

## 2 Kings 17:33

***They feared the LORD, yet served their own gods--according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away.***

There is a difference in fearing someone and respecting them. You may fear your boss because he can fire you, but on the other hand you may not respect him because he is a cheat. As kids we feared the bully in school because he could beat us up, but we had no respect for him because of the type of person he was.

Many people fear God, like when lightning is flashing across the sky and the earth is shaking from the sound of thunder. They fear God when things are going terrible and they know that He is the only One that they can turn to. But when the thunder and lightning is over and when the dust is cleared and things have calmed down, how quickly they go back to their old ways, serving their old useless gods.

But do we as Christians really fear and respect the Lord? Before you say yes, read this next verse.

† **Lev 25:17 (NLT) *Show your fear of God by not taking advantage of each other. I, the LORD, am your God.***

As a Christian, have you ever taken advantage of someone? Maybe as little as keeping that little extra change the store clerk gave you; up to deceiving someone to get something from him or her that you wanted. Sometimes we take advantage of others goodness and even preying upon others to get what we want. It could even be a spouse or close friend. When we do these things we are being covetous and thieves and serve these as our gods.

† ***They feared the LORD, yet served their own gods***

So what do we do?

Simply, stop it and “***show your fear of God by not taking advantage of each other.***”

“Wow, *that’s a no duh*” you may be thinking. Which is true, because it is that simple. Yet as simple as it is, how many choose not to simply stop it as a Christian and continue to take advantage of others anyway? Or how many willfully continue in the sin they are in, knowing it’s wrong? If you hear the truth, and refuse to do it, you are walking on shaky ground as a Christian. No, it’s doesn’t mean you are not saved (but you should still check your heart and ask God if you are saved or not if you choose to continue to be disobedient). It could mean you are saved, yet you are a disobedient child of God.

Say that I tell my son, do not rob a bank, and he goes and robs a bank. He is still my son, even though he chose to be disobedient, and he will still have to pay the consequences of his disobedience.

The same is true for you too, just because you are a child of God does not give you a license to be disobedient to God and to willfully continue in sin.

Even James said: *Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin. James 4:17*

So, the choice is yours to either be obedient to God's word, or willfully disobey His word. For me and my house, we choose to obey God and His word. How about you?

† **Romans 7:7-10 (NLT2)** *Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is sinful? Of course not! In fact, it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, "You must not covet."*

*But sin used this command to arouse all kinds of covetous desires within me! If there were no law, sin would not have that power.*

*At one time I lived without understanding the law. But when I learned the command not to covet, for instance, the power of sin came to life, and I died. So I discovered that the law's commands, which were supposed to bring life, brought spiritual death instead.*