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BESTSELLING AUTHOR

The
Awe
of
God

THE ASTOUNDING WAY
A HEALTHY FEAR OF GOD
TRANSFORMS YOUR LIFE

The Awe of God: The Astounding Way a Healthy Fear of God Transforms Your Life

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HOW TO JOURNEY THROUGH THIS BOOK



1 | GOD'S TREASURE

Making It Personal

Passage: And there shall be stability in your times, an abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the reverent fear and worship of the Lord is your treasure and His. (Isaiah 33:6 AMPC)

Point: Holy fear is God's treasure; it should be ours.

Ponder: What does it look like, practically, to treasure holy fear? How should I approach it? How should I handle it? How do I not lose it?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, I ask that on this journey of discovering the fear of the Lord, I will come to know it, live by it, and delight in it. May it become my treasure, as it is Yours. May it give me the wisdom and knowledge needed to live a fulfilled and successful life, one that is pleasing in Your sight. Also, may those who are dear to me be enlightened, and may all who interact with me recognize its value. I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, amen.

Profession: I choose to value holy fear as life's great treasure, and in doing so I will be strengthened to remain on the path of living well.

2 | CONTRASTING FEARS

Making It Personal

Passage: “Don’t be afraid. God has come to test you and instill a deep and reverent awe within you so that you won’t sin.” (Exodus 20:20 MSG)

Point: Holy fear is not to be scared of God and thereby withdraw from Him. It is to be terrified of being away from Him.

Ponder: What was the main purpose for God delivering Israel out of Egypt? What is the main purpose for God delivering me from slavery to the bondages of the world?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, thank You for delivering me from a spirit of fear through my Lord Jesus Christ. I ask You to instill in me holy fear that I may not sin against You, for this would take away from the intimacy You desire with me and I desire with You. I ask this in Jesus’ name, amen.

Profession: God has called me to be intimate with Him; therefore, I’m not scared of God, but I do desire to fear Him so that I may not sin.

3 | WHAT IS HOLY FEAR?

Making It Personal

Passage: Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:28–29 NKJV)

Point: The fear of the Lord is to love what God loves and to hate what God hates. What is important to Him becomes important to us. What is not so important to Him becomes not so important to us.

Ponder: What does it look like, practically, for me to esteem, respect, honor, venerate, and adore God above anyone or anything else?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, please teach me how to fear Your name, Word, presence, and all You are. May I love and take pleasure in holy fear. Holy Spirit, as I continue this journey, teach and impart God's ways in me; let what I read not merely be informational, but may the words transform my life into the image of my Lord Jesus Christ. I ask this all in Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: May my words and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in God's sight.

4 | GOD'S TANGIBLE PRESENCE

Making It Personal

Passage: God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around Him. (Psalm 89:7 NKJV)

Point: We will only find God's manifest presence in an atmosphere where He's held with the utmost respect.

Ponder: What does it mean to tremble at God's presence? How is this practically lived out when I'm alone? When I'm with friends? When I'm in public places? When I'm in a church service?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, I ask Your forgiveness for the times I've entered an atmosphere of worship with a casual, irreverent attitude. I repent for taking Your presence for granted, for treating it as common. May the blood of Jesus cleanse me. I humble myself before You and ask for grace to change. I want to be aware of and respect Your presence no matter where I am or what I'm doing. I want to live in reverent awe of You at all times. I ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I will always give full attention to God's Word and honor His presence in all I say and do.

5 | AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENING

Making It Personal

Passage: I was with you . . . in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (1 Corinthians 2:3–5 NKJV)

Point: The fear of the Lord changes atmospheres. It cultivates an environment for the Holy Spirit's power to change our lives and the lives of others.

Ponder: Have I expected and believed for God's presence and power to manifest? How will my prayer life change by approaching Him with holy awe? How can I make this shift?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, if I've restricted the manifestation of Your presence due to past experiences or have been influenced by others' limitations of what You can do, please forgive me. I will enter Your presence in holy awe and place no restrictions on You. Please exceed what I can ask, think, or hope for in revealing Your power. Please do this to glorify my Lord Jesus and minister to the people in my world of influence. I ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: All things are possible if I only believe and approach God with holy fear.

6 | BEHOLDING HIM

Making It Personal

Passage: Worship the LORD in all his holy splendor. Let all the earth tremble before him. (Psalm 96:9)

Point: Our holy fear grows proportionally to our comprehension of God's greatness.

