

The Fear of God: Ingredients, Part 2

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If someone were to read through his Bible with pen and paper in hand, jotting down every explicit, overt reference to the fear of God, and then seek to keep a column where passages dealt with not so much the words but the thought and illustrations of the reality of the fear of God, I'm quite confident he would have many pages filled with references and much in his second column of indications and illustrations of this great truth. For one of the most dominant themes in all of Holy Scripture is the theme of the fear of God. It is that which the writer of the Proverbs says is the beginning or the chief part of all knowledge. So in the past few Lord's mornings, we have been attempting to grasp something of the weight of this theme and come to a better understanding of what Scripture means when it speaks of the fear of God. The way we've approached it is, first of all, by seeking to establish the predominance of the fear of God in Biblical thought. Then we spent two weeks trying to come up with a somewhat workable definition, or perhaps I could better say, a description of the fear of God.

That the fear of God is a predominant note in Scripture is obvious to anyone who takes the Scripture seriously. Well then, if it is a dominant note and to be devoid of it is to be devoid of saving religion, then the question that ought to be focused in the mind of every serious listener is, "What then is the fear of God? Do I have it? How may I grow in it?" And so we've grappled with this matter of seeking to define and describe the fear of God. There is a fear of God which is comprised of dread and terror. And even for the Christian, the fear of God is never totally devoid of this aspect of dread. However, it is the second aspect of fear that is the dominant thought in Scripture when it speaks of the fear of God: the fear of reverence, the fear of awe, the fear of veneration, the fear which seraphim and cherubim knew when they veiled face and feet and cried one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the almighty."

So much then for these two lines of thought upon which we have been moving: the predominance of the fear of God in Biblical thought and then a definition of the fear of God involving dread and terror, involving the fear of reverence and awe. Now last week, what we tried to do was to begin to carry out a third line of thought: the essential ingredients of the fear of God. What is necessary if men and women are to Biblically fear God? And the first thing we dealt with was, there must be correct concepts of the character of God, particularly His immensity, His majesty, and His holiness.

Men will not fear God unless they see that there is a God worthy to be feared: either the fear of dread or the fear of awe and reverence. You don't need to dread a God who's one big gushy, formless glob of love. Who trembles before a formless, gushy,

ethereal glob of love? Why tremble before that? All you need to do is push it, and a few drops of it will come over you, and you're all fixed up. And there's very little trembling and very little dread in the consciences even of unconverted religious people who sit in the best of our evangelical churches week after week and year after year. Why? Because the God whom they hear preached illicitly no dread and no terror.

When unconverted people see that the God with whom they have to do is a consuming fire, and that His love is holy love, and that His mercy is holy mercy; when they see that all of His attributes are suffused with holiness, immensity, and majesty, perhaps once again the holy trembling and holy terror will seize their hearts, but not until. This God whom you can snuggle up to is not the God who will illicit the fear of dread. But more so, He's not the God who will illicit true awe and reverence from His people.

Ah, but someone says, "That sounds so Old Testamentish to me. Isn't there something in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ that just sort of like a rasp rubs off those sharp angles of the dread and terror of God." No, just the opposite is true, for I read in the latter part of Hebrews 12 where the writer to Hebrews having expounded all the greater privileges that are ours under the new covenant, having contrasted with the Old, says this:

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved [that which we now have in Jesus Christ in the fulfillment of the new covenant is an unshakable kingdom. Having such privileges], let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is [not was] a consuming fire" (vv. 28-29).

Therefore, we must feed our minds upon the God of Scripture and in particular, those Scriptures which set Him before us in all the splendor, might, and majesty of His person. And this is no less true of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, for the New Testament actually uses the term "the fear of the Lord" and "the fear of Christ" (Colossians 3:22; Ephesians 5:20). So if your Jesus is one who illicitly no sense of awe, no sense of holy dread, not the carnal dread that unregenerate men have (Revelation 1), He's not the Christ of the Bible. He's some other Jesus. And O how necessary that we as the people of God feed our minds and spirits upon the Scriptural concept of God that will illicit true fear. So then, the first essential ingredient of the fear of God is correct concepts of the character of God, particularly His immensity, His majesty, and His holiness.

