

AWESTUCK - By an AWESOME GOD

A study of the Biblical concept of what it means to "Fear God"?

Schedule

Lesson 1 -	Taking a Look at God – "I Am Who I Am"
Lesson 2	Taking a Look at Biblical Definitions
Lesson 3	Taking a Look at the Consequences
Lesson 4	Learning from the Examples of Abraham, Joseph and the Midwives
Lesson 5	Learning from the Example and Teaching of Moses
Lesson 6	Learning from the Life and Counsel of some Great Leaders
Lesson 7	Taking a Look at David's Insights from the Psalms
Lesson 8	Taking a Look at Solomon's Insights from Proverbs
Lesson 9	Learning from the Old Testament Prophets
Lesson 10	Learning from the Gospels and Acts
Lesson 11	Learning from the Epistles and Revelation

Study Time Suggestions for this series

Reflect – This may be the most important part of each lesson – a time for you to open up your heart and mind and consider the immeasurable greatness of God – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. What causes you to stand in awe of the Lord today?

Read - As you read the verses, jot down some of your impressions and your observations. What are the verses telling you? Which ones seem to be of particular interest to you? Why? Perhaps you will want to start your own system of notations with symbols - like stars, question marks, exclamation points, so that you can go back to the ones that caught your attention.

Receive - God has promised that He will teach us how to "trust and fear Him." It is not something that we can really grasp on our own. It is an attitude and emotion that will come through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Let Him guide your thoughts and give you new insights and ideas.

Respond – God does not force His way and will on us. He patiently waits for us to respond to His invitation to place Him above all other gods, including our own self will, so that He can bless us. Your joy and peace will increase as you learn what it really means to fear and to trust God and His name will be honored.

Awestruck – By an Awesome God

Lesson 1

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TAKING A LOOK AT GOD – “I AM WHO I AM”

O LORD, our LORD, Your majestic name fills the earth

Your glory is higher than the heavens.

Psalm 8: 1

God really doesn't need an adjective before His Name, does He? The name He gave to Moses that day when He talked to him about the job He had for him to do said it all. "I AM". "I Am Who I AM". We are the ones who need the adjectives because our minds can't grasp the mystery and majesty of God. That same God Who met with Moses wants to meet with you. He wants you to get a glimpse of Who He Is and to willingly, yes even eagerly, listen to His voice and walk with Him in wonder and awe day by day. Why would you choose to do anything else when GOD is calling your name? Sometimes it will be scary, but His presence will comfort and delight you. You might feel inadequate at times, but you will be walking with The LORD.

REFLECT – Take some time to read Psalm 8 and absorb the praises that are expressed in this song.

READ – Taking a Look at God – “I Am Who I Am” –

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|
| 1. His Greatness – | Genesis 2: 1 – 3
Exodus 14: 29 – 31
Deuteronomy 7: 17 – 26 | Psalm 33: 4- 11
Isaiah 40: 25 - 31
Jeremiah 10: 6-10
Hebrews 1: 1 – 12 |
| 2. His Holiness - | Exodus 3: 1 - 6
Isaiah 6: 1 - 8
Isaiah 57: 15 - 19 | Luke 1: 46 - 55
II Corinthians 7: 1
Revelation 4: 8 – 11 |
| 3. His Wisdom | Job 38 and 39, 40: 1 - 5
Psalm 104: 24 - 35
Isaiah: 40: 12 - 14 | Isaiah 55: 6 - 11
Romans 11: 33 - 36
Ephesians 3: 10 – 11 |
| 4. His love | Exodus 34: 6 – 7
Deuteronomy 4: 32 –40
Jeremiah 31: 3 | John 3: 16
Romans 8: 31 – 39
I John 3: 1 and 16 |

RECEIVE –“The reverent and worshipful fear of the LORD is the beginning and the principal and choice part of knowledge/wisdom – that is, its starting point and its essence. Proverbs 1: 7a - Amplified Bible

As you listen to the Lord, what does **He want you to know** and to understand about:

1. His Greatness -
2. His Holiness –
3. His Wisdom –
4. His love -

RESPOND –

This would be a wonderful time for you to write your own song, psalm, letter or poem of praise to the Lord God Almighty. What would you like to tell Him? What makes you feel in awe of Him? What causes you to be filled with wonder and thanksgiving? Listen quietly for His gentle spirit to speak ideas and thoughts into your mind. Wait patiently until you His voice.