Ponder: What would happen if I took ten-minute segments three times a day, shut out all outside influences, and pondered the greatness of God? Is it worth investing the time? Could I be more effective in daily life by increasing my holy fear, which ultimately will make me wiser?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, I ask that You grant me a fresh vision of Jesus. Your Word promises that as I behold Him in my heart, I will be transformed into His image, from one level of glory to another. May my holy fear increase as His glory becomes more real. I ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I am being transformed into the image of Jesus from glory to glory.

7 | THE GLORY OF GOD

Making It Personal

Passage: He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen. (1 Timothy 6:15–16 NKJV)

Point: The glory of the Lord is everything that makes God, God. All His characteristics, authority, power, wisdom—literally the immeasurable weight and magnitude of God. Nothing is hidden or held back!

Ponder: Imagine a light so brilliant and pure that no darkness, shadows, dullness, or dimming can be present. Imagine this light shining in my heart. Why would I ever think about or ever want to hide anything from Him? It's impossible.

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, I ask that You give me keen awareness of Your glory. I don't want this to be a trivial reality, a casual thing, or something that I periodically think of; rather I want its magnitude to become ever present and more real than the world that surrounds me. May Your glory be before my heart and mind continually. I ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: In Christ, I am the light of the world, reflecting His glory to all whom I encounter.

8 | YOUR VALUE

Making It Personal

Passage: They cannot redeem themselves from death by paying a ransom to God. Redemption does not come so easily, for no one can ever pay enough to live forever. (Psalm 49:7–9)

Point: No wise person will make an unprofitable deal—to give what is more valuable for that which is less valuable. In the same way, God would never make an unprofitable deal. The price God paid for you was the life of His only begotten Son, which means He values you as much as He values Jesus. It also means He values those around you as much as He values Jesus.

Ponder: Considering the great value Jesus has placed on my life, how do I now view myself? How does this affect how I view and treat those I encounter daily?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, thank You for esteeming my life as so valuable that You were willing to give Jesus to die in my place. Jesus, thank You for esteeming me even better than Yourself by taking my place and taking my judgment. Holy Spirit, I ask that You give me the firm realization in my heart and mind of how much You love and value me, and may I love others the same. In Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I will love and value others in the same way God loves and values me.

9 | THE FATAL COLLISION

Making It Personal

Passage: “By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.” (Leviticus 10:3 NKJV)

Point: The greater God’s manifest glory, the greater and swifter the judgment of irreverence. Therefore, delayed judgment is not denied judgment.

Ponder: How do I approach the Lord, in prayer, in church, in worship, while God’s Word is being taught, or in everyday life? Have I developed a casual attitude in approaching Him? Have I lost sight of the reality that He is not only my Father but also the holy God who is a consuming fire?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, I ask Your forgiveness in approaching You with a casual and irreverent attitude. I’ve lost sight of who You are and have become too familiar with You. I repent and will no longer see You as a “buddy” but will revere you as the holy God that You are. Thank You for being so kind and merciful and for forgiving me of my irreverence. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.

Profession: I will revere God no matter how powerfully or softly He manifests His presence.

10 | GOD ISN'T WATCHING

Making It Personal

Passage: Then all the churches will know that I am the one who searches out the thoughts and intentions of every person. And I will give to each of you whatever you deserve. (Revelation 2:23)

Point: God knows not only what we do but the motives and intentions behind our actions.

Ponder: Do I continually live with awareness that God knows my innermost thoughts, motives, and intentions? How can I increase my awareness of this truth?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, I ask that my motives and intentions would be as pure as Jesus' motives and intentions. May I filter all my thoughts, desires, words, and actions through the understanding that You continually examine my ways. May I never diminish this truth in my own perception of You. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Profession: I will live my life knowing God is fully aware of my intentions, thoughts, words, and actions.

11 | FEAR AND TREMBLING

Making It Personal

Passage: That you may walk (live and conduct yourselves) in a manner worthy of the Lord, *fully pleasing* to Him and *desiring to please Him* in all things, bearing fruit in every good work. (Colossians 1:10 AMPC)

Point: You cannot do anything to make God love you more or less than He already does. But you are responsible for how pleased He is with you.

Ponder: Is my life pleasing to God? How do I know what does and doesn't please Him?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, I ask that You reveal to me through Your Word and by Your Spirit what is pleasing and displeasing to You. Give me a heart and mind that would pursue Your pleasure and delight more than anything else. In doing so may I come to know Your heart and live in a way that honors You. May what I ask prepare me to one day face the believer's judgment and receive the eternal rewards You desire to give me. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Profession: Pleasing God is my first priority in life. He is working in me both to will and to do His good pleasure.