The second essential ingredient of the fear of God is what I'm calling a pervasive sense of the presence of God. The foundation of the fear of God: correct concepts of the character of God. The next building block in the fear of God: a pervasive sense of the presence of God. Some of you kids may say, "Preacher, why do you use such a big word?" Well, because I want to give you a little vocabulary lesson this morning. The word "pervasive" is a very good word, and you ought to know what it means. Something that's pervasive is something that spreads throughout a given area.

Let me illustrate from something you all know. You happen to be driving down the highway, and up ahead you see a little dead body on the road, and as you get closer, before you can even see its color, you know what that animal was, don't you? If it was one of those little black animals with a white stripe down its back, before you even get close enough to see it, you can tell that it's a skunk. Why? Because a skunk

has a little gland that squirts out something that pervades the atmosphere. It becomes a very pervasive smell. It extends throughout the whole area.

Now when something is pervasive, it extends through everything. If you come into a small room where there's a potted lily, the fragrance of that lily is pervasive. It pervades the whole room. You don't need to go over within a foot of it. The moment you open the door, that beautiful fragrance strikes your nostrils and it registers--that's a lily.

So the second great ingredient of the fear of God is a pervasive sense of the presence of God, that is, a sense of the presence of God which spreads throughout the entirety of our lives so that there is no place in which we find ourselves, no circumstance in which we are found but what we know God, this great, majestic, transcendent holy God is here. And all that He is in His majesty, His holiness, His immensity is not somewhere out there but right here. So then, the fear of God will always be constructed of this pervasive sense of the presence of God.

I remember sometime years ago hearing a statement by the late Dr. Tozer. And I don't know if I'm quoting him accurately, but if I'm not, the seed thought comes from him, and it's got a little bit of my own adjustment in it. But he said this: "The most profound word in the human language is 'God'" You go to your dictionary to look up a word like "pervasive" (and that's what I did) and it said, "That which is spread throughout." You can define the word "pervasive." Now try to define God. Think of all the thousands of theological books that have been written in all the hundreds of languages throughout the earth trying to define God. If you could put them all together into one language and read them all, if God gave you some kind of computer mind that could read through them all in a year's time, when you're all done, you would have to say, "We know but the edges of His ways." The most profound word in the English language is "God." The most profound fact in all of human experience is the sentence "God is." All that the Scripture tells us about Him, He is right now.

And then the third thing: the most profound experience is the recognition that God is here. The most profound word: God. The most profound fact: God is. The most profound transforming experience: God is here. And that's what I'm driving at. It's interesting--and I want to support this now from Scripture--that in most of the instances where the fear of God is described for us in Scripture, it's described in a context of the realized presence of God.

Some of you, I trust, will remember last week when I was trying to describe this fear of reverence and awe, I went to Jacob and his vision, and he said, "Surely God was in this place and I knew it not." Moses at the burning bush said he was afraid to look upon God. Isaiah, in Isaiah 6, said, "Woe is me, I'm undone. I've seen the Lord." If you trace out these illustrations of the fear of God, the fear of reverence, the fear of awe, the fear of veneration, you will find that almost exclusively they are set in a context where men are experiencing the realized presence of God. God is there, and they know He's there, and they are in His presence, and they know it.

In Exodus 3, Moses sees that bush burning, and he turns aside to examine it, and God speaks out of it. And when he recognizes God is there speaking out of the bush, it was then that he covered his face and wouldn't even look upon it. At that point, all Moses knew of God--it wasn't the God who is up there and out there somewhere, but

He's all that He is right there in Moses' presence. God is all of this right there, so he hides his face.

