

Unite My Heart to Fear Thy Name

“Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name” – Psalm 86:11

Here, the fear of God does not refer to a specific grace of the Spirit but to Christianity as a whole. It is common practice for writers to represent an entire concept by referring to a part of it; here, the author refers to “the fear of God” as an essential part of the whole of the Christian experience.

Christianity is nothing without the heart. However, naturally, the heart is detached from God's life and remains loosely connected to all aspects of spiritual service. It must be drawn toward divine things, and only God can achieve this union. Without His intervention, there might be an external, professional appearance of union, but the bonds of faith and love rooted in Christ Jesus would be missing.

Therefore, we should give Him the glory for any work accomplished in us and turn to Him in prayer, as David does here, if we wish to experience God working in us. We can be confident that He will not withhold the Holy Spirit from those who ask.

Three Questions will help us understand David's prayer for the fear of God.

First, how can I know that God has united my heart to fear Him? When we are emotionally attached to something, we enjoy discussing it, think about it frequently, talk about it, and cherish memories of it. Similarly, when we are closely connected to a person, they share our feelings: we care about their interests as if they were our own; we weep when they do, and celebrate when they rejoice. The same applies to someone deeply devoted to religion; they see themselves as part of it: when it faces attack, they try to defend it; when it suffers harm among its followers, they feel the pain; its reproach weighs on them; they pray for its victory; and they take pride in its success. Do we feel this close connection to anyone?

Just as we dislike being away and fear separation, so Ruth told Naomi, "Please don't ask me to leave you or to turn back from following you. Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried."

Second, what is the language of a soul under this Divine influence? For this, we can go to many other scriptures: Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation!" (Psalm 27:9), and "Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11).

Third, was David's heart not united to the fear of God before? It was. However, the one who has the dawn longs for the day. The person in whom good work has started will always pray, "Perfect that which concerneth me" (Psalm 138:8, KJV). Who can truly say, "*I have already obtained this or am already perfect*" (Philippians 3:12).

As a backslider, David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). However, at no point in his life or spiritual journey would he have failed to use this same prayer.

"Whoever says, 'I want no more, confesses he has none.'"

The Christian who experiences any hesitation in duty, dullness in work, distractions during worship, or internal conflict between the law in his flesh, or the law of his mind, will continue to pray, "Unite my heart to fear thy Name." Do we not know what Paul experienced when he sighed, "When I would do good, evil is present with me, and I find not how to perform that which is good" (Romans 7:21).