# The Fear of God

The subject before us today is the crucial subject of the fear of God.

We want to observe 7 reasons from the Scriptures as to why this subject is so vital.

I. It is foundational to all true saving wisdom
Prov. 1:7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.
Prov. 9:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.
Psalm 111:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.
Job 28:28 And He said to man, Behold, the fear of the Lord that is wisdom and to turn away from evil is understanding.

Without the fear of the Lord there is no saving wisdom. A man has not even learned the ABCs of true wisdom unless he fears the Lord. Here is the beginning. Here is the foundation. A man is not even in the kindergarten of true wisdom much less its graduate school if he does

not fear God. Things that are foundational are of vital importance.

Secondly, this theme of the fear of God is crucial because: Primary Books of Wisdom Lit. in Bible

II. This theme of the fear of God is pervasive in the Book of Proverbs.

Prov 1:28, 29 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.

Prov 3:7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn from evil.

Prov 8:13 The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.

Prov 10:27 The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short.

Prov 14:2 Whoever walks in uprightness fears the Lord, but he who is devious in his ways despises Him.

Prov 14:16 One who is wise fears the Lord and turns from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless.

Prov 14:27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.
Prov 15:16 Better is the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it.
Prov 15:33 The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor.
Prov 16:6 By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord one turns away from evil.
Prov 19:23 The fear of the Lord leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.
Prov 22:4 The reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life.
Prov 23:17 Let not your heart envy sinners; but continue in the fear of the Lord all the day.
Prov 24: 21,22 My son, fear the Lord and the king, and do not join with those who do otherwise, for disaster will arise suddenly from them, and who knows the ruin that will come from them both?
Prov 28:14 Blessed is the one who fears the Lord always, but whoever hardens his heart will fall into calamity.
Prov 31:30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

Proverbs is a gold mine of practical wisdom on numerous subjects:

The use of money, the use of the tongue, warnings against the seductress, good and bad communication, friendship, the work ethic, laziness, the fool, anger, the godly woman, interpersonal relationships, the scoffer, the use of gifts and time, and a host of other subjects.

But none of this practical wisdom will be of any eternal value on a horizontal level between man and man unless we have the vertical relationship right first–the fear of the Lord. This is the beginning of wisdom and this is what is crucial to all other subjects in Proverbs. Understand and possess the fear of the Lord and the other subjects will make sense. Forget this foundation and the other instruction on numerous topics in Proverbs loses most of its value.

Thirdly, the subject of the fear of the Lord is crucial because:

III. The fear of the Lord is a large part of the fundamental duty of man to His God.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

Anything that is such a large part of man's entire duty to God must be of vital importance!

Fourthly, this subject of the fear of God is vital because:

IV. Without this grace of the fear of the Lord there is no eternal salvation

The wicked, who are on the broad road that leads to destruction, are described as being without this grace.

Psalm 36:1 Transgression speaks to the wicked deep in his heart, there is no fear of God before his eyes.

(Both Jews & (Gentiles / Greeks) all under sin)

Rom 3:10-18 As it is written: none is righteous no not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even

one. Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips; their mouth is full of curses and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

We have already seen from Proverbs 14:27 that The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death.

Without the fear of the Lord men will perish in their sins. There is no salvation without this grace.

Observe the 5th reason why we insist that the fear of God is a crucial subject–vitally important to understand.

V. The Old Testament prophesied that the fear of the Lord would be the experience of New Testament believers.

Psalm 67:6,7 The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us; let all the ends of the

earth fear Him.(NKJV reads and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him)

The Psalmist sees the day coming when the ends of the earth will worship and serve and fear Jehovah the God of Israel. This is clearly referring to the New Covenant age when the Gospel has been preached in every nation and men and women and children from every kindred, tribe, tongue, and nation will universally fear the God of the Bible.

Psalm 72:5, 17-19 May they fear You while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations….May His name endure forever, His fame continue as long as the sun! May people be blessed in Him, all nations call Him blessed. Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be His glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with His glory! Amen and Amen!

In my NKJV translation the title of the Psalm is: Glory and Universality of Messiah's reign.

This text looks forward to the day when Jesus shall reign wher-ere the sun does its successive journey run.

His kingdom stretch from shore to shore till moons shall wax and wane no more.

This is surely speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ the Messiah. And verse 5 of this Psalm says that every generation of Christ's true people will fear Him.

Jer 32:38-40 And they shall be My people and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of Me in their hearts, that they may not turn from Me.

