

LIVING TRUTH MINISTRY



The Awe of God

A Six-Week Journey into the Fear of the Lord

LEARN. EXAMINE. RESPOND. LIVE.

A guided biblical study designed to help you recover a reverent view of God, understand the fear of the Lord, respond faithfully to His Word, pursue holiness, grow in intimacy, and walk in wisdom.

Based on *The Awe of God* by John Bevere

LIVING TRUTH MINISTRY

The Awe of God

A Six-Week Journey into the Fear of the Lord

The fear of the Lord is not a life of terror or distance from God. Scripture presents holy awe as a reverent response to who God is - His holiness, majesty, authority, mercy, and love. Over six weeks, this study explores how awe of God shapes worship, obedience, holiness, intimacy, wisdom, courage, and everyday faithfulness.

Based on *The Awe of God* by John Bevere

Welcome to The Awe of God

Scripture repeatedly describes the fear of the Lord as something precious.

It is the beginning of wisdom. It turns us from evil. It gives confidence. It leads to life. It is connected with close fellowship with God.

Yet the phrase can be misunderstood. Some hear *fear* and think only of punishment or anxiety. Others emphasize God's love in ways that can unintentionally make His holiness, authority, and majesty seem distant from everyday faith.

This six-week journey is designed to hold the biblical picture together: God is perfectly holy and perfectly loving. Through Christ we draw near with confidence, but never casually. Holy awe teaches us to worship, obey, trust, and live with God at the center.

The Six-Week Journey

1. **Holy Awe** - Recover a biblical understanding of the fear of the Lord.
2. **Revealed as We Are** - Allow God's holiness to expose what is false and lead us into humility.
3. **Irresistible Holiness** - Pursue a life that increasingly reflects God's character.
4. **God's Word** - Give God's voice enough weight to obey promptly, trustingly, and completely.
5. **Intimacy with God** - Draw near in reverent friendship, confidence, honesty, and trust.
6. **The Treasure's Benefits** - See how holy fear produces wisdom, confidence, life, direction, and deeper fellowship with God.

How to Use This Study Guide

1 - Learn

Read the corresponding weekly teaching on Living Truth Ministry before beginning the study guide.

2 - Study Scripture

Read the key passages carefully. Let Scripture - not assumption - define holy fear.

3 - Examine and Discuss

Use the reflection and discussion questions to examine your own heart and talk honestly with others when studying in a group.

4 - Respond in Faith

End each week with prayer and one practical response of worship, trust, obedience, or surrender.

BEGIN HERE

Do not rush. The goal is not simply to complete six lessons, but to allow a clearer view of God to reshape the way you worship, think, choose, obey, and live.

WEEK 1

Holy Awe

Holy awe begins when we see God more clearly and allow His holiness, greatness, mercy, and glory to reshape the way we worship, trust, obey, and live.

THE AWE OF GOD - A SIX-WEEK JOURNEY INTO THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Week One

PURPOSE OF THIS WEEK

This first week introduces the biblical idea of holy awe. The goal is to move beyond misunderstanding the fear of the Lord as terror and begin seeing it as a reverent response to who God is.

As we study Scripture, we will consider God's holiness, His glory, His presence, His mercy, and His authority- and ask how seeing Him more clearly should change the way we worship, make decisions, respond to His Word, and live each day.

BIG IDEA

The fear of the Lord is not being terrified of God. It is living with profound reverence, honor, love, and respect for Him because we recognize His holiness, authority, mercy, and greatness. Holy awe shapes the heart, and holy fear shapes the life.

Read Before You Begin

Key Scriptures

Isaiah 6:1-5 - Isaiah encounters the holiness and glory of God and becomes deeply aware of his own condition.

Psalms 130:3-4 - God's forgiveness does not eliminate reverence; His mercy gives us reason to fear Him.

Proverbs 9:10 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Isaiah 66:1-2 - God looks with favor on the humble and contrite person who trembles at His Word.

Hebrews 12:28-29 - Grace, gratitude, worship, reverence, and awe belong together because our God is a consuming fire.

Psalms 25:14 - Scripture connects the fear of the Lord with friendship and intimacy with Him.

Opening Question

When you hear the phrase "fear of the Lord," what thoughts, emotions, or assumptions immediately come to mind?

Teaching Summary

Holy awe is one of the Bible's central themes, yet it is also one of the most easily misunderstood.

Some people hear the word *fear* and imagine anxiety, punishment, or a God who is looking for reasons to condemn them.

Others emphasize God's love and grace so strongly that His holiness, majesty, authority, and glory begin to fade from view.

Scripture gives us a fuller picture.

Holy Awe Begins with God's Holiness

Holy awe begins when we see God as He truly is.

Isaiah's vision of the Lord in Isaiah 6 does not produce casual familiarity. It produces worship, humility, and a new awareness of the greatness of God.

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!" - Isaiah 6:3

The repeated word *holy* emphasizes that God is utterly unique. He is not simply a larger version of us. His character is perfect. His wisdom is perfect. His authority is absolute. His glory is beyond measure.

Holy awe grows as our view of God grows.

Holy Fear Is Not Terror

The fear of the Lord is not the terror of someone who believes God is waiting to destroy them.

It is reverence for His holiness, deep respect for His authority, and a heart that desires to honor Him above everything else.

Holy fear means taking God seriously without running away from Him.

"But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared." - Psalm 130:4

God's forgiveness teaches us something important. His mercy does not make sin trivial. It makes grace astonishing.

We draw near because He is gracious, but we never become careless about who He is.

Holy Awe and Holy Fear Work Together

Holy awe describes the wonder and reverence that rises in the heart when we see God's greatness.

Holy fear describes the way that reverence begins shaping our decisions, priorities, worship, and obedience.

Holy awe shapes the heart. Holy fear shapes the life.

The person who fears the Lord increasingly asks: "What honors God?" rather than "What can I get away with?"

The Fear of the Lord Is the Beginning of Wisdom

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." - Proverbs 9:10

Wisdom begins when we stop treating ourselves as the final authority over reality.

God is the Creator. He knows what produces life. He knows what destroys it. He sees what we cannot see.

Reverence places us beneath His wisdom rather than above it.

Holy Awe Changes Worship

"Let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire." - Hebrews 12:28-29

Grace and reverence are not opposites.

Gratitude and awe are not opposites.

Joyful worship and holy fear are not opposites.

Biblical worship remembers both the goodness of God and the greatness of God.

God Is a Consuming Fire

The image of consuming fire reminds us that God's holiness is not ordinary.

Fire in Scripture can represent holy presence, judgment against evil, purification, refining, and covenant jealousy.

God's fire is not uncontrolled human anger. His holiness always remains consistent with His perfect justice, goodness, mercy, and love.

The same God who opposes evil also purifies His people and draws them toward what is good.

Trembling at God's Word

"But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word." - Isaiah 66:2

To tremble at God's Word is to give it weight.

It means refusing to approach Scripture as merely interesting religious information.

We listen because God has spoken.

We listen with the intention of responding.

Holy awe gives God's Word our full attention.

God's Presence and Holy Awe

God is always present.

Yet Scripture also records moments when His presence becomes especially evident-the burning bush, Mount Sinai, the tabernacle, the temple, Pentecost, and many moments of prayer and worship.

We cannot manufacture God's presence. His nearness is a gift of grace.

But we can choose whether we approach Him casually or reverently.

Before asking what we want from God's presence, remember whose presence we are entering.

The Glory of God

God's glory is the revealed greatness, holiness, beauty, goodness, and character of God.

