

# Reverence for God

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of reverence for God as foundational to wisdom and spirituality, illustrated through the life of Job.*

**Duration:** 1:00:03

**Scripture:** Matthew 18:7

**Topics:** "Fear Of God", "Christian Living"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the importance of the fear of God, emphasizing how Job, the man of integrity, was a model of godliness even in the face of trials. It highlights the significance of fearing God in various aspects of life, including uprightness, sexual morality, and worship, pointing out that true praise and holiness can only be perfected in the fear of God.

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## Transcript

I want to turn today to the first book that God wrote, and that's the book of Job. That may surprise some of you, but it's my firm conviction that Job was written before Genesis. The book of Genesis was written by Moses 1,500 years before Christ, about 500 years after Abraham lived.

And the book of Job is the only book in the whole Bible which has no connection with Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. Every other book has some connection, except this one. It's unique among the 66 books.

It's written by a man who never knew Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, had no connection with them, was not a part of their descendants, and therefore I believe he was outside of that stream. And it appears as though these things were written very soon after they happened, because there's such details of the conversation between people, word-for-word. I mean, I can hardly write word-for-word conversations I heard last week.

And here is a detailed description of conversations that went on for some time, which means it is written pretty soon after it happened. And so, therefore, if he was part of a tribe of Israel, it would have been mentioned. So, if he was outside the tribe of Israel, it must have been before Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because after that, we read from that time onwards, God dealt only with the people of Israel from the time of the giving of the law.

God didn't deal with people outside after that, and it's after the giving of the law, Genesis was written. So that's why I believe that Job was the first book that God wrote when he was writing scripture. It's very

interesting to study Job with that in mind, that when God was writing a book for man, the first chapter in that book was about Job.

And that teaches us that the first thing God looks for on earth is a godly man or a godly woman. He's not looking for a nation, he's looking for a man or a woman. And you'll find throughout the history of Israel that it was lone individuals that changed the history of the nation.

When Israel was declining and going down badly, one Samuel, one Moses, one Joshua, one Samuel. Throughout history it's like that. When 600,000 Israelites worshipped idols, that golden calf, one man, Moses, turned them around.

One man, Samuel, changed the face of that nation. One man, David. One man, Isaiah, Jeremiah, it was always like that.

One man had a tremendous influence on the nation. And once you come into the New Testament, God's perfect will was that it should be a body of people now that is his witness, not an individual. It's not a lone Isaiah or Jeremiah or Elijah.

It's the body of Christ, the church. There was no such thing in the Old Testament like a church, but now local churches like little lights in the darkness all over the world are God's plan to be, to proclaim his witness in every generation. But you read in the New Testament and in 2,000 years of church history, what is it that preserves a church as a light? Usually one man.

Again, Paul once told the elders in Ephesus, I've been with you three years, he said in Acts 20. And during all those three years, you can read that in the latter half of Acts 20, not one wolf could come inside this church. But now I am leaving.

I've got to go. And I know what's going to happen after I leave. All those wolves who've been waiting outside are going to come right in.

And not only that, you fellas who are elders of this wonderful church, Ephesus, you're going to seek your own. You didn't dare do that when I was around here, but you're going to do that once I leave. And you're going to get your own following, and things are going to go haywire.

That's exactly what happened. You read the second letter to the Ephesians in Revelation chapter 2, and you find churches lost its first love, and it's so bad that the Lord says that was the finest church in Paul's time, because he spent three years there. But they didn't take Paul's warning seriously.

They said, oh we'll be okay. That's how the Israelites were. They never took the warnings of the prophets seriously.

They said we'll be okay. And the Ephesians said we'll be okay, and they were not okay. And they drifted.

They lost out, and finally they lost the lampstand itself. There's no witness there in Ephesus today. It's a Muslim nation today in Turkey, and that's the state of affairs.

So God begins with a man, and that's in his first book. He talked about a man, and he talked about a man who had a number of qualities. Here is the first sentence.

Listen to this. The first sentence when God writes a book for a man, for a human, for the world. Read it.

There was a man in the land of Uz. See, this is how it begins. There was one man.

This is how God's book begins. There was one man. I mean, what about the creation of the world? Yeah, that we'll write later.

We'll write Genesis later, but first we'll write about a man. There was one man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. That man was blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil.

The first thing that God writes about this man is his character, not his gifts, not his intelligence. I'm sure he was a very intelligent man, but that's not first. He was a man who feared God.

