



FEARING THE LORD

14:2, 26, 27; 15:16, 33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17

These **proverbs** deal with the subject of **fearing the Lord**. This fearing of the Lord spoken of in these **proverbs** is not a **servile** or **slavish** fear. Such is full of anxious **apprehension**, **terror**, and **dismay**. When *Adam* and *Eve* sinned in *Eden*, **THEY FEARED GOD, AND AS A RESULT THEY DREADED TO SEE GOD AND SOUGHT TO HIDE THEMSELVES FROM HIS HOLY PRESENCE!** Ever since that day, *Adam's* children have been subjected to this kind of fear. A fear that arises from guilt and causes people to shut out the thoughts of God from their minds, or to seclude themselves in places they imagine that God cannot see them. **THIS KIND OF FEAR DRIVES MEN AWAY FROM GOD!** It is a product of **guilt** and **doubt**, and results in **despair!** This is not the "**fear**" spoken of in these **proverbs**.

The "**fear of the LORD**" spoken of in these **proverbs** is the same that *Solomon* spoke of when speaking of the **pursuit of wisdom** [1:7; 9:10]. Concerning this, *Job* said "**Behold, the fear of the LORD that is wisdom**" [Job 28:28]. This "**fear of the LORD**" is a "**fear**" that **dreads God's displeasure**, and that **desires His favor**, and has a **regard for His Person!** It is a **reverence**, a **respect**, an **admiration**, and an **affection** for God! It is **honor** and **esteem** for God! **WITHOUT THIS REVERENCE THERE IS NO TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND THERE IS NO WISDOM FROM ABOVE!** This "**fear of the LORD**" is commanded [Psalm 4:4; 33:8; I Peter 1:17], and is part of the whole spiritual duty of man [Ecclesiastes 12:13]. This "**fear of the LORD**" flows from a consideration of **what God has done** [I Samuel 12:24; Psalm 33:6-8], and from a sense of His **love and mercy in forgiving sinners** [[Psalm 130:4]. When the Bible describes a true believer and worshipper of God, he is often said to be one who **fears the Lord**. The Lord told *Abraham* on Mount Moriah "**for now I know that thou fearest God**" [Genesis 22:12]. It is said of *Obadiab* in I Kings 18:3 "**Now Obadiab feared the Lord greatly**" It is said of *Cornelius* in Acts 10:42 that he "**feared God with all his house**" **THIS GODLY FEAR LEADS ONE TO GOD AND NOT FROM GOD!**

"He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him" [14:2].

In this **proverb** there is a contrast between the one who "**feareth** (reverences) **the LORD**" and the one that **despiseth** (thinks lightly of the Lord) **him**" Both are identified by their conduct, by their lifestyle. The one who fears God is **upright**, that is, he has **honorable behavior**, and the one who **despises** (thinks lightly or lowly of God) is **perverse**, that is, he lives **contrary to God!** The word "**perverse**" has reference to that which is **depraved**, **degenerate**, **immoral**, **twisted**, **corrupt**, and **evil!** **ONE'S LIFE IS A MANIFESTATION OF WHAT THEY THINK OF GOD!**

"In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death" [14:26-27].

Here, *“the fear of the LORD”* provides confidence (trust and conviction), security, (peace of mind) as seen in the word *“refuge”* and enjoyment of life, as seen in the phrase *“fountain of life”* and protection from destruction, as seen in the phrase *“to depart from the snares of death”*

“Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith” [15:16].

This proverb coincides with what *Jesus* said in Luke 12:15 *“for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth”* MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT ONE HAS IN THEIR HAND IS WHAT THEY HAVE IN THEIR HEART! Respect, admiration, honor, esteem and affection for God no matter what the circumstances, is *“better”* (more advantageous, useful, and valuable) than great earthly treasure.

“The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility” [15:33].

“The fear of the LORD” not only is the beginning or principal part of knowledge and wisdom, but it also *“is the instruction of wisdom”* That is, *“the fear of the LORD”* teaches wisdom, trains, directs, and grounds in wisdom. This proverb also teaches that there is a connection between *“humility”* and *“wisdom”* *Paul* taught such in Romans 11:20 when he wrote *“Be not highminded, but fear”*

“By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by fear of the LORD men depart from evil” [16:6].

Reverence for God leads to and results in a hatred for sin [Proverbs 8:13]. It is the very nature of reverence to hate all forms of evil. The *“fear of the LORD”* serves as a restraint to the desires of the flesh, leading to a departure from evil [Proverbs 3:7; 14:16]. If the *“fear of the LORD”* causes one to depart or withdraw from sin, then a lack of such *“fear”* (irreverence) will cause one to move toward sin.

“The fear of the LORD tendeth to life; and he that hat it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil” [19:23].

There is a threefold fruit of *“the fear of the LORD”* set forth in this proverb. It is said that it has an inclination, a bent, and leaning toward life, not the life common to the ungodly, but spiritual life. *“The fear of the LORD”* brings satisfaction (contentment, fulfillment, enjoyment and happiness). This is what the *Psalmist* was referring to in Psalm 112:1. Another fruit of *“the fear of the LORD”* is security-*“he shall not be visited with evil”*

“By humility and fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life” [22:4].

Again, humility and reverence go hand in hand, a person cannot be fearing God and be filled with selfish pride at the same time. *“Humility and fear of the LORD”* results in riches, spiritual riches [Psalm 25:14], honor [Psalm 33:18; 103:13; 147:11], and life (the enjoyment of life, especially spiritual life).

“Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long” [23:17].

The remedy for wanting to do what sinners do is *“the fear of the LORD”* The child of God, in all times, and under all circumstances is to possess a *“fear* (respect, admiration, honor, esteem, and affection) *of the LORD”* The child of God is to pray for such [Psalm 86:11], and to always maintain the spirit of *“the fear of the LORD”* [Deuteronomy 14:23; Joshua 4:24]. It is living in such a spirit that will spare the child of God many troubles, and will deliver the child of God from the depths of sin. Living in the *“fear of the LORD”* changes one’s attitude and outlook toward life, causing them to live for the honor and glory of God. This *“fear of the LORD”* will make one willing to **give the best that they have** [Genesis 22:12], and will **cause one to offer more than lip service in worship** [Isaiah 29:13], making their service to God acceptable [Hebrews 12:28].