

In Proverbs (Part 1)



The Fear of the Lord (Part 7)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing with you precious truths out of Scripture that have made the difference between success and failure in my life and can do the same in yours.

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

In my talk yesterday I shared with you some of the wonderful benefits and blessings that proceed from the fear of the Lord, as they are described for us in the book of Psalms.

I closed my talk yesterday with the reading of a beautiful passage from Psalm 128 and I feel it would be appropriate to read that again. It's such a beautiful picture of the man who lives and walks in the fear of the Lord. Psalm 128, verses 1 through 4:

> "Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in His way. 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 more could you ask for than that? And all of it proceeds out of the one source, the fear of the Lord.

Well today 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.

In my talks last week, I shared that the fear of the Lord is the only source of true wisdom. Well, in the first chapter of Proverbs, wisdom is personified and makes a dramatic appeal to the whole human race, and I'm going to read Wisdom's appeal. It's found in Proverbs, chapter 1, verses 20 through 29. Please listen carefully as wisdom gives forth this appeal which is addressed to the whole human race.

> "Wisdom calls aloud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares. She cries out in the chief concourses, at

> the openings of the gates in the city She speaks her words…"

All those are the places of meeting; they're the places where people gather, the places where the greatest number of persons can be addressed. So Wisdom's appeal is made to the whole human race. This is what she says:

> "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorner's delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge. Turn at my reproof; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you…"

And again we see behind wisdom personified, the Lord Himself. He says, "If, when I reprove you, you repent and turn back to me, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you." And we need to bear in mind always that it's only the Holy Spirit that can make known to us the words of God. And then God speaks to the stubborn and the rebellious and this is what He says through Wisdom personified:

> "Because I have called and you have refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, because you disdained all my counsel, and would have none of my reproof, [And notice the opposite of the fear of the Lord is disdaining counsel and reproof; being unteachable and uncorrectable. So wisdom says:] Because you have disdained all my counsel and would have none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, [Those are fearful words, aren't they?] When your terror comes like a storm, and your destruction comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. [Be very sure the consequence of rejecting wisdom and the fear of the Lord ultimately is distress and anguish. Wisdom continues:] 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, they would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof." (NKJ)

There's a very solemn phrase there, "Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord." We need to understand the fear of the Lord will come into our lives through a choice. We have to make a choice. We have to exercise our will. We have to make a decision to invite God to impart to us the fear of the Lord. It does not just happen. We must cooperate with our will in this process. If we do not make the right choice, then the fear of the Lord will not be ours and we will be in the category of those who would not receive God's counsel and despise His reproof.

Here is such a clear watershed. Either we invite God to teach us the fear of the Lord, or we turn away and despise and reject His counsel and reproof. That's really the watershed of a human life. Either you are on one side or you are on the other. If you are on the side of the fear of the Lord, then all the blessings we've been looking at will be yours. But if you're just over on the other side, and you reject God's counsel and reproof and do not open your heart to the fear of the Lord, then you must expect distress and anguish.

You see, wisdom is still appealing to humanity today. That's not out of date. Humanity hasn't changed. The heart and the ways of men have not changed and God hasn't changed either. In fact, God is the great, unchangeable factor in the universe. God still speaks to men today and says, "Stop, think on your ways; listen for a moment; I have good advice for you. I have counsel. I'm willing to teach you something that will bring My blessing in its fullness into your life."

Remember those words in Psalm 128 I read earlier, "Blessings and prosperity will be yours." To whom are those words addressed? The man who fears the Lord. How foolish it is to reject God's blessings and God's prosperities. But if we wish to accept them, if we wish to experience them, then we have to exercise our will. We have to make a choice, a decision. We have to choose the fear of the Lord. We have to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. We have to let Him teach us.

You remember in Psalm 34, the Holy Spirit says, "Come you children, [that's God's children] and I will teach you the fear of the Lord." It means being teachable. The opposite is rejecting God's counsel and God's reproof.

Let me emphasize again, this is the watershed of a human life. On the one side is blessing and prosperity and the other side anguish and distress. Let me ask you, on which side are you as you listen to these words today?

