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Book Review (August) : The Fear of God by John Bunyan

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For The King - Rocky Ramsey

"When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments." - 2 Timothy 4:13

"The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and they that lack the beginning have neither middle nor end." - John Bunyan

"Though there is not always grace where there is the fear of hell, yet, to be sure, there is no grace where there is no fear of God." — John Bunyan.

This episode I walk through The Fear of God by John Bunyan. It was a wonderful read and something definitely worth picking up. The contemporary church doesn't speak much about the fear of God, but I assure you that after reading this book by Bunyan you will be well informed. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Learning to fear God rightly is fruit that every Christian ought to bear. Thanks for listening!

Get the book: https://www.amazon.com/Fear-God-John-Bunyan/dp/1848718187/ref=sr_1_4?dchild=1&keywords=fear+of+god+bunyan&qid=1631052105&sr=8-4

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Transcript

(music) Hello, For The King listeners. Welcome to this podcast where we recognize Christ as the King. The King he is right now, reigning on high.

Whether you recognize him as King or not, he is King. Welcome to the podcast. Thanks

for tuning in wherever you are.

This episode is obviously one of the quicker ones in all the different series and things we do here on the podcast. We know that God has given us His Word in a book. That book is the Bible.

God's Holy Word. Because of that, we value books here at the podcast. The King has given us a book and another blessing that he has given us is minds to also write ourselves and also create books.

We love books and books are a way in which we grow as Christians, that we grow in the knowledge of all sorts of things. So, on these book review podcasts, I just basically go through some of the books I've been reading. And if you guys, you know, maybe just food for thought of, you know, some cool ideas in these books, but also possibly something maybe you yourself could pick up.

Yeah, so this past month, I only got through one. I've just been real busy starting a new job. I haven't got to read as much as I would have liked, but I did get through one book.

And that book is *The Fear of God* by John Bunyan. Forward by Michael Reeves. It's put out by the Banner of Truth Trust.

Banner of Truth. They do a bunch of these Puritan Paperbacks. It's one of the Puritan Paperback series that they have.

So you can find that on Amazon and I'll put a link. You know, it was a great book. I had never, I don't know of a lot of contemporary works on *The Fear of God*.

I think there might be one, I forget who it's by. I think there is a contemporary workout, but for the most part, we don't hear about this topic very often in the church nowadays. We read it in our Bibles all the time.

We see the fear of the Lord littered all throughout the scriptures, but we don't necessarily see works interacting with the concept from the Bible very often. But John Bunyan, a Puritan from the 17th century, he gives us a lot of practical wisdom on how to think about the fear of God. So I want to go through a few of those big concepts, key concepts real quick.

I guess one more thing about Bunyan. You guys would probably know him from his book, *The Pilgrims Progress*. That's his most famous work and also one of the most famous Christian books of all time.

So this guy is a prolific writer. He was in jail for a big time of his life and honestly was a man of many sorrows, but also loved the word of God and was a kind man and loved his flock. He was a pastor and preacher.

He lived in Bedford, England. He lived from 1628 to 1688. So that's who this guy is and we obviously still have his words today.

So let's go through just a real quick couple of the concepts, some things that stuck out to me and maybe give you guys something to think about, but also maybe hopefully entice your guys's appetite to maybe pick up the book and devour it yourself. So I would say the big things I took away from this book, he starts off talking about, you know, it's the object of our fear. What are we fearing? What is the object? A fear is a disposition in the heart, in the soul, in the mind towards something.

So that thing that we do fear is God and he talks about there is many things that go into why we fear him. His goodness, his presence, his justice, his attributes, all of these things. And what's cool about this, you know, we joked a lot because I read this book with a few other guys, we would joke a lot.

You know, Bunyan has a verse for almost everything he comes up with, but really it's the other way around. I think he scoured the Bible for literally probably almost every time the word fear of God is brought up or fear in general and basically just writes this work after he had already compiled all the verses. So every single part of the fear of God that he talks about, he will walk you through the scriptures, which is awesome.

So, you know, he talks about why we ought to fear God, you know, why is that a good thing? Why should we have our fear oriented towards God and not towards men? And then after that he talks about the rule and director of our fear. So he gets into the written word of God is the director of our fear, the rule of it, his very words. So there's not anything too terribly noteworthy there.

