

When Should You Fear God?

International Bible Lesson

2 Corinthians 6:1-18 & 7:1-4

Sunday, August 24, 2014

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“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1—KJV).

“Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1—NRSV).

God made promises that are always “yes” in Christ Jesus, because Jesus made them possible (2 Corinthians 1:19-20). God’s promises to believers include: the Lord God will be their God and they will be His people; God will be their Father and they will be His sons and daughters; God will live within and among them. In a mysterious way, because Jesus Christ died and rose again, He prepares believers for the indwelling presence of God by cleansing them from sin. Because the Spirit of God lives within them, Paul wrote that Christians must cleanse themselves morally and spiritually and not misuse their bodies. When Christians live worthy of Jesus Christ, God and His people can rejoice in each other’s presence. In addition, Christians need to stay clean by loving Jesus and expressing their love for Jesus by obeying His commands. Since God set Christians apart from the ways of this world to serve Him and others, they need to do His will completely and fully as the Holy Spirit helps them live according to His Word. Paul wrote that “the fear of God” can serve as a motive for Christians to obey God if their love and devotion to God fails them. Christians will stand before Christ face to face someday, and they will not want to feel ashamed before Him. When the Bible teaches about “the fear of God,” believers can remind themselves that if they persist in disobeying God then God as their Father will use appropriate discipline to inspire them to repent and return to faithful obedience to God.

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Thinking Further

1. When should a person repent of their sins and place their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior?
2. List some of the afflictions, hardships, and calamities the Paul suffered as an apostle.
3. What character traits did Paul develop through his sufferings or in spite of his sufferings? How did he develop them?
4. As an apostle, how was Paul sometimes misrepresented or mistreated?
5. Because Christians have the promises of God in Christ and the Bible, what does Paul say they should do?