12 | CONTAGIOUS HYPOCRISY

Making It Personal

Passage: For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12 NKJV)

Point: The fear of the Lord keeps us in touch with our heart motives, which is critically important, for the lack thereof leaves us vulnerable to the deception of hypocrisy.

Ponder: How do I gravitate toward pleasing others with the underlying motive of personal satisfaction, protection, or gain? Is this something I default to when under pressure? In what areas has it caused me to compromise my integrity?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, I ask You to forgive me for seeking to please others for my benefit. Holy Spirit, I ask You to expose all areas of my life where I easily give in to this pressure. I repent of making people my source of joy and happiness rather than making Jesus my source. I ask you to fill my heart with holy fear so that I will consistently love others in truth and so that I will not succumb to hypocrisy. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Profession: I will love those I interact with by speaking truth and seeking their benefit over my own.

13 | THREE IMAGES

Making It Personal

Passage: “For all that is secret will eventually be brought into the open, and everything that is concealed will be brought to light and made known to all.” (Luke 8:17)

Point: Every human being has three images: a *perceived* image, a *projected* image, and an *actual* image.

Ponder: What image do I gravitate toward? Do I live from a place of truth, or do I lie or make deceptive statements to protect my reputation? Am I honest and forthright with those I’m in relationship with?

Prayer: I repent of putting more emphasis on my projected and perceived image rather than my actual image. I’ve compromised integrity and ask Your forgiveness. Purify my motives and intentions. May my focus center on Jesus and others, not myself.

Profession: I will allow the double-edged sword of God’s Word to expose the thoughts and intentions of my heart.

14 | ETERNAL DECISIONS

Making It Personal

Passage: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. (2 Corinthians 5:10–11 NKJV)

Point: What we do with the cross determines *where* we'll spend eternity; however, the way we live as a believer determines *how* we'll live in the forever.

Ponder: Do I focus each day on building for the eternal—building others' lives with truth and love—or do I give my strength, energy, and time to building for myself?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, forgive me for giving my focused attention, energy, strength, and time to building for the temporal. I ask that You show me how to build for Jesus' kingdom on a daily basis. Please empower me to impact people's lives for the eternal. Thank You in Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I will look for and engage in eternal opportunities, not merely the ones that perish with this life.

15 | THE FEAR OF MAN

Making It Personal

Passage: Make the LORD of Heaven's Armies holy in your life. He is the one you should fear. He is the one who should make you tremble. He will keep you safe. (Isaiah 8:13–14)

Point: You will serve whom you fear. If you fear God, you'll obey God. If you fear man, you'll ultimately obey man's desires. If you seek to obey others' desires, you can no longer be a true servant of Jesus Christ.

Ponder: Why do I try harder not to offend the person before me than the One I don't physically see? Why do I desire love, acceptance, and friendship from people more than from God? How can I change this?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, I ask You to forgive me for the times I've sought the approval of others rather than Your approval. Jesus, I repent of seeking popularity with people over Your approval. I choose to be holy, set apart for You. From this moment forward, You are the one I ultimately seek to please. In Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I am a servant of Christ. I seek His approval over the approval of others.

16 | ENTITLEMENT

Making It Personal

Passage: And a great road will go through that once deserted land. It will be named the Highway of Holiness. Evil-minded people will never travel on it. It will be only for those who walk in God's ways; fools will never walk there. (Isaiah 35:8)

Point: The love of God protects us from the ditch of legalism. Conversely, the fear of the Lord protects us from the ditch of lawlessness. Holy fear empowers me to stay on the highway of true holiness.

Ponder: In what ways do I ignore holy fear and tolerate ungodly behavior in my life? How has my service in the kingdom given me permission to ignore the command to be holy as God is holy? And what sense of entitlement has caused me to err and fall into the ditch of lawlessness?

Prayer: Dear Lord, forgive me for assuming I'm exempt from judgment due to my service in Your kingdom. I repent of this and heed Your command to be holy as You are holy. I choose to embrace Your love for me but also the holy fear of You. By choosing both, Your Word promises that I will stay on the highway that leads to life. In Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I choose to be holy as God is holy!

17 | DEPART FROM EVIL

Making It Personal

Passage: All who fear the LORD will hate evil. Therefore, I hate pride and arrogance, corruption and perverse speech. (Proverbs 8:13)

Point: The fear of the Lord is a gift from our loving heavenly Father that protects us from departing from Him. The moment we develop a tolerance for sin, rather than a hate for it, is the moment we begin our departure from Him.

