

# The Fellowship

## In Awe of God Devotional

by Molly Howard

“Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.” — Psalm 145:3, NIV

Have you ever taken a moment and tried to consider the greatness of God? Maybe you’ve thought about what God has done in the Bible, in your own life or the life of someone you know. Psalm 145:3 says “his greatness no one can fathom.” As human beings, we cannot even begin to comprehend the full extent of the glory of God and His greatness. He is our Creator, our King, Savior and Lord. He is a loving, merciful, powerful, forgiving and awesome God.

### Attitude of Worship and Admiration

“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our ‘God is a consuming fire.’” — Hebrews 12:28-29, NIV

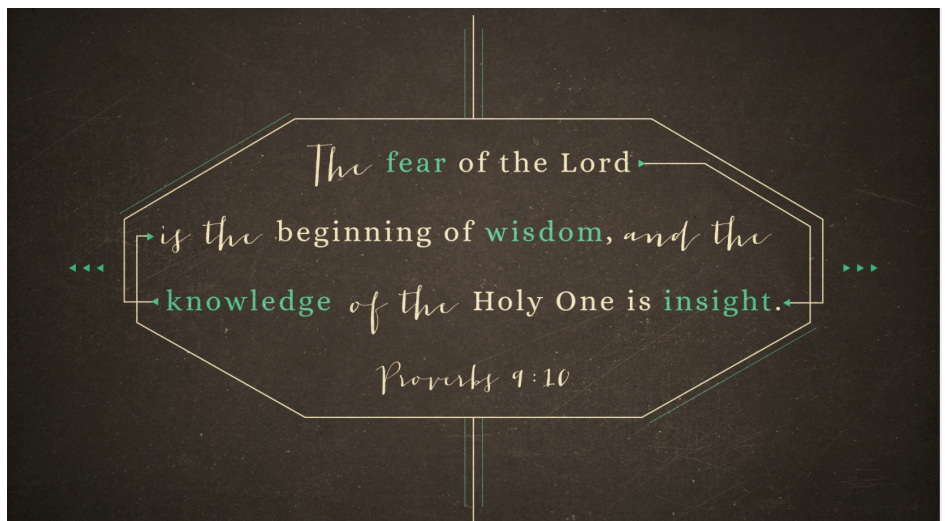
What should our response to God’s greatness be? Hebrews 12 encourages reverence and awe. Being in awe of God implies that we have a respect toward Him as well as an attitude of worship and admiration. Psalm 95:6 says “Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!” God, in His greatness, is worthy of all our devotion and praise. He is worthy of our whole hearts.

### Eternally Grateful for the Cross

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” — Colossians 3:15-17, NIV

God’s love for us is awe-inspiring. He sent Jesus Christ to die in our place. This sacrifice and willingness took place while we were caught up in our sins and concerned with ourselves. To people living in today’s culture, this is almost incomprehensible. After all, why would someone sacrifice and love without anything in return? God’s mercy and love, great and awesome, is not conditional like the love we are familiar with; it is perfect.

For Christians, our response to Christ’s gift to us can be eternal gratitude. Serving God while we are living is a way to show gratitude and even after we have died, we will still praise the Lord. There is nothing we could ever do to repay what Jesus has done. However, he does not expect anything other than our hearts and love. What good news that is for us!



## The Fear of the Lord

### The Lexham Bible Dictionary

**Fear of the Lord** A religious expression conveying either devotional piety or the dread of punishment. The term “Lord” in this context refers to Yahweh.

#### Biblical Relevance

The act of fearing Yahweh is discussed throughout the Old Testament. The concept “fear of the Lord” occurs most prominently in the Old Testament’s Wisdom Literature, where it is described as both the beginning of wisdom (Prov 9:10) and the responsibility of all humanity (Eccl 12:13).

The “fear of the Lord” motif occurs in three distinct ways in the Old Testament:

1. As an expression of corporate Israelite religion—the religious system of worshiping Yahweh. Occurrences of the phrase “fear of the Lord” in the general sense of religious piety mostly appear in Wisdom texts. In this sense, “fear of the Lord” is an essential component of Israel’s theology (Perdue, *Wisdom and Creation*, 78–79). It essentially means faith in Yahweh.
2. As a description of personal piety—the act of worshiping and obeying Yahweh. In Deuteronomy 5:29, God declares to Moses His desire that the people would fear Him enough that they would obey His commandments. “Fear” can be expressed as (positive) obedience caused by reverence for Yahweh and/or (negative) obedience caused by the threat of divine punishment (Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 325).
3. As an identification of a religious person, i.e., a worshiper of Yahweh. Joseph identifies himself as a God-fearer when he is reunited with his brothers (Gen 42:18). Jonah similarly identifies himself as a God-fearer when he is questioned by the sailors (Jonah 1:9; compare Pss 25:14; 33:18; 34:9).

#### Key Occurrences

Key occurrences of the phrase “fear of the Lord” in the Old Testament include:

- In Genesis 22, when Abraham sets out to obey God’s command to sacrifice Isaac and is stopped by the Angel of Yahweh, the angel says, “For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son” (Gen 22:12 NRSV). Here the fear of God is demonstrated through Abraham’s perfect moral obedience to Yahweh (Westermann, “Genesis 12–26,” 361–62).
- Deuteronomy 10:12–13 begins with the statement, “So now, O Israel, what does Yahweh your God require of you?” The answer is five commands: to fear Yahweh, to walk in His ways, to love Yahweh, to serve Yahweh, and to keep His commandments. All of these are expressions of reverence to God. Fearing the Lord occurs first and summarizes the act of carrying out the other four expressions of obedience (Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1:1–21:9*, 201–06).
- Job is introduced as “perfect, just, one who feared God, and avoided evil” (Job 1:1). Later, when God discusses Job with “the Satan,” He refers to these same characteristics (Job 1:8). However, it is Job’s fear of God that Satan questions and attacks (Job 1:9). Satan argues that if God takes away Job’s wealth, Job will deny God. After this fails, God again acknowledges Job as a God-fearer (Job 2:3).

The New Testament also contains several references to the “fear of the Lord.” For instance, Acts 9:31 records that after Saul’s conversion, the entire church in Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria was at peace, and “walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied” (ESV). The New Testament writings also mention a group of people known as the God-fearers, one of whom was Cornelius the centurion (Acts 10:2). In the time of the New Testament, the term “God-fearers” referred to Gentiles who worshiped Yahweh and adhered to Jewish laws (Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 203).