

## **“The fear of the Lord”**

**Introduction: This morning we looked at fear fighters, passages that enable us to live in faith rather than fear. But there is a fear that is essential in our lives, one that I hope you will never lose—“the fear of the Lord.” Throughout the Scriptures God’s people were urged to “fear Him.”**

*“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,”* (Deuteronomy 10:12)

*“Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.”* (Joshua 24:14)

*“Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.”* (1 Samuel 12:24)

*“He will bless those who fear the LORD, The small together with the great.”* (Psalm 115:13)

*“And opening his mouth, Peter said: “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him.”* (Acts 10:34–35)

**The Hebrew word for “fear” (yirah) has a broad semantic range. It refers to the awe, respect, the reverence, and yes, even the trepidation that comes from the acknowledgement of God’s being and character. And although it is used throughout both testaments, it is an integral theme of the book of Proverbs. In it Solomon shows the necessity of fearing God always and the blessings that accrue to the one who does so. Let’s consider tonight what Solomon had to say about “the fear of the Lord.”**

**By “the Lord” Solomon does not mean just any deity—the god of your choice. He refers to the unique name God gave Moses at the burning bush, the divine tetragrammaton, the great “I am,” the self-existent one and the one that causes all things to be. Though there have been many deities worshipped by people, it is the God of Israel that Solomon’s proverbs concern.**

**Why should we always fear Him?**

***We should fear Him because of who He is and what He has done and is doing!***

Proverbs has a lot to say about the Lord. These verses in Proverbs about Him establish a basis for godly reverence toward Him. The more we know about Him the more we can fear Him.

We should fear because:

***He made everything; He is the wise creator of all that exists.***

*The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens. (Prov. 3:19)*

***He has a plan for this world that cannot be overruled by man.***

*The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil. (Prov. 16:4)*

*There is no wisdom and no understanding and no counsel against the LORD. (Prov. 21:30)*

*Many are the plans in a man's heart, but the counsel of the LORD, it will stand. (Prov. 19:21)*

***He sees what we do.***

*The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good. (Prov. 15:3)*

*"And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (Hebrews 4:13, NASB)*

***He can discern our character.***

*The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests hearts. (Prov. 17:3)*

*Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD, how much more the hearts of men! (Prov. 15:11)*

***He can hear and answer our prayers.***

*The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous. (Prov. 15:29)*

***He can provide our needs.***

*The LORD will not allow the righteous to hunger, but He will thrust aside the craving of the wicked. (Prov. 10:3)*

***He can overturn our plans for good or evil.***

*The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps. (Prov. 16:9)*

*The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD. (Prov. 16:33)*

***He will judge the righteousness of our deeds.***

*Every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the hearts. (Prov. 21:2)*

*The LORD will tear down the house of the proud, but He will establish the boundary of the widow. (Prov. 15:25)*

***We have every reason to fear the Lord because of these things; but***

**What blessings does the fear of the Lord bring to one's life?**

***Fearing the Lord brings wisdom for living.***

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 1:7).*

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of "wisdom." Wisdom is in this genre of literature not so much about intellect as it is about attitude. It is that understanding of God's nature and God's law that results in a proper response to life's circumstances. In a word, wisdom is the moral skill to apply the knowledge of truth to life's circumstances. The fear of the Lord is the "beginning" of wisdom. Solomon is saying that the fear of the Lord is the "first and controlling principle, rather than a stage which one leaves behind" (Kidner). The idea is not, "I'll start with God and then I'll be headed in the right direction to follow my own wisdom afterward"; but instead, "I'll start with respect for

God and never stop respecting Him, so that I'll attain the wisdom He gives!"

***Fearing the Lord helps us discover true wealth of inner peace instead of the vexation of materialism.***

*Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and turmoil with it. (Prov. 15:16)*

The incessant quest for riches often masks our material insecurity; but when we trust God to provide our needs we can find true contentment. We can live with less, rather than experience the turmoil that often come with greater wealth.

***Fearing the Lord leads to the discovery of the greatest thing—the Lord Himself.***

*Then you will discern the fear of the Lord, and discover the knowledge of God. (Prov. 2:5)*

Solomon seems to say that our initial quest to fear the Lord is rewarded by a more intimate and complete knowledge of God. God reveals Himself to those who seek Him; and in seeking Him we attain life's greatest blessing.

***Fearing the Lord enables us to receive God's forgiveness and avoid the consequences of sin.***

*By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord one keeps away from evil. (Prov. 16:6)*

By fearing the Lord we access His gracious forgiveness and have our paths redirected into a way of life that pleases Him.

***Fearing the Lord leads to inner peace and contentment.***

*The fear of the Lord leads to life, so that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil. (Prov. 19:23)*

When one's life is dominated by the fears of life, it creates the conditions for spiritual dis-ease—guilt, uncertainty, hopelessness, and anxiety about the future.

But fearing the Lord enables us to truly experience "life" as it was intended to be lived, and we can pillow our heads at night in contentment or satisfaction with life.

***Fearing the Lord leads to a long life.***

*The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be shortened. (Prov. 10:27)*

A life of sin often leads by its very activities to the prospects of misfortune, ill health, and death. In addition one is exposed to the temporal judgment of God.

But contrast living the fear of the Lord safeguards us from the dangers of sin, the company of evil, and the judgment of God resulting in a long life.

***Fearing the Lord brings a feeling of security.***

*In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and his children will have refuge. (Prov. 14:26)*

Ironically it is the fear of the Lord that ultimate frees us from all other fears. In their place is a sense of security and hope.

**Conclusion: So you want to be wise? You want to know what will help you live life well? To be blessed by the creator?**

*Do not let your heart envy sinners, but live in the fear of the Lord always (Prov. 23:17).*

**Our two lessons today are embodied in the contrast of Prov. 29:25:**

*“The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.”  
(Proverbs 29:25)*