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Getting To Know God - Part 2

Introduction

When an individual begins to muse on God, it is my suggestion that it can flow into one of three avenues:

- a) The individual will be content to be saved, staying with the basic knowledge, that being, I know God is.
- b) I can take a broad knowledge of the attributes of God. He is holy, infinite in power, unmeasurable in love, dreadful in wrath. All I know then is data about God.
- c) I can seek to live in fellowship with Him and yield to His good pleasure, thereby getting to know Him personally.
- d) I will also learn that the natural me can find a multiplicity of things that distract my attention, interrupt my praying, make flat the word of God, and suddenly find this month's Reader's Digest needs to be read right now. Often, an individual may feel they are spiritually comatose, aware of what is happening and of eternal truths, but not really in spirit with the Lord's Spirit. The truths of God, the judgment of believers, the Great White Throne, eternity, Heaven and Hell are words and expressions, but while the mind of the individual knows these things, the spirit of the individual is nonchalant and detached from the realities. I submit it is due to our casual attitude toward God that results in such characteristics.

The fear of the Lord

The expression, "The fear of the Lord" occurs in 30 verses and all except Acts 9:31 occur in the Old Testament.

The fear of the Lord is a reverential awe due to the glory of His person, the unwavering absoluteness of His character, the majesty of His throne, the fearfulness of being the object of His wrath, the infiniteness of His power, the awareness of His omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience. He is not "the big man upstairs" or "daddy". Contrary to modern casualness and lack of spiritual understanding, Abba (Mk. 14:36) does not mean "Daddy".

Since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1:7), the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10), and is the instruction of wisdom (Prov. 15:33), those who are unsaved have a right to fear God in alarmed anxiety for God is angry with the wicked every day (Psa. 7:11). For His own there ought to be a holy awe for, "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him (Psa. 89:7).

Examples of those who feared God

1) Joseph (Gen. 42:18)

- a) One can feel so sorry for him. The despising by his older brothers is understandable because he was a little tattletale (Gen. 37:2), and the father did not help the situation by spoiling him (Gen. 37:3). He was also a somewhat egotistical young man because while the first dream came from God and therefore was fulfilled (Gen. 37:5-8), the second was not. In it he dreamt his father and mother came and bowed to him (Gen. 37:9). That did not happen because his mother never came down to Egypt and bow before him, as she had died (Gen. 35:16-18). How dark and unjust were the experiences he had when he was lied about (Gen. 39:13-20). When his brothers came to buy corn, instead of getting even, he showed abundant kindness to those who had done him so much wrong (Gen. 43:23-31; 45:1-11). In a nutshell, "he feared God", therefore did not seek to retaliate in any way but sought their blessing. Joseph feared God (Gen. 42:18).

2) Moses

- a) Moses knew what it was to spend time with God. Time uninterrupted by the things on earth, yet when God manifested His dreadfulness at Sinai Moses said, "And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake" (Heb. 12:21).

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3) Job

- a) Surely Job is among the great men recorded in the Bible who had a fear of God. The beginning of the book of Job states, “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil” (Job 1:1). Even though Satan was given liberty to afflict and bankrupt him, he was unmoved in His faithfulness to God. So true that God stated, “And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause” (Job 2:3). Job feared God, a fact Satan acknowledged (Job 1:9). Three times it is recorded he feared God.

4) Obadiah.

- a) While we do not read much about Obadiah, what is said of Him shows a very spiritual man. He held a place of importance in the government of Ahab, a very wicked king. When the fury of Jezebel, Ahab’s wife, was vented, her desire was to cut off the prophets of the Lord. Obadiah took one hundred and secretly hid them in two places, feeding them bread and water. Twice it is recorded concerning his fear of the Lord (1 Kgs. 18:3, 12). He is the only person (I am aware of) to whom it adds the word “greatly” in describing his fear of the Lord (1 Kgs. 18:2).

What can I learn from these men who feared the Lord?

When there was a working knowledge and reverential fear of God, it resulted in some cases of:

- a) Humiliation before exaltation, like Joseph.
- b) Suffering before abundant blessing, like Job.
- c) Being told to do things that are naturally against the desire to live, for he rejected the command of evil King Ahab, like Obadiah.
- d) Being given great intimacy with God and then being brought to a deeper level, like Moses.

Prayer

John, by the Holy Spirit, wrote, “And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth (Rev. 11:18). Thank God He has mercy on us and is still giving us time to seek His help and to fear His Name.

. . . . Rowan Jennings