Ponder: Backsliding doesn't occur the moment a person finds themselves in bed with someone they don't have a marriage covenant with. It doesn't start the moment a person finds themselves embezzling money from their employer. It starts long before, when we begin to tolerate what Jesus gave His life to free us from. What do I tolerate that Jesus died to set me free from?

Prayer: Dear Lord, I ask You to forgive me for tolerating sin, not only in my life but in the lives of those believers I'm in relationship with. Forgive me for not gently and with a heart of love confronting them so that they don't continue on the wrong path. I repent of this tolerance. Thank You for forgiving me. In Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I will love people, for God loves people. I will hate the sin that unmakes the people I love.

18 | LONGEVITY

Making It Personal

Passage: The love of the LORD remains forever with those who fear him.
(Psalm 103:17)

Point: Every created being who surrounds God's throne for eternity will be those who fear Him.

Ponder: One of the aspects of living well is finishing well. The fear of the Lord endures forever. How can I make holy fear a staple in my life? What practical ways can I keep holy fear as a filter in all I say or do?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, Your Word states that You are able to keep me from falling away and will bring me with great joy into Your glorious presence without a single fault. I know it's by the redemptive work of my Lord Jesus accompanied by embracing holy fear that secures this eternal relationship. I ask that holy fear would abide within me always that I may forever live in Your presence. I ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: In holy fear I will abide in the house of the Lord, in His presence, forever.

19 | CLEANSE OURSELVES

Making It Personal

Passage: If someone claims, “I know God,” but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. (1 John 2:4)

Point: The work of sanctification (holiness) is when what was done on the inside of us is worked out; our new nature becomes an outward reality in the way we live.

Ponder: Holiness is a work of God’s grace, but I must cooperate with the power He gives both to will and to do what He desires of me. Do I believe this? Have I ignored this truth and His command to live holy because I have confused positional holiness with behavioral holiness? Or have I allowed past failures to stifle my faith in God’s empowering work within me? How can I return to believing this, so it becomes a reality in my life?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, I ask that You work in me both to will and accomplish Your good pleasure. I desire to live outwardly what You’ve already done for me inwardly. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Profession: I am working out my salvation with holy fear and trembling.

20 | OUR PURSUIT

Making It Personal

Passage: Whoever loves a pure heart and gracious speech will have the king as a friend. (Proverbs 22:11)

Point: Without chasing after behavioral holiness with the intent to apprehend, we cannot enter into the presence of the Lord. It's not about when we arrive at the place of perfect holiness but rather when we make it our heart's pursuit.

Ponder: God knows if I am chasing after holy behavior or if I'm consistently excusing my love or tolerance for worldly desires and the pride of accomplishments. It all begins with my heart's intentions. Will I chase after purity of heart and mind, resulting in a change of actions? Will I do so even if those who are close to me don't?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, forgive me for not pursuing holiness. I've ignored its importance, but now I see that it is to be my pursuit, for it is the doorway to an audience with You. Please forgive my worldly behavior and pursuits and cleanse me with the blood of Jesus. I repent of my casual attitude toward holiness, in Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I am chasing after holiness with the full intent to apprehend it. My goal is to be holy as God is holy.

21 | DESIRE AND POWER

Making It Personal

Passage: Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:1 NKJV)

Point: If we're unaware of grace's empowerment, we will continue to attempt to please God in our own ability. We will have received God's grace in vain.

Ponder: Have I *tried* to live a holy life and failed more than I've succeeded? Have I attempted in my own ability? Have I depended on God's grace to empower me to live holy? If not, how can I change this?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, I realize that it's only by the power of Your grace that I can live a godly life, one that welcomes Your glorious presence. Forgive me for attempting to do this in my own ability. From this moment forward I will be strong in Your grace to live a set-apart life that glorifies Jesus. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Profession: I am motivated by holy fear to pursue holiness and will accomplish it by the power of God's grace.

22 | TREMBLING AT GOD'S WORD

Making It Personal

Passage: If you are *willing* and *obedient*, you shall eat the good of the land. (Isaiah 1:19 NKJV)

Point: The evidence of holy fear is obedience, which entails both a right attitude and follow-through in action, no matter the circumstances.

