

The Key to a Perfect Heart



The Fear of the Lord (Part 9)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we continue with our theme that has opened up to us so many of God's richest treasures: The Fear of the Lord.

In my previous talks this week I've shared with you out of the two books of Psalms and Proverbs an amazing range of benefits and blessings that are promised to those who cultivate the fear of the Lord.

Here are some of the many benefits and blessings that we discovered promised to the fear of the Lord in these two books, Psalms and Proverbs. And I'm not suggesting that my list is necessarily complete.

First, continual spiritual cleansing. The fear of the Lord is clean and endures forever.

Second, life, many good days, and there are probably at least half a dozen different passages where life in its fullness in quantity and quality is associated with the fear of the Lord.

And then, a blessed and happy family. This is the promise in Psalm 128. It covers the man, his wife, and his children, and also his job.

Fourth, freedom from all evil fears. In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence.

Fifth, a place of security, a shelter.

Sixth, deliverance from satanic snares that would trap us and bring about death, physical and spiritual.

Seventh, abiding satisfaction. The man who has the fear of the Lord will abide in satisfaction. To me that's a staggering promise. As I look at the world today I see so few people that are really permanently satisfied and yet it's promised to the fear of the Lord.

The eighth, preservation from the visitation of evil. He will not be visited with evil.

Nine, riches and honor.

And ten, a hope that extends beyond the grave.

Those are just some of the many blessings and benefits that are promised to those that cultivate the fear of the Lord.

In my talk today I'm going to give you a brief verbal sketch of the kind of person who is qualified to enjoy these blessings. I'm going to try to give you a character picture of that kind of person.

I'm going to turn first of all to the Old Testament, to 2 Chronicles, chapter 16 and verse 9 which is one of the most remarkable statements I think anywhere in Scripture. It says this:

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

The eyes of the Lord are looking for a certain kind of person anywhere in the earth and the eyes of the Lord, I believe is a description of the Holy Spirit. They're looking for a certain kind of person because God wants to show Himself strong on behalf of that person. What kind of a person? The person whose heart is perfect toward Him.

Now another more modern translation says this:

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

It's the same Scripture but it's a slightly different translation. The one says, "whose heart is perfect toward him," the other says, "whose hearts are fully committed to him", that's to the Lord. Let's consider for a moment what that means. The heart is perfect. It means there's no area of the heart that is turned away from the Lord. The entire heart of that person is focused on the Lord. His entire attitude is: How can I please the Lord? What does the Lord require of me? How does the Lord view this situation? How does the Lord view this choice that I'm going to make? There's no area of such a person's heart which seeks to turn away from the Lord or seeks to hide something from him or to do something that He might not approve of.

And then, the other translation I think also is beautiful, "whose hearts are fully committed to him." I think full commitment is essential to the fear of the Lord. You're totally given over to God's way, to pleasing God, to doing his will. In a certain sense I think you have to say you've burned your bridges; there's no way back; you've taken a decisive step.

Most of the people called into the Lord's service in the Bible had to do that one way or another. They had to make a commitment which was, in a sense, irrevocable. There was no going back. And I see the same in the lives of people today. I know it was true in my own life. I can look back more than once on situations where, in order to do the will of God, I had to make a commitment that was irrevocable. There was no way to undo it; there was no way back. And let me say to you, if God is confronting you who are listening with such a commitment, don't be afraid to make it because when you do burn your bridges, when you do step out in faith, God will open up things for you that you'll never discover until you make the commitment. It's commitment first, then revelation. God has a lot of wonderful secrets which He does not reveal to people who are not committed to Him.

Let me give you those two translations once more. I'd like you to meditate on them. I suggest that you obtain the cassette of these talks and meditate on these Scriptures over and over again. One says, "whose heart is perfect toward the Lord." The other says, "Whose hearts are fully committed to him." Let me ask you this question. Is your heart perfect toward the Lord? Is your heart fully committed to Him?

You see, a person like that views every issue from God's perspective. He says, "How does God see this?" not, "How will this work out for me? How will this affect me? Where are my interests?" And that attitude overrules all other motives and pressures in such a person's life. And we know from experience, all of us, there are many pressures that come into our lives that seek to cause us to do things, but they may not be the things that God would wish us to do.

