

Junior 1 Year 3 Book 4 Lesson 1
Fear, Love, and Honor God
 Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”
 (Deuteronomy 10:12)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Works [Behavior]
1. A reverential fear regards God’s will as greater than our own. 2. Loving God requires us to seek a deeper relationship with Him. 3. Learn to honor God when emboldened by the spirit and with a deeper understanding of Him.	God is a fearful, loving, and honorable God.	1. Learn how to identify and lay aside desires that draw us away from God. 2. Practice fearing, loving, and honoring God through small actions in our everyday lives.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Fear, Love, and Honor of God
- B. Fearing God
- C. Loving God
- D. Honoring God

Life Application

- 1. Overcoming Our Desires
 Activity: Identifying and Laying Aside Our Desires
- 2. Practice Through Positive Action
 Activity: Small Steps to Honoring God

Memory Verse

Conclusion: God is the one who gave us everything that we have, and who, therefore, has the power and right to take it all away. When we fully understand this, and learn to fear, love, and honor God with every action we take, we can lay aside our sins and run the race towards salvation with endurance!

Introduction

What is something that you love or honor? (*Allow students to answer.*) A common example is money, because of what you can do with it. Some people honor celebrities or superheroes, while others spend every penny on games or hobbies. Meanwhile, what we fear can be quite different. But quite often, we have fears related to our social standing, such as not “fitting in,” or being unable to “rise to the top.” Everyone is afraid of failure in some way, not always due to the consequences, but because of how everyone will view them after they have failed. We often fear rejection.

God has given us a great capacity for love and honor, and our fears help us to live wisely. Unfortunately, when these feelings are misdirected, they can lead to idolatry and sin. When we pursue our games, we may fail to follow our parents’ instructions. If we have a great love of money, we may prioritize our part-time job over Sabbath services. If we fear what our friends might think of our poor grades, we may drop our Bible studies in favor of studying. There’s nothing wrong with enjoying the blessings God has given to us, but God wants us to fear, love, and honor Him above all. Today, we’ll learn how to do this.

A. The Fear, Love, and Honor of God

Most of the time, we like to know why we ought to do something. So why should we fear, love, or honor God? There are three basic reasons why:

- God Himself is fearful, so He is worthy of our fear (Heb 10:31; Rev 14:7).
- God Himself is loving, so He is worthy of our love (Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8).
- God is our Creator, so He deserves our honor (Mal 1:6; 1 Tim 1:17).

If someone had the power to give us a failing grade in school, wouldn’t we treat them with respect? In much the same way, we should revere God, as He is the one who gave us everything that we have, so He has the power and right to take it all away. He is also our Lord who laid down His life for us, so that we might obtain salvation. God has the power to condemn or to save us. When we know and remember these things, it is easier to understand why we should afford God such respect.

It is also important to remember that God never asks us to do anything that He is unwilling to do. Jesus was God who became flesh, bringing us grace and truth (Jn 1:14). He made what was unseen about God visible (Jn 14:9; 1:18), so that through His example on earth, we might know the best way to fear, love, and honor Him. How exactly did Jesus show His fear, love, and honor towards God?

Jesus Christ had every opportunity to turn away from the heavy burden given to Him. But He didn’t. Instead, He chose to fulfill the Scriptures (Mt 26:53–54). This was because of His godly fear, His love for the heavenly Father, and His desire to honor God’s will (Jn 14:31; Mt 26:39; Jn 8:49; Heb 5:7). From this, we can see that Jesus taught us how we should act as God’s children: we need to hold a reverential fear towards God, love our Father in heaven, and honor Him above anything else in our lives.

B. Fearing God

We can have a better understanding of what it means to “fear” God by examining Jesus’ example in the Bible. Turn to Matthew 26:38–42. The Bible records that Jesus’ soul was “exceedingly sorrowful” when He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. Luke 22:44 says that Jesus, “being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” But despite this, He still prayed that this cup be taken, “not as I will, but as You will” (Mt 26:39; cf. Lk 22:42). How does

this passage demonstrate fearing God? To fully understand this, we first need to recognize what Jesus was experiencing at this moment.

Why did Jesus make this prayer?

1. Fully human

It is important to remember that Jesus Christ was fully human. The Bible reminds us that He experienced all of our fears and emotions (Heb 4:15; Isa 53:3). At this moment, in the face of pain and death, He also had a human fear. He dreaded what He was about to experience.

