

# The Joy of Fearing God

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Date: 12 March 2023

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, we start with that quote that's on the screen that is still up there by C.S. Lewis. I've heard this quote numerous times, whether it's in other lessons, messages, or books that I've read.

And in his time and the days in which he was living, he certainly saw the futility of man in the lives of people and the choices that they were making and wrote that quote, we are half-hearted creatures fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at sea.

We are far too easily pleased. Interesting, isn't it? We're far too easily pleased. And it could be that, well, it's not a could be, it is a reality that some people even today perceive fearing God as a way of life means that one has to settle for something less than what one enjoys apart from God.

And that's the whole idea of the quote there. Individuals, people in the world today pursuing all kinds of things and finding some satisfaction, pleasure in those things could be even good things.

But the problem is, is when they find their ultimate pleasure and joy in those things apart from God. And it's at that time that they're settling for far less.

[ 1 : 3 8 ] They're far too easily pleased with the things of this world. And rather than finding their ultimate pleasure in God, whatever life circumstances you are experiencing.

So we want to focus on this reality. Fearing God includes enjoying God and life to the fullest as he's designed it.

In fact, no individual can enjoy life to the fullest if they're seeking to enjoy it apart from God. There may be certain pleasures that they can enjoy, certainly, but not to the fullest that one could enjoy those pleasures in knowing God through Jesus Christ.

So fearing God and enjoying God go together. Some quotes, one that we're very familiar with from the Westminster Shorter Catechism, where it teaches that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

And Jerry Bridges again makes that point. Both glorifying God and enjoying him together form one aim.

[ 2 : 5 2 ] The chief end is the idea. It's not ends, like there's two separate things. The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

They're two sides of the same coin. They go together. A couple of quotes that John Piper is known for are, The chief end of man is to glorify God and he makes a little change by enjoying him forever.

And adding that little twist to bring home that truth that we glorify God most when we are enjoying him in the way that he's made possible for us to enjoy him.

We're familiar with doing that when we enjoy an activity or a food or whatever it might be. Next time we see somebody, we tell them, Oh, did you ever taste a dish with this recipe?

Or did you, Oh, I want to tell you about this trip we went on and what we saw at this place. And you're extolling the praises of that food or that place, that activity that you did.

[ 4 : 08 ] And so that place, that food, artist, whatever it is, is glorified most by us enjoying what we've experienced through, whether it's, again, that food, that movie or whatever it is, that activity.

So God is glorified most when people truly are enjoying him. His other quote is, God is glorified in me when I am most satisfied in him.

Just the pleasure of God to see people who fear him and are living in the enjoyment of fearing him and walking in his ways. We're totally satisfied in who God is and knowing him and walking in his ways and his counsel.

It doesn't get any better than that. The more we know God and find our delight in him and walk in all of his ways, the more we will glorify him. He's magnified through our obedience.

Our soul signing satisfaction in him. Sinclair Ferguson has a quote that also shows the mixture of the fear of God and enjoying him and how he defines the fear of God.

[ 5 : 17 ] And he says, the fear of God is that indefinable mixture of reverence, fear, here we go, pleasure, joy, and awe, which fills our hearts when we realize who God is and what he's done for us.

So hopefully we're not like the child playing in the mud and making mud pies and settling for mud pies, thinking it doesn't get any better than this.

And I've probably been there before, playing in the mud and making mud pies and thinking that was great until I got home and my parents made a different conclusion than what I had made.

And it didn't feel quite as great at that time. But we don't want to be people like that. What that child wanted most was to be able to continue playing in the mud and making mud pies.

For him, life again was grand and couldn't get any better. But in reality, he was turning down something that was far better, a vacation or a holiday at the sea.

[ 6 : 23 ] The parents knew. They understood. Come on, Johnny, let's go. We're going to the sea. He said, no, no, this is fine. I'm having fun here. No, you don't understand. That's the truth.

He does not understand. And so in reality, that's what's happening with an unbeliever enjoying life apart from God. Don't understand. We were all there at one point.

And even for us as believers, there come those times when the flesh is seeking to deceive us and to draw us in a direction to walk in a way that isn't honoring to God.

And you know what it's like, the wrestling match that's going on in our thoughts and thoughts being formulated in our minds, thinking, getting us to think and move in the direction.