Ponder: Do I only obey when conditions are favorable? Do I tend to complain when it's not going my way? How can I maintain an attitude of joy and gratitude at all times? How can I firm up my resolve to obey?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, forgive my lack of trembling at Your Word. My obedience has been conditional, and my attitude hasn't been one of joy and gratitude. I repent and ask Your forgiveness. I embrace holy fear. Please teach and empower me to obey at all times with an attitude of joy. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Profession: I fear God and therefore He is working in me both to will and to do His good pleasure.

23 | IMMEDIATELY

Making It Personal

Passage: “I will honor those who honor me, and I will *despise* those who *think lightly* of me.” (1 Samuel 2:30)

Point: If we delay our obedience to God’s Word for personal excuses, we communicate that His will is secondary in importance.

Ponder: It’s possible that seemingly harmless things can detour us from fulfilling God’s will. When what is not sin takes precedence over the Word of the Lord, it becomes sin. Have I allowed myself to be distracted by personal interests and therefore delayed my obedience? How can this change?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, forgive me for the times I’ve treated Your Word as optional or not prioritized it as most important. I realize in doing so I’ve inadvertently communicated what is important to You to be trivial to me. I repent and ask Your forgiveness. I will give top priority to what You desire. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.

Profession: Once I know the will of God, I will immediately obey it.

24 | IT MAKES NO SENSE

Making It Personal

Passage: Those who trust their own insight are foolish, but anyone who walks in wisdom is safe. (Proverbs 28:26)

Point: The Lord's wisdom far exceeds ours; therefore, we shouldn't depend on our own understanding. It can easily sway us from beneficial obedience. The person who fears God obeys, even when it doesn't make sense.

Ponder: Do I have trouble trusting God's wisdom? In the past, have I second-guessed His counsel and fallen back on what seemed logical to me? How did that work out? What would happen if I looked to God for direction and trusted Him? Can I commit to this process?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, forgive me for trusting in my own wisdom over Yours. I ask for faith to receive Your wisdom as I read Your Word, pray, and hear godly counsel from those who fear You. Give me the strength to believe and obey even if it doesn't make sense. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Profession: I choose to obey God's wisdom over my own and the voices of those who trust in mankind's ability over God's.

25 | NO OBVIOUS BENEFIT

Making It Personal

Passage: “If you try to *hang on to your life*, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.” (Matthew 16:25)

Point: We most often miss the greatest blessings by shunning God’s wisdom that doesn’t appear to be personally beneficial. In essence, we hurt ourselves in the long run. We can never outgive God.

Ponder: What does Jesus mean in saying, “Hang on to your life”? Have I looked at this scripture in light of only the extreme cases, such as martyrdom? Have I applied it to the small, everyday decisions I make? What would happen if I did? How would this change the way I live?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, forgive me for limiting my hunger and obedience to the wisdom that I deem personally beneficial. I repent of this mindset and ask Your forgiveness. I choose from this moment forward to no longer hang on to my life but to give it up for Jesus’ sake. Therefore, I will hunger and thirst for Your wisdom, even that which doesn’t carry an immediate benefit. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.

Profession: I choose, moment by moment, to give my life for the desires and wisdom of my Lord Jesus.

26 | A GOOD PAIN

Making It Personal

Passage: In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge. (Proverbs 14:26 NKJV)

Point: The fear of the Lord is what arms us to maintain a deep resolve to obey God, even in the face of adversity.

Ponder: Have I bypassed obedience to God's Word for the sake of self-preservation? Am I willing to repent and embrace the fear of the Lord? Will I choose to love and obey even if it costs me financially, socially, or even physically?

Prayer: Dear Lord, forgive me for the pattern of avoiding obedience to Your Word in order to protect myself. I realize I've chosen unwisely—Your protection is infallible and enduring; my protection is only temporary. From this moment forward I choose the fear of the Lord; may it give me the deep resolve to obey You no matter the cost. Thank You for this strength, in Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I am armed by holy fear to obey God even if it means I will suffer in the process. I commit my soul to Him who judges fairly.

27 | IT IS FINISHED

Making It Personal

Passage: Never quit! . . . Keep your eyes on *Jesus*, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way . . . When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. *That* will shoot adrenaline into your souls! (Hebrews 12:2–3 MSG)

Point: *Almost* complete obedience isn't obedience at all. Jesus set the example for us to fully obey—to the finish—whatever God entrusts to us.

Ponder: Have I started to obey God's Word and allowed distractions, pleasure, resistance, disapproval of others, or any other adversity to cause me to cease and not finish? How can this change?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, please forgive me for starting to obey what You've told me to do but not finishing, either by ignoring it or changing my mind because of not seeing it as self-serving. I repent of this lack of holy fear and ask Your forgiveness. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Profession: I choose to obey God's Word to completion.

