

Familiarity Breeds Contempt

by Pattie DeLea

Well, I don't know about you, but my folks often said this saying, in the above title, when I was growing up. I'm sure you have all heard it. Frankly, I never understood it and did not take the time to find out it's origins. That is, until now. During our current Bible Study on "The Fear of the Lord", it seemed to me that this old saying surfaced in my thoughts on several occasions. Here is what I found when I looked it up.

It turns out most historians credit this saying to the famous writer of a collection of Greek fables, Aesop. According to the editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica "there were various attempts in ancient times to establish Aesop as an actual personage." The historian Herodotus thought him a slave, while Plutarch thought him an advisor to a king. Tradition made him a Thracian, a Phrygian, and possibly an Ethiopian. Aesop supposedly lived in the Island of Samos, Babylon, and Delphi. The editors concluded from this information that, "the name Aesop was no more than a name invented to provide an author for fables centering on animals (beasts) so that 'a story of Aesop' became synonymous with fables. The importance of fables lay not so much in the story told as in the moral derived from it." Fables are very old tales, it seems, which surfaced throughout the first, fourth, ninth, and up to the seventeenth centuries.

The following "fable" is the one that the saying actually comes from. It is called, "The Fox and the Lion."



A very young Fox, who had never before seen a Lion, happened to meet one in the forest. A single look was enough to send the Fox off at top speed for the nearest hiding place. The second time the Fox saw the Lion he stopped behind a tree to look at him a moment before slinking away. But the third time, the Fox went boldly up to the Lion and, without turning a hair, said, "Hello, there, old top."

Here is the moral in its complete form. **"Familiarity Breeds Contempt. Acquaintance with evil blinds us to its dangers."**

As believers in Jesus Christ this is a good moral as it relates to the evil of sin. So, by now you may be asking how does this relate to the fear of the Lord? Well you could say: "familiarity breeds contempt and casual acquaintance with God, blinds us to the fear of His holy judgments." Any form of disrespect for the holiness and royalty of God will find you in the most dangerous place of all, judgment. Hopefully, you've just read this last statement over a few times. Maybe you decided, that it doesn't really apply to you, as we are living in the New Testament, and therefore under grace? Maybe you think this could only be true under the law? Perhaps you've always had a deep respect for God. Let's look and seriously contemplate the Word of God to see what ground we are standing on.

The first verse that comes to my mind is Hebrews 13:8 – *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.* God has not changed according to this one verse alone. We know he is unchangeable. Now pair that up with Leviticus 10:3 where Moses said to Aaron: *"This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.'*" James 1:17 says, *"Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."* God never changes. He is the unchangeable One.

We can all recount numerous times in our lives when we have sensed the beautiful Presence of Jesus or the Holy Spirit when they comforted us, helped us, led us, guided us, forgave us, we felt like they were embracing us etc. It is awesome isn't it? Nothing is like God's love and affection when it is being poured on you, it is like a liquid gold that is all encompassing. It is rich. Even reading things in the Word about His love is overwhelming at times. As a fellow believer in Christ, I believe we are all striving to know our Savior in a deeper and more intimate way. This is a lifelong journey, not a one time prayer. It is why we pray, read the Word, attend Church/Bible Studies etc., serve God in some voluntary capacity, and do our best to live the way the Word tells us. None of which can be done without the constant and considerable assistance of the Holy Spirit. We know God loves us, and we can be forgiven when we truly repent of any sin, anything that may displease the Lord, and anything else the Holy Spirit shows us. It may come as a surprise to you but when you were saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit you received not just the Love of God (in Christ) but the Fear of the Lord. How do I know this? Because the Word says that the Holy Spirit has several aspects to His Being.

Isaiah 11:2-3 ²*The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.* ³*His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;* NKJ

²*And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness.* ³*And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge according to the sight of the eyes, nor reprove according to the hearing of the ears.* DRA

That said, to me it means you received the fear of the Lord at the time you were baptized into Christ. However, perhaps you are like most believers, you have emphasized the love of God which is wonderful, but maybe you need to study up on the fear of the Lord and know it as well as the love of the Lord, our God! Psalm 9:10 says, *"The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true, they are righteous altogether."*

John Bevere, in his excellent book call "The Fear of the Lord" says that "The fear of the Lord will keep you from sinning." He defines the fear of the Lord as the following:

- It is a profound and abiding respect and reverence for God & all things He declares is Holy.
- It is to assign God Most High the infinite & highest place of honor in your life.
- It is to deeply tremble in awe at the privilege of His Presence & the Wonder of His Word.
- It is to worship God alone with passionate praise & continual thanksgiving.
- It is to honor what He honors, love what He loves, hate what He hates, It is to make His main thing, our main thing.
- It is an internal disposition that produces fear, dread, and even terror at the very thought of offending God. This tempering makes it impossible for the individual to sin casually, whole-heartedly, or persistently.
- It is the submitting of our will to embrace His will fully.
- It is a cleansing or purifying agent that endures forever. There is absolutely nothing corrupt or deceitful about the Fear of the Lord.
- It is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit and it is Jesus' delight. (Isaiah 11:1-4)

I don't know about you, but when I read this definition, I realized three important things. One, I needed to repent. Two, I needed to study what this meant in depth, and lastly, I needed to keep the fear of the Lord before my eyes for the rest of my time here on earth. Honest believers, I think, would say the same thing I did, after reading the above definition of the fear of the Lord! To be totally transparent with you, I have studied the Word of God for over forty-five years, but have never heard a teaching so well put together as this one from John Bevere. It is totally life changing. I believe each person in our Bible Study would say the same.

(continued on page 8)