

#56 “The Fear of the Lord”

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There are many directions a person can take in life, but the Bible says that as we make decisions, either we can be wise or foolish. If we want to be wise, we must start by dealing with our hearts in that we must be sure that we fear the Lord and have surrendered our lives to Him. Proverbs 9:10 says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” Those who fear the Lord are those who have true wisdom, understanding, and insight as to what this world and this life are all about. They are those who do not waffle when it comes to principle and truth, but they stand firm for righteousness and justice, things in which God delights. Those who fear the Lord don’t pander to the crowd or seek to people-please, but they seek to please the Audience of One.

In addition to being the beginning of wisdom, the fear of the Lord is also the end of all things, that is, it is the summation of our purpose and life on this earth. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 says, “The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.” Some live for selfish pleasure, others for riches, and others for fame, notoriety, and vain ambition. Those who are wise, however, will live by the guiding principle of the fear of the Lord. They will seek His will above their own, knowing that God sees all and will hold them accountable for how they live. Those who could care less about God’s judgment because they don’t fear Him won’t care to receive the gospel. But those who do fear the just punishment of God for sin have reason and incentive to trust in Christ. The fear of the Lord is the only right posture for living, and it is the only way that leads to wisdom.

Fearing the Lord is a starting point for faith and a guiding motivator for life in Christ. Our entire lives should be lived by fearing God and keeping His commandments. Those who fear God will keep the commands of God, living out Christ’s desires on earth. When we fail to fear God and thereby exalt ourselves, we will sin. The fear of God is to be a lifelong posture which will enable us to walk in holiness over the long haul. The Christian life requires much perseverance, and a right view of a holy God will help keep us on the right track. Proverbs 28:14 says, “How blessed is the man who fears always, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.” As soon as we start being careless, as soon as we devalue eternal priorities in exchange for temporal pleasure, and as soon as we lose sight of God’s nature as a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29), we will walk arrogantly and lackadaisically into Satan’s traps. It is imperative that we recognize that we are engaged in a battle and that we represent the true Sovereign of the universe. There is nothing else and no one else to fear but God. He alone has all power, and nothing happens beyond what He ordains. He deserves our full allegiance, obedience, respect, reverence, awe, and fear. God’s manifestations of Himself as recorded in the Scripture as

earthquakes, trumpets, fire, thunder, and so on are there to remind us of His awesome power, wonder, and authority (1 Kings 19:11-12, John 12:29). He is the Master of the universe, and we must keep that in mind as we make choices each day.

Jesus says in Matthew 10:28, “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Only unbelievers will face God’s wrath in hell, so, as believers, we wrongly understand the idea of fearing God if we think God is going to pour out His wrath upon us. As believers, the fear of the Lord shows up most clearly based upon how we view our time on earth. Those who fear God will keep His commandments not because they are afraid of God’s wrath but because they know that they have a stewardship before God (1 Corinthians 9:17). They understand that they will have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for how they lived their lives (2 Corinthians 5:10). Some Christians will receive an abundance of rewards on that day, while others will suffer great loss as they recognize that they were not nearly as faithful as they could have and should have been (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). When we remember that God sees all, knows all, and is over all, it will prompt us to be careful as to how we use our time, energy, talents, and resources on this earth. If we are keeping God’s commandments willingly and joyfully, it is a clear sign that we fear God and can expect rewards. If we live for ourselves and think very little upon advancing the kingdom of God, we lack wisdom and don’t fear God as we ought to. We need to try to view our lives in terms of how Jesus the Judge views our lives. When we start concerning ourselves with what He thinks, we are fearing God and preparing ourselves for a much happier judgment day. There is none like our God Whose power, majesty, glory, holiness, and perfection demand our offering our lives in sacrifice and service to Him. We need to remember that we are ultimately accountable to Christ, so may His satisfaction, honor, and glory be our chief delight.