The whole book is great, but really when he gets into the third chapter, that is when things get really spicy. On page, my favorite page probably of the whole book is page 43 to 44. He basically just goes through.

So he talks about there's a godly fear, then there's an ungodly fear in the second chapter. And he gets to a point where he's talking about this ungodly fear that is raw in the spirit of unbelievers and he asks a question. But by what spirit is it then that I am brought against the fears, even into fears of damnation and so into bondage? So he differentiates between there's two different fears of God.

There's a bond, there's a spirit of bondage and then there's just the regular godly fear of him. A spirit of bondage is one that comes upon you when you see yourself as a wretched sinner in need of a savior. That's how he defines it.

So he says that after he has given you a spirit of bondage, God will give that to you to make you basically afraid of his judgment, which then leads you to what? Coming to the spirit of adoption. When the spirit now adopts you, it convicts your heart and then God,

you turn in faith and repentance towards Christ and then he adopts you into his family. And that spirit of adoption, this new fear, the fear of a father that we take on after the spirit of adoption comes onto us is what ought to be.

This is a godly fear of God. So that spirit of bondage that comes upon you at first is a godly fear. But the issue is that he, I think is one of the main concepts in this book that I took away that was just so helpful for my Christian faith and hopefully you guys as well, is that we ought not to return back to the fear of God as one under bondage by the spirit.

So Satan will so quickly want to turn us back into ones that are under condemnation in Christ, but we know in Romans 8-1 there's therefore now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus. So he wants you to quickly return back to having a spirit of God of judgment and not of grace as one of his sons. And he talks a lot about God, once he adopts you, God will never take you out of his family.

And this is what we fall back on when we fear God rightly. The fear of a father of his divine displeasure unto us in discipline, but never in judgment or casting off. He will never do that to his children, just like a good father in this life, although there are bad fathers that would, a good father would never cast off their son.

So then he goes through this whole thing that basically Satan wants you to feel under a spirit of bondage once again, and we ought not to submit back to this. So just listen to all these rhetorical questions he gives. I'm going to read this real quick.

This is, I hope this aids you guys. And then after that, I'll finish out kind of what the end of the book talks about. But I think this is kind of like the, probably one of the best parts to me.

Question one, talking about this return to the spirit of bondage. "Do not these fears make the question whether there was ever a work of grace wrought in thy soul? Answer, yes, verily they do. Do not these fears make the question whether ever thy first fears were wrought by the Holy Spirit of God? Yes, verily they do.

Do not these fears make the question whether ever thou hast had indeed any true comfort from the word and spirit of God? Yes, they do." And remember, this is the fear going back to God as judgment, no longer as father. "Dost thou not find intermixed with these fears plain assertions that thy first comforts were either from thy fancy, fooling yourself into thinking that God actually does love you, or from the devil, and a fruit of his delusions? Yes, they do make me think that. Do not these fears weaken thy heart in prayer? Yes, they do.

Do not these fears keep thee back from laying hold of the promise of salvation by Jesus Christ? Answer, yes. For I think if I were deceived before, if I were deceived by myself or by Satan, that I thought myself a child of God, but I'm really not. If I was deceived before,

if I were comforted by a spirit of delusion before, why may it not be so again? So I am afraid to take hold of the promise." Question seven, "Do not these fears tend to the hardening of thy heart into making of thee desperate? Answer, yes.

Verily they do." Question seven, "Do not these fears hinder thee from profiting and hearing or reading of the word? Answer, yes. Verily, for still whatever I hear or read, I think nothing that is good belongs to me, because I'm not God's son. I really don't think I'm God's son.

Do not these fears tend to the stirring up of blasphemies in the heart against God? Yes, to the almost distracting of me." Question ten, "Do not these fears make thee sometimes think that it is in vain for thee to wait upon the Lord any longer, just to give up? I'll never actually be a follower of Christ. God made it seem like he loved me for a while, but he doesn't love me anymore. Yes, verily, and I have many times almost come to this conclusion that I will read, pray, hear, company with God's people, or the like, no longer." And then he says this, guys, this is amazing.

"Well, poor Christian, I am glad that thou hast so plainly answered me. But prithy," which means please, "but please," basically, "look back upon thy answer. How much of God dost thou think is in these things? How much of his spirit in the grace of his word? Just none at all.

