

THE WAY GOD'S CHILDREN BEHAVE
God's children respect their heavenly father
1 Peter 1:17-21

Intro: The way God's children behave. First God's children seek to imitate the character of their heavenly father.

And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. (1 Peter 1:17-21)

The main exhortation of this section is : *conduct yourselves in fear.*

What does it mean to fear God?

Fear has a broad semantical range: terror, fear, alarm, fright, reverence, respect, awe

Fear of God is first of all terror at the prospect of punishment

It is a terrifying (fearful, KJV) thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:31)

Fear is rooted in the recognition of God as Judge of all who will punish those who live in disobedience to Him.

“And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. “But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him! (Luke 12:4-5)

This terror of punishment for the believer has been ameliorated by the grace and mercy of God in the gospel.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” (Romans 8:15)

John tells us that as love of God is perfected in us, the terror of punishment is “cast out”.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. (1 John 4:18)

Fear of God then is transformed into a feeling of reverence or awe because of the character, position, and power of God.

Vine define then this fear of God is “reverential and moral, a controlling motive of the life, in matters spiritual and moral, not a mere fear of His power and righteous retribution, but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him, a fear which banishes the terror that shrinks from His presence and which influence the disposition and attitude of one whose circumstances are guided by trust in God through the indwelling Spirit of God”.

Ill. Two young people are contemplating doing something wrong: One says, “If my father found out he would kill me!” The other says, “If my father found out, it would kill him!”

When we can get to a point in our life that what matters most to us is what our actions do to God, then we’re getting the idea of Christian fear! This is the fear that a loving child has for a loving father.

Why we should fear God

Because we address Him or call upon Him as Father

Do you remember a time in your life when you blurted out something disrespectful to a parent and the other quickly put you back in place, “That’s not any way to talk about your father/mother!”

We ought to fear God for the same reason that we ought to fear our earthly parents; because He is our Father.

We ought to fear God because we call upon Him for help and blessing in this life. Every time God answers a prayer, grants a blessing we ought to fear Him more!

Because life on earth is only temporary

If a visitor comes among us we may inquire about where he “lives” and he will tell us the city or town of his residence. Will may also ask, “Where are you staying?” We are acknowledging that this is not his home!

Peter refers to “the time of our stay on earth” as if to remind us that we are strangers living in a foreign land. We’re just “staying” here on earth; but we’re going to “live” somewhere for all eternity!

That will put the fear of the Lord in anyone who thinks about it!

Because God will impartially judge us according to our deeds.

This expression reminds us first that God will be our judge.

It reminds us that His judgment will be impartial.

This is assuring that we will be treated fairly.

But is also a warning that we will not get special treatment. Sometimes children misbehave because they know that Daddy can get them off the hook. He has connections. We won’t get off the hook because we have a close connection with the Judge.

Because God has redeemed us at great cost.

Think of what God did to save our souls.

We were not redeemed with money, but with blood.

The sacrifices of the OT were inadequate to atone for sin.

They were declaring what God would some day do!

The Lamb God offered was unspotted and unblemished

Jesus had no sins

Jesus was the best offering possible.

Because God's plan has existed from before the foundation of the world

Consider that from all eternity God has known what he would do through Christ.

What kind of God is this that makes a world with a purpose in mind and methodically after thousands of years sends His Son to be its redeemer. God never became impatient nor disinterested in the purpose He had for mankind, though we are often both.

We ought to fear Him because of this, because we have been able to know and to be a part of the plan of the ages!

Because God is the reason for both our faith and our hope!

Because of what God has done through Jesus we can look at life differently. When others look at problems and death with despair we can face them with hope of a better world.

Conclusion: There's not much worse than a disrespectful and rebellious child, unless it is a disrespectful and rebellious child of God! God has given us every reason to fear Him!