

In the Psalms



The Fear of the Lord (Part 6)
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.

This week I'll be continuing with the theme that I commenced last week: The Fear of the Lord.

But first, let me say thank you to those of you who've been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write even if it's only a brief personal note.

Now back to our theme: The Fear of the Lord.

In my talks last week I explained that the fear of the Lord really expresses the keeping of the first commandment. That first commandment is found in Exodus 20, verse 3 where God says:

> "You shall have no other gods before Me." (NKJ)

That is the fear of the Lord. It's giving God His rightful preeminence; giving Him His first place in every area of our lives; never letting anything else come before God; never letting anything else be placed on a level with God. That attitude toward God in our lives is the fear of the Lord. It's the keeping of the first commandment and that's the most important commandment of all.

We also looked at the fear of the Lord as it was practically demonstrated, both in the life of Jesus and in the early church as portrayed in the New Testament. And we saw, from the prophetic preview given in Isaiah chapter 11, that the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus that made Him the Messiah, culminated in the fear of the Lord; and then it adds that His delight is in the fear of the Lord. So we find that the fear of the Lord is endorsed, if I may use that expression, both by the character of Jesus and by the work of the Holy Spirit. They meet together in that climax, the fear of the Lord upon Jesus. And then in the early church it says, "They walked in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit and doing so, they were blessed, edified, and

multiplied.

Today we're going to look at the fear of the Lord as it's portrayed in the book of Psalms. We'll find there some of the most wonderful benefits and blessings that the Bible has to offer.

We'll turn first of all to Psalm 2, verse 11 which says this, and it's addressed actually to the rulers of the earth:

> "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." (NKJ)

We find there a paradox that we've noticed already several times in this series of talks. The relationship between fear and rejoicing, "serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling." The rejoicing is as it were, sandwiched in between the fear and the trembling. Now that doesn't make much sense to the natural mind. The natural mind says, "If there's fear I can't rejoice; if I'm rejoicing, there's no room for fear." But that's not the way it works in the spiritual realm. In the spiritual realm it is actually the fear of the Lord that releases the rejoicing and without the fear of the Lord, our rejoicing will be very shallow and impermanent. So we learn again from this Scripture in Psalm 2 that the spiritual safety in this balance between the fear of the Lord on the one hand, and rejoicing in the Lord on the other hand.

And let me warn you that if you ever move out of the fear of the Lord, you may seek to be happy; you may seek to rejoice, you may seek to work out spiritual experience but it will be shallow and it will be impermanent. It takes the fear of the Lord to give depth and reality to our joy in the Lord.

We saw this already in the picture of the early church which we looked at last week. We'll just look at that Scripture again in Acts 9, verse 31, where the writer says:

> "Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified [or built up]. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied."

Again, the same paradox: the fear of the Lord, the comfort of the Holy Spirit. The natural mind says, "If there's fear, where's the comfort?" But that's not the way it works in the spiritual realm. In the spiritual realm, the comfort is for those who walk in the fear of the Lord. God does not comfort us when we're self-indulgent, when we take the reigns into our own hands. When we desire to run our lives irrespective of the Lord's requirements, God withdraws His comfort. So there we have the paradox; the fear of the Lord, the comfort of the Holy Spirit; rejoicing, but with trembling.

And then we look on in Psalm 19, verse 9 which says this:

> "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever..." (NKJ)

Note that. There's never an end to the fear of the Lord. It's a permanent requirement of God and a permanent provision of God. Again, the immature Christian might say, "Well, when I really become mature, there'll be no more room for the fear of the Lord." Believe me, if anything, it works the opposite way. The further you go in maturity, the more you will be conscious of the fear of the Lord. So the fear of the Lord endures forever.

And then it says, "The fear of the Lord is clean." That's a beautiful statement. There's a cleansing power in the fear of the Lord that keeps us from the contamination and defilement of sin and of this world. The world we live in is a very contaminated world. We talk much today about pollution, and that's in the physical realm, but much worse is pollution in the spiritual realm. So much of what we hear, so much what we read, so much of what we see on television, so much of what we may be surrounded with at our place of work, or whatever it may be, is impure. It's unclean. It breaks down our moral fiber. We need something to protect us, to keep us from this contamination. The psalmist has pointed us to God's provision, "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever."

