

THE FEAR OF THE LORD
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Proverbs 1:1-7

1. In Romans 3:9-18 Paul summarized his charge that every human being is guilty before God. What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; 11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; 12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."
13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS"; 14 "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS"; 15 "THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,
16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, 17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN." 18 **"THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."**
2. A. W. Tozer stated, "No one can know the true grace of God who has not first known the fear of the Lord."
3. In this message we will focus on the emphasis in the book of Proverbs related to the fear of the Lord.
4. We will see that the fear of the Lord is foundational to our salvation, our spiritual progress, and how we approach life.

I. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

- A. The word beginning could be translated starting point, first part, chief part, or choice part.
- B. The fear of the Lord is the foundation upon which our knowledge of God is built.
- C. Let me give you a few examples that illustrate this truth.
 1. After Adam and Eve sinned they experienced something they had never felt before, and that was fear. Gen 3:8-11
They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."
 2. When God spoke to the Israelites at Mount Sinai their response was fear.
Ex 20:18-21
All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. 19 Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die." 20 Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin." 21 So the people stood at a distance, while Moses approached the thick cloud where God was.
 3. On the Day of Pentecost those who heard Peter's message were powerfully impacted to the point of fear. Acts 2:36-38

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified." 37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

D. Unlike Peter our modern approach to evangelism focuses on the love of God rather than beginning where it should; man's complicity in the death of Christ and man's guilt before God.

NOTE: Shouldn't the first Gospel message of the Church Age serve as a model for those who try and share the Gospel?

NOTE: The fact that very few professing Christians actually fear God is evidence that they do not know God.

II. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. 9:10

A. The fear of the Lord is the foundation upon which wisdom from God is built.

B. A person who does not fear God does not possess wisdom from God.

C. The fear of the Lord leads to repentance and salvation. 2 Tim 3:14-17

You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you **the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus**. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

D. Salvation leads to an understanding of the magnitude of God's love toward sinners.

III. The fear of the Lord is foundational to a Christian's life

A. Jesus Christ is referred to as Wisdom from God.

1. Col 2:1-3

For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

2. 1 Cor 1:30-31

But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

B. Jesus warned that we were to fear God. Luke 12:4-6

"I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. 5 "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!"

C. The Apostle Paul saw fear as an important factor related to our ongoing life with God. Phil 2:12-13

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

D. Both the fear of God and the love of God motivated the Apostle Paul. 2 Cor 5:11-15
Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. 12 We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. 14 **For the love of Christ controls** us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

APPLICATION

1. The phrase “the fear of the Lord” in the book of Proverbs could be expanded to read, “the reverential and worshipful fear of the Lord.”
2. We should have an exalted view of God and His holiness.
3. That view of God should cause us to reverence God and to live accordingly.
4. It should also enable us to understand the greatness of God’s love for us and cause us to return that love.

ADDENDUM: Below are all the verses in Proverbs that include the phrase, “The fear of the Lord,” with the exception of the two verses we dealt with today.

Prov 1:28-29

Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but they will not find me, 29 because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord.

Prov 2:5-6

Then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God. 6 For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Prov 8:13

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverted mouth, I hate.

Prov 10:27

The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be shortened.

Prov 14:26-27

In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and his children will have refuge.

27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may avoid the snares of death.

Prov 15:16

Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and turmoil with it.

Prov 15:33

The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom, and before honor comes humility.

Prov 16:6

By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord one keeps away from evil.

Prov 22:4

The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor and life.

Prov 23:17

Do not let your heart envy sinners, but live in the fear of the Lord always.