

The Fear of the Lord - Continued

Proverbs 1:7, et al

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*⁷ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

We began our study of Proverbs 1:7 and the idea of just what the Bible tells us it is to “Fear the Lord” as we see it introduced here in Prov. 1:7. We first said that this “fear” is something that God desires for us to seek and nurture as we walk with Him. We also discussed some basics about just what the Bible does to introduce the idea to us. We then looked at the way it is expressed and said that God is the author of this godly “fear” and that it is a quality that is put forth throughout all of the Bible. Also, we said that this godly fear is something that is not natural to men, but is something that must be cultivated and developed as one walks with the Father.

This being said, we will note that there are many, many places in the Bible that give a description as to just what this “godly fear” is and how it can be known as such...

I. It Is Described as:

A. The beginning of knowledge.

- Solomon gives us one of the most valuable and well known clues as to just what the “Fear of the Lord” is exactly.

Prov 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

- Knowledge has to begin somewhere.
 - Solomon makes it quite clear, again and again, that it arises as a function of seeking the wisdom of God via His Word.
 - He seems to tell us that fearing the Lord is the first step in acquiring knowledge and/or wisdom:

Prov 9:10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Prov 15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility.

- One point I’d like to make clear is that “fearing the Lord” is not the SUM of the Knowledge of the Lord!!
- There is MORE to the knowledge of the Lord than fearing Him

- We may take a look at what the Bible says about “Knowing” the Lord at a later time - this is another topic that Solomon addresses in some depth here in Proverbs.
- For now, let’s just get in our minds that the “fear” of the Lord is the start of growing and getting a real grip and practical implementation of the knowledge of God.
- Another way that Solomon described the presence of the “Fear of the Lord” is a...

B. Hatred of evil.

Prov 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.

- “Hate” here, interestingly, speaks of the idea of scorn or perhaps a decrease in status - something that has a decrease in status or priority in our view.
 - The word for “evil” here goes right along with that idea - it speak of that which one knows to be of small worth.
 - The combination of the two speaks of just what happens at times in our lives.
 - We KNOW that some of the things that we indulge in are of little worth, and perhaps are contemptible, even damaging to our Christian lives.
 - Solomon here tells us that it is a function of the fear of the Lord that we, in light of what we know to be worthless to our service to the service of the Lord, set it aside as we know it is useless and offensive to God.
 - The fear of the Lord is that which causes us to forsake that which causes us to seek to pure and clean before God, walking purely before him as we cast aside what offends God.
- Again, another way the Fear of the Lord is described is as...

C. Wisdom.

Job 28:28 And to man He said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is understanding.’ ”

- Job’s closing words of self-vindication.
 - He clung to his righteousness, 27:1–6,
 - contrasting himself with wicked people, 7–23.
 - He described the treasures of earth, 28:1–6,
 - and the higher wealth of wisdom, 7–22,
 - which is known by God, 23–28.
- Job will outlined his past blessings and honors, 29:1–10,
 - and the good deeds he had wrought, 11–25,

- contrasting his present shameful humiliation, 30:1–19,
 - with God’s silence, 20–31.
- He will end confidently maintaining his chastity and righteousness, 31:1–12;
 - his philanthropy, 13–23; and
 - his integrity and hospitality, 24–34.
 - He challenged God and man to disprove his claim, 35–40.
 - He will conclude by saying in a word: ‘I am clean!’
- The next time he spoke, he declared in essence,
 - ‘Behold I am vile’ (42:6).
 - The reason for the change is recorded in the earlier of the book.
- Job had made the connection that the others would not.
 - While the specific features of God’s wisdom may not be revealed to us,
 - the alpha and omega of wisdom is to revere God and avoid sin (cf. Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 9:10; Eccl. 12:13, 14),

¹⁰ *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
A good understanding have all those who do His commandments.
His praise endures forever. (Psalm 111:10)*

⁷ *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)*

¹⁰ *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (Proverbs 9:10)*

¹³ *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God and keep His commandments,
For this is man’s all.*

¹⁴ *For God will bring every work into judgment,
Including every secret thing,
Whether good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14)*

- It is clear that Solomon didn’t just either come up with or make this stuff up himself!

Job 28:28 *And to man He said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is understanding.’ ”*

- The essence of what he is saying here is that being what God want you to be and realizing His blessing and protection in life simply means that we take heed of what God has made plain to His creation...

- Hearing His “speaking”
- Taking it in even if it is different that might be expected -
 - The use of the word “Behold” suggests an interjection of the following idea...
- We must grasp the “fear of the Lord” so that we might progress to and grasp the wisdom we need to accomplish what God wishes.
- We must seek Him for knowledge and also leave the unanswered questions to Him in trusting submission.
 - All we can do is trust and obey (cf. Eccl. 12:13)
 - and that is enough wisdom (this is the wisdom of Prov. 1:7–2:9).
 - One may never know the reasons for life’s sufferings.
- David ties this “fear of the Lord” and the resulting Wisdom to the matters of understanding and obedience to God’s Word:

Ps 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.

