

23. Loving, Fearing and Obeying God

Love and fear are arguably the two prime emotions or attitudes that we should have towards God. Love and fear of God are both closely associated with obeying him. They are very strong, compelling emotions and provide the primary emotional motivation for obeying God (cf. Deuteronomy 10:12-13). Their importance is underlined by the fact that obeying God ought to be a constant aim of every Christian.

Love God

Love God with all your heart – which is most important

Jesus answered: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.* ³⁸*This is the first and most important commandment.* ³⁹The second most important commandment is like this one. And it is, “Love others as much as you love yourself.” ⁴⁰*All the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets are based on these two commandments.* [MATTHEW 22:37-40](#) CEV

Love for God is shown by obeying him

We show our love for God by obeying his commandments, and they are not hard to follow. [1 JOHN 5:3](#) CEV

Fear God

Fear God and nothing else

[GOD, TO ISAIAH:] *Don't be afraid of what they [other people] fear; do not dread those things.* ¹³*But remember that the LORD All-Powerful is holy. He is the one you should fear; he is the one you should dread.* [ISAIAH 8:12B-13](#) NCV™

God's people should not live in fear of his punishment

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *God is love, and those who live in love live in union with God and God lives in union with them.* ¹⁷*Love is made perfect in us*

in order that we may have courage on Judgment Day; and we will have it because our life in this world is the same as Christ's. ¹⁸*There is no fear in love; perfect love drives out all fear. So then, love has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid, because fear has to do with punishment.* [1 JOHN 4:16B-18](#) GNT

Knowing and expressing the love of God drives out fear of punishment from God (v. 18).

Fearing God is closely associated with obeying him

[A WISE TEACHER:] *Fear God and keep his commandments, because this is the whole duty of man.* [ECCLESIASTES 12:13B](#) NET

Obey God

Obey God's word

“Rather, how blessed are those who hear God's word and obey it!” [LUKE 11:28B](#) ISV

Persistently read God's word

He should keep it [a copy of God's teachings] with him all the time and read from it every day of his life. [DEUTERONOMY 17:19A](#) NCV™

Follow Jesus Christ

Follow Jesus Christ

Jesus then told the crowd and the disciples to come closer, and he said: *If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross and follow me.* [MARK 8:34](#) CEV

In order to follow Jesus, we must set aside our own desires, no longer having ourselves as the focus of our lives. To “take up your cross” implies a willingness to bear any cost.

Make Jesus Christ your Lord

Honor Christ and *let him be the Lord of your life.* [1 PETER 3:15A](#) CEV