

The Fear of the Lord

by Dean Stump

The fear of the Lord is a reverence or awe for God that leads to a deeper relationship with Him and a desire to obey Him, resulting in numerous benefits such as life, strong confidence, and a fountain of life.

Duration: 57:50

Scripture: Exodus 20:18, Psalm 33:8-37, Proverbs 2:1

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by emphasizing the importance of shutting out the distractions of the world and coming to God in prayer. He encourages the listeners to renew their strength and worship the one true and living God. The speaker then references Exodus 20, highlighting the awe-inspiring scene when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, demonstrating the power and authority of God's word. The sermon also emphasizes the need to fear the Lord and work righteousness, as God's mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

Transcript

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A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Greetings to you all this morning. Let's kneel for prayer.

Lord, we shut the door to the outside world, to the cares of life, to all of the pleasures of sin. We shut the door. We come to you, Lord.

We want you to renew our strength. We come to you to glorify your name. We come to you to worship you.

You are the only true and living God. You are the great I AM. We love you, Lord, because you first loved us.

We surrender ourselves to you today. We bow in your presence. In your presence is fullness of joy.

At your right hand there are pleasures forevermore. Hallelujah. Hallowed be your name.

Lord, I pray that you would continue to feed us from your word this morning. Thank you for that opening, the reminder that you are coming again. In a world of scoffers, we need to be reminded that Jesus is coming again.

Lord, I pray that you would minister to our hearts today. In Jesus' name. Amen.

For an opening scripture here, let's turn to Proverbs chapter 2. It says in Proverbs chapter 2, verse 1. My son, if thou wilt receive my words and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom and apply thine heart to understanding, yea, if thou cryest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding, if thou seekest her as silver and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous.

He is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness and judgment and equity.

Yea, every good path. I'd like to preach this morning about the fear of the Lord. It's a good thing to fear the Lord.

It's a right thing. We have a bit of confusion at the start here about fear. 2 Timothy 1.7 says God hasn't given us the spirit of fear.

In 1 John we're told that perfect love casts out fear. And there was another scripture I had been thinking of about fear. And there are many.

There are many scriptures that speak of a very negative, a fear as being very negative, a very wrong thing. But then we're also told to fear the Lord. And we're told many good things about fear.

And we're told here in Proverbs chapter 2. If we will give our whole heart unto understanding, crying after knowledge and inclining our ear to wisdom. We would understand the fear of the Lord. So I pray that this little meditation could help us to understand the fear of the Lord.

What inspired my heart was in devotions one morning we came across that verse that says. The fear of the Lord tendeth to life. Now, that was a real inspirational thought to me as I meditated on it over the last couple of weeks.

That the fear of the Lord tendeth to life. Not to death, not to coldness, not to austerity or something to run away from. But it tendeth to life.

This fear that we're talking about, it says in the Strong's, means to frighten, to be alarmed. By analogy, to be in awe of. That is, revere, be sore afraid, or fear exceedingly, or reverence.

Now, we're told in Hebrews 11 verse 7. That by faith, Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet. Moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. I think we first should say something about the other fear.

We're told in 2nd Timothy 1.7 there. God has not given us the spirit of fear. And in the Strong's, it just says timidity.

It's a timidity. It's as I would understand from Proverbs chapter 10. That drawing back that God has no pleasure in.

That God isn't pleased with. That kind of fear is a fear that would be one of unbelief. There's also the kind of fear that would just be afraid of the dark.

Or there's this semi coming towards me on the highway. And that emotion of fear rises up. Oh no, he's right in front of me.

And that's not what we're talking about either. And that's not maybe good nor bad. I mean, I think that's just a God given instinct that we have.

But I'd like to cause our hearts to be stirred up here this morning about this fear. This fear that Psalms 19 verse 9 says is clean. The fear of the Lord, Psalms says, is clean, enduring forever.

That sounds like something to be desired. Something that we should have. It's something that's clean.

Something that's going to endure. And it says in Malachi chapter 4 verse 2. Malachi 4 verse 2 says, But unto you that fear my name shall the son of righteousness arise with healing in his wings. And you shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.

And you shall tread down the wicked. For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts. That's a promise to those that fear the Lord.

Now, I don't know what you think of this definition. For fear, to frighten, to be alarmed by, to be in awe of. We can certainly grab a hold of that one.

That is to revere or to reverence. So, I think we can say for sure it's to hold God in high esteem. To be awed by is, I think, simply to be that He is the indescribable one to us.

He is the one who is of utmost importance in our life. And thus, His word is of utmost importance to us. And I guess that's where I'm going.