We look on now a little further in the book of Psalms, to Psalm 34, verses 11 through 14, where the psalmist says, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and really speaking on behalf of God and of the Holy Spirit:

> "Come, you children, [and I think this is addressed to God's children] Come you children listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; Seek peace, and pursue it." (NKJ)

That's the Holy Spirit speaking through Scripture to God's children and it brings out certain extremely important features of the fear of the Lord. First, it has to be taught. The Holy Spirit says, "I will teach you the fear of the Lord." If we're not willing to be taught, if we have an unteachable spirit and an unteachable attitude, if we're not willing to receive counsel and correction, like the people that we spoke about in the

first chapter of Proverbs, who refused Wisdom's appeal; if we're not willing to be taught, then we cannot receive the fear of the Lord.

Secondly, the psalmist brings out a very important point. The first area of our life in which the fear of the Lord will be manifested is our tongue. Keep your tongue from evil. A person who does not control his tongue is not walking in the fear of the Lord. It manifests itself in words that are well chosen, without exaggeration, without foolishness, without likeness, a kind of solemnity, expresses itself through the tongue of the one who walks in the fear of the Lord.

The third feature brought out there is that the fear of the Lord leaves no room for compromise with evil. It says, "Depart from evil and do good."

And the fourth feature is, that the fear of the Lord offers us life, many days that we may see good. You'll find that this is continually emphasized in the book of Psalms and in the book of Proverbs that the fear of the Lord brings us to life, a good life, a long life, many days.

Finally, we'll turn on in the psalms to Psalm 128, and we'll read the first four verses which provide us a beautiful picture of the man who fears the Lord and all the blessings that are his. Psalm 128, verses 1 through 4:

> "Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in His ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor. Blessings and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house. Your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord." (NIV)

What all-inclusive blessings; blessings for the man, blessings for the work that he does, blessings for his home, blessings for his wife, blessings for his children. "Blessings and prosperity will be yours", all these are promised to the man who fears the Lord and who walks in the ways of the Lord.

Let me commend these Scriptures that we've looked at today. I suggest that you obtain the cassette of these messages so that you can go over these Scriptures again and again and meditate on them until they really become part of your life.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow we'll be looking at The Fear of the Lord as it's portrayed in the book that follows Psalms, that is, the book of Proverbs. We'll find yet more benefits and blessings in store for us there.

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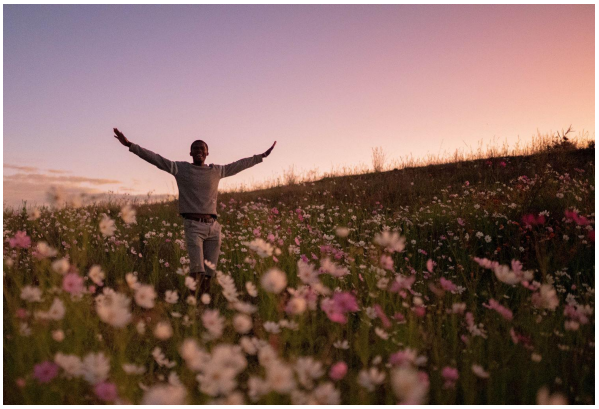

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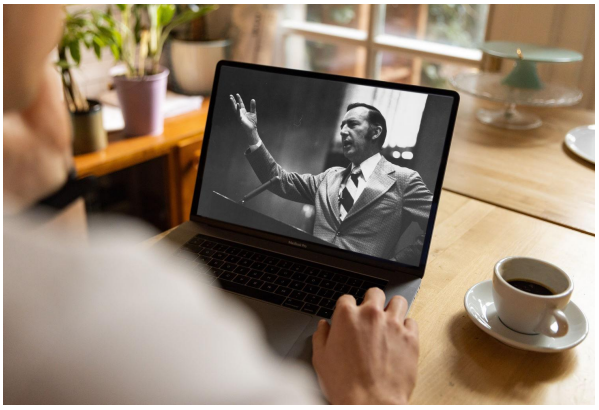

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