

Pachad Yitschaq: Isaac's Terror

If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me, certainly now you would have sent me off empty-handed. But God has seen my affliction and my hard work, and He issued His verdict last night... The God of Abraham, and the gods of Nahor-the gods of their father -will judge between us." And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. – Genesis 31:42, 53 HCSB

Years ago, as I was pulling into a mall parking lot, I passed by two young men. I heard a loud bang, looked in my mirror and realized that as I went by, one of the two had kicked my car! I stopped, got out and went back to confront the young hooligans.

"What are you gonna do? We're minors! You can't touch us!" they yelled. But as I remonstrated with them, they advanced on me aggressively with their hands above their waists. Twenty-five years of martial arts and four years in the Corps kicked in and one of the toughs ended up on his back. The other looked at his stricken friend with his jaw hanging open and croaked out, "We're awfully sorry, sir. We promise to behave."

Suddenly, these boys who had never learned respect from their fathers developed a healthy sense of fear. Fear can be a good thing. It can keep us in line. It can protect us from doing bad things.

Pachad Yitshaq is one of God's names and it means "Isaac's Fear." Pachad can be literally translated "terror or dread."

In today's society, which seems hell-bent on glorifying individual freedom to the point of anarchy, the truth that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"¹ is underappreciated. People would much rather focus on "God is love."² But this is only because they don't understand what true love is.

I love my children desperately. My love causes me to discipline them so they can grow up to be godly people. My love drives me to remove their privileges, to confine them to their rooms and yes, even spank them if need be. That is true love.

The Bible says that a person who does not discipline their child hates them³ and if he or she continues to fail in this regard, the child will be ruined by it.⁴ We should base our parenting style on that of our Heavenly Father who is the perfect Parent. He allows suffering in our lives, but never more than is absolutely necessary and it is always for good.⁵

The Father caused Jesus to suffer⁶ and by that suffering gave us salvation. He caused Paul to suffer⁷ and by that gave us the New Testament. The Egyptians faced Pachad Yitschaq and died.⁸ Job called upon Him for justice.⁹

We need to understand that love does not preclude fear. Fear and love are two sides of the same coin. And both are God's name.

¹ Proverbs 1:7

² 1 John 4:8, 16-18

³ Proverbs 13:24

⁴ Proverbs 19:18

⁵ Job 5:17-18; Lamentations 3:32-33; Hebrews 12:11

⁶ Matthew 27:46; Psalm 22:1

⁷ Acts 9:16

⁸ Exodus 15:16

⁹ Job 13:11