

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 – A Grand Summary – Part 2 – Fear God

Stam, TSK, HebrewLexicon, Gill, JFB, Delitzsch, Poole, Trapp, Eclectic, Barnes, Henry, Kuiken,

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Someone may say to you: Be very careful, traffic is really bad and there are some crazy drivers out tonight, and the cops are out with their radar guns. You would be foolish if you disregarded his warning. Rather, you slow down. You turn down the radio. You pull your hand out of the potato chip bag. You keep your eyes on the road. You get where you are going safely and you don't have any fines assessed against you and you have no bad driving points. And you will be thankful to the person who gave you the warning.

Solomon too gave you a warning – but a warning for your soul – a life-saving warning. **Fear God.** Yes, enjoy your spouse, your political power, your wine, your great projects, your wealth...but keep them in their proper place, but to save yourself, you need to fear God. This is the subject for today.

Our headings are: **What does the Fear of God Mean**, **Your fear of God will make you keep his commands**, and **Your Fear of God will Give you Confidence on Judgment Day**.

Our goals are: **That you will understand what the fear of God is and its benefits, and that you will use it to face and fulfill your responsibilities in Christ**.

What does the Fear of God Mean?

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God...**

1. When you hear the phrase “fear God” what does it mean? It does not mean that you are afraid of God like you would be afraid of a great white shark or an irritated恼怒的cobra or rattlesnake响尾蛇. Yes, there is a sense where you must realize the size and power of God and that must make you rethink your actions and be careful. However, that kind of fear is a fear that non-Christians have of God. For you, God is your Father because of Jesus Christ. Therefore you can come boldly before his throne of grace – and you don't have to think “what would a holy God do to me if I come close to him?” You must not be afraid of God the way a non-Christian might be.

2. So what is the fear of God? The “fear of God” is a rich term. It means to live for God and exude散发all the graces that come from God's Holy Spirit. It means to reverence God for who he is and what he has done for you. It means to love God. It means to obey God. It means to have faith in him. It means to be humble and submit before him. It means to be patient before him. It means to hate even the thought of offending God. And when you consider the context of the book, you understand that “the fear of God” is **the antidote解毒剂 for all the things that Solomon tried to bring peace in his heart.** The self-righteous man is changed when he has the fear of God in his heart. Look at a couple of examples to make the point!

Ecclesiastes 7:16 Do not (pretend to) be overly righteous, Nor (pretend to be) be overly wise: Why should you destroy yourself? **18** It is good that you grasp this, And also not remove your hand from the other; **For he who fears God will escape them all.**

The oppressor is changed when he has the fear of God in his heart – the antidote for sin.

Ecclesiastes 8:12 Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. 13 But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

The “fear of God” is the kernel核心of the book of Ecclesiastes...or better, it is the star of the book.

Revelation 14:7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."
Job 28:28 And to man He said, `Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is understanding."

3. If you don't have the fear God on judgment day you will self-condemn to hell. It is like saying to God: “Damn me.” **No one can safely appear before his** Holy Majesty and claim anything else but say: I fear you Lord. The fear of God gives life...Non-fear of God brings death.

4. The fear of God is shown and seen. Trapp wrote: “Affection without endeavor is like Rachel, beautiful but barren.” The fear of God is not a state of mind – as something theoretical, or ethereal... No, “fear of God” is but a life of obedience from body and soul. Thought without action means nothing. In fact, if you think you must fear God and don't do it, it is worse for you.

Isaiah 29:13 Therefore the Lord said: "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,

Hypocrites do otherwise. Notice how God does not call them "my people." He simply refers to them as "these people." And you can know a lot about a relationship by the way people address each other.

5. In sum, you fear God by living for his glory and you fear God because the fear of God is good for you. I believe this is why Solomon did not come up with some patronizing comment...or some sugar-coated wish in his conclusion: "Do the best you can." "As long as you are sincere." He called on his readers to literally "suck it up" and fear God. Yes, man has all kinds of troubles in life. Yes, man has many desires to please himself. Yes, there are many things in life that man wants and can never get. But Solomon doesn't go that way. He deals with the grown up things and tells them what they want to hear.

Revelation 14:7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

Your fear of God will make you keep his commands

V13...and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.