When Moses asked God to show him His glory, God's response pointed toward His goodness and His name.

God's glory therefore includes more than raw power.

It reveals who He is.

His holiness. His compassion. His justice. His mercy. His faithfulness.

And the clearest revelation of God's glory is Jesus Christ.

Holy Awe Transforms Daily Life

Holy awe is not merely a feeling during a worship service.

It begins affecting ordinary life.

Speech. Entertainment. Relationships. Work. Prayer. Choices made in private. Attitudes toward sin. Willingness to obey.

The more clearly we see God, the more naturally our lives begin to revolve around honoring Him.

Examine Your Heart

1. When I hear "fear of the Lord," do I think primarily about terror, reverence, love, obedience, or something else?

2. Has my understanding of God's love ever caused me to overlook His holiness?

3. Do I spend more time thinking about God's blessings than about God's character?

4. Is there an area of my life where I have become casual about sin?

5. Do I make decisions primarily to please God or to gain approval from people?

6. What keeps me from experiencing deeper reverence for God?

7. How would my prayer life change if I became more aware of whose presence I am entering?

8. What is one place where God's Word deserves more serious attention from me?

Talk About It Together

1. How would you explain holy fear to someone who believes it means being terrified of God?

2. Why do you think the fear of the Lord is often neglected in Christian teaching today?

3. Why is God's holiness essential to understanding His love?

4. What does Hebrews 12:28-29 reveal about worship?

5. Why does Scripture call the fear of the Lord "the beginning" of wisdom?

6. What does Psalm 25:14 suggest about the relationship between reverence and intimacy with God?

7. What does it mean practically to tremble at God's Word?

8. How might holy awe affect our speech, entertainment, relationships, work, and prayer life?

LOOK MORE CLOSELY

Hebrews 12:28-29

Read Hebrews 12:28-29 slowly and notice the movement of the passage.

Grace → Gratitude → Worship → Reverence

Receive

We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. The passage begins with grace, not human achievement.

Give Thanks

Grace produces gratitude. We worship because of what God has given.

Worship with Reverence

Gratitude does not make worship casual. We worship the holy God with reverence and awe.

Remember Who God Is

"Our God is a consuming fire." His grace never diminishes His holiness.

Prayer

Father, teach me to fear Your name, honor Your Word, and approach Your presence with reverence and awe. Forgive me for the times I have treated You casually or taken Your grace for granted. Help me see Your holiness, greatness, mercy, and glory more clearly. Let what I learn become more than information. Shape my worship, my choices, my obedience, and my everyday life. Teach me to love what You love, turn away from what dishonors You, and draw near to You with both confidence and humility. In Jesus' name, amen.

Cultivate One Habit of Reverence

Choose one practice that will help you become more intentionally aware of God's greatness this week.

You might begin prayer with praise before making requests.

You might read a passage that focuses on God's character and spend several minutes reflecting on one of His attributes.

You might identify one area where God has already spoken clearly and respond with obedience.

Or you might pause before worship or prayer and remind yourself whose presence you are entering.

This week, I will cultivate holy awe by _____.

Make the answer specific. Then practice it throughout the week.

Five Days in Scripture

Day 1 - Isaiah 6:1-8

What does Isaiah's response teach you about encountering God's holiness?

Day 2 - Psalm 130

How are forgiveness, hope, and the fear of the Lord connected?

Day 3 - Proverbs 1:1-7; 9:10

Why does wisdom begin with reverence for God?

Day 4 - Hebrews 12:18-29

What do grace, worship, reverence, and God's holiness reveal together?

Day 5 - Revelation 4-5

What do the worshipers focus on when they behold God's throne and the Lamb?

For each reading, ask:

What does this reveal about God?

What response does His character deserve?

What should change in the way I live?

REMEMBER THIS WEEK

See God Clearly

Holy awe is not running away from God. It is seeing Him clearly enough that we can no longer treat Him casually.

Behold His holiness.

Receive His mercy.

Honor His Word.

Worship with reverence.

Obey with trust.

Draw near with humility.

The more clearly we see God, the more deeply reverence begins to shape our lives.

WEEK 2

Revealed as We Are

God's holiness does more than inspire awe. It exposes what is false, reveals what is true, and invites us to walk before Him with humility, honesty, reverence, and trust.

THE AWE OF GOD - A SIX-WEEK JOURNEY INTO THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Week Two

PURPOSE OF THIS WEEK

Week Two asks what happens when the holiness of God confronts the way we actually live.

The goal is not to create shame or spiritual anxiety. It is to allow God's light to reveal pride, self-protection, false images, casual attitudes toward sin, and areas where our outward appearance may not match our inward reality.

As God reveals us as we are, His grace gives us the freedom to stop pretending and begin responding with humility, repentance, careful obedience, and deeper trust.

BIG IDEA

The holiness of God reveals the difference between who we appear to be and who we truly are. Holy fear does not force us to hide; it teaches us to live honestly before God, receive His grace, and allow Him to transform what His light exposes.

Read Before You Begin

Key Scriptures

Leviticus 10:1-3 - God declares that those who come near Him must regard Him as holy.

Isaiah 6:1-7 - Isaiah encounters God's holiness and becomes deeply aware of his own condition.

Luke 5:1-11 - Peter encounters the power of Jesus and becomes aware of his own sinfulness.

Philippians 2:12-13 - Fear and trembling are joined with the truth that God Himself is at work within us.

Proverbs 5:21 - God sees our paths clearly and knows what is hidden from everyone else.

Psalms 139:23-24 - We can invite God to search us, reveal what is within us, and lead us in His way.

Opening Question

Which is harder for you: allowing other people to see your weaknesses, or allowing God to confront something in you that needs to change?

Teaching Summary

The Fatal Collision

Leviticus 10 gives us one of Scripture's most sobering reminders that God's holiness must never be treated as ordinary.

Aaron's sons had been given access and responsibility, but they approached God irreverently.

"By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy." - Leviticus 10:3

The lesson is not that God delights in destroying people.

The lesson is that nearness to God never reduces His holiness.

Grace gives us access, but grace does not make God common.

Familiarity with God should deepen reverence, not erase it.

Holiness Reveals Us

When people encounter God's holiness in Scripture, they often become more aware of themselves.

Isaiah saw the Lord and recognized his uncleanness.

Peter witnessed the power of Jesus and became aware of his sinfulness.

John encountered the glorified Christ and fell before Him.

These people were not rejected.

They were revealed.

God's holiness exposed the contrast between His perfection and their humanity.

Pride could no longer hide. Self-sufficiency could no longer pretend. Casualness could no longer feel appropriate.

What Must Die?

The "fatal" part of the collision is not the destruction of the person who comes to God through Christ.

It is the death of the old patterns that cannot remain if we are going to live near Him.

Pride must give way to humility.

Self-sufficiency must give way to dependence.

Indifference must give way to attentiveness.

Casual Christianity must give way to wholehearted devotion.

God's holiness confronts what His grace intends to transform.

Fear and Trembling

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you." - Philippians 2:12-13

Fear and trembling does not mean living in constant panic.

It describes a posture of profound reverence, humility, careful obedience, awareness of God's greatness, and dependence upon Him.

There is seriousness in this passage, but there is also reassurance.

God is at work in us.

We are not attempting to transform ourselves by sheer willpower.

We respond reverently to the God who is already working within us to shape both desire and action.

Handle What Is Precious with Care

We treat precious things differently from common things.

If something is irreplaceable, we handle it with care.

Not because we are terrified of it, but because we recognize its value.