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Lesson 2

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TAKING A LOOK AT BIBLICAL DEFINITIONS

Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge.

Proverbs 1: 7 and 9:10

Both of these definitions for the word FEAR are right there for you to read in Webster's dictionary. The first one is "the feeling of alarm caused by the expectation of danger, pain, or disaster". It includes the emotions of dread or apprehension. Some parallel verbs are to be afraid or frightened, anxious or apprehensive. There is a second meaning for the word fear, however. It means to have "extreme reverence or awe, as toward a supreme power". It is an attitude that permeates one's thinking and behavior. A few parallel verbs include revere, respect, esteem, wonder, and even worship. So what does it mean to "fear God"? Why don't you try to write out your own definition, knowing that it may change by the time you finish this lesson.

REFLECT – Take some time to read Psalm 19 and absorb the praises that are expressed in this song.

READ – "TO FEAR GOD" - Taking a Look at the Biblical definitions (or parallel phrases) –

1. Old Testament

Deuteronomy 4: 9 – 10
Deuteronomy 5: 28 – 29
Joshua 24: 14- 15
I Samuel 12: 14 – 25
Job 28: 28
Psalm 33: 8 & 18
Psalm 115: 11
Psalm 147: 11

Proverbs 3: 5 - 8
Proverbs 8: 13
Proverbs 15: 33
Proverbs 23: 17 - 18
Ecclesiastes 12: 13 - 14
Isaiah 8: 11 - 13
Isaiah 59: 19
Jeremiah 5: 20 - 25

2. New Testament

Acts 9: 31
II Corinthians 7: 1

Hebrews 12: 28 – 29
Revelation 14: 6 – 7

RECEIVE - "Come, My children, and listen to Me, and I will teach you the fear of the LORD."

Psalm 34: 11

1. Do these verses help you to understand the concept of what it means to "fear the Lord"? Find some specific examples which are particularly meaningful to you.
2. Do the New Testament verses reflect the Old Testament verses or do they bring new light or meaning to the phrase?
3. Do you believe that "fearing the Lord" is mostly an emotion that you experience or a feeling that you have at specific times or is it an attitude or mindset that influences your behavior continuously? Do you think the Bible indicates that it could be both?
4. Did you notice any benefits for those who choose to "fear of the Lord"?

RESPOND –

"The fear of God is the soul of godliness.' That is, the fear of God is the animating and invigorating principle of a godly life. It is the wellspring of all godly desires and aspirations. Do you desire to be a godly person? Then you must understand and grow in the fear of God."

(Notes - Jerry Bridges, The Joy of Fearing God, (Waterbrook Press), p. 25 & pp. 45 – 116)

Talk with the Lord about what it really means to "fear the Lord". What is your new definition? Listen quietly as He speaks to you.

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Lesson 3

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TAKING A LOOK AT THE CONSEQUENCES

**Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always,
so that it might go well with them and their children forever.** Deuteronomy 5: 29

Scholars have said that this topic, *the Fear of the Lord*, has more promises connected to it than any other theme in Scripture. The reverse may also be true, for the warnings to individuals and to nations that come when they do not revere Him are also plentiful. Motivation usually increases when there is a reward in view, but the thought of a consequence can also be a huge incentive. While we have become focused in our culture on using only the positive type of motivation, it would seem that a balance might actually be the most effective way to influence attitudes and behavior. What do you think?

REFLECT – Take some time to read Psalm 29 – a tribute to an awesome and holy God.