The same way with Jacob. He awakes from his dream, and when he reflects upon it, he says, "This is none other than the house of God. How dreadful is this place." Why? "Because right here God is and I've been in His presence. How dreadful is this place." It's made dreadful because the dreadful one was there. Even that fear of terror has this thought in it, for you remember in Genesis 3:10, Adam answers to the Lord when He says, "Where art thou?" He says, "I heard Thy voice, and I was afraid." You see, as long as Adam could think of God as being out there somewhere, he wasn't gripped with that sense of terror and dread. But he says, "When I heard Thy voice, and I knew that all You were and are, you were right here in close proximity to me, so I was afraid."

Now what does this tell us? It tells us that the second essential ingredient of the fear of God is this pervasive sense of His presence, not only right concepts of His character, but taking all that He is and bringing it here in this very place where I sit, where I stand in this moment.

Now I've tried to establish the general principle from these passages, but now let's zero in on what's probably the most sustained and concentrated passage which teaches this truth. If you were asked to select one, what immediately comes to your mind? What passage in Scripture most clearly describes a man who has right concepts of the character of God (His immensity, majesty, and holiness), but it's couched in the context, He's all of that right here, and He's filled with a pervasive sense of the presence of God? I hope you're thinking Psalm 139. If you weren't, I hope you will be in the future. Now remember what we're trying to establish is the second essential ingredient of the fear of God. Without this, there will be no fear of God. Notice how the Psalmist begins (thinking of the omniscience of God, that is, the fact that He knows all things):

"O lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, Thou knowest it altogether" (vv. 1-4).

Now up to this point, the Psalmist is giving what we might say a description of bare omniscience. He's describing what he knows about the character of God as an all-seeing, all-knowing God. But how is he thinking of that? Is he thinking of it in terms-- and I want to use an illustration that I hope will bring this into focus--is he using it in terms of what we might say about one of these U-2 planes with special cameras that can take pictures from 60 to 80 thousand feet that would show the color or the shape of your car on the ground all these miles below, or some of these photographing satellites? And it's amazing the detail they can show from 100 miles up. There's not a detail they cannot see from a distance.

Now is that the concept David has? God is this great immense all-knowing, all-seeing God, and He's up there, out there somewhere. And everything I do, like the great eye of the orbiting spy satellite, He sees it; He knows it. Is that the concept? No, for notice the transition in the next verse: "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me." Now granted, God has no hand. He's using a figure of speech, what they tell us is an anthropomorphism. God has attributed to Himself certain

characteristics of men. He doesn't actually have hands and eyes and feet. But in order to convey to us His ways and what He's like, God does this. Now, David says, "The God who has searched me, the God who knows me, who understands my thoughts, who knows every word. He knows and understands [not like the orbiting spy satellite from miles away], but because His hand is upon me." Now notice how this thought is developed:

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence [not just knowledge, but presence]? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there [he doesn't say, 'You will see me.' He says, 'Thou art there']: if I make my bed in hell [or in the grave], behold, Thou art there. [He says, 'If I go as high as a man can go in this direction, Thou art there. If I go as far as a man can go in this direction, Thou art there.'] If I take the wings of the morning [apparently a poetic picture of jumping on the first rays of the sun as they break up over the horizon and shoot out over the sea], and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me."

You see what he's doing? Do you catch this? He's not talking about bare omniscience (God knows everything), or some bare kind of heartless, formless, personalityless omnipresence (God is everywhere). No, "Wherever I go, God is there as the personal God whose hand is upon me, whose hand holds me, whose hand covers me." And then he even traces this all the way back in a beautiful poetic imagery in verse 13: "For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb." It was in the darkness of that period before he was ever born He says, "Thy hand did cover me and envelop me. I was not only enveloped in my mother's womb, but I was enveloped in the tender protecting hand of my God."

Then he goes on to develop these thoughts until he says his head's going to split. Verses 17-18: "How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with Thee." Do you catch that strain of emphasis? Thy presence, Thy hand, with Thee. What's he saying? He's saying, "O God, the thought that has just pervaded me and that I carry with me in every circumstance and situation is that all You are as that all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful, all-gracious God, you are to me right here."

