

A Revival of the Fear of the Lord

We desperately need a revival of the fear of the Lord, a recovery of the awe of God, a restoration of reverence. It is a matter of life and death.

The Word not only tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7), but it also says, “The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death” (Prov. 14:27, NIV).

The fear of the Lord can save your life, both physically and spiritually.

Moses told the Israelites that the Lord came down on Mount Sinai in fire and thunder so that “His fear would be before you to keep you from sinning” (Ex. 20:20, my translation). And the voice of wisdom in Proverbs says, “To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride, arrogance, the evil way, And duplicity in speech” (Prov. 8:13, Jewish Study Bible).

How we need to recover the fear of the Lord!

We must regain our reverence for Him. As Hebrews 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, for our ‘God is a consuming fire’” (Heb. 12:28–29, NIV).

You do not play games with a consuming fire, and you do not play games with a holy God.

Those who truly know Him—intimately and personally and closely—will love what He loves and hate what He hates. They will not trivialize the things that nailed Jesus to the cross. Never!

That's why you can be assured that, that anyone who is casual with sin or flippant about holiness—be it the Christian next door or the preacher on TV—has not deeply encountered the Lord.

You cannot possibly be casual about sin when you come into the presence of “the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see” (1 Tim. 6:15b–16a).

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There is a reason that the apostle John, perhaps the Lord's closest friend during His time on the earth, fell to the ground like a dead man when the glorified Jesus appeared to Him (Rev. 1:17).

This is the one John saw:

“I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance” (Rev.1:12–16).

Even the thought of this is breathtaking. No wonder even John was undone.

When you encounter the God of whom the seraphim declare, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is

full of his glory,” you too will say with Isaiah, “Woe to me! ... 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.” (Isa. 6:3, 5).

It is only then that we fully understand grace and mercy.

It is only then that we really grasp the power of the cross and the beauty of the blood.

It is only then that we appreciate the depths of the Father’s love and the miracle of His forgiveness.

It is only then that, without reservation or restraint, we cry out, “Here I am! Send me!” (Isa. 6:8b).

That’s why Jude exhorts us to, “Be merciful to those who doubt; save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh” (Jude 1:22–23).

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As I wrote in “How Saved Are We?” in 1990,

Jesus lived in the light of the Judgment. He knew that everything would one day be revealed. Hypocrisy was utterly pointless. There was no reason to put on an act. It would all come out one day. The whole truth would then be uncovered. This is what Jesus taught: “There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs” (Luke 12:2-3). These are sobering words! Will that Day bring us glory or shame?

“Those iniquities which men hide in their hearts shall be written one day on their foreheads as with the point of a

diamond" (Thomas Watson). And everyone will be there to see! We may fool a few people now, but we will be exposed before all on that Day.

Living in the reality of the great Divine Disclosure can free us from all outward displays. It can make us disciples in deed and in truth. And it can help us live in true holy fear. God's records do not lie! "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him "to whom we must give account" (Heb. 4:13). He will set things straight.

All of us will give account one day. How then should we live? Our God cannot be mocked (Gal. 6:7-8).

Just because a ministry is being blessed does not mean that the Lord is fully pleased with it. Just because a church is growing doesn't mean that God is fully backing it. Sometimes, the Lord is giving us time to repent.

Especially dangerous is the thought that the Spirit can somehow be "used," as if the Lord could anoint us and gift us and then we could use those graces for our own aggrandizement, or as if those supernatural giftings somehow covered over our sins. Danger!

This might work for a while in the eyes of people, but it will not work for a split second in the sight of God. Let us walk in holy fear.

The reality is that a massive pruning is taking place, and we are living in the midst of unprecedented shaking.

Let us get low before Him, asking Him to shine His holy light on our hearts and lives, and let us be zealous to destroy any willful sin before that sin destroys us.

May I urge each of you to take the time to listen to an extremely important message, one that I have preached to

myself time and again, and one that God has used to save many lives? The link is here. I implore you to listen to this message, whether you're a megachurch pastor, a homeschooling mom, a successful businessperson, a new believer or a seasoned saint. It is relevant for every single one of us.

May the Lord have mercy on His people, may He purify His bride, may He make something beautiful out of us and may His name be glorified in the eyes of the world.

We urgently need to recover the fear of the Lord.

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Dr. Michael Brown () is the host of the nationally syndicated *The Line of Fire* radio show. He is the author of over 40 books, including "Can You be Gay and Christian?"; "Our Hands are Stained with Blood"; and "Seizing the Moment: How to Fuel the Fires of Revival." You can connect with him on Facebook, X or YouTube.