228612 - How to Increase Taqwa

the question

How can we raise the level of Taqwa (fear of Allah, righteousness) in our hearts? I waste time watching television and playing games; what can I do?

Summary of answer

You can increase Taqwa by:
• Reflecting on the matter of this world and the hereafter and understanding the value of each of them
• Striving to obey Allah and do righteous deeds
• Fasting a great deal
• Striving to acquire the characteristics of the righteous who fear Allah
• Adhering to the guidance and teachings of the Prophet
• Keeping away from what Allah has prohibited
• Reflecting on the verses of Allah and His signs in the universe
• Remembering Allah a great deal and reciting Quran
• Keeping company with good people
• Reading biographies of those who feared Allah among the righteous believers.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Taqwa is the key to success

Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, has commanded us to fear Him (Taqwa) , and He has told us that Taqwa is the key to success and prosperity in this world and the hereafter, as He, may He be Glorified and Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{O you who have believed, fear Allah as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims [in submission to Him]} [Al `Imran 3:102]

{And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger and fears Allah and is conscious of Him - it is those who are the attainers.} [An-Nur 24:52]

And He tells us that He, may He be Glorified, is with those who fear Him:

{Indeed, Allah is with those who fear Him and those who are doers of good.} [An-Nahl 16:128]

{but Allah is the protector of the righteous.} [Al-Jathiyah 45:19]

He also tells us that the [best] outcome is for the righteous (those who fear Allah), as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And the [best] outcome is for the righteous.} [Al-A`raf 7:128]

They are those who will attain salvation and success in this world and the hereafter, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And We saved those who believed and used to fear Allah.} [Fussilat 41:18]

{Then We will save those who feared Allah} [Maryam 19:72]

{Indeed, for the righteous is attainment.} [An-Naba' 78:31].

The righteous among the believers are the allies or close friends of Allah:

{Unquestionably, [for] the allies of Allah there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve,

Those who believed and were fearing Allah.} [Yunus 10:62-63]

And there are many similar verses.

How to increase Taqwa

Taqwa (fearing Allah and being righteous) means doing what Allah has enjoined and refraining from what He has prohibited. Some of the things that will increase Taqwa in people's hearts are:

- Reflecting on the matter of this world and the hereafter, and understanding the value of each of them. This understanding will inevitably prompt a person to strive to attain the bliss of paradise in the hereafter and salvation from the fire. Hence Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, tells us about paradise that it is {prepared for the righteous.} [Al `Imran 3:133]
- Striving to obey Allah, may He be Exalted, and do righteous deeds, because Allah will reward him for that with an increase in guidance and Taqwa, which will help him to adhere to what Allah has enjoined and will open to him the gates of goodness and obedience, and Allah will make easy for him that which was not easy for him before. Allah, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness.} [Muhammad 47:17].

- Fasting: One of the means which help a person to increase his fear of Allah and attain Taqwa is fasting a great deal, for Allah, may He be Exalted, has ordained in fasting a special quality that helps a person to do acts of worship and obedience, and endears such acts to him. Hence Allah, may He be Exalted, said regarding the obligation of fasting:

{O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.} [Al-Baqarah 2:183]

Hence the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) enjoined it, emphasized it and told us that there is nothing like it in that regard. It was narrated that Abu Umamah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I said: O Messenger of Allah, tell me of a good deed. He said: "You should fast, for there is nothing like it." I said: O Messenger of Allah, tell me of [another] good deed. He said: "You should fast, for there is nothing like it." (Narrated by Ahmad, 22149, An-Nasa'i, 4/165 and others; classed as authentic by Al-Albani)

- Striving to acquire the characteristics of the righteous who fear Allah, which Allah, may He be Exalted, has mentioned in His book, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah , the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakah; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.} [Al-Baqarah 2:177]

{And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous

Who spend [in the cause of Allah] during ease and hardship and who restrain anger and who pardon the people - and Allah loves the doers of good -

And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins - and who can forgive sins except Allah? - and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know.

Those - their reward is forgiveness from their Lord and gardens beneath which rivers flow [in Paradise], wherein they will abide eternally; and excellent is the reward of the [righteous] workers.} [Al ‘Imran 3:133-136]

- Adhering to the guidance and teachings of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and keeping away from innovations that have been introduced into the religion. Allah, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way. This has He instructed you that you may become righteous.} [Al-An`am 6:153]

- Keeping away from the things that Allah has prohibited, as He, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{These are the limits [set by] Allah, so do not approach them. Thus does Allah make clear His ordinances to the people that they may become righteous.} [Al-Baqarah 2:187]

- Reflecting on the verses of Allah and His signs in the universe as He, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Indeed, in the alternation of the night and the day and [in] what Allah has created in the heavens and the earth are signs for a people who fear Allah.} [Yunus 10:6]

{And thus We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran and have diversified therein the warnings that perhaps they will avoid [sin] or it would cause them remembrance.} [Ta-Ha 20:113]

Other things that also help to strengthen Taqwa in the heart include:

- Remembering Allah a great deal and reciting Quran.
- Keeping company with good people who offer sincere advice and reminders, and avoiding evil people and followers of innovation.
- Reading biographies of those who feared Allah among the righteous believers, such as the scholars, the ascetics and devoted worshippers.

Be always prepared for death

The wise person should be prepared to meet Allah, may He be Exalted, at any moment, for he does not know when death will come to him, after which he will not be able to make up for his shortcomings, and at that time he will feel regret at a time when regret will be to no avail.

Each person will be questioned on the Day of Resurrection “about his life and how he spent it, and about his youth and how he used it.” (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi, 2416; classed as authentic by Al-Albani)

Good health and free time are among the blessings of Allah, may He be Exalted, the value of which many people do not appreciate until after they lose them. Hence the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “There are two blessings which many people fail to benefit from: good health and free time.” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 6412)

What is meant by “failing to benefit from them” is using his health and his free time in that which will not benefit him in this world or in the hereafter. This is true loss.

The wise person understands that he is going to be faced with a momentous matter, so it is essential that he prepares for it.

Any effort made in obeying Allah in this world will lead to comfort and ease in the hereafter. Hence one of the early generations would push himself to strive hard in obeying Allah; the people advised him to rest, if only for a little while, and he said: “It is rest that I seek.” (Al-Fawa’id p. 42)

Any comfort and pleasure that results from disobeying Allah in this world will lead to regret and punishment if Allah does not forgive the doer on the Day of Resurrection.

And Allah knows best.