

How to Cultivate It



The Fear of the Lord (Part 10)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we draw near to the close of another week. Today I'll continue and complete the theme that I've been following for the past two weeks: the Fear of the Lord.

In my closing talk today I'm going to deal with an extremely important question which comes as a natural consequence of all that I've been saying for the past two weeks. The question is: How can we cultivate the fear of the Lord in our own lives? And I'm going to outline for you in my talk today four important steps which I believe will lead you to this desired and desirable conclusion, the fear of the Lord in your life.

The first step is found in a passage in Proverbs, chapter 1, that I have referred to more than once already. It's one of the key passages in connection with the fear of the Lord. I'm going to read from Proverbs, chapter 1, verses 28 through 30, the passages, as I say, that I've already read. In this first chapter, in this passage, Wisdom is personified, that's the wisdom of God representing God Himself in a sense and is making an appeal to men. But Wisdom indicates that many men turn down this appeal and reject Wisdom's offer, and so, in that connection, Wisdom goes on to say in these verses:

> "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. [You see there was a time, Wisdom says, when I was calling on them but they wouldn't answer. The next stage will be when they call on me, but I will not answer.] "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)

I've pointed out already, but it's so important that it needs to be emphasized yet once more, the fear of the Lord comes by a choice, by a decision of the will. These people did not enter into the blessings that Wisdom was offering them because they did not choose the fear of the Lord, so in order to enter into the fear of the Lord, the first thing you have to do is make a definite, personal choice. You say, "Lord, I choose to take the course that will lead me into the fear of the Lord, whatever it means, I'm willing, I make this choice, I make this

decision. If you're listening to these words and you've never made that decision, why don't you make them right now. Say to the Lord, in your heart, "Lord, I make this choice; I choose the fear of the Lord; lead me into it," and there'll be a great change in your life from that moment onwards.

Then the second requirement there, which is also stated in that passage, is accepting counsel and reproof. Wisdom says of these people who did not find the fear of the Lord, "They would have none of my counsel, my advice, and despised all my reproof; they were uncorrectable, unteachable." So, the second step is to be teachable; first, to make the decision, then to be teachable. And there are two main sources of teaching to which I want to direct you, well, we could say, in a way, three and I'll point them out to you in succession.

Step two is, turn yourself to the first source of teaching of the fear of the Lord which is the Holy Spirit. We've already looked at the passage in Psalm 34:11 where the Holy Spirit, on behalf of God, is speaking to God's children and says:

> "Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord." (NKJ)

So in order to enter into the Lord, we have to be willing to be taught by the Holy Spirit and in order to be taught, we have to listen. How many of you are parents who've tried to teach a child something and become aware as you're doing so that the child isn't listening and it's impossible to teach a child who isn't listening. And it's just the same in our relationship with God or with the Holy Spirit. If we're going to be taught, we have to listen. It's very impolite if somebody is seeking to speak to us and we turn away and ignore them and don't receive what they're saying. And I'm afraid that many, many times God's children are impolite to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is seeking to speak to us, but we've got other ideas. We've got other priorities and so we don't hear and so we don't learn.

So let me strongly recommend to you that if you've made the decision to seek the fear of the Lord, then you turn yourself over to the Holy Spirit. You say, "Holy Spirit, be my teacher; I really want to listen; help me to hear and as I hear, help me to learn." Cultivate sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. Without that, you will not find the fear of the Lord. He's the guide. He's the teacher. He's the one who speaks to the children of God and says, "Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord."

I'm going to continue now with the step 3 to attaining to the fear of the Lord. Step three turns us to what I call the second source of teaching which is human ministers. I want to quote two passages from Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 7 and verse 17. Each of these passages speak about our attitude to God's ministers who rule over us. Some people in churches today don't like that word, "rule," but there it is. God has put men of his choice in the Body of Christ to rule and to fulfill other functions. Some people have the attitude, "Well, I'll listen to God if He has anything to say to me, but I don't have to learn from men."

