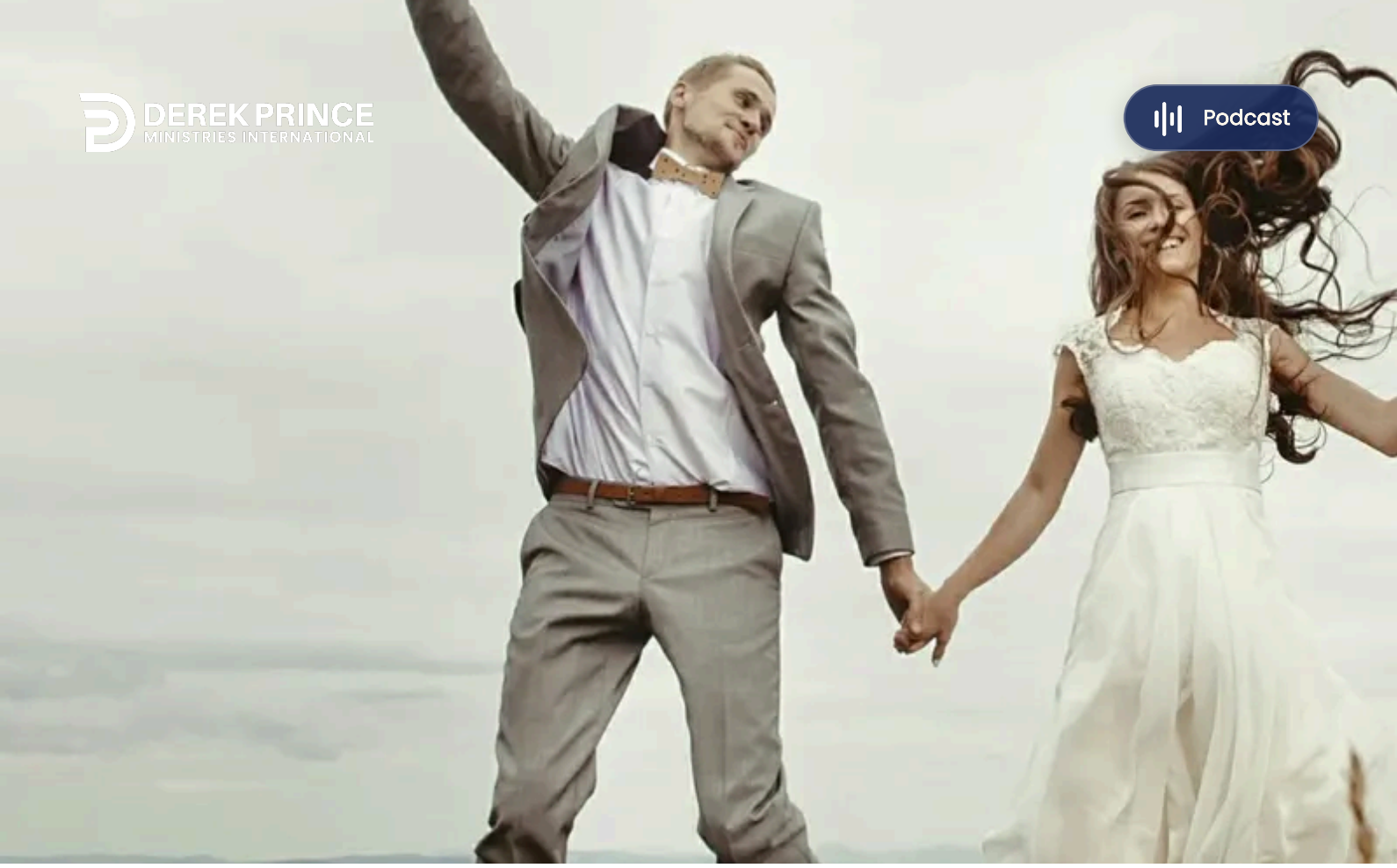

A Heart Perfect Toward God



Part 1/5

The Fear of the Lord
By Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you Keys To Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

In my talks this week I want to speak about our personal relationship with God. In particular, I want to focus on one aspect of our character which is essential for a right relationship with God, one which is seldom mentioned in contemporary Christianity and is little understood by most Christians. And yet, as I say, it's essential for a right relationship with God.

