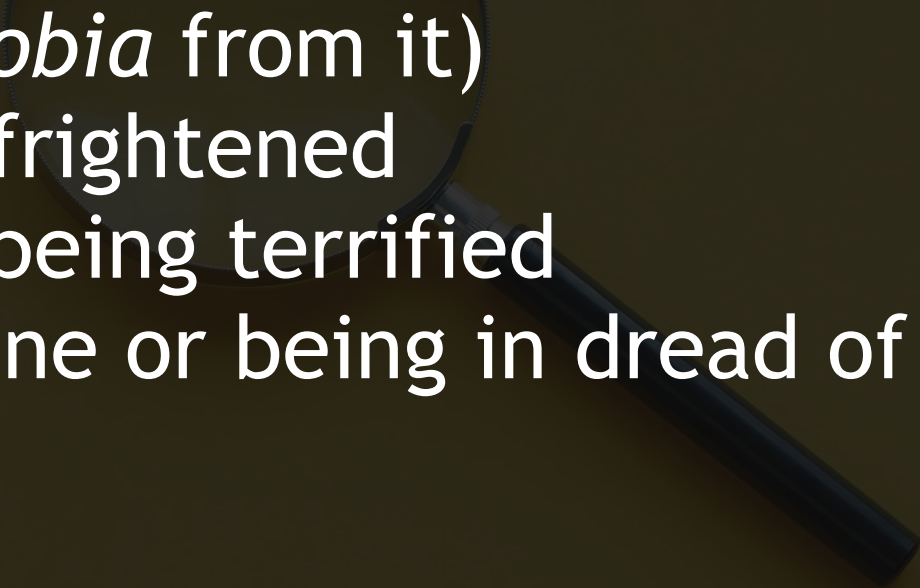


The Fear of Christ

Ephesians 5:21b Message

The fear of Christ is a sense of joyful wonder and sobering awe at His majesty

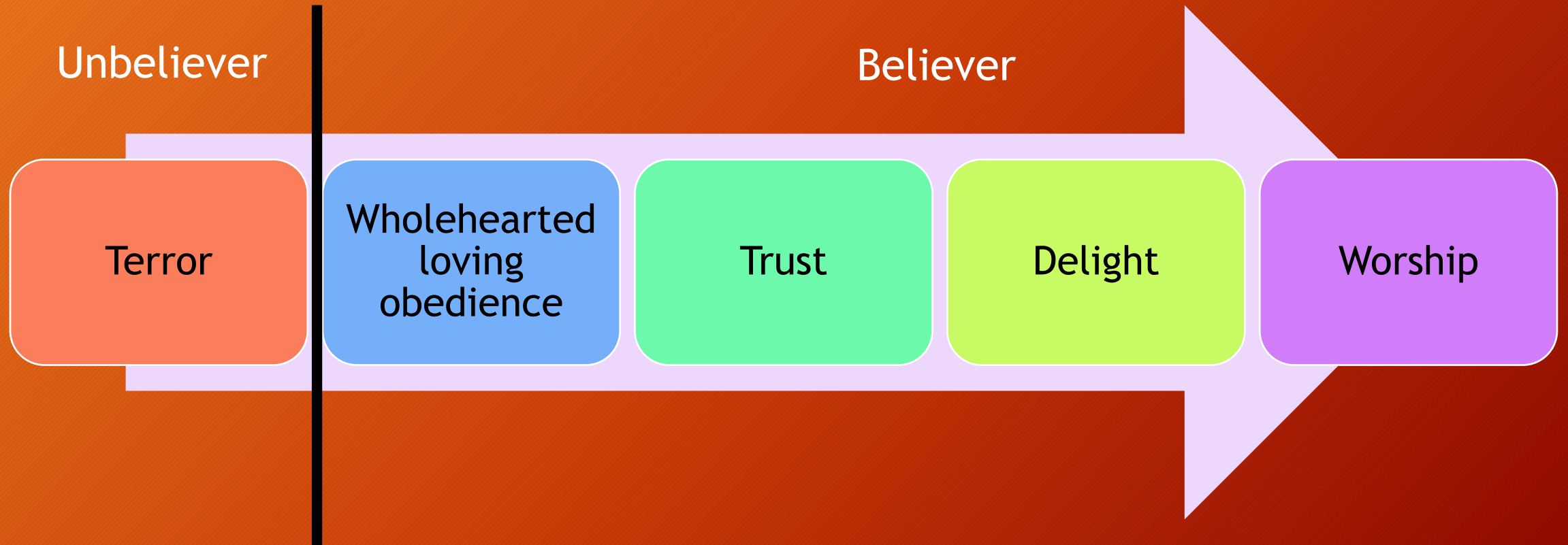
“Fear”

- Greek *phobos* (we get *phobia* from it)
 - Fleeing when startled or frightened
 - A sense of panic, fear or being terrified
 - Standing in awe of someone or being in dread of them (Classical Greek)
 - Fear, awe or dread (LXX)
 - NT: from being afraid to reverential awe
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Why say “the fear of Christ”?

1. Christ is Head of the church (Eph 1:22)
 - It is His character we must imitate (Eph 4:13)
 - In Him we are under the New Covenant (Gal 6:2)
2. It reflects His deity
 - Since He is God, “Christ” is interchangeable with “Lord”
3. OT and NT teaching are tightly knit together
 - Jesus is the object of our fear
 - OT and NT teach that He will be the judge (Ps 2; Mt 16:27; 25:31ff; 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Pet 4:17)

Fear of God



Acts 9:31

- **Sense of wonder and awe** (God can transform a vicious enemy into a humble servant)
- “Terror” is absent
- Inspired boldness to serve Christ, divine comfort and growth

Rom 3:18

Unbelievers lack the fear of God:

- Sobering reality of judgment
- **Holy seriousness about obedience**
- Reverence for God who sovereignly rules with absolute authority

2 Cor 5:11

- Sobering awe (in light of judgment seat of Christ)
- Sobering acknowledgement of accountability

2 Corinthians 5:11

“Paul himself had a deep consciousness of the awe which should be inspired in the heart of every servant who will be required to give an account of his stewardship to his master”

(Philip Hughes, *2 Corinthians*, p. 186)

2 Cor 7:1

- Holy seriousness that pursues perfect purity inside and out

Definition

The fear of Christ is a sense of joyful wonder and sobering awe at His majesty

Fear of Christ

Fuels a holy
seriousness about
obedience - held
accountable

Trembles with
joyful, loving
delight in God and
His word

Produces gospel
boldness, comfort,
faithfulness,
growth, purity

When it is
faithfully present,
the church
thrives!

“Fear of Christ” and “filled by the Spirit”

Delight in God’s word and obey Him with joy

“We don’t need the Spirit to obey God; we do need the Spirit to *enjoy* obeying God” (Dane Ortlund, *Deeper*, p. 165, italics original)

“Fear of Christ” and “mutual submission”

Fear of Christ gives us a holy seriousness

- Take the duty of mutual submission seriously
- Produces a profound humility toward one another

Meditation for next week:

Psalm 112:1

Isaiah 60:5