No, this would be better. It would be okay. Those are mud pies, folks. And the greater pleasure and joy is sticking with God and walking in his ways.

[ 7 : 25 ] Well, if you had one wish this morning, what would it be? If there was just one thing you could have, what would it be? Well, I hope it wouldn't be mud pies when we're talking about choices in life or be like the man who was lost in the desert for so long.

And at this point, he was just crawling through the sand until his hand hit a jar in the sand. And he picked it up and wiped it off and poof, a genie appeared.

This isn't real, by the way. The genie appeared. And of course, you know the scenario. The genie says you can have one wish, whatever it is.

And so, of course, the man wishes for a car door. Yeah, Scott's looking at me. A car door? Why would he wish for a car door? Well, genie doesn't reason why.

Poof, there you go. He got a car door. And the genie asked, you know, you could have anything you wish for. Why did you wish for a car door? He said, well, whenever I'm hot at home in the car, I roll the window down and I cool off.

[ 8 : 45 ] Come on, folks. You don't get that. It's just a bad joke, huh? Okay. Okay. He could have wished for an abundance of water and could have taken him on the rest of his journey.

But he settled for something far less. So whether it's mud pies or car doors, wish and make it your ambition and aim to pursue God in Christ and find your ultimate enjoyment in him.

Well, every time you open your car door, now you can think, don't settle for car doors. Make it your aim and ambition to pursue Christ. Well, David certainly was doing that in Psalm 27, 4.

He says, One thing have I asked of the Lord that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and inquire in his temple.

So David knew something of what life was like in knowing God. After all, he was a man that was characterized as a man after God's own heart.

[ 9 : 56 ] He knew something of the joy of fearing God, and he desired that above anything else in life. And we see it again in Psalm 63.

And David says, Oh God, you are my God. You even hear that in that phrase. It's that I can't imagine, I can't hardly believe that you are my God.

Even in that, is that the perspective we have as we wake up in the day or as we are moving through our day with challenges? Oh God, you are my God. I'm not moving through this on my own, but you, as you are revealed in the Scriptures, you are my God at this time.

Earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you. My flesh faints for you. As in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

[ 10 : 59 ] So I will bless you as long as I live. In your name I will lift up my hands. See the intensity that David writes with you.

Trying to describe his longings for God who is his God. He knew God as his God. And he had seen something certainly of the glory of God.

And from that he earnestly sought after God even more. He had tasted already. And see that the Lord is good. I mean, we know that experience physically as well.

Take, we're going to be doing that today with all those delicious meals and desserts down there. And you take a taste. Oh, this is good. You know, I want more of that.

David had lived that kind of life in his relationship with God. He had a thirst for knowing God that really needed to be satisfied. And he wanted to drink of that well and that water even more.

[ 12 : 00 ] He again knew something of what set God apart from the other gods of the day and what people were worshipping back then. And so he sought after God even more.

And beheld even more of God's power. God's glory. And his steadfast love. He was so satisfied and enthralled with God's love for him that it was to him, as he describes it, even more precious than life itself.

And out of that realization, that contemplation of God's steadfast love, he knew that God was worthy to be praised day after day for as long as he lived.

God was always glorified in David as David was enjoying him. I mean, we have this expression from David in the psalm, certainly by the working of God through David, but as a hard expression from David.

And we can see from his example, certainly God is worthy. There's nothing that can satisfy the soul of man from David's testimony more than God could.

[ 13 : 12 ] And so he was giving testimony that he knew that he could be fully satisfied and was fully satisfied in knowing God and enjoying walking, really, in the fear of God day by day by day, whatever his circumstances were.

But it wasn't just David. The apostle Paul also gave testimony that showed this combination of knowing God and being fully satisfied in him as well. And Paul testified about how his ultimate longing was in knowing Christ Jesus his Lord.

And he wanted to know him and know him even more. Now, according to Philippians 3, 4 through 11, Paul had every reason, according to the popular thinking of his day and the circles in which he traveled, he had all reasons to be fully satisfied in his life.

Through all the accomplishments he had achieved. I mean, he had reached the highest level, the pinnacle of what was really ultimate in life in his circles. And he describes that in verses 5 and 6 of chapter 3.