Our relationship with God is infinitely more precious.

His presence matters. His Word matters. His grace matters. His calling matters.

Reverence recognizes value.

Fear Without Panic

Scripture tells believers both "**Do not fear**" and "**Fear the Lord.**"

Those commands speak about different kinds of fear.

We are not called to live controlled by dread, anxiety, or fear of rejection.

We are called to honor God so deeply that dishonoring Him matters to us.

The heart of holy fear says:

"I do not want to dishonor the God who has loved me so completely."

The Fear of God Reorders Other Fears

When God's approval carries the greatest weight, human approval begins to lose its control.

When His authority is ultimate, circumstances no longer have the final word.

When His faithfulness becomes more real, fear does not need to direct every decision.

Holy fear does not make us more fearful of everything.

It begins freeing us from lesser fears.

Perceived, Projected, and Actual Image

There can be a difference between how people perceive us, how we present ourselves, and who we actually are.

Our **perceived image** is the impression others carry of us.

Our **projected image** is the version of ourselves we intentionally present.

Our **actual image** is the truth God sees.

Reputation can become so important that we spend more energy protecting an image than pursuing integrity.

Holy fear redirects us.

We begin caring more about who we truly are before God than how successful, spiritual, strong, or impressive we appear to others.

God is not asking us to maintain an image. He is inviting us to become truthful.

God Sees the Motive

People usually see actions.

God also sees motives.

Service can come from love or from a desire for recognition.

Generosity can come from compassion or from a desire to be admired.

Religious activity can come from devotion or from the desire to protect a spiritual reputation.

Holy fear invites us to ask not only: "What am I doing?"

But:

"Why am I doing it?"

The Harsh Judge

Some people picture God mainly as angry, distant, and waiting to punish every failure.

This can create guilt, insecurity, fear of rejection, and endless attempts to earn approval.

This image remembers judgment but forgets the mercy and grace revealed in Christ.

The Indulgent Grandfather

Others picture God as endlessly permissive.

Sin becomes unimportant. Obedience becomes optional. Holiness receives little attention.

This picture remembers kindness but neglects holiness and justice.

Love becomes separated from transformation.

The Holy Father and King

Scripture gives us a fuller picture.

God is perfectly loving.

Perfectly holy.

Infinitely merciful.

Completely just.

Approachable through Christ.

Worthy of absolute reverence.

He is Father.

And He is King.

This produces confidence without casualness and humility without terror.

Love draws us near. Holy fear keeps our hearts surrendered.

Revealed, Not Rejected

It can be uncomfortable when God exposes something we would rather avoid.

Pride. envy. fear. hidden motives. approval-seeking. casualness about sin.

But revelation is not the same as rejection.

For those who belong to Christ, God's light becomes an instrument of grace.

He reveals what needs confession.

What needs healing.

What needs surrender.

What needs to change.

God reveals us as we are because He loves us too much to leave us as we are.

Examine Your Heart

1. When God exposes an area of weakness or sin in me, do I tend to hide, defend myself, feel condemned, repent, or receive His correction with gratitude?

2. Is there a difference between the person others think I am and the person I know myself to be?

3. Where am I most tempted to protect my reputation?

4. Do I ever perform spiritual activities partly because I want others to think well of me?

5. Which distorted picture of God tempts me most: the harsh judge or the indulgent grandfather?

6. What would change if I consistently saw God as both holy Father and King?

7. Is there an area where I have become casual about something God takes seriously?

8. What might God be revealing in me right now that He wants to transform?

Talk About It Together

1. Why can familiarity with God sometimes lead people toward casualness rather than deeper reverence?

2. What do Isaiah, Peter, and John have in common when they encounter God's holiness or power?

3. What do you think Paul means by "fear and trembling" in Philippians 2:12-13?

4. How is reverence different from panic or terror?

5. Why are people often more concerned about reputation than actual character?

6. How can a projected image interfere with spiritual growth?

7. What problems result from viewing God only as a harsh judge?

8. What problems result from viewing God only as an indulgent grandfather?

9. How does seeing God as holy Father and King hold love and reverence together?

LOOK MORE CLOSELY

Philippians 2:12-13

Read Philippians 2:12-13 slowly and notice the relationship between our response and God's work.

Reverence → Response → Dependence → Transformation

Reverence

We take our spiritual life seriously. We do not treat obedience casually.

Responsibility

We actively respond to what God is teaching us. Reverence moves toward obedience.

Dependence

God Himself is at work within us. Transformation is not accomplished by human effort alone.

Purpose

God is shaping both our desires and our actions according to His good purpose.

Prayer

Father, You are holy, merciful, loving, and just. Thank You that through Jesus Christ I do not have to hide from You. Search me and reveal what is true. Show me where I have protected an image, sought human approval, become casual about sin, or resisted Your correction. Give me humility to receive what You reveal, courage to confess what needs to change, and faith to trust Your grace. Teach me to walk before You with reverence, integrity, and joyful obedience. In Jesus' name, amen.

Choose Truth over Image

Set aside time this week to pray through Psalm 139:23-24.

Ask God to reveal one place where your projected image and actual life may not match.

It could involve: motive, attitude, speech, a relationship, a hidden habit, a need for approval, or an area of delayed obedience.

God is revealing _____, and my faithful response will be _____.

Keep your response specific.

Confess what needs confessing. Receive God's grace. Then take one concrete step toward integrity.

Five Days in Scripture

Day 1 - Leviticus 10:1-3

What does this passage teach about regarding God as holy?

Day 2 - Isaiah 6:1-8

What does Isaiah see about God, and what does he see about himself?

Day 3 - Luke 5:1-11

How does Peter respond when Jesus' power becomes undeniable?

Day 4 - Philippians 2:12-16

How do reverence, obedience, and God's work within us fit together?

Day 5 - Psalm 139:1-24

What changes when you remember that God knows you completely?

For each reading, ask:

What does this reveal about God?

What does this reveal about me?

What response of humility or obedience is needed?

REMEMBER THIS WEEK

Live Truthfully Before God

**Holy fear frees us from pretending. We can allow God to reveal us
as we are because His grace meets us there.**

See His holiness.
Welcome His light.
Reject false images.
Receive His grace.
Respond with humility.
Walk in integrity.

God does not reveal us so we can remain ashamed. He reveals us so we can be transformed.

WEEK 3

Irresistible Holiness

God calls us to holiness not so that we can earn His love, but because in Christ we already belong to Him. Holy fear teaches us to value His approval above human approval and to pursue a life that increasingly reflects His character.

THE AWE OF GOD - A SIX-WEEK JOURNEY INTO THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Week Three

PURPOSE OF THIS WEEK

Week Three explores what it means to pursue holiness as people who have already been received by God's grace.

The goal is to understand the difference between our standing in Christ and the way we are called to live, recognize how the fear of people can compete with obedience to God, and identify practical ways to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in becoming more like Christ.

Holiness is not a way to earn acceptance. It is the fruit of belonging to the One who is holy.

BIG IDEA

God makes us His own by grace, and then calls us to live like people who belong to Him. Holy fear helps us care more about God's approval than human approval, turn from what defiles us, and actively pursue holiness in thought, motive, character, and conduct.

Read Before You Begin

Key Scriptures

2 Corinthians 7:1 - Paul calls believers to cleanse themselves and bring holiness to maturity in the fear of God.

Ephesians 1:3-4 - In Christ, believers are chosen and set apart as holy before God.

1 Peter 1:13-16 - Those called by a holy God are commanded to be holy in all their conduct.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 - God's will for His people includes sanctification, purity, and lives marked by holiness and honor.