He was upright that you couldn't find a single thing to blame in his life, and he turned away from evil, and it says in the Message Bible, he hated evil with a passion. You know what that means? Hating evil with a passion means a fierce desire to hate evil, and he was a family man. Can family men be godly? Sure.

The first man God wrote about was a family man, and he didn't have just one or two children. He had ten children, seven sons and three daughters, and as far as we know, he brought them up in a godly way. We certainly know he prayed for them regularly.

We see there. The other thing we see here is he was a rich man. He had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels.

Those are the ways people counted riches those days. Oxen, donkeys, and very, very many servants. Now, a lot of people think that if you're rich, you can't be spiritual.

Who are the people who think so? Those who are not rich. They're usually jealous of somebody else who is rich, and they have this prejudiced mind which says rich people can't be spiritual. Well, the first person God wrote about was a rich man, and he was the most spiritual man in the world.

It doesn't mean that all rich, I think very few rich people are spiritual. That is true, but because the Bible says God has chosen the poor of the world rich in faith, and 1 Corinthians 1 says not many rich, not many clever are in that crowd, but you can be rich, and you can be spiritual. A lot of people think the opposite of that, that you've got to be poor to be spiritual.

If that were true, then the most spiritual people in Bangalore should be living in the slums, and this church should be full of slum people because we want to be a spiritual church. Is it true? How many of you believe that? No, you don't believe that. You believe that the middle class are spiritual.

Why do you believe that? Because you're a middle class. You see how conceited we are. You know, there are lots of elders in our churches who believe that.

People who live at my level economically are spiritual. People who are richer than me cannot be spiritual. I straight away look at them with the prejudice look and say they are not spiritual.

It's because of fantastic conceit and arrogance and pride that makes people feel I am the standard. Who said you're the standard? Jesus is the standard, and he was poorer than all of us. It's good for all of us to humble ourselves.

Riches or poverty have got nothing to do with spirituality, just like the color of your skin has got nothing to do with spirituality. Your height has got nothing to do with spirituality. Your weight has got nothing to do with spirituality.

The number of children you have has got nothing to do with spirituality. The size of your house doesn't have anything to do with spirituality. What job you have, what country you belong to, whether you're white or yellow or black, makes no difference to spirituality.

You believe all that? It's exactly the same with upper class, middle class, lower class, but you can't believe that because you don't read the Bible. We have to get out a lot of prejudices from our minds before we... and the only way to get prejudice out of our mind is by reading the Bible. Okay, but I'll tell you another thing.

There was... the Bible says, charge those who are rich in the world to be generous. If a rich man is spiritual, he's very generous. That's for sure.

He cares for the poor. Job did. If he doesn't, then he's not spiritual.

And another thing, it says here, this man, the Message Bible says, was the most influential man in the East. Now a lot of people think also, okay, forget riches. If you're influential, you can't be spiritual.

Who said that? You haven't read the Bible. This guy was the most influential man in that entire area and he was the most spiritual man. Oh, what a lot of prejudices we have to get out of our carnal minds before we ever become spiritual.

Whether you have influence or no influence makes no difference to spirituality. So why am I saying all this? That in future at least, when you look at people, do not pass a judgment that this fellow can't be spiritual because he lives in a slum or this fellow can't be spiritual because he lives in a palace. Or this fellow can't be spiritual because he's too influential.

Or this fellow can't be spiritual because he's got no influence. This is crazy, stupidity, thoughts that come from people who haven't read the Bible. Spirituality is completely independent of all these human factors.

Okay, now the other thing we see here is that this man, when his children, you know, they used to have, they were all living in their own houses. They were grown-ups. So Job was like a grandfather almost.

His children were married. They were living in their own house and they would have feasts on their birthdays, which would last a number of days. And then when the days of feasting for their birthdays were over, verse 5, Job would get up early in the morning and sacrifice a burnt offering.

I mean, that was the way those days they, you know, atoned for sin. For each of his children. This is for my oldest son, Lord, and this sacrifice is for my second son.

He didn't sort of pray a general prayer. God, I pray for all ten of my children. No, no, no, no, no.

He prayed for each of them by name. This one, now I pray for this one, and now I pray for this one. You see, the godly men do that.

Godly men pray for each of their children by name. For each one, he offered a burnt offering. And the reason was, he said, perhaps during this time of feasting, they may have sinned.

He doesn't know that they've committed any sin. Perhaps they sinned and may have fought something against God in their hearts. Look at this man's concern.

He's not talking, perhaps my children went and fell into adultery. No, no, no. He hasn't got that far.

He's starting with the heart. He says in verse 5, perhaps my children sinned in their thoughts. Boy, how many of you pray that type of prayer? Lord, my children may have sinned in their thoughts.