Therefore, the fear of God to David comprised this great second element: a pervasive sense of the presence of God. And it's this that will create that awe, that sense of wonder, that sense of reverence, so that the thought of disobeying such a God, the thought of grieving Him by walking contrary to His will is unthinkable to the man who walks in His fear. That's why Scripture says, "The fear of the Lord is to depart from evil." For if I'm living in the sense of the immediate presence of this great God, I will not dare to fly into the face of His holy commandments and laws.

How often have we been tempted to do something--you children, maybe you were going to take some forbidden object, and just the presence of your sister or brother walking into the room--and suddenly you stopped what you were doing and started fiddling around like you never were going to do it. If the presence of another creature who has no power to judge you for your action--the worst they can do is squeal on you, but they have no power to judge you--if their realized presence radically changes your moral and ethical conduct, what happens to the man who knows he's

always in the immediate presence, not just of one who can observe and squeal on him, but the one before whom he is accountable for all that he does. Will that have any ethical and moral implications? I'll say it has ethical and moral implications, and we'll look at a couple of them in a little bit.

May I use one more illustration? I've labored at trying to make this concept clear. Suppose we went down to the local library, and we were going to find out all the facts we could find out about the Grand Canyon. I've talked with some people who have been to the Grand Canyon, and it's made me want to go there. But we could get all the facts: so many miles across at certain points, so deep. And we've got all these facts about the immensity, the majesty, the beauty, the transcendent splendor of the Grand Canyon. And so we memorize all those facts and could pass a test and be experts on the physical properties of the Grand Canyon. But now let me ask you a question. You get up in the morning and brush your teeth, get your toast and coffee and go off to work. All that you know about the immensity, the majesty, the grandeur, the glory of the Grand Canyon doesn't affect you one bit in how you live. But if it were possible, when you got up the next morning (you've got all the facts about the Grand Canyon) and suddenly you were saddled up on the back of a ray of light that broke over the Eastern Coast of our country, and within the snap of the fingers, you found yourself standing right in the midst of the Grand Canyon. What would happen? I doubt you'd take your tube of toothpaste and start brushing your choppers. No, no, what would happen? You'd say, "O yeah, I got all the facts, but this is the Grand Canyon. This is the Grand Canyon!" What's happened? All the facts and figures--not a one of them has changed. You can look out and see the mile or two mile expanse; you can see the depth. You can see all the factors, but what's happened? You've been put into the presence of the Canyon itself, and all that should have illicitly awe suddenly grips you with a sense of awe and wonder.

Now that's what I'm trying to say. We can have all the facts about God, even good Biblical and Reformed facts about God (holy, sovereign, transcendent, immense, boundless, and all the rest), but unless we learn to cultivate an all-pervasive sense of His presence, it won't make much difference in how we live. That's why some people who've got a smaller God in their theological propositions but have more of a sense of the presence of God live a lot better than people who've got a great big God in their theology but have a distant God in their experience. He's not the orbiting spy satellite. He's the ever-present personal God. And in that sense--and I say it reverently--the very environment in which we live--and I have Scriptural grounds for this--is this great God. That's why Paul, speaking to pagans and setting before them the God of Scripture, the God who is creator, the God who is sovereign, who governs the nations, made of one blood all nations, rules them--he says, "In Him we live, and move, and have our very being." It's not pantheism, but it's a Biblical concept I fear I know too little about experientially. And it is this which is the essential ingredient of the fear of God.

What we'll do is look at several illustrations of how this has its practical effect upon the life of the man who learns it. Turn to Genesis 17. Abraham has walked with God for a number of years. God has revealed Himself to him, and here we have another record of one of those self-disclosures that God makes to His servant whom He calls His friend. Verse 1:

"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him [here's the first element in the fear of God], I am the Almighty God

[Abraham, whatever you think of Me, I want you to think of boundless might. I want you to think of Me as the God in whom all might and power reside]; walk before Me [that is, walk in the constant awareness of My eye upon you, My presence with you, and your relationship to Me being the all-important thing to you in every circumstance. Wherever you walk, may your walk be before Me], and be thou perfect."

