

Fear of Yahweh
Proverbs 1:7
May 31, 2015

Introduction

The fear of God in Solomon's mind (and Holy Spirit) is the most foundational truth of Proverbs. Here he wants us to understand this concept and allow it to grip our lives and control our very thoughts. We should be living in the fear of God, and Solomon shows us how to live in that fear. It is a worldview that every Christian must have. To not have the fear of God is to shrug our shoulders and feel indifferent about God and the Word. Solomon calls this person a fool.

Proverbs 1:7 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.*

For Solomon (and God) the fear of God begins with the Law. We go back to **Deuteronomy** to find this fear of God.

Deuteronomy 4:10 *Remember the day you stood before the LORD [YHWH] your God at Horeb, when He said to me, "Assemble the people before Me to hear My words so that they may learn to revere [fear] Me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children."*

Moses was talking about that day when the people of Israel met God for the first time on Mt. Sinai.

Exodus 19:16-19 *On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. 17 Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD [YHWH] descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently, 19 and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.*

What is happening is that the people were experiencing emotional fear when they first encountered God. Moses is not thinking about the emotional fear (even though the emotional fear is needed at the beginning), but reverence to God that glorifies His name. This fear must be taught through His word.

Deuteronomy 4:15 *especially concerning the day you stood before the Lord (Yahweh) your God in Horeb, when the Lord (Yahweh) said to me, 'Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.'*

Deuteronomy 31:12-13 *Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the Lord (Yahweh) your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, 13 and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord (Yahweh) your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess."*

The fear of God does not come naturally for us, so it must be taught to us. Only by His word can we learn it. Solomon understood that well.

Deuteronomy 17:18-19 *Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord (Yahweh) his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes.*

What is this fear of God? How do I live in fear of Yahweh?

I. Fear of Yahweh

- Is produced by His Word

Psalms 119:38 *Establish Your word to Your servant, who is devoted to fearing You.*

- Is valuable

Isaiah 33:6 *He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure.*

- Transforms us to
 - Turn away from evil

Job 28:28 *And He said to man, 'The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.'*

- Walk in His ways for salvation

Psalms 128:1 *Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in His ways.*

- Fear of Yahweh is faith in Jesus Christ
 - We cling to Christ in faith
 - We cling to Yahweh in fear

II. Benefits of Fearing God¹

- Continual knowledge growth

Proverbs 1:7 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.*

- Wisdom—the skill of living in fear of God

Proverbs 9:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

Note: Knowledge of the Holy One—intimacy; we are clinging to God instead of recoiling from Him in fright. Wisdom—skill for living in the fear of Yahweh. Understanding—the ability to tell right from wrong (discernment).

- Blessed, meaningful, God-centered life

Proverbs 10:27 *The fear of the LORD adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.*

Note: Blessed life—abundant life in fear of Yahweh. Similar to honor your mother and father.

- Strong confidence

Proverbs 14:26 *He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress,*

¹ Dan Phillips, *God's Wisdom in Proverbs* (The Woodlands: Kress, 2011), 86-92.

and for his children it will be a refuge.

Note: When we live a life in fear of Yahweh, we are confident...our conscience is relaxed and we trust completely in His sovereignty. Not only that, we will be leaving a legacy of God-fearing to our children.

- Fountain of life

Proverbs 14:27 *The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.*

Note: Jesus Christ is the fountain of life. (See **John 4:10-14**). The snares of death—sin that separates us from God.

- Peace and satisfaction

Proverbs 15:16 *Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great wealth with turmoil.*

Note: Comparison proverb (A is better than B). When we live in fear of God, we have peace (opposite of trouble). Contentment—even if we have little, when we live in fear of God, we have complete satisfaction in Him.

- Discipline

Proverbs 15:33 *The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor.*

Note: Instruction—also means discipline or training. We learn to humble ourselves before Him.

- Preservation from evil

Proverbs 16:6 *Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil.*

Note: This is a human perspective—when we walk in fear of Yahweh, we avoid the strife, gossip, slander, and all of the relationship errors. Fear of Yahweh helps us to steer away from those types of evil.

- Best life

Proverbs 19:23 *The fear of the LORD leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.*

Note: This does not mean “Your Best Life Now” as popularized by false teaching. What Solomon is saying here is that in the Fear of God, we will have the best quality of life as given to us by the Holy Spirit...love, peace, joy, goodness, kindness, patience, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

- Riches, honor, and life

Proverbs 22:4 *Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.*

Note: All riches are found in Christ Jesus alone.

- Praise

Proverbs 31:30 *Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.*

Note: It is the internal, rather than the external that God finds precious, and it starts with fearing the Lord. Outward beauty is temporary. (See **1 Peter 3:1-6**).

III. The Fool

- Despises (belittles)
 - Opposite of fear (which is to hold God in high value)
 - The fools view that the gospel have very little or no value to them
- Foolish actions explained
 - No brains

Proverbs 10:21 *The lips of the righteous nourish many,
but fools die for lack of judgment.*

Note: This is the gospel...hearing the gospel, you have the bread of life. The fool does not see the value of the gospel...therefore s/he dies.

- Stubborn

Proverbs 27:22 *Though you grind a fool in a mortar,
grinding him like grain with a pestle,
you will not remove his folly from him.*

Note: Refusing to learn—willfully ignorant. Even though you discipline a fool, punish them, they do not listen and take to heart.

- The consequence of the fool

Proverbs 13:13 *He who scorns instruction will pay for it,
but he who respects a command is rewarded.*

Coram Deo

The lost do not fear God at all. They simply shrug their shoulders and do not care about Him. However, for those who claim to be Christians, we must be God-fearers. Who are we then? We are the people who have repented of our sins and of our works that tried to prove God of our “goodness”. We have placed our faith in Christ alone as Savior, depended only on Christ’s righteousness by God’s grace alone and obeyed God’s Word alone as the final authority in our life with God’s glory as the supreme motivation for our life.