Will you please forgive them? This guy lived 4,000 years ago without any Bible, without any fellowship, without any Holy Spirit, without any knowledge of Jesus or Calvary. How did he learn all this? Because he had one characteristic by which we learn everything. The fear of God.

He says he feared God. That means he revered God. And when a man reverences God, the Bible says that is the ABC of wisdom.

The reverence of the Lord or the fear of the Lord is the beginning or the ABC of wisdom. It's like when children go to school, they don't learn geography and physics first because they can't learn that before they learn their ABC. We have the great tragedy in Christendom today of a whole lot of people who are trying to stuff their heads with Bible knowledge but who don't have wisdom for daily life because they have not started with ABC.

I mean, if you had a school in Bangalore where you sent children and they straightaway started teaching them physics and geography and history without teaching them ABC, they're going to fail for 25 years. They'll sit there and fail every year because we tell that stupid school, please start with ABC. Don't start with physics and geography and chemistry.

That's what we need to tell many churches. Please don't teach them about the rapture and the tribulation and the coming of Christ and justification and sanctification before you teach them the ABC. They say they are so ignorant they don't know what the ABC is.

It's written in your Bible. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It's the ABC of wisdom.

Teach them to fear God, to reverence God. Then they'll understand everything else properly. If they don't learn the reverence of God, they will have a lot in their heads and pretty close to zero in their hearts.

That's the condition of a lot of Christendom today and I've been around Christendom a lot more than you. That's the reason why we have so many lovers of money in Christendom. That's the reason why we have so many divorces in Western countries anyway in Christendom today.

That's the reason why so many fine young believers are defeated by the lust of the eyes 365 days of the year. That's why there are so many believers who are involved in internet pornography. You think they lack Bible knowledge? They got Bible knowledge oozing out of their ears but and their tongue especially but they haven't learned ABC.

They haven't learned the fear of the Lord. I blame their teachers. I mean if teacher doesn't teach them how will they learn? You know David said in Psalm 34 Come my children I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

There are very few teachers who can teach the fear of the Lord because there are very few teachers who fear God themselves, who reverence God. Job was a man who feared God and a man who fears God is concerned about his children, concerned about sin in the heart. Notice how in the first paragraph of the Bible that God wrote he spoke about sin in the heart.

He was afraid that they have sinned in their hearts. This guy was really an amazing man. He says in another chapter in chapter 31 he says I made a covenant with my eyes.

Think of that for a moment. I made a covenant with my eyes never to gaze at a young woman. How old did we say Job was? 25? He's a grandfather.

Do 65 year old people have to make a covenant with their eyes? He made it when he was a young man but he maintained it all through. Long ago he says I made a covenant with my eyes. Who taught him that? Was Matthew chapter 5 written there in those days that if you lust with your eyes you'll commit adultery? No you don't need Matthew chapter 5. You don't need the Bible when you have the fear of God.

When you don't have the fear of God you can study all these verses you'll never get anywhere. See what this man had long before the Bible was written. I made a covenant with my eyes that I will not gaze at someone who's not my wife because I'll be tempted and he goes on to say I wouldn't hang around some other woman's house.

What a man he was. He spent his time thinking of how he could help the widows and the orphans instead of thinking how he could lust after women. See because of the fear of God there was only one thing that kept him from all this the fear of God.

There's another place there I don't have time to show you where he says I did not make gold my God. Where did he learn that gold can become your God? That money can become your God? Who taught him that? Was it written in Luke 16 about what Jesus said about mammon? That wasn't even written in those days. When you have the fear of God you don't need any of these verses.

When you have the fear of God it's not only the beginning of wisdom it leads you all the way to the end of wisdom. You don't have the fear of God you learn nothing. This man feared God.

He revered God. He became sensitive to sin. He knew mammon is a tremendous power that can draw me away from God.

He knew that he must use the resources God has given him to help those who are more needy than him. He used to help blind people cross the street. Is that Christianity? Sure it is.

Total strangers. A blind man he helped him cross the street. Yep.

And it says here one day you know various angels and Satan were also there. Satan couldn't come into the third heaven the immediate presence of God. He'd been cast out from there.

But from the second heaven he could speak to God. The other angels were in the third heaven. And it says here the Lord said to Satan where do you come from? Verse 7. Satan said I've been roaming around the earth and walking around on it and he's still doing that.

Satan is alive and well on planet earth. He's moving around all the time. And the Lord says you've been moving around all the earth okay let me ask you a question.

