

Journey CHURCH

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Session 1 Leader Guide

OUTLINE

- I. There is a hidden virtue that, in essence, is the key to all of life.
 - A. This secret virtue offers the essential ingredient for being close with God.
 - B. This virtue can help safeguard your faith and the faith of your loved ones.
 - C. This virtue can help you remove behaviors that harm you spiritually.

- II. This secret virtue is the fear of God.
 - A. King Solomon, one of the wisest men to ever live, wrote about this virtue.
 - B. Solomon was trained in the fear of God and his success as king was largely based on that virtue.
 - C. Solomon lost sight of this virtue toward the end of his life but didn't die in that state.

- III. There is a difference between the fear of the Lord and being scared of God.
 - A. There are harmful fears ... but there are also healthy fears.
 - B. The person who is scared of God has something to hide.
 - C. The fear of God is not being afraid of God but being afraid of being away from Him.

- IV. The fear of the Lord includes more than just reverence.
 - A. The fear of God does include esteem, respect, honor, and veneration.
 - B. To fear God also means to give Him all that belongs to Him.

- V. The key benefits to fearing God.
 - A. The fear of God increases our intimacy with Him.
 - B. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.
 - C. The fear of God provides the pathway for us to mature in our salvation.
 - D. The fear of God produces authentic holiness.
 - E. The fear of God swallows up all other fears, including the fear of man.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The "fear of God" is one of those terms that gets used a lot in church settings but is rarely defined. In your own words, how would you summarize what you've been taught about "the fear of God"? What does it mean? What does it *not* mean?
2. At the end of the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon sums up the wisdom of his experience by saying, "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind" (12:13). How would you describe the connection between fearing God and obeying God?
3. Look again at Hebrews 12:28-29: "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our 'God is a consuming fire.'" How does the fear of God lead to worship, and vice versa?
4. The key idea in this study is that holy fear-what we might call the awe of God-is an incredibly powerful force for good in our lives. When have you experienced benefit or blessing because you chose to fear God?
5. Think back to your first encounters with God and your earliest memories of meeting Him. What emotions were most prominent in those encounters? What thoughts or feelings were most prevalent in those experiences?