I just have them listed here. He was circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

[ 14 : 43 ] Couldn't be anybody that had anything more than him. He had reached the top of the ladder. But by God's grace and through faith in Jesus Christ, he came to realize that all those things that meant so much and were measured so high in the world and the culture in which he was living, they were all loss in comparison to knowing Christ Jesus is Lord.

Now, I'll read these verses 7 through 11 and you'll see that. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share his sufferings becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

You talk about living counter to the culture of his day at this point in Paul's life. Does he sound like a man that would still prefer making those religious mud pies at the time that were held so high in his circles prior to knowing Christ?

Does he sound like somebody that's sorry for being a follower of Jesus Christ? Not hardly. I mean, according to his testimony, now indeed he had reached the pinnacle of life and he wanted more.

[ 16 : 35 ] He wanted to go beyond where he was at in knowing Christ Jesus his Lord. There was a pleasure, a joy in life that he didn't know before. Jerry Bridges closes his book, the last chapter, by writing that there are promised joys that come to one who lives in the joy of fearing God.

And he writes, As I've studied the fear of God in the Psalms, I've noticed how often blessing is promised to those who fear him. In fact, there are 15 or so passages on this subject.

I've grouped them under four headings, provision, protection, guidance, and compassion. So there's another study you can do. Just look up in your concordance or whatever resource you have, Bible Hub online and other resources.

And if I look up those passages that say, use the words fear of God or fear of the Lord, and that can be a study for you. You can learn much more on what we have tried to share with you in the past weeks.

But I want to focus on these four blessings that Jerry Bridges mentions in his book. So let's start with the blessing in living in the fear of God and that one being enjoying his provision.

[ 17 : 52 ] Psalm 34, 9 and 10, O fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack. The young lions suffer want and hunger, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

Now David was familiar with the challenges of life that at times really made it difficult for him to move through his day, even in just getting provisions of daily food.

But God provided for him during those times. And many times it was through other people. One example was with the case of Abigail.

Remember that story? David and his men had been protecting her husband's cattle and flocks, and they had gone to him for some provisions of food, and he rejected all their requests.

And once Abigail heard about that, she went into action. When her foolish husband refused to provide for David and his men, it was Abigail that quickly gathered the provisions for David and his men.

[ 18 : 57 ] And God had provided for him through Abigail. And many times while we see in the Scriptures God providing through miraculous means, whether in the Old Testament or New Testament, generally it was through, we'll say, secondary causes.

One of those being just being able to work and earn the finances we need for provisions for our daily needs. God provides through our privilege of being able to work.

Even Paul did this as an example. To the people that he was ministering to. In 2 Thessalonians 3.8 he wrote, Nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you.

And then in verse 10 he wrote, In regard to those who were being idle at the time and not working, he said, If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. Such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

So many times we can give thanks that we even have the opportunity to go work on a daily basis. But we're seeing that as a provision of God, that God has given me the strength that I need to get up and go to work.

[ 20 : 16 ] God has provided me with a job in his providence to go and to work daily. That might give us a brand new perspective as we get up in the morning. Oh no, I've got to go to work again.

Oh, rejoice in the Lord. Walk in the fear of the Lord and give thanks for the provision that he's made. There's still problems you might have to deal with and solve at work, but we can do that with the wisdom of God that we've gained through the fear of fearing God.

So in that way God provides. But there are times indeed that God does provide through the gifts of others. And as we have opportunity to give to those who are experiencing genuine need.

In 1 Corinthians 16, 1 through 3, Paul instructed the church in Corinth as to how to go about gathering finances in order to send to those who are in need in Jerusalem.

And he says, Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of the week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

[ 21 : 25 ] And when I arrive, I'll send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. And we've had those opportunities as we've maybe just personally and privately as you've come across someone who is in genuine desperate need and you have the opportunity to give because maybe in your budget you've set aside something.

You know, this is the extra giving column in the budget because we want to be ready to be able to dispense to those to an unexpected need that might come up. I want to be ready to be able to give.

And so Paul was helping these people to understand that they can be the means through which God can provide to the needy in Jerusalem. And in that way, both the givers and the receivers get to experience the joy in fearing God and joy in walking in obedience to God.

