BIG PROBLEMS? BIGGER GOD!
Part 3: NOT FEARING GOD

INTRO—Last lesson dealt with the problem of fear, using the Hebrew nation crossing the Red Sea as text. Passage closed in Exo. 14:31 "…the people feared the Lord…" Phrase caught my eye. I've never heard or taught a lesson on this important subject. Most fears are negative. The fear of God is actually positive in the sense it has many positive results. Solving this problem can resolve other issues. God gets bigger when we properly fear Him. Ask and answer three questions about fearing God (What? Why? How?)

I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FEAR GOD?

A. Phrase usage? Found about 70 times, mostly in OT in Proverbs.

B. Word in Hebrew is yiran and Greek is phobos.

C. Contrast. In Scripture unbelievers do NOT fear God (Gen. 20:11; Rom. 3:18; Psa. 36:1), but believers do. We are commanded to fear God (Psa. 34:8-22). See Deut. 6:13 and Matt. 4:10.

D. Definition goes beyond the emotion of fear. Fear of God is our response to understanding who He is, what He has done, and what He will do. Fear of God involves 3 things (1) a reverential awe of the wisdom, power, and grace, and majesty of God (2) a faithful trust in His goodness no matter what (3) habitual hatred for sin and evil as an offense to God's holiness. "Can we fear God and love Him at the same time?" Yes and we must (Ex: teachers, officers, etc.). We find trouble when our fear of God is superseded by other fears.

II. WHY SHOULD WE FEAR GOD? What are some of the benefits that come when we fear God? "Fear of God" mentioned 14 times in Proverbs.

A. From Proverbs (generally true principles, not promises):

1. Source of knowledge and wisdom (1:7; 2:5, 9, 10)
2. Hatred for sin and evil (8:13; 16:6) – Exo. 20:20 – When we fear God we hate what He hates. World has limitless tolerance for sin. Hate sin, love sinner.
3. Fountain of life (14:27) – salvation
4. Hope (23:17-18) – not love or envy the world
5. Prolongs our days (10:27; 22:4) – not necessarily a longer life on earth. Beyond life on earth with God will enjoy forever with Him.
6. Protects us (14:26-27; 19:23) – our refuge
7. Humbles us (15:33) – receives honor
8. Contentment (15:16)

B. Others:

1. Perpetuity (Deut. 5:29)
2. Provision for needs (Psa. 33:18-19; 34:8-10) – lack no good thing
3. Pleases the Lord (Psa. 147:10-11)

III. HOW CAN WE DEVELOP A MORE HEALTHY FEAR OF GOD?

A. Something we learn as God teaches us (Psa. 34:11; 86:11). We learn it from Scripture and life experiences affirms it.

B. Stay away from sin (Pro. 3:7; 16:6)

C. Serve (Deut. 6:13; 10:12, 20; 13:4; Josh. 24:14-15)

D. Give (Deut. 14:22-23) – God-fearers are generous givers He is owner.

E. Worship (Psa. 5:7; 22:23; 135:20)

F. Obey His commandments (Eccl. 12:13)

G. Trust—Build confidence (Pro. 14:26; Psa. 115:11; 119:74)

SUMMARIZE ALL THESE VERSES TOGETHER into Two Statements:

1. The fear of the Lord is the key to a blessed life of wisdom, prosperity, joy, and hope.
2. The fear of the Lord is the single most important quality a parent can hand down to their children.

TWO CLOSING THOUGHTS ON THE FEAR OF THE LORD:

1. It is an attitude of the heart (Deut. 5:29)
2. It is a choice (Pro. 1:29)

CONC: John Piper . . . Eccl. 12:13. . .