I remember trying to counsel a lady once. She'd come to me for help and I was trying to tell her what I believe God was requiring of her and she actually said those words, "Well," she said, "if God has got anything to say to me, I'm willing to hear it," but by implication, she wasn't willing to listen to what I had to say to her. Well, I believe God was speaking to her through me and you need to bear in mind that God does teach his children, sometimes very often, through the ministers that He's placed in the Body of Christ. It's no good saying, "Well, I'll listen to the Holy Spirit but I'm not going to accept teaching from men." Because you're tying the hands of the Holy Spirit. You've got no right to do that. The Holy Spirit may say, "Well, I'll teach you, but I'll teach you through your pastor; I'll teach you through that evangelist; I'll teach you through that Bible teacher on the radio." And you have to be willing to accept the Holy Spirit's teaching by whatever channel God makes it available to you. So let me read these words in Hebrews 13, verse 7 and 17:

> "Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. [And verse 17:] Obey those who have the rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you." (NKJ)

So God has placed in the Body of Christ men who rule, men who set an example of faith, men who speak the Word of God and men who watch over our souls, and it's of the greatest importance, if we're going to learn the fear of the Lord, that we submit to such men wherever God places them in our lives. You see, it says in Ephesians 4:11:

> "He [the Lord Jesus Christ] gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry." (NKJ)

God has put those men in the body to help us become the kind of people he wants us to be.

Now I must move on very quickly to step four which is the third source of teaching which is the Word of God itself and I want to read now from Proverbs, chapter 2, verses 1 through 5, some very beautiful words:

> "My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your heart to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; Yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." (NKJ)

Notice the closing promise in verse 5, "Then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God." They go together. God reveals Himself to those who fear Him. The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him. If you want to find the knowledge of God, you have to enter into the fear of the Lord.

Now, in the previous four verses, the writer gives us certain conditions or steps we have to take if we're going to find the fear of the Lord through the study of His Word. Verse one, He says, "receive and treasure my words and my commands." Verse two, "incline your ear, apply your heart." That means a teachable attitude, undivided attention, listening most carefully to what God is saying to us.

Verse three, He says, "Cry out… and lift up your voice." That's earnest, importunate prayer. Prayer is one of the requirements for entering into the fear of the Lord. And verse four, He says, "Seek and search as for hidden treasure." Jesus spoke a parable about treasure in a field and He said that a man who wanted the treasure has to buy the field first; there's a price. Then he had to search in the field for where the treasure was and when he found where the treasure was, he had to dig it out. There was a lot of commitment and a lot of hard work involved in finding that treasure and the treasure that we're talking about is the fear of the Lord. It's there in the Word of God but you have to go God's way to find it there so take another look in your own time, at Proverbs, chapter 2, verses 1 through 5. In fact, why not order the cassette of these messages because you're going to need to hear these truths again and again.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week I'll be sharing with you on another exciting theme from the Word of God.

My special offer this week is my Self Study Bible Course. This is a complete course in 14 lessons, with explanatory notes, correct answers and coordinated memory work. It will introduce you to God's all-inclusive provision for us, and will equip you to search out Bible truth for yourself. The only equipment needed is a Bible and a pencil.

Also, my complete series of messages this week on "The Fear of the Lord, Part 2" is available in a single, carefully edited cassette.

Stay tuned for details.

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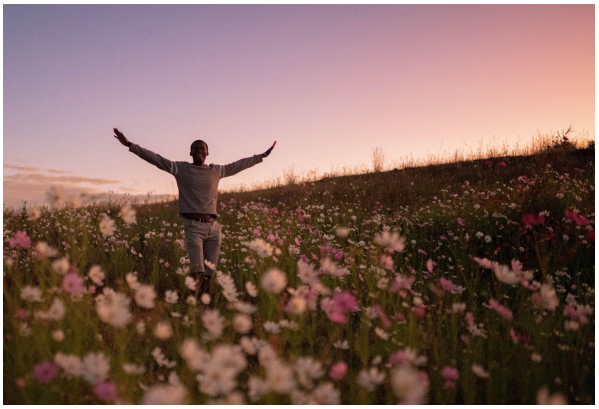

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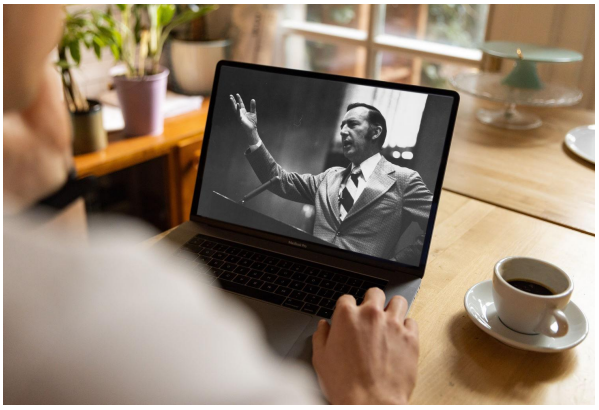

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