1. What does it mean to keep God's command? It might seem like a dumb question, but it is not. It means that God's law must first be in your heart before it will come to the outside. What is in the heart is what will come to the outside. So you have to get God's law there first. And then you obey. This is a good time to warn you that if you don't make God's law a regular part of your children's lives you can't expect them to have the fear of God. So make it your duty to put God's law first in the lives of yourself and your children.

2. And when you keep God's law it will bring you great reward. Now when one speaks of reward, there is nothing more common in history that to be rewarded with food. The Greek Olympians, for instance, did not have to worry about food for the rest of their lives if they won a race. Even today, we say: The way to a man's heart is through his stomach. And kids will do lots of things for food. No wonder God used food as an inspiration to those who need to grasp the benefits of keeping the law of God.

Psalm 19:10 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.

Psalm 119:72 The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of coins of gold and silver.

Psalm 119:103 How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth!

So while the keeping the law is commanded by the Lord and because you fear him you should obey them, yet, if you keep them there is the incentive of God rewarding you. He is the vine!

1John 3:22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. 23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment. 24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

3. Now notice that Solomon also said that this "fear of God" (which is seen in obedience to God's law) is "man's all. Obeying God's law must be man's greatest goal and should be man's greatest desire." And we must go further. Obedience to God must exist in every area of life: whether you are high or low, rich or poor, man or woman, weak or strong, happy or unhappy. God's commands cover all areas of life. As Kuiper said: There is not one area of life where the Lord does not say "It is mine."

Your Fear of God will give you confidence on Judgment Day

14 For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

1. Everyone will face judgment. And God himself will be the judge. So there is nothing that will slip by him as you might slip something by parents, teachers, or Canada Revenue Agency. God never misses any details...

2Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Consider Paul's warning to the Romans: God judges even your thoughts...even thoughts you might have long forgotten...even thoughts while you were sleeping...

Romans 2:15 who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) 16 in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

2. What about judgments in this world? As a Christian you get some kind of punishment (judgment) for wrongs you do in this world, but that that is not an eternal judgment. It is a fatherly judgment. Your Father does not send you to hell for sins, but he may cause some pain so you turn back the right way. For the non-Christians it is much different. Their sins, because they were not paid for by Jesus Christ, deserve hell. So they must face the eternal judgment of God.

1Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

When a non-Christian faces punishment in this world, it is only a pre-cursor of the full judgment for sin. The worst is yet to come.

3. For the Christians, beginning in this world, and certainly in fullness in the next world, they will be rewarded based on their good deeds. Entrance into heaven is based on Christ's work. **Rewards in heaven will be based on good works you do through Christ's** strength and Christ's desire.

4. One more interesting application here for Christians. Christians can find confidence that even the secret things that are good that are done will be rewarded by the Lord as well – rewarded openly. **This is why you must not live for earthly applause.** Live for the glory of Christ in public and private, knowing that secrets deeds never go unrewarded.

Conclusion

All is vanity. That is how Solomon started this sermon. But he ends with hope. If you fear God, and when you fear God, there is meaning and purpose to life. And you will fear God by following his laws. God will reward you for fearing him. These things imply that you are not just believing in Christ sacrifice for sins, but you are studying God's Words and putting your studies into practice.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: How much do you love God's law? If you love something or someone you want to stay close. Consider these words from the Psalmists how they viewed the Word of God and why they made God's Word their study all the day long: *Ps 19:10: God's words are: "More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."* And remember *Ps 119:72 "The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of coins of gold and silver."* And *Ps 119:103: "How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth!"* No Word of God, no fear of God. God's word teaches you how to be saved through Jesus Christ...and how to live in the fear of God. So feast and live. Live for loving your neighbor. Live for loving God.

Finally, only the Word of God tells you how to be saved...and the basis of you calling on God for help – which is the most direct way of fearing God. Consider some of God's Words: *Hosea 14:2 "Take words with you, And return to the LORD. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity; Receive us graciously, For we will offer the sacrifices of our lips."* *Job 19:25 "For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; 26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, 27 Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns 憧憬 within me!"* If you don't have the confidence of Job and Hosea, ask and God will take away your sins because of Jesus Christ and give you that confidence.