

A Heart Perfect Toward God

Part 2

August 2001

Dear Friend,

In my previous letter we saw that natural fear, demonic fear, religious fear, and the fear of man are four types of fear that are not the fear of the Lord. We will now consider what the fear of the Lord is. It may be defined in many ways, and we will look at some of the definitions given in Scripture. Briefly, though, we can say that the fear of the Lord is making the Lord your God. It is an attitude of reverence, total commitment and submission to God.

In Psalms and Proverbs we discover two aspects of the fear of the Lord.

Come you children, listen to Me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.¹

Notice, the fear of the Lord has to be taught. I believe it is the Holy Spirit that is speaking in this psalm saying, "Let Me teach you the fear of the LORD."

Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD.²

I want to impress upon you that you must *choose* the fear of the Lord in your life. If you do not, there will come a time when you pray and God will not answer; when you seek Him, but will not find Him.

Now let us look at some passages that tell us what the fear of the Lord will do. Proverbs 1:7, 9:10, 15:33; Psalm 111:10 and Job 28:28 all link the fear of the Lord with wisdom and knowledge. "Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."³ The fear of the Lord makes us wise.

"The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever."⁴ The fear of the Lord is never abolished; it endures forever. It is clean and it will keep you clean.

"The fear of the LORD prolongs days, but the years of the wicked will be shortened."⁵ That is very clear: if you want a long, happy life, fear the Lord.

"In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of the LORD one departs from evil."⁶ If you fear the Lord, you will depart from evil. You will shun it.



Derek Prince



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“In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence [as I said earlier, if you fear the Lord, you do not have to fear anything else in life], and His children will have a place of refuge [the place of refuge is conditional: God protects those who fear him]. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death.”⁷ Four blessings are here listed: strong confidence, a place of refuge, a fountain of life, and escape from the snares of death.

“By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches and honor and life.”⁸ Three more blessings here: riches, honor and life!

Finally, I do not think there are any greater promises than those given in Proverbs 19:23. “The fear of the LORD leads to life, and he who has it will abide in satisfaction; he will not be visited with evil.” I do not know what more you could ask for than that—to abide in satisfaction and not be visited with evil!

Living in the Fear of the Lord

The Scripture indicates that the fear of the Lord is needed in those who exercise authority over others. “The God of Israel said . . . ‘He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.’”⁹

There are two requirements for spiritual leadership. The first is the love of the Lord and the second is the fear of God. When Jesus called Peter to shepherd His sheep He asked, “Do you love Me?” (See John 21:15–19.) And He asked it three times! Then He said, “If you love Me, feed My sheep.” The love of the Lord and of His people is necessary. However, if you try to minister only out of love for people, you will eventually be called to deal with a person who is so trying that your love will not last. Only love for the Lord Himself will keep you faithful in such a case.

Also, if your only motive for ministry is love for people, you will eventually be tempted to do what the people want you to do, and not what God wants you to do. At this point we separate the shepherd from the hireling. The hireling gives the people what they ask for; but the shepherd gives them what God says to give them. It is only the fear of the Lord that will enable you to do that!

Let us look at the fear of the Lord in the life and ministry of Jesus. Isaiah 11:1–2 says of Jesus, “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.” The culminating aspect of the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the fear of the Lord. It rested upon Jesus, the only begotten of the Father. If there is one thing about Jesus that is clear, it is that He walked in the fear of God. He said of His Father, “I always do those things that please Him.”¹⁰ “I can of Myself do nothing.”¹¹ “The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do.”¹²

Isaiah 11:3 continues: And the Spirit of the Lord “shall make him [Jesus] of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD” (KJV). The Holy Spirit coming upon Jesus gave Him a special sensitivity to the will and the ways of the Lord. If there is one thing we need in the church today, it is this

sensitivity to God's will and God's ways.

Hebrews 5:7 speaks of Jesus:

Who, in the days of his flesh [His earthly sojourning], when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear. . . .

God heard the prayers of Jesus because they were prayers born of the fear of God. What was the great evidence that Jesus had this fear of the Father? I believe this passage refers primarily to Gethsemane. What one thing that Jesus said there revealed the fear of the Lord? "Not My will, but Yours, be done."¹³ When you pray that way, you are heard!

We also find that the fear of the Lord was present in the early church.

Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified [built up]. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.¹⁴

They were experiencing what Psalm 2:11 expresses: "Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling." Do you see the combination? Rejoice, but do so with reverent fear of God. Never separate the two, because if you do, you become unbalanced. When we balance the rejoicing with the trembling—the fear of the Lord with the comfort of the Holy Spirit—then the church is built up.

First Peter tells us why we should fear the Lord.

And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ.¹⁵

These words are not addressed to unbelievers, but to Christians—those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. Why are we (Christians) to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear? Because of the price of our redemption. It cost God the blood of His Son to redeem us. God gave His Son that we might be redeemed out of our foolishness, our ignorance, our disobedience, our rebellion and our pride.

I believe that God the Holy Spirit plants in our hearts the fear of the Lord. I do not believe that we have it until the Holy Spirit teaches it to us. But when we respond, by the Holy Spirit, in the fear of the Lord, then we begin to enjoy the favor of the Lord. Following are three statements about the favor of the Lord.

"For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield."¹⁶ The favor of the Lord is like a shield that surrounds and protects you on every side. You are absolutely safe under the favor of the Lord.

The favor of the Lord, in a certain sense, is typified by the cloud of God's presence. Proverbs says, "In the light of the king's face is life; and his favor is like a cloud of the latter rain."¹⁷ So, when you have the favor of God on you, you are walking under the cloud of the latter rain.

Proverbs further tells us: "The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion; but his favor is like dew upon the grass."¹⁸ So, God's favor is like a cloud of the latter rain, and it is also like dew on the grass. You never need to be spiritually dry when you are walking under God's favor!

Also, if you walk in the favor of the Lord, you take the cloud and the dew with you wherever you go. You precipitate the blessing upon the people of God. What could be a greater privilege than that?

The humble child and servant of God who walks in the fear of the Lord under the cloud of God's favor is a "rain-bringer." He automatically blesses everybody he comes in contact with. There is a fragrance about him, a presence within him—something overshadowing him that goes everywhere he goes.

God is still searching throughout the earth to find those whose hearts are perfect toward Him—those who have made Him their God—those who have learned the fear of the Lord. When He finds such a person He will show Himself strong on his behalf, manifesting divine favor in and through that person's life. Let us choose to be such people.

Yours in the Master's service,



Derek Prince

¹Psalm 34:11

²Proverbs 1:28–29

³Job 28:28

⁴Psalm 19:9

⁵Proverbs 10:27

⁶Proverbs 16:6

⁷Proverbs 14:26–27

⁸Proverbs 22:4

⁹2 Samuel 23:3

¹⁰John 8:29

¹¹John 5:30

¹²John 5:19

¹³Luke 22:42

¹⁴Acts 9:31

¹⁵1 Peter 1:17–18

¹⁶Psalm 5:12

¹⁷Proverbs 16:15

¹⁸Proverbs 19:12

For further study we recommend the audiocassette, "Do You Fear God?"

A contribution to help cover cost will be appreciated, but is not necessary.