Hebrews 12:14 - Believers are told to pursue holiness actively.

Psalm 25:14 - The fear of the Lord is connected with intimacy and deeper fellowship with God.

Opening Question

Which has more influence over your choices: the desire to please God or the desire to be approved by people?

Teaching Summary

The Fear of Man

One of the quietest competitors to the fear of the Lord is the fear of people.

We want acceptance. We want to fit in. We want to avoid criticism. We want to protect our reputation.

Those desires become spiritually dangerous when human approval carries more weight than God's approval.

We will eventually serve what we fear most.

God's Approval Must Carry the Greatest Weight

Holy fear does not make us indifferent toward people.

It simply puts every other voice in its proper place.

God's truth matters more than popularity.

God's commands matter more than cultural pressure.

God's character becomes the standard for our choices.

The fear of man asks, "What will people think?" Holy fear asks, "What will honor God?"

Holiness Begins with Grace

We do not pursue holiness so that God will finally accept us.

In Christ, believers are forgiven, received, and set apart as God's people.

"He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him." - Ephesians 1:4

Our standing before God is rooted in Christ, not in our spiritual performance.

We pursue holiness from acceptance, not for acceptance.

Positional Holiness

Positional holiness describes what is true of us because we belong to Christ.

We are forgiven. We are set apart. We belong to God.

This is not achieved by discipline, self-improvement, or moral effort.

It is a gift of grace.

Behavioral Holiness

"As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct." - 1 Peter 1:15

Behavioral holiness is the growing alignment between who God has declared us to be and the way we actually live.

Our thoughts change. Our desires change. Our speech changes. Our habits change. Our response to sin changes.

Holiness becomes visible.

Justification and Sanctification

Justification and sanctification are related, but they are not identical.

Justification is God's gracious declaration that we are righteous in Christ.

Sanctification is the ongoing work by which God increasingly shapes our lives into conformity with His character.

Confusing them can produce two opposite errors.

Legalism says: "I must become good enough for God to accept me."

Passivity says: "Because grace is free, my conduct does not matter."

Scripture rejects both.

Grace saves us freely, and grace trains us to live differently.

Cleanse Ourselves

"Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." - 2 Corinthians 7:1

Paul uses active language.

We confess.

We turn away from sin.

We remove what feeds temptation.

We practice obedience.

We renew our minds in truth.

Holiness is God's work in us, but we are called to respond.

God's Will Includes Holiness

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification." - 1 Thessalonians 4:3

Holiness is not an optional specialty for unusually committed Christians.

It belongs to the ordinary calling of every follower of Christ.

Scripture connects holiness with real decisions: purity, self-control, honor, obedience, and the way we treat our bodies and other people.

Obedience Reveals Allegiance

Obedience does not create our relationship with God.

But relationship changes allegiance.

If Jesus is Lord, His words carry authority.

If God is good, His commands are not against our good.

If God is holy, His instructions are not suggestions.

Holy fear closes the gap between "I know what God says" and "I will do what God says."

Pursue Holiness

"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord." - Hebrews 12:14

The word *pursue* is active.

Holiness is not merely something we admire.

We chase after a life increasingly worthy of the Lord.

This is not frantic striving to earn God's love.

It is the response of someone who has seen something of God's beauty and wants life to reflect Him.

Holiness Begins in the Heart

Behavioral holiness is not merely external.

God also cares about motives, thoughts, desires, loyalties, and intentions.

A person can appear morally upright while still nurturing pride, bitterness, envy, lust, greed, or approval-seeking.

Holy fear brings the hidden life under the lordship of Christ.

God is not only forming holy behavior. He is forming holy hearts.

Holiness Brings Us Nearer to God

Holiness is not the ultimate destination.

God Himself is.

We do not pursue purity so that we can admire our purity.

We pursue holiness because we desire unhindered fellowship with the One who is holy.

"The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." - Psalm 25:14

Holy fear does not create distance.

It prepares the heart for deeper intimacy.

Holiness Is Not Dull

Sin often presents itself as freedom.

Holiness can appear restrictive.

But over time we discover the opposite.

Sin enslaves.

Holiness frees us to become who God created us to be.

Loving. truthful. pure. faithful. courageous. humble. generous. whole.

Biblical holiness is life increasingly aligned with the character of God.

Examine Your Heart

1. Where am I most tempted to seek human approval instead of honoring God?

2. Have I ever confused God's grace with permission to remain unchanged?

3. Do I understand the difference between my standing in Christ and my daily conduct?

4. Is there an area God has already shown me that needs to be cleansed from my life?

5. What hidden thought, motive, or desire most needs to come under Christ's authority?

6. When I think about holiness, do I primarily think about restriction or about becoming more like God?

7. Where have I delayed obedience because I was more concerned about people than God?

8. What would active pursuit of holiness look like in one ordinary part of my life this week?

Talk About It Together

1. Why can the fear of people become such a strong obstacle to holiness?

2. What is the difference between positional holiness and behavioral holiness?

3. Why is it important to distinguish justification from sanctification?

4. What can happen when grace is taught without a corresponding call to obedience?

5. How do we actively pursue holiness without falling into legalism?

6. What does 2 Corinthians 7:1 suggest about our responsibility in spiritual growth?

7. Why does biblical holiness need to reach motives and desires, not merely outward behavior?

8. How can holy fear deepen intimacy with God rather than push us away from Him?

LOOK MORE CLOSELY

2 Corinthians 7:1

Read 2 Corinthians 7:1 slowly and notice the movement from God's promises to our response.

Grace → Cleansing → Holiness → Reverence

Grace

The verse begins in the context of promises God has already given His people.

Cleansing

We are called to remove what defiles both outward conduct and inward life.

Holiness

The goal is increasing maturity in a life set apart for God.

Holy Fear

Reverence gives God's commands weight and moves us toward faithful obedience.

Prayer

Father, thank You that my acceptance before You rests in Jesus Christ and not in my performance. Teach me to live like someone who belongs to You. Show me where the approval of people has become too important, where I have become casual about sin, or where I have confused grace with passivity. Give me courage to cleanse what needs to be removed, humility to receive correction, and strength through Your Spirit to pursue holiness with joy. Form in me a life that reflects Your character and draws me closer to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Pursue One Area of Holiness

Do not try to change everything at once.

Ask God to show you one area where holiness needs to move from conviction into action.

It could be: a habit, a relationship, sexual purity, speech, entertainment, resentment, dishonesty, people-pleasing, or delayed obedience.

God is calling me to pursue holiness in _____.

One concrete step I will take is _____.

Keep your response specific. Depend on God's grace. Then take the step.

Five Days in Scripture

Day 1 - Ephesians 1:3-14

What has God already done for you in Christ?

Day 2 - 1 Peter 1:13-21

How does belonging to a holy God shape the way we live?

Day 3 - 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

What does Paul connect with cleansing and holiness?

Day 4 - 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

What practical areas of life does sanctification touch?

Day 5 - Hebrews 12:12-17

What does it mean to pursue holiness actively?

For each reading, ask:

What has God already done by grace?

What kind of life is He calling me to pursue?

What response of obedience is needed?

REMEMBER THIS WEEK

Pursue What Reflects God

Holiness is not how we earn God's love. It is how a life begins to look when God's love and holiness reshape us.

Receive grace.

Fear God above people.

Cleanse what defiles.

Obey what He says.

Pursue holiness.

Draw near to Him.

We do not become holy to belong to God. We pursue holiness because we already belong to Him.