2. The cross that He faced

The cross that He had to face was unlike any other. It was the deepest agony and anguish that we ourselves would never experience or understand. This is because His death meant carrying the world's sin and guilt. He would face all of God's wrath (Ezek 7:8; Isa 51:17) for all the sins that we have committed and will commit. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Jesus Christ knew that He would become a sin and a curse for us, and that He would have to experience the fullness of God's anger.

We can now see that Jesus Christ had a human nature. He felt dread and sorrow from the knowledge that He would carry the sins of the world and experience separation from God's love. But the amazing thing is that despite His fear of what He would face, His godly fear was greater still.

How did He show fear towards God?

1. He remained obedient

Jesus Christ foresaw how dreadful His impending death would be, so He asked God if the cup could be taken from Him. Yet because of His fear of God, He remained obedient to God's will. "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour" (Jn 12:27). He had a healthy fear of God because He reaffirmed His desire to do God's will and fulfill God's purpose, despite knowing that His soul would be crushed by the weight and power of the sin that He had to bear.

2. He willingly sacrificed Himself

Bearing the weight and power of our sins means that the suffering He had to endure went beyond the physical. It is difficult for us to understand what it means to be cut off from God so completely, but this is what Jesus had to undergo in order to fulfill God's will (Mt 27:46). "He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many" (Isa 53:12). This agony of "pouring out His soul unto death" was an essential part of His fear. He foresaw the physical and spiritual struggle that He had to endure, yet He was still willing to be crushed. Because of His godly fear, He sacrificed everything, so that He could redeem us with His precious blood.

God's will was more important to Jesus than anything else, including His own life. This is because He feared and respected God's will more than His own. Through His prayer and His actions, Jesus taught us that ultimately, God's will is greater than our own, and to fear God means to follow His will even if we don't like it or are scared to do it. In this manner, we can learn to hold a reverential fear towards God.

C. Loving God

Loving God is a two-way street. God desires that we abide in His presence, so that He can abide in us! Jesus demonstrated this mutual relationship throughout His life: His every action was in unity with God's

will. In turn, God abided with Him and visibly blessed Him throughout His ministry. Let's read a few verses to first understand why Jesus Christ had so much love for His Father.

1. A love before the foundation of the world

In His last prayer before His crucifixion, Jesus said, "for You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (Jn 17:24). Jesus' love for the Father comes from God's immense love for Him, a love that already existed even before the creation!

2. God's validation and blessing

Let's read Luke 3:22. "And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." God repeated similar words at the mount of transfiguration, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" (Mt 17:5). God's words reveal the heart of a Father who loves and delights in His Son, and this became the foundation of Jesus' life. God's blessing was a source of strength, confidence, and purpose. His faith was deeply rooted due to the love of the Father. As a result, His life was never determined by what others said of Him, but by God's will.

3. The image of the invisible God

Jesus stated that "he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me" (Jn 12:45). God being Spirit, it is difficult for us to fully understand His presence. However, Jesus reflected God's glory and bore God's very nature. He was "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation" (Col 1:15). Because of this, Jesus said that "the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel" (Jn 5:20).

When we think of how to love God, we tend to think of how we can serve in church, how we can repay His love, or how we can sacrifice for others. These are all important acts of faith and loving service for our Lord. However, God desires us to be in His presence, and to have a deep and abiding relationship with Him. If we remain in His presence and let God's love fill us every day, God will show us how we can love Him back.

During His life on earth, it was natural for Jesus to love God because the relationship that He had with His Father was one of delight, not of duty. He loved His Father eagerly, so He gladly carried out His purpose. His entire life was anchored in what God wanted Him to do (Jn 14:31).

What is your relationship with God compared to this? Is it a loving one? Or is it one filled with frustration, where you do not understand how to establish a relationship or grow in your love for Him? Like Jesus Christ, God loved us before our birth, and even before the foundation of the world. If you reach out to God through His word, you will be surprised to find out how much He loves you! With time and patience, we can learn to receive His love, and in turn, we will experience the "fullness of joy" in His presence (Ps 16:11). He will "revive" you according to His "lovingkindness" (Ps 119:88).