- It is, indeed a marvelous idea that our “understanding” is a function, not ONLY of the “fear of the Lord” as we have seen, but also of the “doing” of God’s commandments.
 - Psalm 111 speaks of The King-Priest on his throne (cf. Ps 110 where David spoke of the coming Messiah).
 - First of the hallelujah (‘Praise the Lord’) psalms.
 - His work of redemption is praised (Lk 1:68).
- “Beginning” speaks of the starting part...the part that comes before all of the rest...
 - We note here that it is joined to both “the fear of the Lord” and “wisdom”
 - Think of it as the Pennsylvania turnpike.
 - In order to ride on the PA Turnpike and get any where, there are some things that can be thought of as the “beginning”
 - You can’t get to you destination otherwise.
 - Ready at home
 - Get the car
 - Strat ’er up, gear, etc.
 - Go to the Entrance and got through the terminal
 - THEN, and only THEN can you ride on the Turnpike
 - All that given, you can arrive at the exit and then go you destination.
 - But the other matters where then Beginning of the Trip.
- Likewise, in similar fashion, “The fear of the Lord is the BEGINNING of wisdom.
 - The ONLY way to wisdom, Biblical, godly Wisdom, is via the “Fear of the Lord”.

- Again, we note that this is also joined with the other two ideas:
 - Once the fear of the Lord develops, or begins to develop wisdom, more comes the believer's way:
 - The desire and ability to seek A good understanding
 - Likewise, those with the Fear of the Lord and possess Wisdom have the desire to do His commandments.
 - We might also add the capacity and desire to offer a praise to God that endures forever.
- We should also note that the Fear of the Lord ought to be...

D. A treasure to saints.

- This is another famous verse here in Proverbs, in Ch. 15:

Prov 15:16 Better is a little with the fear of the LORD, Than great treasure with trouble.

- “Better” speaks of ones’ mental and emotional experience.
 - It is not a mental or production matter
 - It does imply that whatever is being spoken of yields a pleasant or positive experience as compared to one’s prior experience
 - The comparison is “little” vs. a lot or more.
 - What makes it better is our topic - “the fear of the Lord”.
 - Most people would have the mindset that the “more” would be better, but once we are in possession of the “Fear of the Lord”, the understanding/knowledge that results from it (as we have seen)
 - The one who knows the Lord and has come to possess the “Fear of the Lord” colors our idea of what is valuable or good.
 - Again the comparison (something that Solomon is very, very good at!!) is between a “little” and “great treasure”
 - Note that this is no token treasure!!
 - Little speaks of a trifle or tiny amount
 - “great treasure” is a combo of two words - Treasure is what we perceive it to be - valuable stuff
 - “Great” speaks of a gigantic measure of what it is joined with!!
 - The meaning is clear!!
 - Even is life is modest in what it gives to the believer - if the “fear of the Lord” is present in their lives - life will still be BETTER that if they had a great deal!!
 - Again, this is NOT just a matter of mentally think a good way!!
 - It is the effect of the Fear of the Lord that brings to be this proper and godly perception.
- Next, once again, related to what we have already said, the Bible makes clear that there is a fullness in the character and perception that the “fear of the Lord” produces...

- Wisdom
- Knowledge
- Stability in the midst of unstable times
- The realization of the strength that salvation can bring to life
 - BECAUSE of all of this...it is little WONDER that the believer comes view and think of the very possession/exercise of it as a “treasure”!!
 - The word refers to where one keeps supplies, their storeroom, a safe place for what is considered to be valuable.
- BTW - note the term “His treasure” and we’ll simply note that it is singular!!
 - Isaiah deliberately directs the group that was his listeners to think in singular terms, in personal terms!

Is 33:6 Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, And the strength of salvation; The fear of the LORD is His treasure.

- It is the personal, individual apprehension of the “fear of the Lord” that brings God’s blessing and usage - NOT any group or conglomerate practice of what is perceived as a good or godly thing that God rewards.
 - This is NOT what many, in today’s “church” think of and treat as what makes one godly.
 - Isaiah disagreed!
- In similar fashion, speaking of the place that the godly person holds the “fear of the Lord”...described as:

E. A fountain of life.

Prov 14:27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, To turn one away from the snares of death.

- Solomon is excellent in Proverbs in teaching concerning the things that are in contrast in our lives as we strive to live for the Lord.
- Likewise, he is very, very good in telling us what the results of obedience and drawing close to our Lord and Master are and why it is what he says it is...
 - When we seek out and learn to exercise life in the “fear of the Lord” it isn’t just a thing that we have...or what we think...
 - It is that which begins to act as source of nourishment, raising us up and causing us to grow more and more in Christ...
 - It is a source, that which “bubbles forth” and gives what is necessary with an abundant sense.