READ – **Taking a Look at the Consequences for those who do not Fear the Lord** –

1. Old Testament

Exodus 9: 27 – 35

Deuteronomy 25: 13 – 19

Deuteronomy 28: 58 – 63

I Samuel 12: 8 – 18

Psalm 36: 1 – 4

Psalm 55: 19

Proverbs 1: 28 - 33

Ecclesiastes 8: 11 - 13

Isaiah 57: 11 - 13

Jeremiah 5: 20 - 25

Malachi 3: 6 – 18

2. New Testament

Luke 12: 4 – 10

Romans 3: 9 – 18

II Corinthians 5: 6 - 11

RECEIVE – **“Sons and daughters, come and listen and let me teach you the importance of trusting and fearing the Lord.”** Psalm 34: 11 – Living Bible

1. What are some words which describe some one who does “not fear the Lord”? Looking at the opposite side of an idea often helps clarify the concept.
2. Obviously, when some one describes him/her self as a atheist or agnostic, they are not in awe of God, but what are more subtle forms of this idea?
3. What observations came to your mind as you read about the consequences for those who do not fear the Lord?
4. How do you reconcile the reality that many people who do not fear God seem to prosper and thrive? Did any of these Scriptures give you any clues or answers to this dilemma?

RESPOND –

“It is the essence of impiety (ungodliness) not to be afraid of God when there is reason to be afraid. The Scripture throughout prescribes the necessity to this fear of God under all the circumstances in which our sinful situation makes us liable to God’s righteous judgment.” John Murray

Is God asking you to think about consequences? About His justice and holiness? Is there anything that you are hiding or rationalizing in your life today? In the quietness of these moments, let God shine His light into some of the hidden corners of your life.

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Lesson 4

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LEARNING from ABRAHAM, JOSEPH and the MIDWIVES

Let the whole world fear the LORD, and let everyone stand in awe of Him. Psalms 33: 8

Would you take it as a compliment if someone described you as a “God-fearing” person? If it is said for all the right reasons, then there is probably no other description that could be more admirable. Do you know some men or women about whom you might feel this way? What is it about them that would make you come to this conclusion? It’s good to spend time with people that you really admire, with people who know God well and the way that they respond to life gives you abundant proof of that fact.

REFLECT – Spend some time reading Psalm 33 – stand in awe of the LORD

READ – Learning from the examples of Abraham, Joseph and the midwives

Though their circumstances are very different, each of these people is recognized because their actions give evidence that “the fear of God” influences their attitudes, choices, and behavior. What are your insights?

1. Abraham and his son – Genesis 22: 1 – 19
2. Joseph and his brothers – Genesis 42: 1 – 25
3. The Midwives – Exodus 1: 1 - 21

RECEIVE – God said, “I will personally instruct them. They will learn to fear me as long as they live and they will teach their children to fear me also.” Deuteronomy 4: 10 NLB

As you reflect on each of these stories, here are some questions you might want to consider, remembering God wants to give you insight and understanding through the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to open your mind and heart to the truths which He wants to you to think about today.

1. In the challenge that this person was facing, how did “fearing God” affect his/her choices?
2. What do you think is meant by that description in each particular story?
3. Who said that this person “feared God”? Is this significant?
4. What do you notice about this person’s relationship to God?
5. Was there blessing or good that came out of this event because he/she “feared God”?
6. What insight or impact is God showing you through this story?

RESPOND –

Whatever your circumstances are today, this would be a good time to look back at Psalm 33: 17 – 22. Those people who rely and put their hope in God’s unfailing love are the same ones who understand what it means to fear Him – to stand in “radical astonishment” at His amazing grace and yet His unchangeable holiness. Talk with the Lord about His desires and yours.

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Lesson 5

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LEARNING from the EXAMPLE AND TEACHING OF MOSES

**Fear the LORD you His saints, for those who fear Him lack nothing.
The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.**

Psalm 34: 9 – 10

Have you ever heard God calling your name? Probably it wasn't audible to your natural ears. Most likely no one else even knew that God was speaking to you. But for you, it was a moment in time when the "ears of your heart" were open to the quiet voice of the LORD. Other times God gets our full attention through something dramatic, unexpected, or unusual. Quite often we "hear the voice of God" through another person. When God first called Moses by name, it was dramatic – a burning bush (Exodus 3), but that encounter changed Moses' life. That experience was the beginning of his journey and passion to be a man who feared God – for all the right reasons. In the beginning, he resisted God's plan for him, but as the years passed, he became the man that God entrusted with His truth for the Israelites and for you and me.