Is that the fear, if we fear the Lord, then His word will be very important to us. And what He says, we're not going to try and get around it. And what He says, we're not going to try and run from it.

Like Jonah did when God told him to do something. Instead of fearing the Lord, he feared the Ninevites. And so often, I think that's where we end up.

We see what the Lord is saying, but, oh, that's too impractical. Or, Lord, people are going to laugh at me. Or, I'm going to be hated by all men.

Well, I think we can take our chances. Let's keep looking to our good old faithful brother Noah, who, by faith, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear. He believed the word of God.

He didn't draw back. He wasn't timid. He built that big old wooden box out there on the land that had never seen rain before and had scoffers all around him.

He wasn't timid, was he? His soul didn't draw back. He moved with the fear of the Lord in his heart. He believed the word of God, and it brought forth fruit, and it saved his life.

Let's take heed. There's a couple verses here in Exodus chapter 20, verse 18, right after God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. It says, And all the people saw the thunderings.

This is the result of God giving his commands. God's word. And all the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings and the noise of the trumpet and the mountains smoking.

And when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us and we will hear. But let not God speak with us lest we die.

And Moses said unto the people, Fear not, for God is come to prove you. And that his fear may be before your faces, that you sin not. Now here you have both fears in the same verse.

He first tells them, Don't be afraid, fear not. Then he says, This is what you should fear. In other words, don't.

Don't be frightened. Don't be alarmed about what you see. But yes, be frightened, be alarmed.

For God is come to prove you and that his fear may be before your faces, that you sin not. And the people stood afar off and Moses drew near under the thick darkness where God was. And my goal here this morning is to show you that it's a wonderful thing to have the fear of the Lord in your heart.

It's a wonderful thing to be frightened at God. It's a wonderful thing to be in awe of him. I think it's a wonderful thing for you to be sore afraid and to fear exceedingly this God who, when he has not only the power to destroy you in this life, but to cast your soul into hell.

You need to fear that God and be assured that it tended to life. If you fear this God, if you fear this one who spoke the world into existence and holds all things together by the word of his power. If you fear him, you will experience life.

As it says there in Proverbs 19, it tended to life. Let's see what some of the Psalms here say. Psalms chapter 25.

I hope to put all of the lies that the devil may have deceived you with about God and about fearing him. I'd like to put all those things to rest in your heart. It says in Psalms chapter 25, verse 12.

What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease and his seed shall inherit the earth. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him and he will show them his covenant.

Look at that. And here you thought if you feared the Lord, you were going to be this person that would shrivel up in the cold or be beaten into the dust by this austere God that is waiting for you to make a mistake and beat you with his big stick. But this says, if you will fear the Lord, your soul will dwell at ease.

And God's going to show his covenant to you. Oh, it says, and the secret, his secret will be with you. You will know his secret.

Wouldn't you want to know the secret of the Lord? Psalms 33, verse eight says, let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in all of him. And then down in verse 18, behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him upon them that hope in his mercy.

God's eye will be upon you. And in Psalms 37, verse seven, rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him. Fret not thyself because of him who prospers in his way because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Verse nine, for evil doers shall be cut off, but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. Verse 11, the meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance. Of peace, I have the wrong chapter there, I think that's Psalms 34, isn't it? OK, yeah, I was wrong there.

Psalms 34, verse seven, nine and 11, the angel of the Lord and campeth round about them that fear him and deliver them. Verse nine, oh, fear the Lord, ye his things, for there is no want to them that fear him. No lack.

And verse 11, come ye children, hearken unto me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord. So this is obviously a safe place for you to dwell.

God is going to put his angels around you. And there will be no lack in your life. OK, in Psalms 85, verse nine says, not surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land.

And Psalms 103, verse 11, for as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. And verse 17, but the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him and his righteousness unto children's children.

So. Here we have a beautiful picture in the Psalms, and there's many more that there's no there's no better place for you to be than. Exceedingly fearing before before our great God and being in awe of and revering him.

As the awesome God that he is, it's a safe place for you to dwell. Psalms 111 says that he gives meat to them that fear him. Psalms 128 says that the man that fears God is blessed.

And in Psalms 147, it says that the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him. You want God to be smiling over you? In Proverbs 10, 27, it says he prolongs our days. Proverbs 13, verse 13.

Says that we will be rewarded. I want to read a few verses there in Proverbs chapter 14. Proverbs 14, verse two says he that walketh in his uprightness, feareth the Lord, but he that is perverse in his ways despises him.

In verse 16, a wise man feareth and departeth from evil, but the fool rages and is confident. 26 and 27, in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence and his children shall be place of refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life.