WEEK 4

God's Word

Holy fear gives God's Word weight. We receive what He says with humility, trust His character, and learn to obey promptly, willingly, and completely.

THE AWE OF GOD - A SIX-WEEK JOURNEY INTO THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Week Four

PURPOSE OF THIS WEEK

Week Four moves the fear of the Lord into one of the most practical areas of discipleship: our response to God's Word.

The goal is not merely to agree that Scripture is true, but to examine whether God's voice actually carries greater authority than our preferences, convenience, fears, circumstances, or desire for immediate benefit.

This week we will focus on three expressions of reverent obedience: obey immediately, obey without demanding an obvious benefit, and obey all the way to completion.

BIG IDEA

To tremble at God's Word is to give His voice greater weight than every competing voice. Holy fear produces willing obedience: we respond promptly, trust God when His wisdom is not yet clear, and faithfully complete what He has asked us to do.

Read Before You Begin

Key Scriptures

Isaiah 66:1-2 - God looks with favor on the humble and contrite person who trembles at His Word.

Proverbs 16:6 - The fear of the Lord moves us away from evil.

1 Samuel 2:27-30 - Eli's story reveals the seriousness of honoring people above God's clear direction.

1 Samuel 15:1-23 - Saul's incomplete obedience shows that partial compliance cannot redefine what God commanded.

Matthew 16:24-26 - Jesus calls His followers to surrender self-preservation and entrust their lives to Him.

Philippians 2:12-14 - Reverence, God's work within us, obedience, and freedom from complaining belong together.

Opening Question

Which is harder for you: obeying when God's instruction is clear, or continuing to obey when the outcome is unclear?

Teaching Summary

Trembling at God's Word

"But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word." - Isaiah 66:2

To tremble at God's Word does not mean living in emotional panic.

It means recognizing who is speaking.

God's Word is not one opinion among many.

It comes from the Creator who knows us completely, sees what we cannot see, and understands what leads to life.

Reverence gives God's Word the highest place.

God's Character Makes Obedience Reasonable

Obedience is not blind trust in an untrustworthy authority.

It is a response to the character of God.

He is holy. Wise. Good. Loving. Faithful.

He knows what is right for us even when we do not understand the full reason behind what He says.

I can trust God's command because I can trust God's character.

Obedience Includes the Heart

It is possible to perform the correct action while inwardly resisting God.

Scripture connects obedience not only with follow-through, but also with joy, gratitude, and willingness.

"Do all things without complaining and disputing." - Philippians 2:14

Complaining can reveal that we are technically complying while inwardly treating God's direction as burdensome.

Holy fear teaches both a right action and a heart that honors the One who speaks.

Delayed Obedience

We often think disobedience means saying, "No."

But sometimes it sounds like: "Later."

We wait for a better time, more convenient circumstances, more emotional readiness, or greater certainty about the outcome.

Delay can slowly teach the heart to treat God's voice lightly.

When God's will is clear, reverence moves toward response.

Obey Immediately

Immediate obedience means that once God's will is clear, we stop negotiating for a different answer.

This does not mean acting recklessly on every impression.

It means that where Scripture has already spoken clearly, we do not pretend that more information is needed.

Forgive. Tell the truth. Flee sexual immorality. Refuse gossip. Keep your word. Love your neighbor.

Clear truth calls for a clear response.

Do Not Substitute Activity for Obedience

We can become busy doing things for God while avoiding something God has already told us to do.

We may serve, give, study, volunteer, or attend church faithfully while resisting a particular area of surrender.

Religious activity is valuable, but it cannot substitute for obedience.

Honor Is Revealed When Loyalties Compete

Eli's story shows the seriousness of allowing human relationships to carry greater weight than God's command.

"Those who honor Me I will honor." - 1 Samuel 2:30

Honor becomes visible when two loyalties compete.

The question is not merely what we say about God, but what receives the greatest weight when obedience costs us.

Obey Without an Obvious Benefit

The second movement asks us to obey even when the immediate benefit is not visible.

We naturally ask: What will I gain? What will this cost? Will life become easier? Will people approve?

But obedience cannot be reduced to a calculation of personal advantage.

Sometimes we obey because God is God, before we understand where obedience will lead.

Faith Trusts Beyond Understanding

Scripture contains many moments when God's direction did not appear obvious from a human perspective.

Abraham left what was familiar.

Israel marched around Jericho.

Peter let down the nets again after an unsuccessful night.

Faith does not mean God is irrational.

It means His wisdom exceeds ours.

Obedience Is Not a Bargain

We can sometimes obey with an unspoken expectation: "If I do this for God, He should do this for me."

That turns obedience into a transaction.

Reverent obedience says: God is worthy whether or not the immediate outcome is what I hoped for.

Obey to Completion

Beginning well is not the same as finishing faithfully.

We may start with enthusiasm, then become distracted, discouraged, opposed, or tired.

Holy fear teaches perseverance.

Faithful obedience finishes what God asked us to begin.

Saul and Incomplete Obedience

In 1 Samuel 15, Saul carried out much of what God commanded, but not all of it.

He then explained and justified the part he chose not to follow.

The account exposes a difficult truth:

We cannot redefine obedience around the portion of God's instruction we were willing to follow.

Small Compromises Matter

Losing holy fear often begins quietly.

A conviction ignored. A command delayed. A compromise excused. An act of obedience left unfinished.

Repeated resistance can make the conscience less sensitive.

That is why faithfulness in small matters matters.

Jesus Obeyed to the Finish

"He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." - Philippians 2:8

Jesus is our clearest example of complete obedience.

His obedience carried Him through rejection, suffering, Gethsemane, and the cross.

He did not merely begin the Father's mission.

He completed it.

Obedience and Grace Belong Together

We are not saved because our obedience is perfect.

We are saved by grace through faith in Christ.

Yet grace does not make obedience irrelevant.

Grace creates a relationship in which Jesus is Savior and Lord.

When we fail, we confess and return.

When we stumble, we receive mercy and keep following.

The growing posture of discipleship is: "Yes, Lord."

Examine Your Response to God's Word

1. When Scripture conflicts with what I want, which usually carries more weight: God's Word or my preference?

2. Is there something God has already made clear that I am delaying?

3. Do I ever substitute Christian activity for a specific area of obedience?

4. How do I respond when obedience offers no obvious personal benefit?

5. Is there an act of obedience I began but have not faithfully completed?

6. Do complaint, resentment, or resistance often accompany my obedience?

7. Where am I tempted to honor another person's opinion above God's clear instruction?

8. What is one small area where greater faithfulness would keep my heart tender toward God?

Talk About It Together

1. What does it mean practically to tremble at God's Word?

2. Why can delayed obedience become spiritually dangerous?

3. How can religious activity become a substitute for actual obedience?

4. Why does God's character matter when His instruction does not make sense to us?

5. What is the difference between obeying God and bargaining with God?

6. Why is partial obedience so easy to justify?

7. What does Saul's story teach about obedience to completion?

8. How can we cultivate joyful obedience rather than reluctant compliance?

LOOK MORE CLOSELY

1 Samuel 15:1-23

Read the passage slowly and pay attention to the movement from command to action to explanation.

Hearing → Obeying → Finishing → Honoring

The Command

What had God clearly told Saul to do? Where was the instruction specific?

The Partial Response

What part did Saul do? What part did he leave incomplete?

The Explanation

How did Saul justify what he had done? What role did other people play in his explanation?

God's Verdict

What does the passage reveal about obedience, sacrifice, and honoring God's authority?