REFLECT – Take some time to read Psalm 34 – Why is David in awe of God at this time?

READ – Learning from the example and teaching of Moses

1. Moses and Pharaoh – Exodus 9: 27 – 35
2. Moses and his father-in-law – Exodus 18: 13 – 26
3. Moses and the people – Exodus 20: 18 – 22
4. The law - Leviticus 25: 17, 36, and 43
5. Moses' instructions to the Israelites while they were in the wilderness for 40 years – Deuteronomy
4: 9 – 10
5: 28 – 29
6: 1 – 2
6: 13 – 15
6: 24 – 25
10: 12 – 13
10: 20 - 22
13: 4
14: 22 - 23
17: 14 - 20
28: 58- 60
31: 12 - 13

RECEIVE - God said, "Assemble the people before Me to hear My words so that they may learn to revere Me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children." Deuteronomy 4: 10 NIV

As you reflect on the life of Moses and the instructions which he gave to the people of Israel as their leader, there is a great deal to learn about what it meant for Moses and his people "to fear God".

1. What keeps people from recognizing and turning to the LORD God even after they have seen amazing miracles? Why did Pharaoh still choose to not fear God?
2. Why do you think this story about Moses and his father-in-law is included in the Bible?
3. Awestruck – by God! What does Exodus 20 teach you about being afraid and about the fear of God? Is there a difference? Are there some similarities? Do they produce the same result?

RESPOND

As you think about the life of Moses, read Deuteronomy 34. Take time to ponder what the Spirit of God may be suggesting to you. Is God calling your name? What does He want you to understand? What is your response?

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Lesson 6

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LEARNING FROM THE LIFE and COUNSEL of GREAT LEADERS

Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what He did for me. Psalm 66: 16

Who are your top 3 Biblical heroes? After you have made your list, it would be a very good idea to write down a few reasons for choosing each of those particular people. The advice that we receive from individuals whom we greatly admire and respect can often impact our lives and give us insight that influences our decisions. When several of these people give you the very same counsel, there is no question that you would be wise to listen and heed their guidance very carefully. Wouldn't you agree?

REFLECT – Before you begin your study, join with the choir as they sing the anthem of praise to God found in Psalm 66.

READ – Learning from the life and counsel of Joshua, Samuel, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Nehemiah and Job

1. Joshua – Joshua 4: 19 - 24 – Entering the promised land –
Joshua 24: 13 – 24 – At the end of his life –
2. Samuel – I Samuel 12: 13 – 25 – Samuel's speech at the coronation of Saul
3. Hezekiah – II Kings 18: 1 – 8 - Good king of Judah
4. Jehoshaphat – II Chronicles 19: 4 – 10 – Instructions to the judges of the land
5. Nehemiah – Nehemiah 1: 4 – 11 – His prayer to God
Nehemiah 5: 6 – 13 – Instructions to the people
Nehemiah 7: 1 – 2 - Choosing Hanani, his brother, as leader
6. Job – Job 1: 1 – 5 - A description of the man, Job
Job 23 - Job's view of God
Job 28 - Job's view of wisdom
Job 38 – 39 - When God speaks . . . Job is AWESTRUCK

RECEIVE – Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of Jehovah. (ASV)

1. There are some similarities and some differences between what is meant by “fearing God” in these Biblical texts. Make a list of your observations in each category.
2. If you were asked to prepare a devotional and illustrate what it means to “fear God”, which one of the first 5 people would you choose to use as your example? How would you use this story to motivate someone?
3. What kind of a man is Job? Think about the words which are used to describe him in the verses in Chapter 1. What do they mean?
4. Write a short paragraph which summarizes Job's view of God and his view of wisdom? Do you agree with Job? What questions does this bring to your mind?
5. Put yourself in Job's place – devastated by his circumstances, accused by his friends, and crying out with determination to his God for wisdom and understanding - - Job 30: 16 – 31: 8. Then God speaks. He reveals to Job His omnipotence and His sovereignty and so much more – Job 38 – 40: 2
What was Job's response to God? - Job 40: 3 – 5 and 42: 1 – 6)