Those that are giving have the joy of being the channel through which God is doing the providing to those in need. And those in need have the joy of receiving this gift of love through those people who fear God and want to give and act and show the love of God that He's shown toward them.

And so the greatest God is the great provider. And many times again, as we say, in physical provisions, probably if I opened it up, many of you could give testimony of, man, we had a need and the money came in.

[ 22 : 57 ] Whether it was an unexpected job or just a gift that somebody gave. Carol and I have experienced that before. Years ago, I can remember when we, I think, was I out of college?

You don't even know what I'm talking about yet. Okay, so we were living close to the budget and out of the blue, a check came in the mail for \$400.

Didn't know who it was from. Well, that week, the engine went on the car. And it just came in just under \$400. And now you're already understanding. This was many years ago that this happened.

But God had provided unexpectedly. And by His grace, it came before the engine went out on the car and needed major work. So opportunities like that, God in His providence, He does provide in wonderful ways, unexpected ways many times.

But what we can rejoice in, even beyond the physical, is how God has made provision for the way of eternal life and salvation. Life with Him as His children, His true children, with sins forgiven, transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of the Son He loves.

[ 24 : 17 ] All that provision, not through us working this time, but by His grace through Jesus Christ and Him sending the greatest gift of all His Son into the world who would live that righteous life and would die on the cross not for His own sins, but for our sins.

Be raised again and ascended into heaven where He sits at the right hand of God there. A provision for all those who are willing to set aside the mud pies, the car doors of life and make Christ their highest ambition and worship Him.

Well, we can enjoy the privilege of God's way of providing for us, but we also can enjoy His protection.

David again, Psalm 33, 16-18, The king is not saved by his great army. A warrior is not delivered by his great strength. The war horse is a false hope for salvation and by its great might it cannot rescue.

Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His steadfast love that He may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine.

[ 25 : 31 ] Now, David again, he was a man of many, many different experiences experiences and he's indicating that this time that his ultimate trust for his protection in times of battle were not in the normal military resources that were used in battle at the time, like his personal strength, his great army or the war horse.

And David used all those resources in times of battle, but they weren't his ultimate trust. His ultimate trust was in God. It was God who was the sovereign who provided David's safety and ongoing life in times of danger.

The eye of the Lord, as David wrote here, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him. He sees everything that's going on in the life of the one who fears Him.

I mean, it's not just that he sees what's going on because God knows everything. He sees everything that's going on in life, in everybody's life. Nothing is hidden from him.

But the idea is that it's not fate, it's not random chance, man's own strength or wisdom or any other human resources that might be at his disposal that determines really what happens in the life of the God-fearing person.

[ 26 : 49 ] That's what David's rejoicing in, that God is the one who's ultimately in control. It is God who sets the number of my days. He's ruling over all the events in his life and the same thing with us as well.

He's the one who provides protection and determines the well-being of the God-fearing individual. Quote from the theologian Barnes, their security is in the fact that the eye of God is upon them and he knows their wants, that he sees their dangers, that he has ample ability to deliver and to save them.

Psalms 145, 19 says, he fulfills the desire of those who fear him. He also hears their cry and saves them. So God sees. He knows what's going on.

He's in control, watching over those who fear him. But it goes beyond what he sees. But he also hears our cry in those times that we need help.

He's not deaf to our requests and our cries to him. And the same truth is emphasized in the New Testament in Hebrews as the writer.

[ 28 : 07 ] He's seeking to encourage his listeners there. He says, Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God. Let us hold fast our confession, for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need. So his ears open to the cry of the one who fears him.

It is God who provides us the protection. Well, how does he provide this protection? Well, he does have ministering spirits that work on his behalf.

We don't worship the angels as the people in Colossae were being told to do, and other people today might encourage you to do, to pray to the angels, but they are involved in life today.

God has angels as his messengers who will act on his behalf of those that fear him. We see it in the Old Testament. In 2 Kings 6, I don't have these verses on the screen for you, but you'll remember the story.

[ 29 : 24 ] Elisha's servant became worried when he saw the armies of the king of Assyria. They were far outnumbered by the Syrian troops, and Elisha prayed that God would allow his servant to see God's heavenly host that was prepared to fight against the Syrians, and yeah, he saw what was unseen before.

