

## Fearing God

From John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*,  
trans. Rev. James Anderson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 564-565, emphasis added, English  
updated.

### Psalm 34:9

Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! *There is* no want to those who fear Him.

**9. Fear Jehovah, ye his saints.** Here the people of God are exhorted to the pursuit of holiness and righteousness, that they may open up a channel for divine blessings. We know that men are accustomed to provide for their wants, by resorting to fraud, plunder, and even to wrongful violence. Nor is it possible but that the faithful must feel some stirrings of a desire to imitate the wicked, and envy them in some degree in their prosperity, so that they permit themselves sometimes to howl among the wolves. And although they voluntarily abstain from all wrongful *violence*, yet the common way of living among those around them carries them away like a tempest; and, in the meantime, they think that the plea of necessity is sufficient to excuse them.

David represses, as with a bridle, these temptations, promising that **all will be well with the people of God, provided they keep themselves in the fear of God**, which he opposes to all wicked and deceitful counsels; **because the greater part of men reckon those to be fools who aim at simplicity**, since in so doing they do not consult their own interests and profit. While, therefore, ungodly men are afraid of poverty, and carnal reason urges them to attempt whatever their fancy may suggest for keeping themselves from it, **David here testifies that God takes care of the godly, so that he never suffers them to be in want.**

Let no fear or distrust, says he, withdraw you from the pursuit of what is right, because **God never forsakes those who walk righteously before Him.**

The Psalmist, therefore, bids them yield to God the honor of expecting more from Him alone than the wicked expect from their deceitful traffic and unlawful practices. Moreover, as iniquity rages with unbridled fury everywhere throughout the world, he calls expressly upon the saints to be on their guard, because he would be of no service to the promiscuous multitude. It is a sentiment contrary to the generally received opinion among men, that while the integrity of the good and simple is exposed to the will of the wicked, there should yet be greater security in integrity than in all the resources of fraud and injustice. There is, therefore, no inconsistency in his admonishing the saints who, of their own accord, are endeavoring to walk uprightly, not to depart from the fear of God; for we know how easily the light of piety may be obscured and extinguished, when there appears no hope of living happily and prosperously, except in the pursuit of the world and its enticing pleasures.