

This One Thing Missing in the Church is Damaging Relationships

I can't imagine how frightening it must have been watching as Ananias and Sapphira fell to the floor dead.

What was going on?

The church in Jerusalem was experiencing a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Miracles and signs and wonders were happening. Thousands were coming into the kingdom of God. **The Church was impacting the city.**

A significant part of the work taking place was the care for the elderly, the orphan and the poor. Church members were even selling real estate and bringing the entire equity to the church for distribution to the needy. **In short, the church was being what the church was supposed to be.**

This couple wanted in on the recognition.

Ananias and Sapphira sold a portion of their property and brought an offering to the Apostles. Ananias said they were giving the whole equity as an offering to help the poor and the needy. In fact, it was only a portion of the equity. When questioned by the Apostle Peter, Ananias said it was the whole.

The man fell dead.

It was only a brief few moments when Sapphira arrived. The Apostle Peter asked her the same question. She answered in the affirmative. **She also fell dead.**

"Great fear came on the entire church and on all those who heard these things" (Acts 5:11).

Ananias and Sapphira had a religious form without the power of the Holy Spirit. **The fear of the Lord was not shaped in their spiritual life.** This is one of the unique characteristics of the manifest presence of God upon His Church: a strong fear of the Lord.

That concept is absent from the present church culture.

In past generations there was a healthy fear of the coach, dad and mom, teachers, and leaders in the community. You always called them Mister. It was never a first name basis; after all *“that is Mr. Smith, the bank manager or Mr. Baker the principal, the football coach, or the math teacher.”*

Today, it's all on a first name basis. The coach is supposed to be your buddy. Mom and Dad are supposed to be friends with the kids. After all, children have their rights. Employees, employers, average citizens and community leaders are all equal.

When that healthy fear is removed from society, when it is absent from the heart of a child or a teenager, there is no fear for the position of those who have weight or significance in the community or in the family. It takes the heart out of family and out of the community, **leaving a vacuum of honor and respect.**

When the fear of the Lord is absent from the heart of a disciple and from the spirit of the church, **there is a loss of reverence for the sacred and the holy.** There is a decline in the purity of the heart.

Fear of the Lord is full recognition of His nature; God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.

It is full recognition of His authority; **God is absolutely sovereign.** Such recognition brings a trembling in the heart. It is not cowering before Him but reverence for who He is and His authority over my life.

The child of God has a holy trembling balanced by deep love for Heavenly Father. There is a healthy fear of His authority and power balanced by certain trust in Father's love, mercy and grace.

The fear of the Lord is not optional equipment for the true disciple of Jesus Christ.

"Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?" (Deut. 10:12-13).

"You must fear the Lord your God. You must serve Him and cling to Him, and swear by His name." (Deut. 10:20).

Persistent disrespect to parents, supervisors or community leaders is a certain sign of little honor for authority in that person's heart. They believe themselves to have equal voice and equal authority.

When you see persistent disobedience to God's Word in the life of a believer, there is little or no fear of the Lord. They may say otherwise but deep in their heart they insist on having final authority.

This absence of the fear of the Lord holds great danger to the church and to our nation.

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