This is the practical outworking, the moral, the ethical implications of a man who says, "I believe what is revealed about the character of God. And by His grace, I shall cultivate an all-pervasive sense of the presence of God." The result will be a life of obedience to that God.

Now let's turn to a passage where this command of God was put to perhaps its most crucial test. And see how when Abraham passes the test, God interprets that test and also Abraham's successful passing through that test. Genesis 22. You remember the command of God was to take Isaac the son of promise and to kill him. I like to use the term because we miss something of the heart-wrenching nature of God's command. When God said, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering....", that sounds beautiful to us. But what He's saying is, "Go out and kill him."

"Abraham, as you've plunged the knife into many an animal and you've seen the spurt of blood and the quiver as life has struggled to maintain itself, and then you've seen that final quiver, and then it's dead, now go on up and plunge the knife into the breast of your own son and see the blood spurt forth, and see the twitching of the body as it fights for life, and then see it breathe its last."

That's what God told him to do. "Walk thou before Me, and be thou perfect." "Who has told me to go up and kill my son? This great majestic, transcendent, almighty, all-holy, all-powerful God. And I have learned to walk before Him. He's God; I'm the creature. Mine is to obey; the consequences of my obedience, His responsibility." And so, Abraham, regardless of what struggles he may have had in the wee hours of the morning (and no doubt he had them), Scripture passes them over. And all it does is record for us his implicit obedience. So we read in verse 3: "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him." Then you remember the story. I need not go over the details. Just as he's about to do that very thing God told him to do (the knife is raised); God stays his hand; God speaks to him. Now notice what God says to him--and this is pivotal to our study this morning--verses 11-12:

"And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." I haven't read this in. This is God's interpretation on the whole event. He says,

"Abraham, this test and now your obedience in the midst of it is an eloquent cry and eloquent testimony of many things, but above all, Abraham, this is the eloquent testimony of the depth and the reality of your fear of Me. For I know thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me. Abraham, you've shown Me that you fear Me, a fear which has as it's indispensable element such a

concept of My character and the worth of My being (I'm worthy to be obeyed) and such a pervasive sense of My presence that you know that to walk before Me is to walk in the path that I've laid out for you. And in that path, I will be your reward even if Isaac must die."

He obeyed, and we see something of the effect of the fear of God in the life of a man.

Then there's that classic example in Genesis 39. And this is so relevant, living as we do in this day of Sodom-like debauchery, filth, and preoccupation, not only with legitimate flesh but with strange flesh. The pattern of any society is to move from its sexual pattern simply being one part of the whole of society to where it begins to be the focal point. Then it moves into sophisticated sex; then it moves into perversion, and then it moves into judgment. And I believe we're somewhere between the last two.

Joseph lived in a day where the Pharaohs of Egypt were known for their preoccupation with flesh: legitimate and strange flesh as well. And here's this handsome young man down in the court seeing all of this moral filth on every side; being a normal human being, unlike some of the radical scholars who try to show that he was a homosexual and had no normal heterosexual desires and all this kind of foolishness. In the midst of all that (and I'm only describing that, not to go into gory details but to show some of the relevance of this matter of the fear of God to the whole pull that you feel as young men and women living in our day, and some of us who are not so young), here Joseph receives overtures from Potiphar's wife, and he refuses.

That doesn't tell us too much about him, for a man may say no the first time for a lot of reasons. Any temptation that simply comes by once and flirts with us is relatively easy to deal with. It's when there is persistent temptation in the area of natural weakness that the real test comes. And so day after day, Scripture tells us, she comes and puts out her overtures, and Joseph says, "No," until one day in absolute frustration, seeing everyone out of the house, she actually lays hold upon Joseph physically. But before that hour of his greatest testing, Joseph says, "There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he [Potiphar] kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" What kind of God? A God who was out there somewhere? No, the moment a man begins to think of God in that distant relationship, then he can very conveniently cauterize his conscience and insulate his present circumstance from the eye and the control of God. And when he's done that, then he's given himself up to the sin in principle already.