These are New Covenant promises. This is speaking of an everlasting covenant which is another way of speaking of the New Covenant. Hebrews 13:20 speaks of Christ's blood being the blood of the eternal or everlasting covenant.

One of the grand promises of this covenant is that God will put the fear of Him into the hearts of His people so that they would fear Him forever and never turn away from Him.

Now observe the 6th reason why the fear of God is such a vital subject.

VI. The NT confirms what the OT prophesied–that the fear of God is indeed the experience of New Covenant believers

Mt. 10:28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot ~~fear~~ kill the soul. Rather fear Him who can destroy both body and soul into hell.

Lk. 1:50 (From Mary's Magnificat) And His mercy is for those who fear Him generation to generation. (Can echo of Ps. 23)

LK. 12:5 But I will warn you whom to fear; fear Him who after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell.

Acts 2:43 And awe (NKJV says fear) came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

Acts 5:11 And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard these things.

Ananias & Saphira struck down dead for lying to the Holy Spirit

Acts 9:31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

Rom. 11:20 That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand through faith. So do not become proud, but fear.

II Cor 7:1 Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

II Cor 7:11 For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

Eph 5:21 Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. (NKJV says submitting to one another in the fear of God. (phobos)

Eph. 6:5 Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear (phobou) and trembling (tromou) with a sincere heart, as you would Christ.

Phil 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much

I will dwell in them + walk among them. I will be their God + they shall be my people + I will be a Father to you and you shall be My Sons + daughters

more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear (phobou) and trembling (tromos)

Col 3:22 Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eyeservice, as people pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Vig Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from 2 or 3 witnesses

I Tim 5:20 As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all so that the rest may stand in fear

Heb 4:1 Therefore, while the promise of entering His rest still stands, let us fear (phobathomen) lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.

Heb 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear (eulabeomai) constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Heb 12: 28,29 Therefore, let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe (NKJV has fear–phobos) for our God is a consuming fire.

I Peter 1:17 And if you call on Him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds,

conduct yourselves with fear (phobos) throughout the time of your exile.
I Peter 2:17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear (phobos) God. Honor the emperor.
I Peter 2:18 Servants be subject to your masters with all respect (fear-phobos)not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.
I Peter 3:2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct (NKJV when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear–phobos)
I Peter 3:15 But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for the reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect. (NKJV fear-phobos)
Yes, indeed. NT believers were God fearers. This again underscores how vital this subject is for us.

The seventh reason why the subject of the fear of God is so crucial for us to understand and live out in our lives is because:

VII. Jesus Christ Himself was and is characterized by this grace. He is the perfect God-fearer.

Is. 11:1-3a There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And 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 the fear of the Lord. And His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

Clearly this is a reference to the Messiah our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Son of David the son of Jesse. Acts 13:22,23

Language about the Branch is patently Messianic Jer. 23:5,6; Is. 4:2; Is. 11:10; Is. 53:1,3 refer to Christ as a root. Also Zech 3:8 and 6:12.

Language about the Spirit of the Lord resting upon Him further underscores this. IS 42:1-4; Mt. 12:18-21

It is clear from the text that the Lord Jesus was given the Holy Spirit to empower Him for His life's work. It is also abundantly clear that the Spirit that empowered Him is the Spirit of the fear of the Lord. And it is clear that our Lord Jesus delighted in the fear of the Lord.

One NT text explicitly tells us that our Savior feared the Lord.

Heb 5:7 In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save from death, and He was heard because of His reverence. (NKJV reads–and was heard because of His godly fear–eulabeias)

Now the NT Christian is to be like Christ. His mind is to be in us (Phil 2:5, I Cor. 2:16)

We are to walk even as He walked (I Jn. 2:6)
We are to follow Paul even as he followed Christ. I Cor. 11:1.

Christ was a God fearer. He delighted in the fear of the Lord!
To follow Him and walk as He walked and have His mind in us means many things but it certainly means that we are to be living in the fear of the Lord all the day long. It means that we delight in fearing God as He did.

This applies to all Christians. Every NT believer has the Holy Spirit-the Spirit of Christ is in him.

Paul tells us clearly in Rom 8:9 Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.

Brethren, may God help us to follow our Savior's example and pass the time of our sojourning here in godly fear. May He give us divine grace to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling even as He works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. And may we like our Lord delight in the fear of the Lord.

Charles Bridges: "The fear of the Lord is that affectionate reverence by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father's law. His wrath is so bitter, and His love is so sweet that hence springs an earnest desire to please Him."