28 | HOW TO SEAR A CONSCIENCE

Making It Personal

Passage: Let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean. (Hebrews 10:22)

Point: The clarity and strength of our conscience can be altered. Our sensitivity is strengthened by holy fear and, conversely, is dulled by the lack thereof.

Ponder: Our consciences are made pure by the blood of Jesus Christ. What spiritual discipline can I put in place to keep my conscience clear?

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, I ask forgiveness for the times I've ignored and gone against my conscience. I'm sorry for not diligently guarding it. I repent and ask Your forgiveness. Please cleanse me with the blood of Jesus. Restore a pure conscience within me, one that is tender and sensitive to Your voice and leading. May I be quick to obey You in all things. In Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I will guard my heart diligently and be sensitive to the leading and voice of my conscience.

29 | WHERE INTIMACY BEGINS

Making It Personal

Passage: My heart has heard you say, “Come and talk with me.” And my heart responds, “LORD, I am coming.” (Psalm 27:8)

Point: True intimacy is spawned from both parties knowing each other well, not just one.

Ponder: Think of your favorite person to be with. How well do you know what they are thinking or feeling without an uttered word? How well do you anticipate their response to various situations? Did you just stumble onto this, or did it take time to search out or ponder your close friend’s ways? Now consider God’s thoughts of you being innumerable. What does this tell you? What would happen if you searched out and pondered God’s heart and ways more than your closest friend’s?

Prayer: Dear Lord, I realize I’ve neglected the greatest invitation I’ve ever received—to be intimate with You. I’ve allowed so many things to get in the way of taking the time to develop this closeness. With joy, I choose to make a change. When I open my Bible to read, pray, and ponder, may I come to know You on a deep, intimate level. I ask this in Jesus’ name, amen.

Profession: I choose to pursue knowing Jesus as deeply as He has chosen to know me.

30 | A DIFFERENT JESUS

Making It Personal

Passage: It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. (1 Corinthians 15:2)

Point: It's possible to believe with all your heart in someone or something that isn't true.

Ponder: How do I know for sure that I believe in the actual Jesus, instead of a knockoff? Can I know because my leaders teach about Him? But consider, didn't Aaron teach and lead Israel? Can I know for sure because I read the Bible? But consider, didn't the Pharisees do the same? How can I know?

Prayer: Father, in the name of Jesus, I ask to not only know truth but to love the truth. I choose to embrace Your living Word as final authority and to obey it whether I understand it or not. In doing so I have Your promise that I will not be deceived. As I read and obey Your Word, may it read me; may it reveal to me who I am and who my Lord Jesus is. I ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I choose to believe the Word of God whether I understand it or not.

31 | I DON'T KNOW YOU

Making It Personal

Passage: May God give you more and more *grace* . . . By his divine power [*grace*], God has given us everything we need for living a godly life . . . he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. (2 Peter 1:2–4)

Point: The evidence that someone is in relationship with Jesus is that they are empowered beyond their own ability to keep His Word. This empowerment is identified as His grace.

Ponder: Am I trying to obey the words of Jesus in my own strength or am I relying on His grace, promises, and divine nature to do so? How can I rely more on His ability, rather than my own?

Prayer: Father, forgive me for attempting to obey Your Word in my own strength. From this moment forward I declare Jesus as the supreme Lord of my life. Whatever Your Word says is final authority in my life. I will depend solely on Your empowering grace and imparted divine nature to walk in Your ways. This is a path we will travel together in close relationship. I'm so grateful for Your invitation to this magnificent life. In Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I will walk by faith in His ability. No longer will I depend on my ability but will now cooperate with His empowerment.

32 | THE SECRET OF THE LORD

Making It Personal

Passage: The secret [of the sweet, satisfying companionship] of the Lord have they who fear (revere and worship) Him, and He will show them His covenant *and* reveal to them its [deep, inner] meaning. (Psalm 25:14 AMPC)

Point: God shares His secrets with close friends, and His close friends are those who embrace holy fear.

Ponder: What is a friend? How do friends enjoy life together? What makes a friendship deeper? Would I like to be a friend of God? What do I think He is looking for in a friend? Have I been a good friend to Him? If not, what should change? What are my desires in being His friend?