Now, we'll look on further in the book of Proverbs, at some other passages that also speak about the fear of the Lord. Each one has something specific and special and important to tell us. The next passage in Proverbs is Proverbs 8, verse 13:

> "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate." (NKJ)

Again, it is Wisdom who is speaking, telling us the nature of the fear of the Lord; it's to hate evil. We see again and again,

all through the Scriptures, that the fear of the Lord permits no compromise with evil. We have to know exactly where we stand. If we have the fear of the Lord, we will not in any way tolerate or compromise with evil. We'll hate it. We'll reject it. We'll make no room for it anywhere in our lives.

And another fact that's brought out in that verse that I've just read is again, that the fear of the Lord will be manifested in the way we use our mouth and our tongue. Wisdom says, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; the perverse mouth I hate." It will definitely control the way we use our tongues.

And then in Proverbs 16, verse 6:

> "In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil." (NKJ)

The same truth again; the fear of the Lord leaves no room for compromise with evil. The one who has the fear of the Lord will hate evil. That's the inner attitude. We'll depart from evil. That's the outward action; no room for compromise.

And then, one more passage in the book of Proverbs, Proverbs 10, verse 27:

> "The fear of the Lord prolongs days, but the years of the wicked will be shortened." (NKJ)

Again and again, especially in Psalms and Proverbs, the fear of the Lord is linked with long life, with good days. The fear of the Lord prolongs days. But on the other hand, the years of the wicked will be shortened.

In Psalm 34, the Holy Spirit, speaking through the psalmist, says, "Do you want to lead a long and a good life and see many days. Cultivate the fear of the Lord." Here the message is the same. The fear of the Lord makes provision, not just for length of life, but for quality of life. It's not just a long life, but it's good days that you may see good.

You see, that's just the opposite of so much contemporary thinking. Today, people think, "If I want a good life, I've got to throw off all restraint; I've just got to go my own way, do my own thing, please myself; nobody tells me what to do." That's really the attitude of our generation, perhaps, and yet it's so totally wrong. It's the exact opposite of the truth. It's a deception of Satan that's ensnared multitudes in our time. The truth of the matter is, the more you cultivate the fear of the Lord, the more respect and reverence you have for God and His ways and His requirements, the better and the longer your life will be.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow we'll continue in the book of Proverbs, searching out yet further benefits and blessings that proceed from the fear of the Lord.

Radio Program

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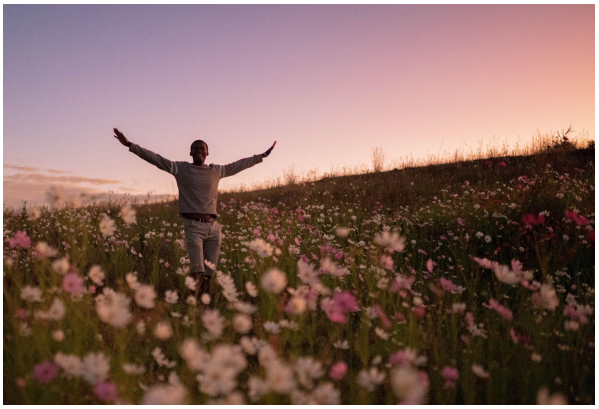

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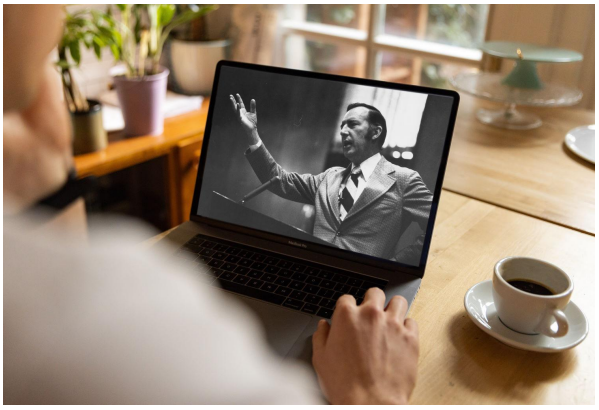

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