Proverbs 19 says it tendeth to life. Now, here we have it as a fountain of life. The fear in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence and the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life.

I would like to come back to that, but I want to first of all. Ground you well in the scriptures. Ecclesiastes 8, verse 12 says, though a sinner do evil and hundred times in his days be prolonged.

Yet surely I know that it will be well with them that fear God, which fear before him. But it shall not be well with the wicked. Surely.

It will be well with them that fear God. Malachi 3:16. Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord and the Lord hearkened and heard it.

And a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts in that day when I make up my jewels. And I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Isn't that a beautiful word? A book of remembrance was written about those who got those who feared the Lord, who got together and spake often one to another. I just read an account in the martyr's mirror of two young men, two single young men, and I think they're early to mid 20s. And they were so enjoying one another's fellowship.

They had gotten together for a time that they decided they wanted to go for one last walk together and and just enjoying the Lord together. And so they went out into the woods and and they were caught. And there's an account there of their steadfastness, their faithfulness there in the in the prison.

But the one young man wrote a letter to his sisters admonishing them to be faithful and and was giving testimony of. Of how. How real the Lord was to him and.

And how confident he was that. It was his standing face to face with his Lord was just around the corner and. This here says this reminded me of that, this says a book of remembrance was written before him, was written before him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name.

And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts in that day when I make up my jewels. And there was another verse that says in the fear of the Lord is great confidence. And those young men had a steadfastness and a confidence about them.

And that even though they were tempted greatly, one one time, as some of the men were discussing with them. Even even were saying things like, how about I just open up the doors of the prison here and let you go free? And and he said, well, I'd be happy to go free, but not if it jeopardizes one of you. And and the one fellow said, well, he would he would lose his head if he left him go free.

And he said, well, if that's the case, you can open the door and I won't even run. And I'm I'm ready for it. I'm ready to go meet the Lord, but you're not.

And he was willing rather to have his own life sacrificed than the the life of his his opponent there. In the fear of the Lord is great confidence. There's something else I want to say about that.

Oh, they before they sent this young man back to his cell, they offered him a glass of wine. As a temptation and and and gave some scripture with it and they they did everything they could. It seems they try everything to make those young men fall.

But because they feared the Lord, there was God. God, God's angels were encamped around about them and protected them and saved them from the evils that they were tempted with. And it seems it wasn't even a temptation to him in the New Testament here.

A couple of verses I'll read in Luke chapter one, verse 50, says his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. So take courage this morning. That includes you and I. It's perpetual.

His mercy on them that fear him. And Acts 10, 35, but in every nation, I'll start in verse 34. Then Peter opened his mouth and said of the truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.

But in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him. This was when when Peter had the meeting with Cornelius, who was a Gentile and God poured out on him the Holy Spirit and his household there, as well as he just like he had the Jews. And that also gives us confidence this morning because God is not a respecter of persons.

It doesn't matter who we are this morning and it doesn't matter what class of people you come from. If you fear him, he will have mercy on you. OK, back to Proverbs there.

Yes, I'd like to just focus a little bit on the fear of the Lord. Tend to life. The fear of the Lord.

Let me get my scripture there. Where are we at? Proverbs chapter Proverbs 14, verse 26 here in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence. And verse 27, the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life.

And in Proverbs 19, 23, the fear of the Lord tended to life. And he that hath it shall abide satisfied. I guess in my meditations of this, my mind has often gone back to.

My. Childhood days. And I, I'm very thankful I had a mother and father who feared God.

And I sat under much preaching in my boyhood days and was thinking about it yesterday again, as I was pondering this, that my my parents were utterly consistent with taking us to church Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night. And if there were special meetings, we were at them, which which happened fairly often among the circles that we affiliated with. There'd be a week of meetings here, week of meetings there, camp meetings in the summer and meetings at Thanksgiving time.

And when when there was church to go to, we went to church. And. And it wasn't because we were sitting around twiddling our thumbs, if if any of you know anything about growing up on a dairy farm or being on a dairy farm, there was always plenty to do aside from the fact that the cows had to be milked twice every day.

And. I think that did establish in me a fear of God as I sat under the preaching of the word. And yet, I believe the devil takes those things and twists them in our mind, just like he did with Eve back there in the garden and and comes in and takes the pure word of God.

You know, God said it. It was as clear as as you and I sitting here today. God told them very clearly what he expected of them.

And then the devil comes and he he twists that and somehow makes what God said as, well, yeah, maybe maybe there's some confusion here. And. And I, I think that confusion was in my mind a lot growing up, but I think I feared God, but I didn't have a right picture somehow of who God is.

