

## **The Fear of the Lord**

**Psalm 34:11-16**

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### **Introduction:**

- I. God places a high priority on knowledge. There is no place for someone to “float through” the Christian life without having a thorough knowledge of the Bible and the Christian’s duty.
  - a. In Hosea 4:6, God lists knowledge as a main requirement for being God’s people. His people were destroyed “for lack of knowledge,” and because “you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.”
  - b. When we do not grow in knowledge, we run the danger of costing ourselves and our families salvation!
    - i. How can we motivate ourselves?
      1. Proverbs 1:7 – The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.
        - a. In other words, you cannot have the knowledge necessary for salvation until you fear God. In fact, this command encompasses everything the Christian must do (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).
      - ii. Now, we could go into what kinds of fear we must have in order to please God, but that discussion is for another day. We are going to discuss today how to live our lives “in the fear of the Lord,” according to Psalm 34.

### **Discussion:**

- I. You must desire life.
  - a. If you do not truly desire eternal life over the joys of this world, there is nothing that will help you get to heaven, except to desire to “love many days, that you may see good.”
  - b. “Delights in life.”
    - i. Psalm 1 – we will delight in one of two things
      1. God or the world.
        - a. Delight in the world makes us ungodly (irreverent), sinful, and scornful.
          - i. The ungodly and sinner are like chaff that the wind drives away. They shall not stand in judgment with the righteous.
            1. I Peter 4:17-18. – If the righteous is barely saved, what happens to the ungodly and sinner?
          - ii. I John 2:15-17 – Again, it is all about your desire. If you desire the things of the world, there is no

church building, preacher, teaching, or any other part of religion that will save you.

1. We must first fix our desires.

ii. You cannot fear the Lord while desiring this world. You must desire eternal life.

II. You must keep your tongue from evil and your lips from deceit.

a. The second thing necessary for us to walk in the fear of the Lord is proper speech.

i. James 3:5-6 – A small spark can burn a whole forest to the ground.

1. Similarly, the tongue is small, but can be an unruly (volatile) fire set on fire by hell itself.

2. It is important to realize the implications found in the following verses 11-12

a. A fountain only brings forth one kind of water.

b. A tree only bears one kind of fruit.

i. If our speech is not “good,” how can we bring forth “good” fruit? It is impossible.

ii. Even if we praise God, but curse people, verse 10 says that this ought not to be so.

iii. Man is made in God’s likeness. We curse God’s likeness by cursing other people.

b. Delight in the law of the Lord makes us a well-watered tree

i. We are strong, nourished, and fruitful, so “whatever we do prospers.”

c. Notice what he says about the one who delights in God’s law. He meditates in it day and night.

i. “moan, growl, utter, speak, muse.” – i.e., to make one’s natural sound.

1. For you to be “fruitful,” strong as a tree planted by water, the word of God must be an automatic response for you!

a. If you are faced with trial, you go to the Bible.

i. Mt. 4:4, 7, 10 – Jesus resisted temptation by “It is written.”

b. If you are distressed, you pray.

c. If you are happy, you sing praises.

i. James 5:13

ii. Psalm 19:15 – meditations come from the heart

1. Mark 7:20-23

a. Whatever “fruit” comes out!

b. Mt. 7:16-20

i. We are either “good” fruitbearers or “corrupt” fruitbearers.

1. Only the good fruit prospers.

d. II Tim 2:16 – These lead to more ungodliness. Fear of the Lord requires reverent speech.

III. You must turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

a. Action follows desire. That is why Jesus could say, “You shall know them by their fruits.”

- b. Whatever [the man who delights in the law] does shall prosper. Again, desire translates into action.
- c. Notice Ezra's success in Ezra 7:9-10 – Ezra prospered on his journey because the hand of the Lord was upon him.
  - i. The hand of the Lord was upon him “for Ezra had prepared his heart (desire) to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it (action), and to teach in Israel (speech) statutes and judgments.”
- d. It should easily be understood that a person's actions will have an integral part in their salvation or condemnation at judgment.
  - i. Mt. 7:21-23 – Whoever “does” the will of my Father in heaven.
  - ii. Mt. 24:45 – Inasmuch as you “did not do”...
  - iii. Romans 2:6-11 – He will render to every man according to his deeds.
    - 1. He later says “To the Jew first and also to the Greek.”
      - a. The Jews had knowledge of God, whereas the Greeks did not. Paul said that there is no excuse for either party, **but** that the Jews will be punished more strictly. They knew the truth!
      - b. This is why Peter says, “It is now time for judgment to **begin** at the household of God. And if it begins with us, what shall the outcome be of those who do not obey the gospel?”

### Conclusion:

- I. Just how do we obey the gospel? Romans 10 gives us what we need, by going backward through the progression. Paul says, “How can we take the last step without taking the steps that come before it?”
  - a. We have to listen to God's word (17).
    - i. That goes for the one who desires to become a Christian as well as for the one who became a Christian long ago. First, we must meditate upon God's word and hear its message.
  - b. We have to be faithful (14).
    - i. We must believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (Heb. 11:6).
    - ii. We must believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son, sent to save the world from sin (John 3:16).
    - iii. We must be faithful in the sense that we continue in those things that are written. We hold up our end of the covenant (Rev. 2:10).
      - 1. Again, these are necessary for both the new convert and the old Christian alike.
  - c. We must call on the name of the Lord.
    - i. One of the ten commandments was not to take the name of the Lord in vain. The penalty for this was to be death! Just what is considered calling on the name of the Lord?
      - 1. This involves confessing Christ before men (I Kg. 18:24).
      - 2. This involves baptism (Acts 22:16).

3. This involves worship (Gen. 13:4).
4. This involves prayer (II Kg. 5:11).
  - a. Baptism is referred in John 3:5 as a new birth. Baptism starts our Christian walk with God. Once we are born again, we become the children of God (Gal. 3:26-27). It is therefore necessary! None of us became children without being born!
  - b. The others of these actions are things that we must do from the beginning of our Christianity until the end of our lives.
- d. This list of actions ought to direct everything that we do on this earth.
  - i. Eccl. 12:13-14 – Fear God, keep his commands, because this is man’s whole duty. This is everything we are here to do.
- e. This fear of the Lord is what brings wisdom. When we live in the fear of the Lord, we live wisely, redeeming the time.
  - i. Psalm 90:10-12 – Fear with wisdom brings urgency. Realizing the shortness of time causes us to do something about the things we fear.
  - ii. What will you do? Will you submit to wisdom and get your life in order?
    1. Look at this world, how it is perishing. Look at the majority of people of our communities, country, and planet: how sad it is that they are going to be condemned at judgment!
      - a. Luke 23:40 – Even the criminal on the cross beside Jesus recognized his sad condition
      - b. If you are not right with God, you know it better than anyone else. Do you not fear God, knowing that you are under the same condemnation? What will you do to prevent that?