- It can be understood as speaking of the manner in which it comes forth also...bubbling, streaming forth in abundance more than sufficient for the need of the one who “fears the Lord”.
- Note that Solomon also talks about why God has designed the “fear of the Lord” to function as this “stream” -
 - It is to enable the one fearing the Lord to “turn one away from the snares of death”.
 - This is NOT speaking of the matters of ultimate death that leads to judgment as an unredeemed person.
 - A “snare” is that which is used to suddenly catch an unsuspecting one; such as a bird or small animal.
 - We should note that the idea of the snare is that of something that the one caught cannot escape himself.
 - Birds, animals stray right into snares UNLESS they are aware or are warned of the snares presence.
 - That warning is what Solomon is saying that they “fear of the Lord” does in the life of the believer!!
 - It acts as that which nourishes and builds up the believer to enable them to see the snares of sin coming and so, not get snared!!
 - Again - “death” here speaks of the effect of sin and the degenerative effects that sin and sinful indulgence can have in a life...
 - The “fear of the Lord” redirects our attention and thinking, our “wanting”, over time, to avoiding the
- Also, The Fear of the Lord is described as...

F. Sanctifying.

- Every now and again we see an indication that David, despite his failings (Solomon had failings as well) we see that he was very much concerned with the matter of Sanctification.
 - It seems evident that it was in the overcoming of these failings that David learned much about the godliness and walking with the Lord, not to mention the experience of the Nature, grace and mercy of God of which we read so wonderfully in the Book of Psalms.
 - It seems evident that Solomon had much the same experience - in his repentance and return from his sinful experience - he grew in his knowledge of the Lord and how to live a life that pleased Him
 - Thus, God led him to write that down (as David did) for successive generations to grow from.
 - David tells us...
- It is interesting that, at times and like others defines what the “fear of the Lord is and how it shows itself in a believers’ life...

Ps 19:9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

- Psalm 19:7-9 actually gives us A sixfold description of God’s special revelation.

⁷ *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;*

⁸ *The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;*

⁹ *The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.*

1. **law.** I.e., His revealed will. (v7)
 2. **testimony.** His truth. (7b)
 3. **precepts or statutes.** I.e., particular injunctions. (8a)
 4. **commandment.** Authoritative words. (8b)
 5. **fear.** I.e., reverential trust that God’s words foster in His people. (9a)
 6. **judgments.** I.e., decisions relating to human situations. (9b)
- Notice also that that he goes on in verse 10 and speaks of the great value that what comes from the fear of the Lord can have:

¹⁰ *More to be desired are they than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. (Psalm 19:10)*

- They are extremely valuable - very desirable - than that huge amount of Gold we spoke about earlier...
- David here adds the idea that, when coupled with the fear of the Lord - all of the 6 things we just spoke of “taste” sweetly to the believer!!
- There is another way the “fear of the Lord” is described as similar, in type, to the fear that a child has for his/her natural father.
- It is

G. Filial and reverential.

Heb 12:9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

- Of course, we all have human fathers...
 - We didn’t just “pop” into existence
 - Neither is this so in the spiritual realm!
- Note we begin with the word “furthermore”
 - It is tied to what was said just before

- The writer was talking about the chastening of God and how we ought to see to it that we are receiving it rightly and submitting to it with virtually a glad heart.
- In verse 7 he introduced the family metaphor.
 - The only ones God does not chasten are those who are not truly His sons (daughters). [v8]
- Likewise, we ought to remember that God is our Father and chastens us a children in order to prepare us for the coming Kingdom.
 - This is another matter that believers to with godly fear (not to mention ‘reverence’)
 - Look over at Hebrews 12:28:

***Heb 12:28** Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*

- Note the multiple things said:
 - It is a function of those who are receiving the Kingdom
 - What is true, is true forever and cannot even be shaken
 - This is the writers’ specific intent - the word means enduring, shaken, movable
 - There is a negative applied so the word is turned about!
 - It cannot be moved or shaken, it cannot be caused to “not endure”
 - The writer tells us that, in light of this truth - we need to “have grace”, that is to bear up even when things don’t go our way!!
 - It is by grace, then, that we may “serve God acceptably”
 - We will be able to serve Him as our Father
 - We will be able to serve God in the fashion that demonstrates “godly fear”.
- Just to move a bit further...having the “fear of the Lord” is not just something that we “ought” to do; or that would be “good” for us to take on!
 - Nor is it something that comes as a “built in” to everyone from the moment they come to Christ.
 - It is not, a “standard” possession so to speak.
 - It MUST be sought and apprehended, adopted, if you will!!
 - Nor is something that we can “shop” for in the “Christian qualities” catalogue...
 - It is COMMANDED for believers!!
 - We’ll undertake a discussion of this truth in a day or so!