The messengers of God ready to act on their behalf. In Hebrews 1.14, we also read how God provides angels to serve on behalf of those who are to inherit salvation.

Even Peter experienced it at times when he was in prison. Remember, there he was sleeping, and an angel came up, kicked him, and time to wake up. Let's go.

And out he was delivered from the prison. So God does have his messengers that act on his behalf. But there is also times that God's sovereign rule over people and events were put into action by God's providence, and God worked in ruling over people and events to provide the protection to his people.

Genesis 12.17, God afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues to protect Sarah when she was taken into Pharaoh's household. An act of God on her behalf, protecting her.

[ 30 : 52 ] In 1 Samuel 23.26-28, we can read how Saul was closing in on David and his men when all of a sudden, out of the blue, yeah, a messenger came to Saul and told him that the Philistines were attacking Israel.

So Saul had to stop pursuing David, and David was delivered. David and his men were delivered. It could be that God has acted on your behalf through one of these means at some time in your life.

We've probably experienced it before. I know I've thought of that before when I've been delayed leaving the house or something has happened and instead of complaining, I think, hey, I have no idea what the providence of God is working for me on my behalf at this time.

No idea. You know, what I'm kicking against here might be a blessing of God keeping me from something that quite possibly could happen to me. And so instead, I will rest in the sovereignty of God and trust Him and be comforted and still have joy in the midst of what could be a possibly frustrating time.

Letting God, knowing that God provides protection. Now, does God always keep His people from experiencing trials, difficulties, suffering, even death?

[ 32 : 13 ] Well, no, of course not. Joseph was one who suffered at the hands of his brothers and was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and then imprisoned by Potiphar. In Genesis 39, 21, it says, but the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love.

So we need to be careful that in those times we're not thinking, God has deserted me. Everything's out of control. No, it's not. You know, God is still there.

God is still seeing. God is still open to your cry, still at work on the behalf of His children. Joseph feared God and in the end stated to his brothers the bigger purpose God was accomplishing through all the events of his life.

He said, as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.

So Joseph didn't have to end up being a man full of anxiety in those times. He was a man who understood the bigger purposes of God.

[ 33 : 22 ] That God was something bigger than what he could formulate in his own impuny mind and thinking. He was content with that. The Lord was with him during that time and so he continued on.

And of course, the greatest example, Jesus Himself. He experienced times of hunger. Matthew 4, fasted for 40 days, tempted by Satan, go ahead and make these stones into bread.

No, there was something bigger going on here than Jesus' hunger at that time. And it was very real hunger for Him. But He understood the bigger plan and referred to that in the Scriptures in fighting off that temptation of Satan.

Of course, He wasn't protected from the sufferings that came during His trial and then His time on the cross. Again, we're reminded there's a bigger purpose that had to be accomplished in God's plan for the salvation that made it necessary for Jesus to go through those experiences.

It was necessary for Him to go through those experiences. And He was committed to that plan in doing the will of the Father. He said, My food, my meat is to do the will of Him who sent me, accomplishing His glory.

[ 34 : 43 ] And so for the joy that was set before Him, the joy in fearing God, He endured the cross, despised the shame, and seated now at the right hand of the Father.

So we as well must be ready to hold on to the greater calling that we're called to. That we have in glorifying God in all circumstances. And as we live in the fear of God, we will also have that joy of the Lord in those times.

Do you believe that? We can believe it now as we're sitting here. It's as we're moving through those times that it's going to be tested. You all know what I'm talking about.

And so we have to cry out to the God who hears us, who sees us. help me to continue on trusting in the sovereign, loving, all-wise God.

Understanding you have a bigger purpose you're seeking to accomplish here than what I might be entertaining and desire in these circumstances. And so I'm going to trust you.

[ 35 : 48 ] He's working all things together for that good of our transformation into the likeness of Christ. There's a purpose right there that we can hold on to.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God during those times. Our joy in the Christian life is not having just the right circumstances for daily life.

If I only had a spouse that would just listen and respect me or love me or if I had just the right house and didn't have to struggle day by day or, you know, you fill in the blank.

No. Our joy in life is not dependent on our circumstances. Our joy comes from the Lord and walking in the fear of the Lord and having that kind of foundation.