Prayer

Father, teach me to tremble at Your Word. Forgive me for the times I have delayed what You made clear, obeyed only the parts I preferred, complained while complying, or expected obedience to guarantee the outcome I wanted. Help me trust Your character when I do not understand, honor Your voice above every competing voice, and follow through faithfully on what You ask of me. Give me a willing heart that responds, "Yes, Lord," with humility, joy, and trust. In Jesus' name, amen.

Identify Your Next Act of Obedience

Ask God to bring one specific area of obedience to your attention.

Then decide which response is needed:

Begin - Stop delaying and take the first step.

Trust - Obey even though you cannot yet see the benefit or outcome.

Finish - Return to something God asked you to do and carry it through to completion.

Because I honor God's Word, I will _____.

Make the response specific enough that you will know whether you actually did it.

Five Days in Scripture

Day 1 - Isaiah 66:1-5

What kind of person does God say He looks upon with favor?

Day 2 - 1 Samuel 2:22-36

What happens when human relationships receive greater honor than God's command?

Day 3 - 1 Samuel 15:1-23

How does Saul redefine his partial response, and how does God evaluate it?

Day 4 - Matthew 16:21-27

What does Jesus teach about surrender, self-preservation, and following Him?

Day 5 - Philippians 2:5-16

What do Jesus' obedience and Paul's instructions teach about humility, obedience, and attitude?

For each reading, ask:

What has God made clear?

What competing voice might make obedience difficult?

What would prompt, trusting, complete obedience look like?

REMEMBER THIS WEEK

Give God's Word Its Proper Weight

Holy fear does not merely admire God's Word. It receives His Word with enough reverence to respond.

Listen humbly.

Trust God's character.

Obey promptly.

Obey without bargaining.

Obey with a willing heart.

Finish faithfully.

When God's Word is clear, the faithful response is not endless negotiation. It is obedience.

WEEK 5

Intimacy with God

Holy fear does not push us away from God. It teaches us to draw near with reverence, trust, honesty, obedience, and a growing desire to know Him for who He truly is.

THE AWE OF GOD - A SIX-WEEK JOURNEY INTO THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Week Five

PURPOSE OF THIS WEEK

Week Five explores the surprising biblical connection between the fear of the Lord and intimacy with God.

We will examine where intimacy begins, how distorted images of God affect the way we approach Him, and what Scripture means when it speaks about friendship with God.

The goal is not merely to feel spiritually close to God, but to know Him more truthfully, trust Him more deeply, respond to Him more honestly, and walk with Him in reverent friendship.

BIG IDEA

Intimacy with God begins when we see Him truthfully. Holy fear removes casualness and false assumptions so that we can draw near through Christ with confidence, reverence, trust, obedience, and a growing desire for God Himself.

Read Before You Begin

Key Scriptures

Psalms 25:12-14 - The fear of the Lord is connected with God's counsel, covenant, and close fellowship.

Exodus 33:11-18 - Moses knew unusual closeness with God and longed above all for His presence and glory.

James 2:21-23 - Abraham's trust in God is connected with his being called a friend of God.

John 15:9-15 - Jesus speaks of love, obedience, remaining in Him, and friendship with His disciples.

Hebrews 4:14-16 - Through Christ we are invited to approach God's throne with confidence for mercy and grace.

1 John 4:16-19 - God's love drives out the fear of punishment while drawing His people into loving relationship.

Opening Question

When you think about being close to God, what do you believe makes that closeness possible?

Teaching Summary

Where Intimacy Begins

"The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." - Psalm 25:14

Scripture does not present holy fear and intimacy as opposites.

Psalm 25 connects reverence for God with closeness to God.

Intimacy begins when we stop approaching God according to our own assumptions and begin receiving Him as He truly is.

Holy fear does not close the door to intimacy. It prepares the heart for it.

Knowing About God and Knowing God

We can know many true things about God without living in a deep relationship with Him.

Information matters, but intimacy moves beyond information.

Truth becomes trust. Trust becomes surrender. Surrender becomes obedience. Obedience becomes a history of walking with God.

Biblical knowledge should lead us toward the God who has revealed Himself.

Holy Fear Draws Us Near

The fear of the Lord is not the fear that God is waiting to reject His children.

Through Christ we are welcomed.

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace." - Hebrews 4:16

Confidence and reverence belong together.

Grace gives us confidence to come near. God's holiness teaches us never to treat that access casually.

We come confidently because of Christ and reverently because of who God is.

A False View of God

The way we picture God profoundly affects the way we relate to Him.

If our view of God is distorted, prayer, worship, obedience, repentance, and trust will also be distorted.

Some see God primarily as a harsh judge.

Others imagine Him as endlessly permissive.

Both pictures miss something essential.

The Harsh Judge

In this false picture, God is mainly angry, disappointed, and looking for reasons to punish.

This often produces anxiety, constant guilt, insecurity, and attempts to earn God's approval.

It overlooks the mercy, grace, and welcome revealed through Jesus Christ.

The Indulgent Grandfather

The opposite distortion sees God as loving but never corrective.

Sin is treated lightly. Obedience becomes optional. Holiness receives little attention.

This picture emphasizes love while neglecting God's holiness, authority, and justice.

The Holy Father and King

Scripture gives us a fuller picture.

God is perfectly loving. Perfectly holy. Infinitely merciful. Completely just. Approachable through Christ. Worthy of absolute reverence.

This produces both confidence and humility.

We run to God, not away from Him, but we never treat Him as common.

Love and Holy Fear Belong Together

Love and holy fear are not enemies.

Love draws us near.

Holy fear keeps our hearts surrendered.

Without love, fear can become legalism.

Without reverence, love can become casual and self-centered.

Love draws us near. Holy fear keeps us surrendered. Together they deepen intimacy.

Friends of God

Scripture uses remarkable language for God's relationship with His people.

Abraham is called God's friend.

Moses speaks with God with unusual closeness.

Jesus calls His disciples friends.

These descriptions do not reduce God's holiness.

They magnify His grace.

The holy God chooses to make Himself known.

Abraham: Friendship Expressed Through Trust

"Abraham believed God... and he was called the friend of God." - James 2:23

Abraham's friendship with God was expressed through trust.

God called him beyond what was familiar.

Abraham did not understand every detail, but he learned to entrust himself to the One who called him.

Intimacy deepens when trust moves from theory into obedience.

Moses: Friendship Expressed Through Presence

"The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." - Exodus 33:11

Moses did not merely want instructions from God.

He wanted God's presence.

He understood that the greatest gift was not simply God's help, but God Himself.

The deepest gift of relationship with God is God Himself.

Jesus Calls His Disciples Friends

"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." - John 15:14

Jesus connects friendship and obedience.

Not because flawless behavior earns friendship, but because genuine relationship includes trust, loyalty, openness, and shared purpose.

Friendship with Jesus is not familiarity without surrender.

Obedience Deepens Relationship

Week Four focused on obeying God's Word.

Week Five shows why obedience matters relationally.

Continual resistance hardens the heart.

Willing obedience keeps us responsive.

As we obey, we experience God's wisdom and faithfulness in ways that information alone cannot give us.

Obedience turns what we know about God into a history of walking with God.

Intimacy Requires Honesty

Deep relationships cannot grow through pretending.

God already knows our fears, questions, temptations, disappointments, failures, and desires.

Prayer becomes more intimate when we stop performing and begin speaking truthfully before Him.

Intimacy Requires Listening

Relationship is not one-directional.

We speak to God in prayer, and we listen to what He has revealed through Scripture.