Prayer: Dear Lord, I desire to be one of Your intimate friends. I know this is also Your desire. In pondering what a close friend is, I realize I've not been a faithful friend to You. Please forgive me for not placing Your desires above all else and protecting our relationship in the way I live and respond to You. I ask for the grace to be Your friend for all eternity. In Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I will seek to be a friend to God and choose to make nothing else a greater priority.

33 | THE INSIDE SCOOP

Making It Personal

Passage: Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. (James 4:8)

Point: God shares His plans with those who fear Him. He hides His plans from those whose loyalty is divided between God and the world.

Ponder: Jesus states, “When He, the Spirit of truth, has come . . . He will tell you things to come” (John 16:13 NKJV). How does this correlate with how God and Abraham interacted? Is this something I desire with God, for Him to share His plans with me?

Prayer: Dear Lord, I desire to hear Your secret counsel. I realize I’ve flirted with the world as Lot did. I’ve in essence removed myself from Your inner counsel. I repent of this. I ask You to thoroughly cleanse me with the blood of Jesus my Lord. Please receive me as one You share Your counsel with. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Profession: I choose God over the world.

34 | FACE TO FACE

Making It Personal

Passage: All things have been *entrusted* and delivered to Me by My Father . . . and no one fully knows and accurately understands the Father except the Son. (Matthew 11:27 AMPC)

Point: For God to say “I trust you” is one of the greatest compliments a human being can receive. The foundation of trust is imperative to entering a friendship with God; it is found in those who fear the Lord.

Ponder: Moses feared God, knew His heart, and was trusted by God. Jesus delighted in the fear of the Lord, knew His Father's heart, and was entrusted with all things. What is the correlation? What happens when we delight in holy fear?

Prayer: Dear Lord, I desire to be trusted by You. Please forgive me for the times I've not obeyed You, not kept my word, not put Your desires and what's best for You above my desires. I choose to change this and ask that You would fill me with holy fear to empower me to make this life change. I ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I choose to be one who can be trusted by my Lord Jesus.

35 | YOU ARE MY FRIENDS

Making It Personal

Passage: “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.”
(John 15:14 NKJV)

Point: We don’t gain Jesus’ trust by simply believing in Him. Friendship with the Lord is reserved for those who fear Him.

Ponder: Is it worth it to obey Jesus immediately and completely, even if it doesn’t make sense, even if there doesn’t seem to be a personal benefit, even if it is painful? Is the benefit of His friendship worth it?

Prayer: Dear Lord, I desire above all else to be one of Your intimate friends. I don’t want to know You from afar; I want to be close to You. I choose the fear of the Lord—to obey You unconditionally, to love You with all my heart, soul, body, and strength, and to love people in truth as You do. I ask this in Jesus’ name, amen.

Profession: I choose to become a friend of Jesus! I will obey whatever He commands me.

36 | ESTABLISHING HIS PROMISES

Making It Personal

Passage: He grants the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cries. (Psalm 145:19)

Point: Often people interpret Scripture through the lens of experience—either their own or others’—rather than allowing Scripture to shape their experience.

Ponder: Have I allowed my beliefs to drift from what is declared in Scripture due to my own or others’ experiences? Are there promises that have not yet been fulfilled in my life, in my family, in my world of influence? Have I settled for living outside of these divine promises? Am I willing to contend for the promises by pleading for them to be fulfilled in this earth?

Prayer: Dear Lord, in Jesus’ name, forgive me for spiritual laziness, settling for unfulfilled promises, and not fighting for what Your Word declares. I’ve looked to past experiences to shape my path rather than contended for Your will to be established. I repent and choose to fight the good fight of faith, to pray for Your will to be established in this earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Profession: I choose to fight the good fight of faith, to lay hold of what eternal life declares, to see God’s will established in my world of influence.

37 | THE FEAR THAT ELIMINATES FEARS

Making It Personal

Passage: Fear of the LORD leads to life, bringing security and protection from harm. (Proverbs 19:23)

Point: Any unbeneficial fear in your life only identifies what you haven't put under the cross; you still own that area of your life.

Ponder: In what areas of life do I battle fear? Is it my health, finances, marriage, children, job, schooling, being rejected, persecution for my faith, or another facet of my life? Have I completely given this area of my life to the lordship of Jesus, or do I still own it?

Prayer: Dear Lord, forgive me for not committing (state whatever applies) to You. In pondering, it's become clear that I've kept ownership of this. My insecurity has exposed the lack of holy fear in this area of my life. I repent and commit (state whatever applies), and every area of my life, to the lordship of Jesus. Amen.

Profession: Jesus is my Lord. I give Him ownership of all areas of my life. May it be done unto me according to His will.

