV)
- “Let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with *reverence* and *godly fear*.” (Hebrews 12:28 NKJV)

- "...conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here *in fear*." (**1 Peter 1:17 NKJV**)
- "Save with *fear*." (**Jude 19 NKJV**)

## ***Holy fear is a New Testament truth.***

### **Do not confuse the 'spirit of fear' with the 'fear of the Lord.'**

- There is a huge difference, and it is illustrated by what took place when Moses led the nation of Israel to Mount Sinai to meet with God.

#### **Exodus 19:3-4 | NKJV**

Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and ***brought you to Myself.***'

#### **The chief reason for God's mighty deliverance was to gather *all the people* to Himself.**

- He longed for them and desired a meeting so they could know Him as Moses did.
- Three days later God came down on the mountain to introduce Himself, but the people responded by quickly retreating.
- In terror they cried out to Moses, "'You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die'" (Exodus 20:19 NKJV).

So, God brought them to Himself, but the children of Israel withdrew themselves from Him.

#### **Exodus 20:20 | NKJV**

"***Do not fear***; for God has come to test you, and that ***His fear may be before you***, so that you may not sin.'"

### ***At first glance it seems Moses contradicts himself,***

- "Do not fear" because God has come to test you, "that His fear may be before you."
- Is he speaking out of both sides of his mouth? The answer is 'no.'
- Moses is merely differentiating between being 'scared of God' and 'the fear of the Lord.' There is a huge difference.

### ***Here's the difference...***

- The person **scared of God** has **something to hide**. Recall, in the garden, once Adam sinned, he and Eve hid from the presence of the Lord. Their reaction wasn't unique to

them, but similar behavioral responses exist all throughout scripture in those who venture into darkness.

- **The person who fear's God**, has **nothing to hide**. He or she is terrified of being away from God. This is illustrated by the fact that while the people drew back, Moses simultaneously drew nearer to God. The person who fears God doesn't say within themselves, "How close can I get to the line of sin and not fall in?" No, he or she, says, "I want to be so close to God, and so far away from that line, that I can't even see it"

**Holy fear is not to be scared of and thereby withdraw from God. It is to be terrified of being away from Him.**

#### **Psalm 25:14**

The Lord is a friend to those who **fear** Him.

**The firm reality is this:** God wants to be close and intimate with you.

**Holy fear does not quench intimacy, it does just the opposite, it enhances our interaction with God.**

## **Holy Fear Defined**

**It's impossible to define holy fear in a single statement or even lesson.**

- We will continue to grow in the fear of God and love of God throughout eternity.

**Some say, "The fear of the Lord only means to 'reverently worship' God."**

- I've heard these very words spoken by well-known ministers from the pulpit, in the green room, and over a meal.
- Their definition is a start, but far from the complete picture.
- It could be compared to merely defining the 'love of God' as being 'patient and kind.' It too is a start because Scripture confirms this defining quality in 1 Corinthians 13:4. But if we leave it there, we can fall short and miss the mark completely.

#### **Hebrews 12:28-29 | NKJV**

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with **reverence** and **godly fear**. For our God is a consuming fire.

If you look closely, you'll observe there are two terms that are referenced:

*reverence* and *godly fear*.

- This immediately shows that *godly fear* cannot be limited to only *reverence*, otherwise the writer just repeats himself with the second term.
- It's not only different words in English, but also two different Greek words.

*Reverence* is an excellent translation of the first Greek word.

- One of Merriam-Webster's Dictionary's definitions of *reverence* is: "profound adoring awed respect."

*Godly fear* carries the meaning of *awe*.

- For *awe*'s definition, the original 1828 edition of Noah Webster's dictionary states: 'fear, dread inspired by something great and terrific; to strike with fear and reverence. To influence by fear, terror, or respect.'

**Don't be alarmed by the word's 'dread' and 'terror.'**

- **Remember:** Holy fear has a drawing, not a repulsive, effect.

**Let's begin to rattle off our definitions.**

- To fear God is to *reverence* and be in complete *awe* of Him.
- To fear God is to esteem, respect, honor, venerate and adore Him above anyone or anything else.
- We love what He loves, and we hate what He hates.
- What is important to Him becomes important to us and vice versa
- To fear God is to hate all manner of evil, sin and injustice.
- To fear God is to depart from evil in every sense - thought, word, and action.
- To fear God is to give Him the praise, adoration, thanksgiving, and worship He deserves.
- To fear God is to give Him all that belongs to Him.
- To fear God is to tremble before Him in wonder and awe. To give His word and presence our full attention.
- The fear of God is to obey Him. It's not just a desire, but an inward force determined to carry out His will, no matter the cost. We eagerly, willingly, and immediately obey, even if we don't see a benefit or it doesn't make sense, and we carry it out to completion.
- To fear God is to shun any form of complaining, murmuring, or grumbling.
- To fear God is to respect, honor, and submit to His direct and delegated authority. It also obeys the delegated authority with the only exception being if the authority tells us to sin.
- The fear of the Lord shapes our intentions, thoughts, words, and actions.

Keep in mind, everything just stated is attainable and beneficial for you  
– it is God's treasured gift that He's made available to us to protect us.

## **Benefits of Holy Fear**

(These are snippets of the many promises made to those who walk in it.)

- The fear of the Lord is the starting place for an intimate relationship with God. We become His friends and His secrets are made known to us.
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, understanding and knowledge. It gives foresight and clear divine direction.
- The fear of the Lord is how we mature our salvation and are conformed to the image of Jesus.
- The fear of the Lord is clean, it produces true holiness in our lives.
- To abide in the fear of the Lord is to secure an eternal legacy.
- The fear of the Lord produces confidence, fearlessness, and security. It swallows up all other fears, including the fear of man.
- The fear of the Lord gives us identity, makes us productive and empowers us to multiply.
- The fear of the Lord provides angelic assistance, fulfilled desires, enduring success, nobility, influence, longevity, productive days, enjoyment in life, happiness, pleasure in labor, healing for our body, and so much more.
- The fear of the Lord endures forever, it will never fade out.

## **Close**

**Holy fear is not to be scared of and thereby withdraw from God. It is to be terrified of being away from Him.**