Let me give you just a brief example of some of these pressures: The fear of public opinion. A lot of people allow their lives really to be molded by fear of what other people might think or say. That's a very bad kind of motivation.

Then there's the very obvious motivation of self-interest, people who are out after promotion, fame, wealth.

And then, another kind of motivation that's very common today is sensual indulgence, the pursuit of pleasure, and we see countless people around us motivated by some or by all of those pressures.

But I want to tell you one thing. People who are ruled by these motives are easily swayed. They're unstable; they're undependable. They don't make good friends. They don't make good mates. You cannot rely on them. And the trouble with them is, they've never cultivated the fear of the Lord.

In seeking to give you a sketch of the kind of person who has cultivated the fear of the Lord, I want to turn to another passage in the Old Testament, this time in the prophets, in the Prophet Jeremiah, chapter 17, verses 5 through 8. Jeremiah here gives us, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, a picture of two kinds of persons; one is blessed, the other is cursed. And it's a strange thing, but you know there isn't much between blessing and cursing. We always like to leave in our lives a kind of gray area. "Well, I'm not blessed but I'm not cursed". I'm not sure that really that is scriptural in the long run. So let me just read to you this description in Jeremiah 17, verses 5 through 8 of the kind of person who's cursed and then the kind of person who's blessed.

> "This is what the Lord says: 'Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives.'"

That's the picture of the man who's cursed, and his problem is his heart has turned away from the Lord. His heart is not perfect toward the Lord and he's relying on himself, his own cleverness, his own effort, his own abilities, he's making his own plans, he's making his own choices. Now, let's look at the opposite picture, the man who's blessed.

> "But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him [that's in the Lord]. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." (NIV)

What a beautiful picture. Let me pick out some of those descriptions which are applied to a tree but are a picture of a person. So we could say rather than "it," "he", "He does not fear when heat comes." You'll notice the fear of the Lord eliminates those negative fears. "He does not fear when heat comes."

"His leaves are always green", he's fresh, he's green, he's never frazzled, he's never withered, he's never dried up.

"He has no worries in a year of drought." Would you like to be like that? To have no worries, even in a year of drought when everybody else is going short and is desperate. He has no worries and he never fails.

"He never fails to bear fruit." That's a picture of the man who walks and lives in the fear of the Lord, a man whose heart is perfect toward God, a man who's fully committed to God. And it leaves us with some decisive questions which I want to ask you in closing.

How deep do your roots go and what is the source of your life? Because in the fear of the Lord, our roots go down to the source of life which is in God Himself.

Well our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll continue and complete this theme of The Fear of the Lord. I'll be dealing with the all-important practical question: How to Cultivate the Fear of the Lord.

Radio Program

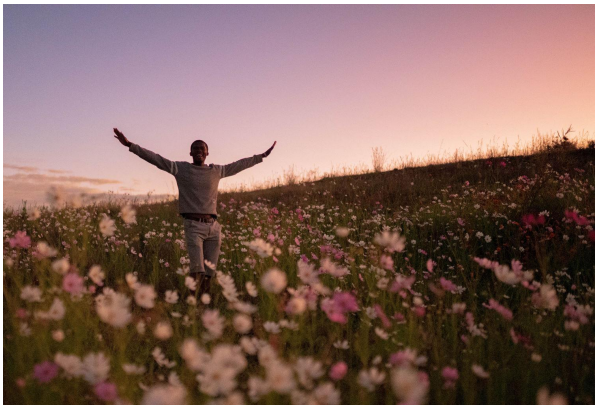
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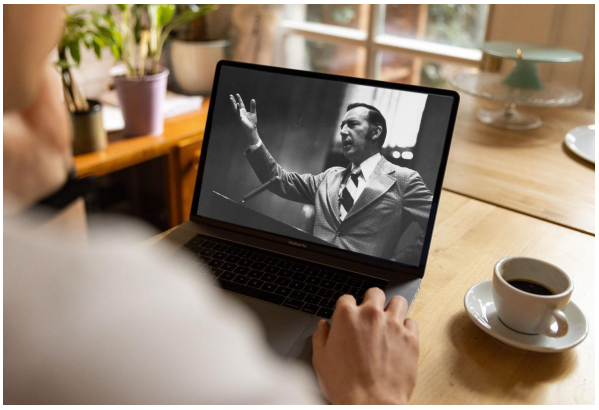
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