RESPOND

Too often in our culture our tendency is to talk. Silence can be hard and long, uncomfortable and difficult. But it is often in quietness, when distractions are removed and schedules are laid aside, that we hear God speak to us. Are you willing to give Him that opportunity right now or are you too busy with your own agenda?

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Lesson 7

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TAKING A LOOK AT DAVID'S INSIGHTS from the PSALMS

**For God's unfailing love toward those who fear Him
is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.** Psalm 103:11

Do you consider yourself to be a theologian? It's an intimidating word, isn't it? In her very helpful book, When Life and Beliefs Collide, Carolyn Custis James, defines a theologian as "one who knows God deeply and draws strength from this knowledge to trust Him . . . with extraordinary wisdom and boldness". It makes me want to be a theologian. How about you? It's a process of learning all that we can about God and then integrating that knowledge with our actions and behavior. David helps us to do exactly that through his Psalms. You may not have any degrees following your name for others to notice, but you can become a graduate theologian in God's eyes if you take this definition seriously!

REFLECT – There are so many reasons to praise the LORD – Read Psalm 103
Join with David, using the words "I" and "me" to personalize your praise.

READ – Taking a Look at the insight that David gives us through his Psalms.

Notice how he describes God and then responds with trust, courage, confidence and obedience.

Is that what "fearing God" is all about?

19: 7 – 11	111: 2 – 5, 9 - 10
22: 22 – 23, 25	112: 1 - 4
25: 12 – 14	115: 11 - 13
33: 8, 18 – 22	118: 4
34: 7 - 11	128: 1 - 4
40: 1 – 4	130: 3 - 4
61: 3 – 5	145: 17 - 20
66: 16 – 20	147: 10 - 11
85: 8 – 9	
103: 11 – 18	

RECEIVE – Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you to revere and worshipfully fear the Lord.
Psalm 34: 11 – Amplified Bible

1. What factors made David strong enough to write Psalm 34 at a time when he was fleeing from the wrath of King Saul and then could have been killed by the king of the Philistines?
2. Psalm 130 gives a very specific reason for learning to "fear God". What is it and why is the writer of this prayer so overwhelmed by the LORD?
Bonus question - Think about this verse being in the Old Testament and then consider what verses you know about this subject in the New Testament.
3. In Psalm 119 there seems to be a connection between the fear of God and His law. Why would this be true?
Verses 27, 38, 63, 74, 79, 120
4. Are there some promises written to those "who fear the LORD" that are there for you in your circumstances today? What would it take to integrate your belief and your behavior?

RESPOND –

To the one who does not know the love and forgiveness of God in Jesus, fear of Him means terror and fright, punishment and judgment. To the one who knows His mercy and grace, His promises and peace, fear of Him means deep gratitude, honor, worship and service. Where do you stand?

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Lesson 8

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TAKING A LOOK AT SOLOMON'S INSIGHTS from PROVERBS

**The LORD provided redemption for His people;
He ordained His covenant forever – holy and awesome is His name.** Psalm 111: 9

What would you ask for if God met you as He did King Solomon so many years ago? Do you remember how King Solomon responded to God when He offered to give the king whatever he desired? His answer greatly pleased the Lord because it was not selfish. It was not for wealth or a long life, nor for riches or honor, but it was for a discerning and wise heart so that He could lead the people of God, the Israelites – I Kings 3. It seems rather significant that one of the major themes that Solomon wrote about in his book of proverbs is “the fear of the Lord”. What do you think is the connection between wisdom and the fear of God?

REFLECT – Psalm 111 – Take some time to consider a few reasons to be in awe of your God.