Have you considered have you seriously looked at my friend Joe my servant Joe? Have you looked at him? I know you moved around the earth Satan and you found a lot of ungodly people. A lot of people who claim to be religious and spiritual and who live hypocritical double lives. You've met a lot of people who gossip and backbite and talk a lot of rubbish at home and lust with their eyes and love money and claim to

be spiritual.

I know there are thousands and thousands of people like that on the earth Satan. But in the midst of this crowd have you thought of this man? I know there are few only but have you thought of this one man Joe? He's different. And what does God say about him? There is no one like him verse 8 on the whole earth.

Why? Because he's got so many camels. God doesn't care one bit for it. He doesn't even mention that.

Do you know that God doesn't care for your bank account or the size of your house or your job? I mean that may swell your head with pride but God doesn't care two hoots for that. But he says there's a man who's blameless and upright according to the light he has. He's absolutely upright and certain areas he doesn't have light yet because the Holy Spirit is not living in him.

But according to the light he has he's absolutely blameless and upright. A man who fears God and hates evil with a passion. There are a lot of other things written about Job in the first paragraph but God doesn't mention any of them.

He doesn't say how many children he has. He doesn't say how much wealth he has. Those things don't mean anything.

The man fears God. Satan have you seen a man like that? There's no one who fears God like him in the whole earth. What do you long for? A better job, a higher salary, more comfortable life, a bigger house.

Yeah nothing wrong in these things provided those are not your priorities. But if those things become priorities then you go astray. If you rejoice more in an increment in your salary than in victory over some sin you got it all wrong brother.

You got it all wrong. It's like a dog getting excited that he got another bone to bite. It's really like that.

It's crazy the thing I'm not talking about unbelievers. I'm talking about believers. The thing that excites them.

They got such a huge salary but they're still defeated by lust. Is that great? That you got a better salary more out more opportunity now to love money and waste it on yourself and sin. You're defeated in your life.

You got it all wrong. God is looking for those who fear him. I tell you from the time I first was gripped with this passage many many years ago as a young man this came to my heart and it hasn't gone away more than 45 years it hasn't gone away.

Lord I want to be a man like that. I want to be a man like that. The cry rings from my heart even today.

I want to be a man like that. I want to be a man whom you can boast about to Satan. I do not want to be a man whom human beings praise.

I couldn't care less for the empty praise of man whose breath is in his nose. God takes away that breath. You hold a man's nose for five minutes he's dead.

That's all he is. His breath is in his nose. All his intelligence everything disappears.

If you hold his nose and mouth for five minutes you'll become retarded. Don't try it but anyway that's that's the way it's done. It doesn't mean a thing.

The Bible says that in the last verse of Isaiah 2. Man's breath is in his nose. Don't care for him. I love that verse.

Many years ago the Lord gave it to me. Isaiah chapter 2 I think is the 22nd last verse. Man's breath is in his nose.

Don't care for him. I said Lord I won't care for him. Care for what God thinks about you.

Care for whether God can boast about you to Satan and say there's a man. Have you gone to Bangalore? Have you gone to that street? Have you gone to that house? Have you seen that man? Have you seen that woman? He's different. I know there are lots and lots of hypocrites in the churches in Bangalore but have you seen this man? Have you seen this woman? I want to ask all of you sitting here how many of you have a burning desire as you hear this? Lord I want to be one like that and I'm willing to pay any price if you can boast about me to Satan.

I couldn't care less what the church thinks about me or what people think about me or anything Lord but if you can boast about me to Satan I don't care if I'm the most insignificant unknown person in the world. I tell you honestly that's my desire. God is my witness.

That's my desire. I hope it's yours. If you are like that, you as one person can make a tremendous difference in this world for God.

You'll be able to do what 10,000 people cannot do. It's true. You'll be able to do more than 10,000 people.

One man who fears God and hates sin with a passion will be able to accomplish more in his life than not only 10,000, a million compromising Christians. But God finds so few who whom he can boast about to Satan. Those who fear God, hate evil, are blameless and upright.

What else did God say? What else does he say? Blameless, upright, fearing God, turning away from evil. God doesn't say, do you know Satan? How much of the Bible this fellow knows? Satan will say, I know more than him. And he's right.

You know Satan knows more of the Bible than you and me. He knows every verse and he knows exactly the right verse to quote to lead people astray. He even quoted a verse to Jesus in the temptation to try and tempt him.

Can you imagine how much he knows the Bible to quote exactly the right verse to lead you astray with the scripture. He knows he can't lead you astray with some other religious book but he can lead you astray by quoting scripture. Aha, he knows that.