"How can I do this wickedness and sin against God?" What God? The God who has set me behind and before and laid His hand upon me, the God who saw me and was with me in that pit when my brothers thought to kill me, the God who brought me out of that pit and put me here in Egypt, the God who has brought me to a place of exaltation before your very husband. How can I do this and fly into the face of this God?"

You know as well as I do that the first step to any sin where there is definite inducement to sin is, we must negate any sense of the immediate presence of God. Right? Because many of the things you and I do, if we started to do them and just a fellow human being were to walk in on us, that's all the check we need. We'd stop

immediately. If you're having a spat with your wife, just let a person whose not even a Christian come to the door, and just the presence of another human being is enough to check your words, and suddenly you can become so sweet. If you're cheating at school and all of a sudden the teacher looks over your shoulder, you hide your cheat sheet.

O, dear ones, what would it do to us if we had this all-pervasive sense of the presence of God. Look what it did for Joseph. It kept him, and that's the only thing that will keep you from the human standpoint. Now I know there is the in-working of God's Spirit, but this is how He works, for His says in the new covenant, "I will put my fear into their hearts." He doesn't keep us automatically, but by putting within and preserving in us this fear of God, which has as an essential ingredient this all-pervasive sense of the presence of God. That's why Scripture says, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." But His working in does not bypass the cultivation of the fear of God nor the natural activity of this fear.

This is why when we turn to the New Testament, we have that command dealing with this same matter of ethical and moral purity. In 2 Corinthians 6, the Apostle is asking some questions to show these Corinthians the stupidity, the moral folly of being sinfully involved with unregenerate people in unnecessary alliances that would try to mix light and darkness, God and the devil. And he would ask all these questions:

"What concord hath Christ with belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God. [All that I am, I will be, not in a distant far off way but in intimate personal relationship with My people.] Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God [carrying our holiness to perfection in the climate in the fear of God, which has as one of its indispensable elements, this all-pervasive sense of the presence of God]."

Why should I work on this area of defilement of the spirit? Because God is here. He sees and knows and is grieved with that which is unlike Him and a contradiction of His holy character. He is not out there somewhere, but "I will dwell in them and be their God." And He says, in that light of that promise, "Let us carry our holiness, carry our sanctification onto perfection in the climate of the fear of God."

Now I hope this opens up a text like Proverbs 23:17: "Be thou in the fear of God all the day long." Carry with you into every circumstance, not only right views of the character of God, but this pervasive sense of the presence of God. You see what a difference it will make in a time like this when we're gathered to worship. The preacher's going to be here--fine. My fellow believer's are going to be here--fine. But above all of that, God is here. How dare I dishonor Him with half-hearted mumbling the words of a song of praise--unthinkable. So I stir myself up to praise Him with full heart and full voice. How dare I dishonor Him by allowing distracting thoughts when the Word of God is being opened, and allowing my mind to run off about work tomorrow and the problems of yesterday and my new suit next week and my boyfriend or girlfriend. How dare I. I'm in the presence of God. God is speaking

through His Word by His Spirit. O, you can carry this out. And the implications are infinite, because the God in whose presence we live is the infinite God.

Does this help? I hope it does--to understand a little more about what the fear of God is. That's the chief part of knowledge. That fear founded upon right views of God's character and constructed of this all-pervasive sense of His presence.

The Lord willing, next week we'll take up the third element: what I'm calling a constraining awareness of my obligations to Him, that in every situation and circumstance, the only thing that really matters is what God requires of me and the obedience that I ought to render unto Him.

Do you know something of this fear that I've been speaking of today? If you're a Christian, I'm sure your heart has cried out as mine has, "O, Lord, I thank you for the little I know. But O how precious little it is." And isn't this the explanation of so much of our shoddy living and so much of the areas of weakness? We have conveniently learned to push the Grand Canyon out to Arizona instead of standing in the midst of it. May God help us that we shall walk in His fear.

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