READ – Taking a Look at the insight that Solomon gives us through his Proverbs –

(Using various translation and paraphrases will help you gain insight.

Notice parallel and/or contrasting statements as you study.)

1: 7	15: 33
2: 1 – 6	16: 6
3: 7 – 8	19: 23
8: 13	22: 4
9: 10 – 11	23: 17
10: 27	24: 21 - 22
14: 26	29: 25
14: 27	31: 30
15: 16	

RECEIVE – Come, children, listen closely; I'll give you a lesson in GOD worship. Psalm 34: 11 – The Message

1. In Solomon's mind, what do you think the "fear of the LORD" really means? Why is it the beginning of wisdom or knowledge?
2. What are the benefits or results of being wise according to the proverbs? What makes someone wise?
3. What are the promises that are given in these proverbs to those who stand in awe, who revere, who trust in the LORD?
4. What is the evidence that someone really does "fear the Lord"?
5. How do you think Proverbs 31: 30 could apply to you and me?

RESPOND –

How would you answer the question that God spoke to King Solomon now? Those who people who rely and put their hope in God's unfailing love are the same ones who understand what it means to fear Him – to stand in "radical astonishment" at His amazing grace and yet His unchangeable holiness. Talk with the Lord about His desires and yours.

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Lesson 9

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LEARNING from the OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

**God fulfills the desires of those who fear Him. He hears their cry and saves them.
The LORD watches over all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy.**

Psalm 145: 19 – 20

Warnings! They're negative, usually repetitive, and often ignored, aren't they? In our culture today we want to hear the positive reasons for doing something – the benefits, the promises, and the advantages. We grow weary of hearing the possible side effects, the potential dangers, or the chance of disaster. However, in God's economy, His warnings are not simply suggestions or options. His warnings are always accurate, without any exceptions, and He has made them available and clear in His Word. The question you and I must ask ourselves is "how seriously am I going to take them?"

REFLECT – God's majesty. His awesome works. His abundant goodness. His glory and might.

Write your own Psalm of praise following the verses of Psalm 145, using the word "I" and "me".

READ – Learning from the Prophets as they warn the Israelites and prophecy concerning their immediate and long range future - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and others –

1. Isaiah 8: 11 – 13
11: 1 - 3
33: 2 - 6
59: 19 – 20
2. Jeremiah 2: 13 – 19
5: 18 – 25
26: 17 – 19
3. Daniel 6: 23 – 27
4. Micah 6: 8 – 9
5. Habakkuk 3: 1 – 2
6. Haggai 1: 7 - 14
7. Malachi 3: 16 – 4: 3

RECEIVE – God said, 'Assemble the people in My presence to listen to My words so that they will learn to fear Me in holy fear for as long as they live on the land, and then they will teach these same words to their children.'

Deuteronomy 4: 10 (Message)

1. Why did God raise up these prophets during the reign of the kings of Israel and Judah?
2. Do you think their warnings have relevance today? If so, find some specific examples from these Bible passages.
3. There are some promises given by the prophets to those who "fear God". Is there any encouragement in them for believers now?
4. Some of the prophets illustrate how "fearing God" influences the choices that people make? Do you find there has been a correlation in any of your decisions recently?

RESPOND – Are there any warnings that you sense the Holy Spirit is speaking in to your heart and mind? Take some time to consider what one of them might be? What are your choices? Is there someone who can help you make your desires a reality? Ask the Lord for His counsel and provision.

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Lesson 10

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LEARNING from the GOSPELS and ACTS

The LORD delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love.

Psalm 147: 11

What is your definition of a miracle? There are two definitions in the dictionary – “an event that appears unexplainable by the laws of nature and so is held to be supernatural in origin or an act of God” or “a person, thing, or event that excites admiring awe”. The birth of a baby is always a miraculous occasion and fits the second definition. However, the “new birth” is one of the most wondrous events that humans can possibly experience. To become a new person on the inside by the cleansing and power of the Holy Spirit, a child of God – it’s the ultimate miracle. Are you awestruck by the love and mercy of the LORD?