He tried it with Jesus but he didn't succeed because Jesus knew another scripture which countered what he said and you may not know that other scripture because you're not so careful in studying the scriptures. So Bible knowledge is not the thing, it's a fear of God. Coming regularly to the meetings, do you know that the demons are more regular at these meetings than you are? It's true.

I don't believe there's a single anointed meeting anywhere on the earth where the demons are not present. I mean if he knows of some dead church, some dead meeting, ah forget that, the devil says don't send

anybody there, nothing will happen over there. But if he sees a place where people are going to be delivered from sin and people are going to overcome Satan and put him under that feet, boy he'd send a pack of demons there.

I believe there are a pack of them here right now. Isn't that great? I want to always be in a meeting where there are a pack of demons sent by the devil because he's scared of what's going to be preached there. I don't want to go to a meeting where the devil says ah don't send anybody there, nothing's going to happen.

So don't glory in coming to the meetings, don't glory in Bible knowledge. The devil exceeds you in all of these things. I'll tell you where he cannot excel you to be blameless, upright, fearing God and hating evil with a passion.

Okay do you know the demons can sing better than you? Do you know that? Do you know who influences the rock musicians of the world? Who teaches them all the back masking that goes on in their songs? Demons. They sing much better. They play the guitar much better.

They play the drums much better. Don't glory that you can play the guitar or drums or keyboard or anything. Demons can do that ten times better than you.

It's stupid to get your head swollen up with these type of things. Preaching the devil can preach better. But I'll tell you what God looks for.

Is there a man who fears me? Who hates evil with a passion in his private life? Who's careful about sin in the heart? Who's careful about sin in the hearts of his children? That is the type of person God is looking for in this church and all over the world. And he finds so few like that. But where he finds such a way there is such a man.

God will boast about him. But I tell you that man will be the target of the devil. His family will be the target of the devil.

That's what you read in the book of Job. The devil will be after that man. The devil will be after his family.

But the devil won't be able to touch a hair on his head without God's permission. That the devil knows. He says there, yeah you have put a hedge around him.

He says in verse 10. You put a hedge around him. You put a hedge around his family.

You've had put a hedge around his bank account on this property. That devil can't touch one rupee of mine without God's permission. He cannot make my business run into loss without God's permission.

I know that. I've earned my own living doing a business for 30 years and the devil's never been able to touch it. I'll tell you sometimes I've lost large amounts of money.

And I said Lord why? And the Lord said to free you from the love of money. Praise the Lord. That I want.

So God allows it to teach us a lesson like he allowed Satan to put a thorn into Paul's flesh to make him humble for a good purpose. Yes. Otherwise he can't touch anything without his.

He can't touch sickness. When sickness comes into our home. Okay that is to manifest the power of God there.

How Jesus can heal. So it's tremendous to be one who fears God. You can be attacked by Satan but he'll never be able to overcome you.

And much more when Satan has been defeated. Satan was not defeated in Job's time. So he didn't have as much power as I have today.

You can have. Satan lived Job lived 2,000 years before Satan was defeated. So he didn't have the authority.

He couldn't use the name of Jesus to drive Satan away. Today we can. We're living in a time when they were defeated.

Satan's been defeated. And the other thing you read is when a man fears God. Others are going to be jealous of him.

You see those three preachers. Jealous of Job. And who were so happy.

And he lost his property. And became sick. You're a man who fears God.

Others will be jealous of you. And they'll be happy when something bad happens to you. They won't say that openly.

They'll come and cry like they did before Job. Oh we are so sorry brother that we heard this thing happen to you. But inwardly they'll say we're thrilled.

This guy was better than us spiritually. And he was rich too. But God didn't let spare them.

He waited a long time. Then he called the three of them up. And said I won't spare you fellas.

Unless you humble yourself and go and ask Job to forgive you. Because you spoke against him. It's a very dangerous thing to speak against a man who fears God.

God will hold you for that a hundred years later. Unless you go and apologize and said it right with that man. You read in the book of Job chapter 42.

It's just you fellas. You spoke against Job. Go to him and apologize.

And ask him to pray for you. Otherwise I won't spare you. And they had to do that.

Job had to offer an offering for these fellas who criticized him. Then they were forgiven. See God keeps his accounts.

He may take a long time to straighten out those to get people to pay their bills. Sometimes he waits 2,000 years. I mean those Pharisees who killed Jesus.

They haven't paid the bill yet for 2,000 years. But you think they've escaped. Even though Jesus said forgive them for they don't know what they do.