I didn't have this picture that the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life. It tendeth to life. It brings those things that that bring fulfillment into your life.

If I fear God, it's going to be it's going to bring rest and peace into my heart. Rather, as a boy, as I definitely wanted to serve God and I definitely wanted to love him with all my heart and do whatever it took to please him. Yet he was distant to me and there there wasn't this this relationship, this this idea that by giving myself to this God, by loving him, I in turn will get rest for my soul.

Even though those scriptures are there and God's word is there, somehow I think the devil takes those things and twists them. And as I've pondered a lot on this over the last few weeks on the fear of the Lord being a fountain of life, I thought, you know, it's not there's no temptation taken any of us, but such as is common to man. And so I have to assume that the devil has twisted things in your mind, too, and that that this is an important message to give to you this morning, that the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life.

Is is your walk with God bringing rest to your soul? Is is the word of God causing a trembling and that it really is the word of the Lord and and I really do need to believe what it says and and not draw back and not fear? Does does my experience bring forth one of of life, of fulfillment, of pleasures at God's right hand? And do we enjoy being in God's presence? Like Moses told the people there that, yeah, they were fearing God, but they wanted to run from him. And I think that's in some ways how it was in my life. Yeah, I feared God, but somehow it was the fear that caused me in some ways to want to run from him.

But but I want to tell you this morning that if that's the fear of God that you have, it's the wrong fear, because if you fear God the way he wants you to fear him, it's going to bring rest and peace to your soul. Like Jesus said, come unto me and you'll find rest to your soul in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence and in the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life. And in the fear of the Lord, as we walk in the fear of the Lord, as we walk in obedience to his word, as we tremble at his word and and just refuse those temptations to draw back because of whatever the timidity is about it that we have and recognize that God hasn't given that to me.

But but the fear that he wants for me is going to produce life and those those decisions that it causes me to make is going to be fruitful as I as I go through life. There's going to be this trail of of fruit coming behind. It's going it's going to bring forth a a a heart that of right actions.

It's going to produce right words. And it's going like we heard in the children's lesson this morning, it's going to the the fearing God as as he has taught us to fear him, it's going to bring forth right actions in our life. And that's why I I opened up with Proverbs chapter two there.

God is not a respecter of persons, and if we do desire with all of our heart to know the fear of God in the way he has designed for us to know it, we will find it. We have that promise here this morning in Proverbs chapter two. If you cry after knowledge, if you incline your ear to wisdom, if you apply your heart, if you seek it as silver and search for as for hid treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord.

And it was just refreshing to me to look up these verses on the fear of the Lord and all of the promises that are with them. There are so many beautiful promises. How about that one that the son of righteousness will arise with healing in his wings if you fear him? How about a book of remembrance being written about you? If you have fellowship with others who fear him, how about his mercy being extended to your generation? How about the eye of the Lord being upon you and his angel and camping round about you? He promises to give meat to you and he promises to take pleasure in you.

Do you want God's smile upon your life if you fear him? Not with the way the children of Israel were fearing him that day there at Mount Sinai, but the way that he has meant for us to fear him in the way Noah did.

You see, the fruit that brought forth in Noah's life, he feared God. And yes, it caused him to look like a fool.

It caused him to look like he had lost his mind. And there's maybe not a more absurd thing that any man has done since creation than what Noah did there. But who was the fool? The day that it started raining, who was the fool? And it became evident that by fearing God, walking in the fear of God, it was tending to life.

It was bringing forth life. All of a sudden, Noah had life and everyone else's life was snuffed out. I think of Abraham.

He feared the Lord in a right way. And he took God at his word. When God said, go, he went.

When God said, sacrifice your son, he went. And now today, Abraham is the father of us all. He's the father of all those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we look at Noah and we look at Abraham and we may think, well, God had a special purpose for their life. But we also read the verse that says that, I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons. And you can have the same experience of fearing God and having that tendency to life in everything that you do in your life.

And that shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day, as it says in Proverbs 4. That is evident of a life that is walking with God, is fearing him, is not afraid to be scoffed at and laughed at. Are you willing to just take God at his word and believe in his promises? And are you willing to let go of all of the confusions that the devil may have, of the things that the devil may have twisted in your mind and just believe the word of God? And that if you will just step out in faith, like our faithful Noah did, and though you look like a fool in man's eyes, if you will fear God and keep his commandments, you will be no fool on judgment day. And even in this life, the decisions that you make will tend to life.

You will have fulfillment. You will have God's pleasure upon you. And yes, you can have a book of remembrance written about you.