REFLECT – Read Psalm 147. How many miracles does the Psalmist describe in his song of praise to God?

READ - Learning from the Gospels and the Book of Acts

1. The Gospels
Matthew 8: 23 – 27 (Mark 4: 35 – 41, Luke 8: 22 – 25)
Mark 9: 14 – 15
Luke 1: 46 – 55
Luke 5: 25 – 26
Luke 9: 43 – 45
Luke 12: 4 – 7
Luke 23:39 – 43
2. The ACTS of the Apostles
Acts 2: 40 – 47
Acts 9: 31
Acts 10
Acts 13: 26

RECEIVE – God said, ‘Gather the people together to Me, and I will make them hear My words, that they may learn (reverently) to fear Me all the days they live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children’. Deuteronomy 4: 10 – Amplified Bible

1. When Mary and Elizabeth rejoice together (Luke 1), it is clear that believing God and fearing God are very closely interconnected. How do you put these two concepts together?
2. Why isn’t everyone convinced that Jesus is the Son of God when they witness His miracles? Are these the same excuses or obstacles that keep people from coming to faith today?
3. Why do you think that God chose the Gentile, Cornelius, to give Peter hospitality? As you read Acts 10 again, what part of this story impresses you the most?
4. There seems to be a contrast between “fear” and “fearing God” in several of these stories. How do they co-exist?

RESPOND – “It took a miracle to put the stars in place. It took a miracle to hang the world in space. But when He (God) saved my soul, cleansed and made me whole, it took a miracle of love and grace.”
By John Peterson 1948

Have you experienced that miracle in your life? Does it continue to amaze you? Why or why not?

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Lesson 11

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LEARNING from the EPISTLES and REVELATION

Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! *His faithful love endures forever.* Psalm 136: 1

Why did God give us the emotion of “fear”? Perhaps one of the biggest reasons is for our protection. In this fallen and imperfect world, legitimate fear is a wonderful gift and comes from the hand of a loving and good God. Fear gives us boundaries which keep us safe. We take certain precautions because of it. At certain times fear provides an incentive for action and in other situations keeps us from responding inappropriately or foolishly. Just like all our other emotions too much can lead to personal problems and too little can be dangerous. A great preacher, Ray Pritchard, once said that “the fear of God is the most positive attitude you can have toward Him. It will keep you from wasting your life on things that don’t matter.”

REFLECT – It’s time to write your own “Psalm” of Thanksgiving to your God – a letter, simple words, a poem, prose – whatever written expression comes into your heart and mind.

READ – Learning from the Epistles and Revelation

1. The Epistles
Romans 3: 9 – 18
II Corinthians 5: 11 - 15
II Corinthians 7: 1
Ephesians 5: 21
Philippians 2: 12 – 13
Colossians 3: 22 – 24
Hebrews 12: 28 – 29
James 2: 18 - 22
I Peter 1: 13 – 21
I Peter 2: 15 – 17
2. Revelation
Revelation 14: 6 – 7
Revelation 15: 3 – 4
Revelation 19:4 - 9

RECEIVE – ‘Gather the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words, so that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.’ Deut. 4: 10 ESV

1. Clearly the importance of “fearing God” is in both the Old and New Testament. Does it mean the same thing before and after the death/resurrection of Jesus or does it change?
2. In several of these NT verses the fear of God is closely associated with how we think and act. Is fear the motivation or is there something deeper than that?
3. There is a very important word at the beginning of Phil. 2: 12. It is because the content of the preceding verses (2: 1 – 11) are the basis for the instructions. What impact does this have?
4. Angels, heavenly beings, vast choirs – all singing in victory. What inspires such awe?

RESPOND – As you conclude this entire study and reflect on God’s amazing love, His awesome power, His unchanging mercy, His unlimited grace and the price that Jesus paid on the cross so that YOU might be forgiven and live with Him forever and ever, what are you thinking? How will you “work hard to show the results of your salvation through obedience and at the same time realize that it is all possible because He is at work in you?” Philippians 2: 12 - 13

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