Jesus only forgave the horizontal part. As a human being I forgive them. But what about their responsibility before God.

The vertical part of their sin. That was not forgiven. That's never forgiven.

Even if somebody says I forgive you. Doesn't release you from the vertical part of it. Until you repent.

And they did not repent. The bill has been waiting 2,000 years. But one day they'll have to pay for it.

A lot of people who escaped justice on the earth. Who cheat and rape and commit crimes. And who escape because they got influenced.

But they haven't escaped. The bill is waiting. They'll have to pay for it one day.

Every single sin that you've committed in your life. There's a bill that's waiting to be paid unless you have repented. Confessed it.

Forsaken it. Ask the Lord Jesus to forgive you. Cleanse you in his blood.

And gone to the people whom you hurt. And ask them also to forgive you. Then it's gone.

Then the bill is destroyed. That's how these guys destroyed their bill. The other thing you read in the book of Job is a man who fears God can sometimes have a very difficult wife.

Mm-hmm. Sometimes we think God fearing men will always have godly wives. Not Job.

First book in the Bible we read about a difficult wife. Who made life hell for him. Told him to commit suicide.

You thought your wife was bad. Look at this guy's wife. She told him to commit suicide.

She actually told him that in Job 2. Go and commit suicide. Curse God and commit suicide. He was a godly man.

I'm not foolish enough to do something like that. I'll accept what God says. He wasn't like Eve.

Wasn't like Adam. Loved Eve more than he loved God. Anyway what was this fear of God mean that made this man such a wonderful man that he came out triumphant at the end that God blessed him double.

You know the first time in the Bible the other day we took a study on three words that occurred first time in the Bible. Okay now I'll tell you the first time in the Bible the word fear of God occurs. It's very interesting study.

Whenever you see the first time in the Bible a certain word occurs. Have you done that study for example? Where in the New Testament does the word grace occur for the first time. I don't mean in terms of books but in terms of time.

In terms of time. Just by the way the first time the word grace occurs is in relation to Jesus. That grace was upon him as a child Luke 240.

That's why he never sinned. That's just by the way. Okay just a few hints for Bible study.

Take a concordance. I bought a concordance 45 years ago. That's how I studied the Bible.

And the first time the word fear of God occurs in the Bible it's very interesting. It's in the book of Genesis in chapter 20. It is in relation to sexual sin.

Very interesting. Fear of God comes first time in the Bible in relation to sexual sin. Abraham had gone up to a certain place.

We read in Gerar. Name of the place was Gerar verse 1. While he was there his wife who was 85 years old was still pretty good-looking. I mean remember they lived up to 200 in all those days.

So it's Sarah was like what would say young 25 year old girl today. And the king of Gerar looked at him and said hey. He took her because Abraham said she's my sister.

Oh sister that's great. I thought she was your wife. She's your sister I'll take her.

But Abraham told a half-truth because he was she was a sort of a cousin sister of his. And he lost his wife because he told a lie. Anyway Abimelech.

God protected Sarah from being raped that night somehow. And the next morning God spoke to Abimelech and said restore the man to verse 7. Restore the man's wife because he's a prophet. Prophet who tells lies? Unfortunately yes.

But he's a prophet but restore the man's wife to him verse 7. If you don't restore her you'll die. I tell you God takes care of his servants. He takes care of his prophets.

So Abimelech restored him. Restored her to Abraham and said here is where an unbeliever can rebuke a prophet. Why have you done this to us? Why? How did I sin against you that you did this? You've done to me things you should not have done.

Can a prophet receive a rebuke from an unbeliever? Why not? You're humble you need to receive it. Abraham received it. Can you be corrected by somebody younger than you spiritually? Sure.

Paul corrected Peter who was 10 years senior to him. He's wrong. He's wrong.

It's a false love that does not correct people. Completely false love. There's too much of that false love among Christians.

We let a person go astray and say let him go astray. We don't love him. Then Abimelech said why did you do this? And listen to this.

Abraham said I thought verse 11. First time the fear of God, word fear of God occurs. I thought there is no fear of God in this place.

That means you fellas don't have any respect for a sexual morality. But that's the sin they were talking about. I thought if I say this is my wife you fellas will kill me because you want to molest my wife.

You guys don't have any sense of sexual morality. That's what he meant. I remember years ago seeing this that the first time the word fear of God is mentioned in the Bible is in relation to sexual morality and uprightness.

And I learned something from that as a young man that my fear of God as a young man is tested by my attitude to uprightness in the sexual area in Scripture. You learn a lot when you study Scripture. You get all the wrong ideas out of your head.