D. Honoring God

Let's turn back to John 17:1. "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You." From His prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, we know that Jesus Christ was deeply distressed about what He was about to endure. But in His final prayer, He still prioritized God's glory over His own humiliation, suffering, and death. Let's turn to Matthew 26:53. Jesus Christ had every opportunity to turn away from the duty given to Him. "But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled" (Mt 26:56).

Whether we realize it or not, we tend to honor different things in our lives by placing special emphasis on things that we love. Perhaps we rush home every day to watch a TV show, diligently log in to one of our apps several times a day, or spend hours on our schoolwork. But as our Creator, God deserves our honor above all other things. The Bible reminds us that, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21). When we choose to honor things or people above God, we have forgotten that the Lord gave us everything that we have. Malachi 1:6 says, “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My reverence?”

Peter denied Jesus three times when Jesus was arrested. But after the descent of the Holy Spirit, when they were put on trial for preaching the gospel, Peter and John proclaimed, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). Emboldened by the Holy Spirit and their greater understanding of God, the apostles now feared God more than men. Because of this, they followed in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus and chose to honor God more than anything or anyone else in their lives.

Check for Understanding

- 1. What are the three basic reasons we should fear, love, and honor God?**
 - God Himself is fearful, so He is worthy of our fear (Heb 10:31; Rev 14:7).
 - God Himself is loving, so He is worthy of our love (Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8).
 - God is our Creator, so He deserves our honor (Mal 1:6; 1 Tim 1:17).
- 2. How did Jesus’ prayer in the garden of Gethsemane demonstrate a fear of God?** Being fully human, Jesus Christ experienced dread and sorrow from the knowledge of what He was about to experience. But He remained obedient because God’s will was more important to Him than anything else, including His own life.
- 3. How do we show our love towards God?** While it is important to do things for Him, such as serve in church, God also desires for us to be in His presence, and to have a deep and abiding relationship with him.
- 4. In what way do we often intentionally or unintentionally honor other things over God during our daily lives?** We honor different things in our lives by placing special emphasis on things that we love.
- 5. From Peter’s example, how might we learn to honor God instead?** Allow ourselves to become emboldened by the Holy Spirit and increase in our understanding of God so that we fear God more than anything else.

Life Application

1. Overcoming Our Desires

When we want things on this earth, our priorities shift, making us fail to fear, love, and honor God. These desires could be anything, from wanting to fit in, to spending more time playing our games, or even the desire for a specific job in the future. To learn how to keep God first in our lives, we must first identify the desires that drive us away from Him.

Activity (Part 1): Identifying Our Desires

On your own or with a partner, brainstorm three common desires in your daily life that interfere with your relationship with God. How exactly do these desires drive us away from God? Share your findings with the class. Then, in the following scenarios, identify what desire is driving each character. Once you have identified their desire, try thinking of ways to address the problem that they face in their faith.

Scenario 1

John's friend Billy has not been doing well in school lately, so Billy has been pressuring John to let him peek at his answers during tests. John knows that this is wrong, and he is afraid that the teacher will catch them. But Billy has been his friend for a very long time, too, and he doesn't want that to change. Besides, isn't it important to stay loyal to your friends and to treat them well?

- What desire or fear does John have? What possible solutions can you offer to John?

Scenario 2

Mary always feels thrilled when she is asked to perform at piano recitals. The applause and recognition that she receives is always something that she looks forward to. During the summer, her parents encourage her to attend church seminars to draw closer to God, but Mary doesn't want to go, as that would mean missing out on her piano lessons and events. If she puts her lessons on hold, who knows how much her skills will deteriorate? Besides, she has to keep pushing herself to become better and better now, while she has the time. She can always attend church events later, can't she?

- What desire or fear does Mary have? If she were your friend, what would you say to her?

Scenario 3

When Robert's parents finally gave him the new game he wanted, he immediately began playing non-stop. There were always so many things to do in the game, and there never seemed to be enough time to play. When his friends wanted to hang out in the park, he didn't feel like going, and when his parents told him to attend church events, he felt anxious about the play time he'd lose. Although he had always attended spiritual convocations in the past, this time, he was considering staying at home. After all, isn't it important to enjoy himself? And his parents paid so much for the game, he really should get every penny's worth of fun out of it.

- What desire or fear does Robert have? How can he balance his desires in a godly way?

