

## Conversations Bible Study and Prayer Guide

Welcome to the first Conversations Bible Study and Prayer Guide. It is meant to complement the video components to Conversations – the Facebook live panel discussion and Lili’s teaching video. If you have not watched those videos, I encourage you to watch them on the WLA Women’s Ministry Facebook page or on [wlachurch.org](http://wlachurch.org) under Women’s Ministry. If you’ve watched those videos already, then let’s begin by asking for the Lord’s leading and help as we approach his Word.

*Heavenly Father, I come before you desperate to hear from you. Even in these days of physical distancing from the people and places I love, the world seems to be uncomfortably close and very loud. The statistics and updates and policies and warnings that continually bombard the news feeds, social media channels, and TV and radio stations make it difficult to see these times as you mean for me to see them. I thank you for the experts who are working diligently on the medical, legal, financial, and social needs of the day, but I need to filter all of it through the wisdom and help and comfort of your Word. So, Lord, come. Come, Lord. Still my heart and quiet my mind, even as I read these words. Help me to breathe slower and more deeply, to relax my shoulders, to shut out all distractions, and to fix my eyes on you. Help me to see my sinful thought patterns rightly and to be willing to submit them to your purposes. Speak to me through your Word. Fill me and comfort me and instruct me by your Spirit. And show me anew that you are my compassionate Father who does all things well. Amen.*

As we begin our time in God’s Word and in prayer, let’s begin with a clarifying question: **what are you fearing in these trying days?** Often in Christian circles we can feel unsure if we are free to name our fears as if doing so might indicate a lack of faith or trust in God. However, it is important that we be honest with ourselves about what worries we are entertaining in our hearts and minds. In the first Conversations Teaching video, Lili mentioned a few examples of fearful circumstances that you could be facing (financial instability, aging parents in Long Term Care facilities, job insecurity, health and wellness, and so on). In the live panel Conversation, the ladies shared some of their fears in these times. But what about you? **Take a moment to prayerfully list and confess what makes these times specifically fearful for you.**

Now that our confession is before us, let's take our eyes off our temporal fears and fix our eyes firmly on the Lord whom we ought to fear. Lili ended the video teaching by quoting Matthew 10:28 where Jesus says of the Father:

*"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."*

Taken out of context of the entirety of scripture, this verse would be spectacularly discomfoting. And yet, it is written for our instruction and is part of the full counsel of God, God-breathed and profitable. It is to correct us, train us in righteousness, complete us, and equip us (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Our knowledge of this God, who we ought to fear, gives us everything we need for life and godliness, allows us to partake in his precious and very great promises, and even become like Him! (2 Peter 1:3-4)

There is a way to know and to fear this God, who can destroy both soul and body, that brings us life! Let's spend the rest of the time endeavouring to see Him rightly in His attributes and in His response to those who fear Him.

**First: His attributes.** One of the questions Lili asked the panelists in the Facebook Live Conversations on Monday, April 13, was **"Which of God's attributes do you think of first when you consider the fear of the Lord?"** How would you answer that question? Is it helpful and comforting to you? Why or why not? Can you see any ways that you are holding a wrong view of God and how that could be magnifying your fear?

As we think of God's attributes, we must remember that He is always, perfectly, eternally all those traits at once. He never stops being loving to be just. He never stops being merciful to be jealous. He never stops being wise to be kind. Every attribute of God is always working together at the same time. So, consider the attribute of God that you had as your answer in the previous section. Is it more comforting to you to consider that He is, at the same time, also being (for example):

*infinite, incomprehensible, self-existent, self-sufficient, eternal, unchanging, always-present, all-knowing, all-powerful, sovereign, holy, loving, just, good, merciful, gracious, faithful, patient, truthful, and wise?*

**Take a moment to write a short prayer of praise for who God is and for His attributes that speak to your fears in these days. Where you are struggling to find an attribute to praise, boldly ask the Lord to reveal himself to you anew even now.**

**Second: His response to those who fear Him in faith.** If you do a word search in the scriptures on “the fear of the Lord” you will find two kinds of references. There are many references made to the enemies of God who found that the “fear of the Lord came upon them”(ex. 2 Chronicles 17:10 and 20:29 among others) where the people did not turn to God in faith and expectation of his goodness, but fled and hid to protect themselves from His might. Let’s not be like those nations! Let’s be women who fear God rightly and enjoy the blessings that come from Him to those who desire Him above all else. We will spend the remainder of this time looking at just a taste of what the Psalms and Proverbs have to say about the fear of the Lord and His gracious response of provision to us. There are, of course, many other passages that we could look at, and I would encourage you to do so as an ongoing study in these times. Search online or in your concordance or in your Bible app for “the fear of the Lord” and revel in the glory and kindness of God in the fear of the Lord. Before we look at the following verses, let’s ask the Lord to transform our mind and conform our will to His so that we can know and see and fear him rightly.

*Father, I want to be a woman who fears the Lord rightly. I want my fear of you to silence all my lesser fears. Lord, give me eyes to see the root of these fears I am experiencing. Yes, I have specific concerns in these fearful times, but show me through your Word what is at the heart of those fears. Is it a wrong belief about your character? Is it a wrong belief about how you view me? Is it a failure to trust that the work of Christ on the cross was for me? Help me see my current fears as a symptom of something more foundationally disordered in my spirit, and help me, through your Word and by your Spirit and in confidence in the substitutionary work of Christ on my behalf, to root it out. You are the one who can destroy both body and soul, but because of Christ’s righteousness imputed to me, I can be a woman who fears the Lord and who experiences the goodness of God and the freedom inherent in doing so. Show me from your Word the beauty of fearing you. And help me to treasure you as I do so. Amen.*

As you read these following verses, consider the confession of your fears that you made earlier. Underline or circle any scripture that speak to your fear. It may not be a direct and obvious connection, but ask the Lord to show you what it is about the fear of the Lord, and His gracious response, that addresses the root cause of the fear in your heart.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. (Psalm 19:9)

Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind! (Psalm 31:19)

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. (Proverbs 1:7)

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. (Proverbs 9:10)

The fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short. (Proverbs 10:27)

In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge.  
The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.  
(Proverbs 14:26-27)

Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it. (Proverbs 15:16)

The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor. (Proverbs 15:33)

The fear of the LORD leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.  
(Proverbs 19:23)

The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life. (Proverbs 22:4)

**Write a brief prayer of response to what He has shown you about the fear of the Lord.**

Is there one verse in particular that stills your heart and calms your fears? Is there one (or maybe two) that seem to speak to the concerns and worries you have in a precious way? I encourage you to memorize that verse and keep it as an ongoing meditation and response that helps you to preach the gospel to yourself when fears arise, and rise again. 2 Corinthians 10:5 instructs us:

*We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.*

Let's use these verses on the fear of the Lord to tear down every fear and every lie that would raise itself against the knowledge of God – the things we know to be true about God but are tempted to doubt or forget in these days. When those fears return, nip the thought in the bud and preach to yourself (using the verse that you are memorizing), "Yes, this is fearful. But I serve God who is the only one worthy of my fear. And in fearing him is my strong confidence and a fountain of LIFE! This scenario cannot shake Him. So, I also will not be greatly shaken."

Ladies, I encourage you to read and meditate on these Psalms and Proverbs regularly. And to complete that word search on the fear of the Lord to learn all you can about this glorious aspect of the Christian faith. And let's use these days of uncertainty to gain ground in our faith! Press into His Word and into His character, and let's be women who remember and speak of the deeds of our Lord in these fearful times.