You'll get to read your biography in heaven. God bless you all. Amen.

Thank you, Brother Dean. That's a clear reminder of walking in the fear of God. You know, today, something has happened in the general language of the Christian young people where they have adopted the word awesome so much.

You know, everything they do and see, you know, and they have an evening of pleasure. It's an awesome evening. But I don't think that's the right use of the word.

Awesome belongs to God and the things of God. And I think if you want, it means to stand in awe. And I don't think we want to stand in awe of a hot dog roast or a barbecue or a volleyball game and have an awesome evening that way.

I think it means that we have an encounter with the Lord. We have read something precious in his word. We have seen the great things of God.

And it's awesome as we stand before him and honor him and give him glory. And so I think it's good for you young people to not fall into that trap of using that language that is so prevalent today. I don't know where it started or where it come from, but it seemed to have just kind of come upon us here in the recent

decade or so.

But may we stand in awe of our God and of his words and the things that he has done for us. Amen. That's good.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And I would say also the continuation of wisdom in our lives. Anyone else want to share this morning? Raise your hand and we'll get a microphone to you able to share something with us.

Up here in the front, David Cooper. Yeah, amen. I was just remembering some of my awakenings in this area when I was about 16 years old.

I began reading my Bible and I discovered that the fear of the Lord was not an Old Testament dispensation. You know, I grew up in a setting where everything was put into dispensations. And the fear of the Lord in my mind was kind of put in that dispensation.

And the cross on the other side of the cross, the love of God had overwhelmed it. And it wasn't until I was reading in the New Testament, and I had read it through a number of times, that over and over again I was arrested at the reiteration of the command to fear God in the New Testament. Actually, in a more powerful way and probably more specifically, I think Jesus' words about fear, the one he quoted there from Hebrews, is also very, they were very, it awakened in my heart the rightness of it.

And I began to pursue it. The other thing that I wanted to say is I think that a lot of people don't like fear. Fear is not a, in our self-preservation, we don't like to live in a state of fear.

And so people want to get away from it. But the people that want to get away from the fear of God end up being the most insecure people in the world. But those that embrace it actually end up being the most confident and least fearful people in the world.

It's so much like God's way of doing things. It's like a step of faith. You know, it's just like disciplining your children.

If you don't discipline your children, you think, if I discipline my child, they won't love me. And it just turns out just the opposite. But if you step out in faith and seek the Lord according to His word, it does, it works so much the better.

I really appreciated that this morning. The other thing is that I think one of the reasons that the fear of the Lord works in a man's life is because by the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil. And I know that there were things in my life that I could not be set free until the fear of God entered my life.

And I said, I don't care. I don't care if I'm not being a good Christian. I'm going to put this thing out of my life because I don't want to go to hell.

And those things, I was delivered by the fear of God from lust, from self-centeredness, from hatred. I realized that those things were going to take me to hell. And I put them away.

And I thank God that the fear of God set me free. And I love that fear. I want to walk in it all my days.

Don't you think also that the world wants, and even many Christians, they want a totally relaxed life. They don't want to be on that bit of edge in their life to be careful what they say, what they do, where they go.

And all those things, they want a totally kickback, relaxed life where they can just kind of flow with anything.

And that's also the opposite of the fear of God, I believe. Where you have the fear of God, there's a carefulness, a holy carefulness that settles in upon us that we watch what we do, where we go, and so on. Okay.

Someone else up here? This has really been a blessing because Friday evening, we had an evening of visiting some brothers and brothers-in-law. And at the end of the evening, this topic came up, the fear of the Lord. He said he has an assignment to teach it in Sunday school this morning to the intermediate class.

And the study guide that they had gave an example of a school teacher who was military style. And the terror that she brought upon the children because of her austerity. And that was given as an example of the fear of the Lord.

And he said, that's not my understanding of what the fear of the Lord is. I said, well, that's Old Testament, but not New Testament. And anyhow, then we discussed some of this.

And so this is really, really refreshing because, Brother Dean, you went a whole lot deeper than we were able to in our discussion that evening. And it just brings a confirmation because a number of years ago in studying this topic, I had kind of come up with a summary that encapsulates a number of these aspects. The fear of the Lord is that the beginning of the wisdom is a conscious awareness that I'm in the presence of Almighty God.

And therefore, I am accountable for all my deeds, actions and motives. And therefore, it causes me to be careful, like you just said. And so that this was I felt like I was in the intermediate class this morning again and being taught.

And so thank you, Brother. Fear of the Lord is strong confidence. It's more than just that austerity.

It's an assurance of salvation there that brings a rest to the wandering soul.

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