

Luke 12:1-5 Teaching Fear of God

He began saying to His disciples first of all, “Beware of leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed and hidden that will not be known. Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops. I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; I tell you, fear Him!”

See also: John 3:19-21 and 1 John 2:3-5; 4:18

- 1. Interpretation:** Here, hypocrisy is the Pharisees’ tendency to cover up their sin, keep it secret in the darkness away from the light. The point is, they feared people and not God. They felt they could get away with it if they kept it from people. Jesus warned the disciples not to do that because God will reveal it.
Application: Therefore, I must warn my disciples to not do that because God will reveal it.
- 2. Interpretation:** Jesus defined *fear* as “be afraid of.” When we define fear as “awe, reverence and respect,” then we are in control of the fear. Obedience is done on our terms. We get to decide when to do it and what it looks like. When we define fear as “being afraid of,” then it is done on the terms of the one we fear. When I am afraid of someone, then they are dictating the terms of my obedience and defining what that looks like. So I can have a reverence for God and still be in charge of my relationship with God. Only when I am afraid of God is He in control of my life.
Application: Therefore, I must teach my disciples to be afraid of God or they will not define obedience to God on His terms.
- 3. Interpretation:** Our fear is connected to our hope in that we will fear in the same direction as our hope. The hope of people who fear men is that they hope they will not lose whatever those men provide. Someone without fear is someone without hope.
Application: Therefore, I must tell my disciples to check out their fears because that will be an indication of where their hope lies. For example, if you fear men who can kill the body, then your hope is in your body. If you are afraid of losing your money, then your hope is in your money.

Christians who come to God in love but without fear are usually thinking of love in terms of God being tolerant. So they are not just coming to God with love, but they are assuming God is coming to them the same way, with a love defined by tolerance. People who come to God with love alone, or with fear defined only as “awe, reverence, respect,” will compromise the Word of God when it contradicts their lifestyle. We promise according to our hopes, but we perform according to our fears. Christians who come to God without fear will tend to find reasons (like ancient culture, post-modern relevance, or “Love Wins”) to ignore the clear teaching of the Word of God.

For more information on *Fearing God*, see ***Discipleship*** on Relational Concepts web page:
<https://relationalconcepts.org/>