

THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES

by Hendrik Joubert

Using religion for personal gain seems unthinkable; however the vast number of e-mail scams where “Christians” solicit help from “Christians” to steal millions from fictitious accounts is sadly but one reminder of just how corrupt man can be. One may be tempted to feel sorry for the thousands of “innocent” people who get caught and lose their money, instead of gaining the millions promised – then you realize that *innocent* people do not get caught trying to steal. Gullibility, caused by greed, result in people losing their life savings. Notice just how applicable the following warning is: ***For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1 Timothy 6:10.*** They wanted to steal millions, causing them to lose what little they had.

Another valuable exhortation is found in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians: ***Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. 1 Corinthians 14:20.*** With regard to sin and corruption Christians should be like *infants*, completely innocent. We should not think of ways to justify the fact that we sin; we should combat it with all our being – and that with the help of our Savior. It is through Paul that we learn of His effective help: ***No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:13.*** What a positive statement concerning my ability as a Christian, but at the same time a statement that puts the blame for sin where it belongs, squarely upon my shoulders.

Through Peter the Lord expresses our responsibility: ***As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,¹⁵ but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;¹⁶ because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."¹⁷ If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 1 Peter 1:14-19***

Notice the way in which the awesome sense of respect and reverence is conveyed – ***If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourself in fear during the time of your stay on earth.*** Christians should be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (Matthew 5:13-16) In Psalm 50:16 God warns through Asaph: ***But to the wicked God says, "What right have you to tell of My statutes And to take My covenant in your mouth?"***

A lack of faith in God, and respect for Him, lies at the heart of the matter. When one considers the absolute disrespect of men, the abuse of God and His word the following warning issued by the Hebrew writer comes to mind: ***For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE."³¹ It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10:30-31.***

Repentance is a simple change of mind. It is such an elementary concept, this change of mind; however it results in a transformation. Real changes in thinking cause changes in

conduct. To the Romans Paul writes: ***And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2.*** In the word of God we have the perfect tool to renew, or educate our thinking. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Now consider the Wonderful Motivator who through His selfless actions causes us to have the desire to make a serious attempt to return His selfless love. There is no way that we may match His sacrifices, but therein lays the motivation. Read **Philippians 2:1-16** to notice how the apostle uses the example of Jesus to motivate our obedience: ¹² ***So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*** What does it say of the man who is not motivated by Him?

When we look at the selfless sacrifice of the Son of God we should indeed be motivated to do things from the heart: ***But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. Romans 6:17-18.*** We are to give as we have purposed in our hearts, not grudgingly. **2 Corinthians 9:7.** When we sing, we are to make melody with the heart. **Ephesians 5:19.** When we eat the Lord's Supper we are to examine ourselves. **1 Corinthians 11:28.** The circumcision the Christian receives is of the heart. **Romans 2:29.**

There is no starting point if there is no faith in God (deep reverence and respect for the Master of the universe) when ***"THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."***
Romans 3:18