His Word teaches us His character, priorities, promises, commands, and purposes.

The better we know His Word, the more accurately we learn His heart.

Intimacy Requires Time

Deep relationships rarely grow through occasional contact.

They grow through repeated presence.

Prayer. Scripture. Worship. Quiet. Gratitude. Obedience.

None of these practices earns God's love.

They create space to attend to the relationship He has already given us.

Intimacy Is More Than Emotion

There will be seasons when God's presence feels vivid and near.

There may also be seasons when prayer feels quiet or spiritual emotion is less intense.

Mature intimacy is not measured only by how strongly we feel in a moment.

We continue praying. Listening. Obeying. Worshiping. Trusting.

Covenant faithfulness can deepen relationship even when emotion changes.

Intimacy Changes What We Want

We may begin by seeking God mainly for guidance, help, provision, healing, or peace.

Those are legitimate things to bring to Him.

But intimacy grows when the deeper desire becomes:

God, I want to know You.

The gifts remain good.

But the Giver becomes the treasure.

Examine Your Relationship with God

1. When I think about intimacy with God, what do I usually imagine?

2. Do I tend to picture God more as a harsh judge, an indulgent grandfather, or the holy Father and King Scripture reveals?

3. Is there a false assumption about God's character that affects the way I pray or obey?

4. Do I approach God with confidence through Christ while still honoring Him with reverence?

5. Do I primarily seek God's gifts, or am I increasingly learning to desire God Himself?

6. Is there an area where resistance to obedience is affecting my fellowship with God?

7. How honest am I with God about what is actually happening in my heart?

8. What practice would help me become more attentive to God's presence this week?

Talk About It Together

1. Why does Psalm 25:14 connect the fear of the Lord with intimacy and friendship?

2. How can a distorted view of God distort our relationship with Him?

3. What problems result from seeing God mainly as a harsh judge?

4. What problems result from seeing God as endlessly permissive?

5. Why is the picture of God as holy Father and King important for both confidence and humility?

6. How do love and holy fear work together rather than against one another?

7. What do Abraham, Moses, and Jesus' disciples teach us about friendship with God?

8. Why can obedience deepen intimacy with God rather than interfere with it?

LOOK MORE CLOSELY

Psalm 25:12-14

Read Psalm 25:12-14 slowly. Notice what the passage connects with the fear of the Lord.

Reverence → Teachability → Fellowship → Deeper Knowledge

Reverence

The passage begins with a person who fears the Lord. What kind of posture toward God does this describe?

Guidance

God teaches the one who fears Him the way that person should choose. How are reverence and teachability connected?

Fellowship

The passage describes God's close counsel or friendship with those who fear Him. Why might reverence make deeper fellowship possible?

Covenant

God makes His covenant known. Intimacy is grounded in who God is and the relationship He establishes with His people.

Prayer

Father, thank You for inviting me near through Jesus Christ. Give me a true view of who You are. Correct every false picture that makes me hide from You or treat You casually. Teach me to know You as my holy Father and King- perfectly loving, perfectly holy, merciful, just, and worthy of all honor. Deepen my desire for You, not merely for what You can give me. Help me speak honestly, listen carefully, obey willingly, worship reverently, and remain attentive to Your presence. Make my life a growing friendship with You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Practice Unhurried Presence

Set aside one unhurried period this week simply to draw near to God.

Begin with Psalm 25.

Behold - Notice what the passage reveals about God.

Listen - Ask what truth He wants you to receive.

Speak Honestly - Tell God what is actually in your heart.

Obey - Respond to anything He has already made clear.

Remain - Do not hurry away. Sit quietly before Him.

One false view of God I need to surrender is _____.

One way I will intentionally draw near to God this week is _____.

Five Days in Scripture

Day 1 - Psalm 25:1-14

What does this passage connect with fearing and trusting the Lord?

Day 2 - Exodus 33:7-23

What does Moses desire from God, and what does this reveal about intimacy?

Day 3 - James 2:14-26

How are Abraham's faith, obedience, and friendship with God connected?

Day 4 - John 15:9-17

What does Jesus connect with love, obedience, remaining, and friendship?

Day 5 - Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-25

On what basis can believers draw near to God with confidence?

For each reading, ask:

What does this reveal about God's character?

What does it reveal about relationship with Him?

What response of trust, reverence, or obedience is needed?

REMEMBER THIS WEEK

Draw Near with Reverence

Holy fear does not make us run from God. It teaches us to draw near without ever forgetting who He is.

See Him truthfully.

Receive His grace.

Honor His holiness.

Speak honestly.

Listen humbly.

Obey willingly.

Desire God Himself.

Love draws us near. Holy fear keeps our hearts surrendered. Together they form a life of reverent friendship with God.

WEEK 6

The Treasure's Benefits

Holy fear is not a burden to escape. Scripture presents it as a treasure that reorders our fears, gives wisdom, deepens confidence, strengthens obedience, and draws us into a life increasingly centered on God.

THE AWE OF GOD - A SIX-WEEK JOURNEY INTO THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Week Six

PURPOSE OF THIS WEEK

Week Six brings the entire six-week journey together.

We will look at how the fear of the Lord reorders the fears that compete for our trust, why Scripture calls holy fear the beginning of wisdom, and the many ways reverence for God shapes a faithful life.

The goal is not simply to finish the study, but to identify how holy awe can become an ongoing pattern of worship, trust, obedience, wisdom, and intimacy with God.

BIG IDEA

When God becomes the One we fear above every competing voice, lesser fears lose their controlling power. Holy fear makes us teachable, directs us toward wisdom, strengthens confidence, turns us from destructive paths, deepens intimacy with God, and helps us live with Him at the center.

Read Before You Begin

Key Scriptures

Isaiah 8:11-14 - God calls His people to fear Him rather than being ruled by the fears that dominate those around them.

Proverbs 9:10 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Proverbs 14:26-27 - Holy fear is connected with strong confidence and a fountain of life that turns us from destructive paths.

Psalms 25:12-14 - The person who fears the Lord is teachable, receives direction, and enjoys close fellowship with God.

Proverbs 19:23 - The fear of the Lord leads to life and a settled confidence in God's care.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 - Scripture concludes by calling humanity to fear God and keep His commandments.

Opening Question

What fear has the greatest tendency to compete with your trust and obedience to God?

Teaching Summary

The Fear That Eliminates Fears

Holy fear does not mean that Christians never feel afraid.

We can still experience fear about health, finances, relationships, uncertainty, rejection, suffering, or the future.

But reverence for God changes which fear has the greatest authority.

"The Lord of hosts, Him you shall hallow; let Him be your fear." - Isaiah 8:13

When God carries the greatest weight, lesser fears lose the right to control our obedience.

Fear Can Reveal What We Are Trying to Control

Some fears reveal areas where we are struggling to entrust life fully to God.

Our future. Our family. Our health. Our reputation. Our security. Our plans.

This does not mean every anxious feeling is spiritual failure.

But fear can become a place of honest examination:

Have I entrusted this part of my life to the lordship of Jesus?

Holy Fear Produces Confidence

"In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence." - Proverbs 14:26

Biblical fear and confidence are not opposites.

Holy fear moves our confidence away from perfect circumstances and toward the unchanging character of God.

We do not need to know that nothing difficult will happen.

We need to know that whatever happens, God remains God and we belong to Him.

Faithfulness When the Outcome Is Uncertain

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego show what reordered fear looks like in practice.

They knew God could deliver them from the furnace, but they refused to make obedience depend on knowing the outcome beforehand.