Friendship, recognition for our skills, and enjoyment in life are not always a sin. But they become sinful when those desires grow out of control and draw us away from God. As a result, things that look like innocent enjoyment often end up becoming a snare for our faith that can cause us to sin. When we fear losing something worldly more than we fear losing God, our desires have become a hindrance to our faith. To avoid this, we need to make a habit of examining our lives and always asking ourselves: What desires are pulling me away from God?

Activity (Part 2): Laying Aside Our Desires

Once we recognize the desires that are putting our faith at risk, what steps do we take? Hebrews 12:1 instructs us to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." We must "lay aside" whatever weighs us down in our race to salvation. Unless we completely set aside the desires that control our lives, they will always be temptations for us, snares that can cause us to stumble in our faith.

Pick one or more of the desires that you thought of earlier. Then, list some steps that you can take to begin curbing these desires. Remember to start small! Realistically, you are more likely to cut fifteen minutes from your social media time than an hour! But after cutting fifteen minutes for several days, you can move that time up to thirty minutes, then forty-five, and so on. Perhaps your plan may not involve time management, but installing an app to prohibit your phone usage, moving your computer so that you can be held accountable, or simply leaving your phone in another room while doing homework. There are a variety of solutions, so try brainstorming several possible steps that you can take to help curb and eventually lay aside your desires. Once you have come up with a practical plan, share it with the class.

(Teachers: You may want to organize a follow-up discussion to this activity, perhaps the following week or at the end of the term depending on how detailed their plans are. You can also encourage them to help each other, especially if they are siblings, or check in with each other outside of church.)

Laying aside our desires is always easier said than done. God *wants* us to focus on Him, though, so He will help those who sincerely want to lay aside their sins and draw near to Him. Isaiah 40:29 says that God “gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength.” To receive His strength, we need to pray for the fullness of the Spirit (Rom 8:26), ask for help from our spiritual brothers and sisters (Eccl 4:9–10; Heb 10:24–25), and fill our hearts with things that are spiritual instead of worldly. As Paul wrote, “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col 3:2).

2. Practice Through Positive Action

We learned in today’s lesson that we cannot show our reverence to God simply in our words—we must show it through our actions in our daily lives! But what actions can we take to show God that we love, fear, and honor Him? When God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, He was testing Abraham’s love for God. We will face challenges, too—challenges that test our fear of God’s power, and our love for His will. Our response to such tests will show whether we honor God. Those tests may even simply be the habits that we form in our daily lives.

Activity: Small Steps to Honoring God

(Teachers: The idea behind this activity is to help your students understand that fearing, loving, and honoring God can be positive and enlightening, rather than just cause them to feel guilt-ridden over the sins they have committed or the habits that they struggle to break. The students can also incorporate the previous activity into this one, by using positive actions to gradually replace any worldly desires that they tend to follow.)

Recall your activities over the past two days, from the moment you woke up to the moment you went to sleep. Write them down in your notebook, using a fresh page for each day, in rough chronological order. Focus on what you did during breaks between classes, before or after school, and what you did the moment you get home. Once you have finished, examine your days, and ask yourself:

- “When can I do something for someone else, instead of for myself?”

These actions don’t have to be large or ostentatious. They can be something small, such as taking the time to greet a lonely classmate, helping your parents take out the trash, or spending a few extra moments in silent prayer. If you realize from your notes that you are spending too much time on a hobby or activity, then try taking small steps to reduce that activity by replacing it with something that will help someone. For example, if your day is littered with time spent on your phone, try setting it aside for half an hour and helping a friend or sibling with their homework instead.

(Teachers: If you’d like, you can brainstorm ideas as a class for this part of the activity. Focus on small, practical actions that your students can take, based on their lives at home, at school, and at church. “Vacuum the RE classroom” is an easier step to take than “preach to a friend during break,” for example – although if your students truly want to do so, there’s no reason to discourage them! Remind them to think of things that are helpful to other that would please God. Once you have finished brainstorming, students can look at the list and choose activities that they think they can do.)

Write down each new action you think of in a different color. If your page is ordered chronologically, you can write it down around the time you think you can do it, such as during lunch break, or just before you go to bed. If you are going to replace an old activity with this new action, cross off what you did previously and write your new item down next to the old one. This can help you remember in the future what you plan on cutting down on, and what action you hope to do instead.

