

March 6, 2021

Read Exodus 20

Key verse: Exodus 20:20

Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid; for God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin.'

The Love That Causes Fear

As much joy as I experienced raising a child, my least favorite task was in disciplining our son when he crossed certain lines. That old adage “This is going to hurt me more than it hurts you” was certainly true in my case. I felt great sadness when my son had ‘time-outs’ of various forms and durations, when he was unhappy and fearful of me.

But I believe that my son could always see that behind the disciplining was a deep love, a love that strove to help him become the best person that he could possibly be, to please not only his parents but to please his friends and to please God. Because the most important thing in this life is *our relationship with God*, and anything that interferes with that relationship threatens our well-being and can bring us misery.

God is the loving parent who disciplines us, his children, so that our relationship with him can grow stronger. The sins we commit place a distance between us and God that causes us to stumble around in the dark where we experience a fear greater than our fear of God; it’s the fear that comes from isolation as our own egos become our masters. We become self-absorbed, intent on gaining our own happiness, but our efforts are futile when we have lost the capacity to love others. So let us be forever grateful to the God who trains us to love.

Prayer: Almighty God, your desire is to keep us relationship with you and with one another, to your greatest joy is in seeing your children’s joy. Guide us, O Lord, and help us to fear the very thought of displeasing you in any way. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.