For it cannot be that these things can be the true and natural effects of the workings of the Spirit of God. No, not as a spirit of bondage. These are not his doings.

Dost thou not see the very paw of the devil in them? Yea, in every one of thy ten confessions is there not palpable high wickedness in every one of these effects of this fear." So, friend, listener of the podcast, brother in Christ, sister in Christ, whoever's listening, do not let Satan make you return back to a fear of a spirit of bondage, that God, you are not God's son. God's judgment still rests upon you and in Christ's blood is not sufficient. Never return back to that thought.

Never return back to a spirit of bondage. And he gets this from Galatians. I forget what the exact verse is, but there is a verse, I think it's Galatians 1 or 2, talking about how quickly they were to return back to a spirit of bondage, these people, these Galatians, Christians.

That was really encouraging, guys. I hope that encouraged you. Do not let Satan rob you of that sweet, sweet peace and reconciliation with God in Christ, his son, and his blood, his propitiatory work on the cross on our behalf for our sins.

"He who knew no sin became sin, that we might be the righteousness of God. Hold fast to that, that you are God's son. You are not some cast off pagan that God will not love or show mercy and grace to." So, he talks a lot about those two different fears.

He talks about fear of men, fear of angels, fear of all sorts of things, but then he gets to the godly fear of a spirit of bondage and then the fear of God, his father, as adopted into his family. Those are the good fears, but when we become a son, we should never return back to the spirit of fear of not being in God's family. And then he gets into the privileges of fear that God encamps around those that fear him.

He delivers them. "Mercy of the Lord is upon him that fears him." Psalm 103. You will get mercy from the Lord if you fear him rightly.

"As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards those who fear him." Psalm 103. 11. Basically, there are so many privileges he takes in Psalm 147.

11. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him." There are so many privileges of God that are given to us if we fear him rightly. Psalm 115.

13. "He will bless them that fear the Lord, small and grave." So, if you fear God, this is not...fearing God is not for the rich, it's not for the poor, it's not for the pastor, and it's not for the congregante, it's for everybody. Sorry, it is for all those people, it is for all of them, and not particularly for the pastor.

It's not particularly for the missionary, it's particularly for every single Christian. So, he talks about all of those privileges that God gives us. And then the very last chapter...where is it? Sorry.

The last chapter basically just gets into the practice of Godly fear and how we live it out, live out Godly fear in our lives. And he basically just says that...one of the main things that I took away from that section is God's distinguishing love should make you fear him. And those that grow in the grace of fear will escape many evils.

When you put this into practice, you will be wise, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. You will...God will think...be concerned of your well-being, obviously. He will bless you if you fear him.

He's more concerned with those that fear him than he is with those that not. Just like he particularly loves his children and he also does...he loves everybody, but he particularly loves his children. That's maybe the point I'm trying to get across.

He'll give you boldness between with God and with men if you fear him rightly. There are so many things in practice that this boldness...I highlighted this. "Alas, the world will not be convinced by your talk, by your notions, and by the great profession that you make.

If they see not there with mix the lively impressions of the fear of God." The fear of God will make you impressionable. It'll make you bold among men because you don't fear men. It'll make you bold.

It'll make you memorable. Not to be remembered, but for God's glory. What will be remembered of you? That you feared who? God.

It's not for your glory. The fear of God does not just make you some savant that can basically do whatever he wants and now this person is going to succeed in everything. But it will make your testimony, your witness to the world that much more convincing because obviously you actually do fear God and not men.

That you're not trying to win man's approval. You're trying to fear God and glorify him most of all. So pick up this book, John Bunyan's *The Fear of God*.

It's really good. Also, a quick update about the podcast. I started a Facebook page to try to help the podcast grow to get more people to hear the gospel, the good news of Christ, just to spread the knowledge of the truth far and wide.

So I started that Facebook page for that reason. I started on Facebook and liked the For the King page and share it. That'd be awesome.

I guess that's the new kind of part of the project I've been working on. Yep, and the website still try to update that regularly and I'm still in the works of writing a blog post. So thanks for all of you that go and visit that.

Thanks so much for supporting the podcast, guys. And may the Lord be glorified. Solely day, O God.

Thanks for listening to For the King podcast. For the King. For the King.

For the King. For the King Jesus.