We can have ongoing joy in fearing God. Well, let's finish up. Enjoying his guidance, David says, Who is the man who fears the Lord? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose.

[ 36 : 51 ] Psalm 23, The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

So as people, we like knowing where we're going and how we're going to get there. In the past, I've enjoyed going on wilderness trips and we've had to hike across some land and then canoe across some lakes.

Well, something, yeah, Donnie experienced that with me and Nate Blair as well and Tim and Mark Barr and, yeah, so during those times, we had to depend on a map and a compass in order to get where we were going and at the beginning of the day, we'd orient ourselves on the map, position the map just right with the compass and say, okay, here's where we are and this is where we need to go.

Okay, boom, we know right where to go across this lake. Now, across land, it was no problem. There was a well-worn path but once you're on the lake, it made a big difference because once you're on the water and you're thinking, oh, well, the next trailhead is on the other side of this island.

On your water, the shoreline looks the same. You don't have the bird's eye view of where the island is and so you need that map and compass to, no, we're going to keep going there.

[ 38 : 14 ] It doesn't look like an island there but we know this is the direction we need to go. And so, we have the privilege of having the guidance we need as those who fear God that He's going to give it to us.

How does He give it to us? Well, He gives it to us in His Word. All Scriptures breathed out by God. Psalm 19, 7-11, just one snippet from that passage.

Psalm 19, the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. That verse, most of us know, Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. So, we have God's Word to give us the guidance we need.

We have direct commands from God's Word that lets us know what we should do or we shouldn't do. And those incidences when we're not dealing with issues that are either right or wrong, yes or no, we have the wisdom principles that will guide us in making those decisions and helping us discern the way in which we should go.

Other times, we have counsel from godly individuals. Proverbs 11, 14, where there is no guidance of people falls, but in an abundance of counselors, there is safety.

[ 39 : 24 ] Or again, God's sovereign control in providential workings. James 4, 13-15 talks about making plans. Nothing wrong with making plans as we're looking toward the future, but are we looking for those plans to come to pass just because I've made those plans and I'm going to make it all happen because of my own strength and energy and wisdom.

That won't cut it. It still doesn't happen sometimes. Instead, we ought to say if the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that. But David, again, going back to him, enjoyed the reassurance of God's guidance.

He leads me besides the waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. So, the one who fears the Lord enjoys the guidance that God provides.

Well, let me finish off by that final blessing that we have enjoying the fear of the Lord and that's His compassion. This is an extended passage that I'll finish on.

But as I read the passage, notice how David directs us to the love of God, God's compassion to those who fear Him. But then also, notice the superlatives he uses in writing about God's love.

[ 40 : 46 ] He says, The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide nor will He keep His anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins nor repay us according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us.

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to His children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him. For He knows our frame, He remembers that we are dust.

As for man, his days are like grass. He flourishes like a flower of the field, for the wind passes over it and it's gone. Its place snows it no more.

But the steadfast love of our Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him and His righteousness to children's children, to those who keep His covenant and remember to do His commandments.

[ 41 : 54 ] So the individual that walks in the fear of the Lord can be reassured and enjoy the fact that God knows him and that God loves him.

He knows our frame. He knows everything about you and all His providential workings in your life flow out of His steadfast love and compassion. It's a reassuring and a blessing to the one who fears God.

It's out of His love that He works all things again together for the good of that individual who loves and fears Him. Nothing can separate that individual from the love of God.

well. And then there's coming that day when He will present you blameless before Him in the presence of His glory with great joy. There's the culmination.

We can walk in the fear of the Lord now. That doesn't mean we can't walk in joy. The two are part of the same coin. Fearing God and enjoying Him.

[ 42 : 55 ] So let us glorify God by enjoying Him now and forever. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, this morning we do give thanks that You have made such provision for such needy people like us that we could know the truth of salvation and life through Jesus Christ knowing You and how You exist as the awesome God and all the attributes that are Yours in complete perfection and that we could know You personally.

We could be called Your children by faith in Jesus Christ. Keep growing us in this knowledge of Yourself that we might fear You because You are worthy of our worship.

And we give thanks that such a walk can be a walk full of joy. teach us and help us to walk in that way today in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you.

You're dismissed.