If I were to give you three guesses, I'm sure that hardly any of you would come up with what I have in mind. The aspect of character that I'm going to deal with this week is "The Fear of the Lord." Does that produce some kind of negative reaction in you? The fear of the Lord. Do you almost shrink away from it? Something stern and unattractive? If you will be patient and open-minded, I believe that I can show you in my talks this week that there is no element of character or Christian experience more to be desired and more rewarding than the fear of the Lord.

I'd like to begin this study, "The Fear of the Lord," with a beautiful jewel of Scripture tucked away in half a verse in 2 Chronicles. You know, sometimes the most precious jewels of Scripture are hidden in little half verses here and there. And unless we read carefully and attentively, we tend to pass them by and miss them. This half verse is found in 2 Chronicles 16:9. The King James Version, which is very beautiful, says this:

> "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him..."

The New International Version says:

> "For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him..."

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So God is looking for a man whom He can strengthen, whom He can stand by, but it's the eyes of the Lord that are running to and fro, or ranging throughout the earth looking for such a man.

What are we to understand by the eyes of the Lord? I believe the answer is to be found, amongst other places, in Revelation 5:6, where John the revelator says speaking about the vision that he had of heaven:

> "Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth."

An alternative translation is "the sevenfold spirit of God sent out into all the earth." So, when it says in 2 Chronicles "The eyes of the Lord are running to and fro—or—ranging throughout the earth" looking for a certain kind of man, we're to understand that to mean that it's the Spirit of God that is out in the earth, amongst all humanity, searching for a particular kind of person. Because, when God finds that kind of person, he can do extraordinary things for him.

So, what kind of a person is God looking for? I think it's important to bear in mind that. Really, we don't have to coerce God into helping us or blessing us; rather, we have to concentrate on being the kind of person that God is longing to bless and to help. God is looking for a certain attitude of the heart. What is that attitude? The Scripture says "a heart that's perfect toward God," or it says, "Those whose heart is fully committed to him." So, what we're talking about is a heart that is fully committed to God, that's perfect.

The word "perfect" doesn't mean necessarily that you've arrived completely but it means that every area of your heart is right in its attitude and relationship to God. That there's nothing in your heart that's being held back from God. There's no corner in your heart where you don't invite God's search and where you are not willing to open up to God and let him show you what's pleasing to him, what he expects of you.

So, we're thinking today of a heart perfect toward God, a total commitment to God that holds nothing back, that's unreserved. God's looking for a person like that. Would you like to be a kind of person like that? I tell you, I would.

I've walked with the Lord long enough to know that He's faithful, that if He lays down certain conditions and says that if we meet those conditions He'll do certain things. I've always proved in experience that when we meet the conditions, God fulfills His commitment.

So, let's ask ourselves today: Do we have a heart that's fully committed to God? Are we completely open with Him? Is there any area of our heart or life that we're seeking to shield from God? Are there some rooms in the house of our heart where we haven't given God the key, that we still want to occupy for ourselves? Some closet door somewhere that we've locked and said, "God, you can walk through the rest of the house and inspect the rest of my rooms, but this closet I just don't want you to see what's inside there." That's the kind of thing that God cannot fully bless. So, the eyes of the Lord, the Spirit of God, is ranging throughout the earth looking for a person who has no locked off areas, no secret dark corners, no reservations, nothing that's unyielded. What is the essence of that kind of attitude? I believe it's summed up in that phrase we're thinking of, the fear of the Lord.

What are we to understand by the fear of the Lord? I believe the fear of the Lord centers in the first commandment. The first commandment, as it's given in Exodus 20:1–2, is like this. The Lord speaks to his people.

> "I am the Lord your God... you shall have no other gods before [or besides] me."

Many of us that have grown up in the church background were so familiar with the commandment or the concept of it that I think sometimes we pass it by without considering all that's involved. We are not to have any other gods before or beside him. There is to be nothing in our life that's placed on the same level as God. God's position in our hearts and lives must be absolutely unique. He will not share the throne with anything in our hearts.

There's a very striking phrase found in Genesis 31:42. Jacob is speaking to his father-in-law Laban—we don't need to go into the background—they're having a kind of dispute and Jacob is saying, "If God hadn't taken care of me you would have cheated me." This is what he said:

"If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me, you would surely have sent me away empty handed."