Testimony: Persist in Fearing God

At times, the temptations, tribulations, or trials that we face can be overwhelming. It is during those times that it always feels easier to just give up and stop bothering with this whole Christianity business. Why do we have to expend so much effort in honoring God? Below is a short testimony from a believer who simply could not find any reason to continue enduring the persecution of the world, but in the end, realized the value of persisting in our fear and honor of the Lord.

In Jesus' name, I testify. Shortly after I became a Christian, I felt persecuted by the world and very lonely. As a teenager with few friends, it was difficult to find anyone who saw the value of fearing and honoring God. I heard things like, "Why do you pray so much?" "What's wrong with you?" "You're strange!" "You're no fun to be around. Bye." I became very depressed with my situation.

One night, as I sat on the edge of the bed, ready to sleep, I thought to myself, "It's too hard to be a Christian. Maybe hell is not that bad. I should just give up." Just as I thought this, I let myself fall back on my bed. But instead of hitting my pillow, I fell into a deep hole. I knew in the spirit that I was in the bottomless pit recorded in Revelation (Rev 9:1–2).

As I fell, I felt complete loneliness, darkness, and confusion. We may think that we have experienced loneliness or darkness, but while on this world, we can still reach out to others. The dark of the night is always cast away by the morning sun. As I descended down this pit, I experienced a deep loneliness that cannot be described. I knew that there was no end to this darkness. I began feeling cold spirits, like lost souls, running through my body. As they passed through, I sensed their pain and heard their cries. A deep spiritual darkness smothered me, and I found myself unable to breathe.

I then remembered a testimony. A brother saw himself awaiting his turn in a line of thousands before God's judgment throne. Jesus sat on it with eyes like a flame of fire (Rev 1:14), and a multitude of angels surrounded the throne. When a person was found worthy of salvation, the angels sang, and they were welcomed into God's kingdom. If the angels did not sing, two other angels took hold of the person's arms and carried them to a large pit that opened up before the throne. The brother saw those souls kicking and screaming as they were thrown into the pit.

Reflecting on this testimony, I realized my mistake and my need for God's help. I cried, "Hallelujah!" and repented of my wrong thinking. I told God, "Lord, I don't want this. Please save me!" Suddenly, I felt like God's hand took my spirit and lifted me back. I was so thankful to be back that I kept praising God. After that experience, I realized that I should never, ever give up on my spiritual life or stop fearing God, no matter how difficult the circumstances may be. As Hebrews 13:5–6 says, "For [God] Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'"

– Anonymous

Memory Verse

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”
(Deuteronomy 10:12)

Meaning

As His children, God requires that we treat Him as our Father and provider. Although fearing, loving, and honoring God is often difficult, He has promised to bless us abundantly when we do so. He told the Israelites to follow His commands, “that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land which you cross over to possess, and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD swore to give your fathers, to them and their descendants, ‘a land flowing with milk and honey’” (Deut 11:8–9).

In the same way, we will also receive strength and blessings from God when we love Him. But most importantly, He has promised us that if we do love Him, an inheritance in the promised land awaits us: the “land flowing with milk and honey,” which is the heavenly kingdom!

Conclusion

God has given us a great capacity for love and honor, and our fears help us to live wisely. But God wants us to direct these feelings towards Him, so that we can receive His blessings. To do so, we must remember the example that Jesus Christ gave us. When we are able to enter into a loving and fearful relationship with God, we will become emboldened by the Holy Spirit and increase in our understanding of God and His word. When we do so, we will learn to fear, love, and honor God with every action we take.

Lesson 1 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does God require of His children? What has God promised if we do so?
God requires us to treat and honor Him as our Father and provider. He has promised to give us strength and blessings, and an inheritance in the promised land, which is the heavenly kingdom.

2. “But that the _____ may know that I _____ the _____, and as the _____ gave Me _____, so I _____. [...]” (John 14:31)
world, love, Father, Father, commandment, do.

3. Explain in your own words what it means to fear God according to the Bible.
See Events and Spiritual Teachings, Section B.

4. What is a prerequisite to being able to love God?
Loving God is a two-way street. God desires that we abide in His presence, so that He can abide in us! To love God therefore requires that we first develop a relationship with Him.

5. For each day of the week, write down at least one new thing that you did to show your fear, love, or honor towards God. Use the plans or actions that we discussed during class to help you along.

Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	