Holy fear does not always remove danger. It can remove danger's authority over our loyalty to God.

The Most Important Thing: Wisdom

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." - Proverbs 9:10

Wisdom is more than intelligence or experience.

Biblical wisdom learns to see life from God's perspective and choose what is faithful, good, and true.

Holy fear makes us teachable because it reminds us of the proper order of reality: God is Creator, and we are His creatures.

Wisdom begins when we trust God's wisdom more than our own.

Holy Fear Protects Us from Hidden Traps

"The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death." - Proverbs 14:27

Temptation often appears attractive before its consequences become visible.

God's wisdom helps us recognize danger before experience teaches the lesson painfully.

Holy fear gives us a standard outside ourselves: God's Word, God's character, and God's wisdom.

Holy Fear Turns Us from Evil

"By the fear of the Lord one departs from evil." - Proverbs 16:6

Reverence makes sin less casual.

It does not merely ask, "Can I get away with this?"

It asks:

Will this honor God?

Holy Fear Leads to Life

"The fear of the Lord leads to life." - Proverbs 19:23

God's wisdom is not designed to diminish life.

It directs us away from what destroys and toward what our Creator knows is good.

The life Scripture describes is not necessarily a life without hardship.

It is a life ordered under the wisdom and care of God.

Holy Fear Deepens Intimacy

"The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him." - Psalm 25:14

Week Five showed that reverence and intimacy are not competing ideas.

Holy fear keeps our relationship with God from becoming casual or self-centered.

We draw near because of grace, and we remain reverent because of who God is.

Holy Fear Makes Us Teachable

Psalm 25 connects the fear of the Lord with instruction and direction.

Reverence creates humility.

Humility creates teachability.

Teachability helps us receive God's wisdom instead of insisting on our own.

Reverence → Humility → Teachability → Wisdom

Holy Fear and Grace Work Together

Grace does not teach us to ignore God.

Grace brings us near, forgives us, restores us, and teaches us to live differently.

Holy fear helps us receive that grace without turning God's kindness into casualness.

We do not obey to earn acceptance.

We obey because grace has brought us into relationship with the One we love and honor.

A Summary of Benefits

Scripture associates the fear of the Lord with a remarkable range of spiritual blessings.

These are not guarantees of an easy life.

They describe the kind of life reverence for God cultivates.

Wisdom - Proverbs 9:10

Knowledge - Proverbs 1:7

Confidence - Proverbs 14:26

Turning from evil - Proverbs 16:6

Life - Proverbs 19:23

Guidance - Psalm 25:12

Intimacy with God - Psalm 25:14

Hope - Proverbs 23:17-18

Holy fear shapes a life anchored in God's wisdom, presence, direction, and character.

The Treasure Is God Himself

There is one final danger to avoid.

We can begin wanting the benefits more than the God who gives them.

Wisdom is good. Confidence is good. Direction is good. Intimacy is good. Fruitfulness is good.

But the greatest treasure is still God Himself.

Holy fear is precious because it keeps our hearts centered on the One who is worthy.

Six Weeks in One Movement

Week One - Holy Awe

See God more clearly and recover reverence for who He is.

Week Two - Revealed as We Are

Allow God's holiness to expose what is false and lead us into honesty and humility.

Week Three - Irresistible Holiness

Pursue a life that increasingly reflects God's character.

Week Four - God's Word

Give His voice enough weight to obey promptly, trustingly, and completely.

Week Five - Intimacy with God

Draw near with confidence, reverence, trust, and friendship.

Week Six - The Treasure's Benefits

Treasure the fear of the Lord and walk in the wisdom, confidence, life, and intimacy it cultivates.

Look Back Over the Journey

1. How has my understanding of the phrase "fear of the Lord" changed during this study?

2. What fear currently has the greatest tendency to compete with my trust in God?

3. Where do I most need God's wisdom right now?

4. Which benefit of holy fear has become most meaningful to me, and why?

5. Is there an area where God's Word is clear but I still need to respond in obedience?

6. Has God exposed a false view of Him that I need to replace with biblical truth?

7. In what area of my life do I most need to ask, "What would honor God here?"

8. What practice will help me continue cultivating holy awe after this study ends?

Talk About the Whole Journey

1. Why can fearing God actually weaken the controlling power of other fears?

2. Why does Scripture call the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom?

3. How does holy fear create confidence rather than anxiety?

4. Which biblical benefit of holy fear stands out most to your group?

5. How does holy fear protect us from becoming casual about sin?

6. How have the six sessions connected holiness, obedience, intimacy, and wisdom?

7. What is the difference between wanting God's benefits and wanting God Himself?

8. What would help holy awe become an ongoing way of life rather than a six-week topic?

LOOK MORE CLOSELY

Proverbs 14:26-27

Read these two verses slowly and notice what the fear of the Lord produces.

Reverence → Confidence → Life → Faithful Direction

Confidence

Why would reverence for God create strong confidence rather than insecurity?

Refuge

What does it mean for security to be rooted in God rather than circumstances?

Life

How does God's wisdom lead us toward what is life-giving?

Escape from Snares

What destructive path might holy fear help you recognize or avoid?

Prayer

Father, thank You for revealing Yourself as holy, loving, merciful, wise, and worthy of all honor. Teach me to fear You above every competing fear. Give me wisdom where I lack it, courage where fear controls me, obedience where I have delayed, and humility where I have trusted myself. Keep me from wanting Your gifts more than I want You. Let holy awe shape my worship, my choices, my relationships, my private life, and my future. Help me continue walking with You in reverence, confidence, intimacy, and trust. In Jesus' name, amen.

Choose One Lasting Practice

Do not end the study with only a new definition.

Choose one practice that will help holy awe continue shaping your life.

Behold - Regularly read passages that focus your attention on God's character and greatness.

Obey - Respond promptly when God's Word makes your next step clear.

Examine - Ask what fear, motive, or desire is carrying too much weight.

Worship - Begin prayer by remembering who God is before presenting requests.

Draw Near - Practice unhurried time with God in Scripture, prayer, gratitude, and silence.

Because I treasure the fear of the Lord, I will _____.

The fear I most need to surrender to God is _____.

Five Days in Scripture

Day 1 - Isaiah 8:11-14

What competing fears does God call His people to place beneath reverence for Him?

Day 2 - Proverbs 9:1-12

Why is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom?

Day 3 - Proverbs 14:26-27; 19:23

What benefits are connected with fearing the Lord?

Day 4 - Psalm 25:1-14

What do reverence, guidance, trust, and intimacy have in common?

Day 5 - Ecclesiastes 12:9-14

How does this passage summarize a God-centered life?

For each reading, ask:

What does this reveal about God?

What benefit of holy fear appears here?

What response would honor God today?

REMEMBER THIS WEEK

Treasure the Fear of the Lord

Holy fear is not about running from God. It is about seeing Him clearly enough that His greatness reshapes the way we live.

Behold His holiness.

Receive His grace.

Fear Him above lesser fears.

Trust His wisdom.

Obey His Word.

Pursue holiness.

Draw near with reverence.

Treasure God Himself.

The study ends here, but a life of holy awe is meant to continue.

SIX-WEEK JOURNEY COMPLETE

Carry Holy Awe Forward

The study ends here, but a life of reverence does not.

Keep beholding God's holiness. Keep receiving His grace. Keep giving His Word weight. Keep obeying what He makes clear. Keep drawing near with confidence and reverence.

Let holy awe become a way of life.

LIVING TRUTH MINISTRY