Notice that phrase "the God of Abraham and then the Fear of Isaac." In the text I have before me the word "fear" is printed with a capital "F." It's a name of God. The Fear of

Isaac is Isaac's God, and Isaac, of course, was the father of Jacob. Ponder on that. What you fear is your god.

There's a kind of fear that makes what you fear your god. This works both ways. If you fear the true God, He's your God. But if you fear the wrong thing, then you make that thing your god. Have you met people that are absolutely obsessed by fear of some particular thing? It might be cancer. I don't want to be uncharitable but, in a certain sense, some people have such a fear of cancer that they almost make cancer their god. Remember, what you fear, in that sense, becomes your god.

And this fear of the Lord and this attitude towards God leaves no room for neutrality. In Proverbs 8:13, the wisdom of God is speaking and the wisdom of God says this:

To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.

You see, there's no neutrality in this realm. If you fear the Lord, then you must hate evil, you cannot compromise with evil. The fear of the Lord dictates a very strong attitude against evil. A person who tolerates and compromises with evil is lacking in the fear of the Lord.

Particularly, wisdom declares, we must renounce three things: pride and arrogance (a wrong attitude), evil behavior (wrong behavior) and perverse speech (wrong speech). These are three things that are inconsistent with wisdom and with the fear of the Lord.

- A wrong attitude,
- wrong behavior, and
- wrong speech.

Well, let's ask God to open up the fear of the Lord to us as I continue with this theme for the rest of the week.

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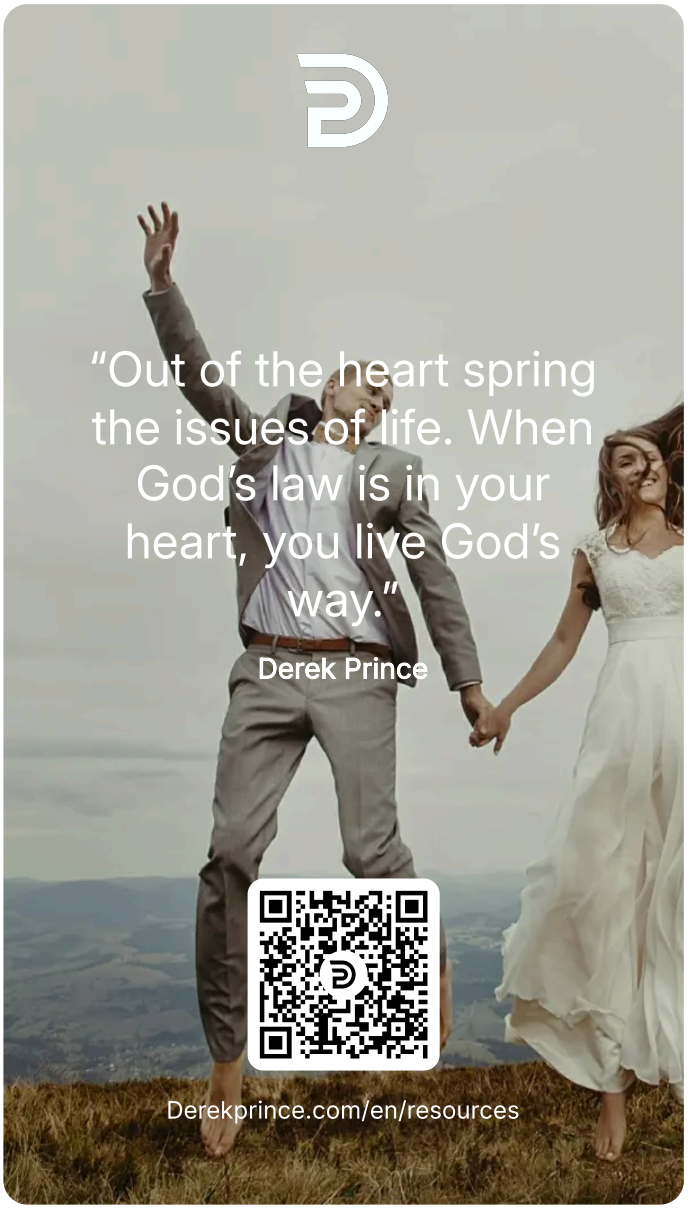
Podcast

Transcript: RP-R039-101-ENG
Last Updated: 28 Sept 2026
Website: Derekprince.com/en/resources



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