The fear of God. I remember asking the Lord at that time Lord why have you made the sexual desire so strong in men that they murder for it, they give money for it, they do all types of things, take such terrific risks for it. The Lord said because it is through this that I test whether a man fears me.

And I've never forgotten it. It is in the sexual area that God tests you my brother and my sister. Whether you fear God particularly men because he's talking about men here in Genesis 20.

This is the area where God tests you. You know how temptation comes. Look at Genesis 3. The devil showed Eve something.

She got attracted with it with her eyes. Her body drew her to it and she reached out her hand and grabbed it. That's how the devil tempts you today.

He shows you something on your computer screen. Your eyes are attracted to it. Your body is drawn to it and you reach out with your hand and click your mouse.

Same thing. Just like Eve. And you get there and you get the consequences.

Do you think the devil told Eve once you eat this your life is going to be destroyed? Your children's lives will be destroyed? All types of confusion. You're going to sickness. You're going to have this.

You're going to that. You're going to solve all types of problems for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years. Do you think the devil tells you the way he's going to mess up your life and mess up your mind and give you dirty dreams for the next 50 years by all that pornography that you watch on the internet? You think he'll tell you that? No.

You wouldn't go anywhere near it if you knew that. He was not going to tell you you're going to have dirty dreams for the next 50 years. No.

He's not telling you that your usefulness to God is going to be hindered. Your sharpness will be blunted. He's not going to tell you all that.

Why should he tell you all that? He wants you to drop into his lap. He'd be delighted if you spend eternity with him. And that's where he's trying to lead you.

Take it seriously. The first area where the fear of God is tested is not in whether you cover your head but in whether what is your attitude in the sexual area. And in this connection I would say a word to sisters as well.

Have you read this verse in Matthew chapter 18? Matthew chapter 18 Jesus said an amazing thing. Matthew 18 in verse 7. Read this very carefully. Woe, woe is the equivalent of the Old Testament curse.

Jesus used to say blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are so and so. The opposite of that is woe, the opposite of curse. You see that in Luke chapter 6. Blessed and woe, blessed and woe.

So this is a curse. Boy, Jesus pronounced the curse. I want to go anywhere near that.

A curse on the world because of its stumbling blocks. You know people you know people are walking down a dark road and there's a stone there. They trip on it and stumble.

That's a stumbling block. It is inevitable that stumbling blocks will come. That means as long as this world exists there will always be stumbling blocks.

Don't pray, Oh God remove all the stumbling blocks from the world. It won't happen. There will always be filth on the television.

It's no use praying that it won't happen. There will always be preachers who steal money from poor believers through television and through their messages. Steal money means ask them to give, give, give, give, give, give, give, give.

You know why I never asked people to give money? I'll tell you what God told me many many years ago when I started serving the Lord and you'll know the reason. I don't think I've ever said it publicly but here it is. The Lord said to me as long as you have got one rupee in your bank account don't ever ask anybody else to give money for my work.

I said Lord I won't do it. When I have given my last rupee and the Lord's work still needs money I will tell people brothers I think it's about time you did something for the Lord's work. That's why in all these years you've never heard me tell you to give money because I haven't come down to my last rupee yet.

That doesn't mean you shouldn't give. That's between you and the Lord. My giving is between me and the Lord.

It's more blessed. I wanted the greater blessing of giving rather than the blessing of receiving. It's more blessed to give than to receive.

I said sure I want the greater blessing. If you fellas want the lesser blessing that's your choice. There's a greater blessing in giving, lesser blessing in receiving.

You can have your choice. I chose the greater blessing. Everybody is given a choice but there's blessing and there's curse.

Stumbling blocks. There'll always be stumbling blocks in the world. Crooked preachers, deceivers, evil men, bad filthy movies.

They'll always be there. False religions, terrorism, immodestly dressed women. They will always be there.

Models and cinema stars who dress in ways to lead people astray. They will always be there but whoa a curse to the man or woman through whom the stumbling block comes. There's a curse on all these people I just mentioned.

If they cause other people to stumble. How does that apply to you sisters? If you dress in such a way that you cause a man to lust after you, you are responsible. You probably never heard that before but you have no answer to give to God from today onwards if you commit that crime.

Will that man be judged? Sure. For lusting after you. Will you be judged? Certainly.

For causing him to lust. That's why the Bible says women should be dressed modestly and that's why the devil is determined to make sure women don't dress modestly. That's why he makes young girls admire the models and try to become like them.