38 | LEGACY

Making It Personal

Passage: Your children will be like vigorous young olive trees as they sit around your table. That is the LORD's blessing for those who fear him. (Psalm 128:3–4)

Point: When you abide in holy fear, something significant is transmitted to your descendants. Not only will they be influencers, but you will continue to be blessed through them.

Ponder: How do I view my children (or future children)? Do I worry about their future? Have I given them completely to the lordship of Jesus? Do I walk in holy fear before them? Do I perceive, pray, and speak according to their current behavior or what God's Word promises?

Prayer: Dear Lord, Your Word states that I will secure an enduring legacy by walking in holy fear. I believe Your promise that my children will be mighty on the earth, they will be influential, successful, and will bring honor to Your name and mine. I commit to continue to boldly pray for these promises to hold true. I ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: My children are mighty on the earth, successful everywhere they go, and they possess the gates of their enemies.

39 | THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

Making It Personal

Passage: Listen as Wisdom calls out! Hear as understanding raises her voice! . . . For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the LORD. But those who miss me injure themselves. (Proverbs 8:1, 35–36)

Point: As a Christ follower, getting wisdom is the most important thing we can do. The fear of the Lord is the fountain of wisdom; it protects us from the traps of death.

Ponder: Have I drawn a line in the sand? Have I determined to not adhere to the wisdom of society that is contrary to what the Word of God states? Am I willing to be persecuted for my belief in and obedience to His Word? How will I seek Jesus' wisdom more carefully in my daily decisions?

Prayer: Dear Father, in the name of Jesus, I cry out for Your wisdom and understanding. Please open my ears and eyes to perceive it. I don't want to be a fool by being wise in my own opinions. I will prize and depend on the wisdom of my Lord Jesus Christ above anything this world has to offer. I choose to obey even if I'm persecuted for my beliefs or obedience. Amen.

Profession: I am determined to seek my Lord Jesus' wisdom in every decision I make.

40 | SUCCESSFUL LIVING

Making It Personal

Passage: All who fear the LORD will hate evil . . . I love all who love me. Those who search will surely find me. I have riches and honor, as well as enduring wealth and justice. (Proverbs 8:13, 17–18)

Point: Holy fear and humility promise riches, honor, and long life. Wealth is not measured by the amount of money or possessions we have but by our ability to help others. Nobility is wrapped up in our character, not our title or position.

Ponder: Do I view wealth in a healthy light? Do I pursue it out of insecurity, fear, or covetousness? Would I be better off to pursue holy fear and believe the promise to have an abundance to impact others? What does it mean for me to be clothed with dignity?

Prayer: Dear Father, please fulfill Your promise that in my pursuit of true humility and holy fear I will experience the wealth, honor, and long life needed to fulfill my divine mission of serving others. In Jesus' name, amen.

Profession: I have been promised by my heavenly Father riches, honor, and a long life in pursuing holy fear and true humility.

41 | FINISHING WELL

Making It Personal

Passage: Listen to me and do as I say, and you will have a long, good life. (Proverbs 4:10)

Point: To the degree pride dies is the degree we will have a fresh vision of Jesus. True humility is rooted in holy fear. It's knowing that without Jesus, we can do nothing. Therefore, we choose to be completely and utterly dependent on Him.

Ponder: Is humility a reality in my life? Are there areas that I have the attitude, *I've got this*? Do I make plans without consulting the Lord? Do I make decisions without looking inside for His witness? If so, how can I change this approach? How does being thankful keep me both bold and humble?

Prayer: Dear Father, in Jesus' name, forgive me for pride in these areas of my life: (*list them*). I repent of this self-dependency and for esteeming myself above others. Cleanse me with the blood of Jesus. I humble myself in Your sight and in so doing choose to see others as more important than myself. Amen.

Profession: I choose humility and the fear of the Lord to guide my life.

42 | FINDING THE TREASURE

Making It Personal

Passage: Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. (Jude 24–25 NKJV)

Point: Finishing well is the most important aspect of living well. God, through His gift of holy fear, will keep you strong and blameless to the end.

Ponder: What do I need to do to increase holy fear in my life? Do I long for and thus relentlessly pursue holy fear as a treasure? Will I hold on to it as one of my most prized possessions? What should I do on a regular basis to maintain it?

Prayer: Dear Father, I cry out to You to fill me with the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord. Keep me strong to the end that I may be found blameless on the day of my Lord Jesus Christ. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Profession: The fear of the Lord is my treasure.