Destroy them spiritually. I have never till today seen an immodestly dressed girl who was spiritual. It doesn't exist.

It's like saying black is white and white is black. How can that be? Now it's impossible. Whoa a curse on all those who cause other people to stumble.

So parents if you have daughters, don't yield to all their demands as long as they live in your home. Once they leave your home and get married, you can't control them but as long as they're in your home, put some values into their head. Teach them these things which they will not hear in other churches.

Preachers who want to be popular, want to increase the size of their congregations won't tell people these things. But we teach people these things. What's good for them.

What will help them to stand before the Lord one day and hasten the joy. What will enable God to boast about them to the devil. Yeah that's that's how it is.

So I would say take this seriously. The fear of God. That's the first time it's mentioned in the scriptures.

Where's the last time it's mentioned? It's in Revelation. Says in chapter 19 and verse 5. Give praise. A voice came from the throne saying give praise to our God.

All you his bond servants who fear him. The small and the great. Who are the ones who will praise God? Who are called to praise God? Those who fear him.

Those who reverence him. You know when I listen to some of the flippant so-called praise and I don't call them worship songs at all. Praise songs.

Flippant songs written by half converted songwriters who were unconverted. One singing, writing love songs once upon a time. Now they got half converted and because they got a gift started writing love songs to Jesus.

Oh no I can't get along without you. Some of these flippant songs. I'll tell you I don't sing them.

I stand there. I reverence God too much. I know God too much to sing the songs written by these half converted fellas.

There was a reverence for God in a lot of the songs written by godly men and women fifty hundred years ago. So rare to find that type of reverence. Now and then you come across the song.

Of course it's real reverence a man who fears God. But a lot of today's so-called praise songs are very flippant. Who can praise God? It says you who fear God.

Reverence him. The small and the great. Praise him.

I want to be in the midst of those who reverence him. I'd rather join with four or five people who reverence God and praise him than multitudes who can sing well and shake their hips and all that. Today's Christians don't know what it is to praise God.

Much less do they know what it is to worship God. It says that we can perfect holiness 2nd Corinthians 7 1 only in the fear of God. Many are not become holy because you're trying to be holy without the fear of God.

They misunderstood the grace of God because they think grace means I can live as I like. I'm just going to be happy before the Lord. Well then you have misunderstood grace.

The grace of God has taught me to reverence God much more than in the days when I did not have the grace of God. That is true grace. True grace is that which teaches us to fear him.

You know there are only four times in the Bible where the word four times in the New Testament where the word hallelujah comes by the way. We sing hallelujah so much in our songs. All four times are in Revelation 19.

The only times in the New Testament where hallelujah comes and all times all those times it's in relation to three of those times it's in relation to the destruction of Babylon. False Christianity. That's allowed people to compromise.

Here it is. Babylon is destroyed. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Okay now let's rejoice.

Verse 6. The Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Hallelujah. You know we haven't understood true praise.

If you don't understand true praise we don't understand worship. Everything revolves around the fear of God. Reverence for God.

Get a certificate from God like Abraham got. Now I know that you fear me because he offered up his son. He obeyed God in secret.

You've heard a lot of things today alone in your mind just like Abraham heard one night in his bed. God spoke to him. Give up your son.

You've heard some things today. Nobody else heard it. The person sitting next to you didn't hear it.

You're like Abraham. Read Genesis 22 where he spoke something only to you. Even Sarah sitting sleeping next to him didn't hear it.

Person sitting next to you hasn't heard it. Your wife didn't hear it. Your husband didn't hear it.

You heard something. Now God is testing you whether you'll obey that or not. Abraham obeyed.

God said to him Genesis 22. Now I know that you fear me. What a certificate to get.

I want that certificate. God telling me now I know that you fear me. You don't get those certificates easily from God.

But when he gives it you will be a man who influences thousands, tens of thousands, however weak you may be, however ungifted you may be. Learn my brothers and sisters to reverence God. Let's bow our heads before God now.

While our hands are bowed in prayer, whatever God spoke to you in secret like he spoke to Abraham. Say Lord will you help me. I'm willing to pay any price.

I don't have the ability. I've tried so many times. I've made so many resolutions only to fail.

Bring me to the end of myself. Help me to fear you and to reverence you to come into this life that you want me to live. Make my life count for you on this earth Lord.

Don't let me drift along and waste my life. Thank you Father. I believe there are at least some.

I don't expect many because you said few there be that find the way to life but I believe there are some. Men and women we're seeking you this morning. Give them their heart's desire.

Teach them the reverence of God and lead them on the path of wisdom. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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