

A Heart Perfect Toward God - Part 1



Part 1/2

A Heart Perfect Toward God
By Derek Prince

> 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. (2 Chronicles 16:9, kjv)

The Spirit of the Lord is moving to and fro throughout the whole earth for a certain type of person—one whose heart is perfect toward God. Whenever the Holy Spirit finds such a person, God delights to show Himself strong in his behalf, granting an open manifestation of His power and approval in that person's life and ministry. He is waiting to move openly in power and in blessing.

A Heart Perfect Toward God

Two persons in Scripture of whom it is stated that they had such a heart are Abram and Job. In Genesis 17:5, we are told that God changed Abram's name to "Abraham", saying "... for I have made you the father of many nations". This account is in Genesis 17:1, before his name was changed:

> When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless [or perfect]." Abram had walked with God for twenty-four years; the call of God came to him when he was seventy-five years old. But now he was reaching the climax of his spiritual growth—that place where God was going to fulfill in a glorious and wonderful way the promises by which he had drawn Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees many years previously. Abram was confronted with a fresh challenge from God. In effect, God was saying, "From now on My eyes are going to be upon you in a very special way. I am going to watch every move you make. I am going to hear every word you speak. And I ask that everything you do be

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> done in an attitude of perfect obedience, faith, and commitment toward Me."

Abraham is also called the father of all them that believe (see Romans 4:11–12). In other words, his life and his faith are a pattern to all believers. I believe that the requirement of God for each of us is stated in those words to Abram, "Walk before Me and be [perfect] and I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly" (Genesis 17:1-2).

We are all coming to the point of the consummation of the purpose of God for the ages. And the message of God for every person who is going to take his place in what God is doing is, "Walk before Me and be perfect."

In the book of Job we discover another man whose heart was perfect toward God. Job's friends did not speak too highly of him, but I am more interested in what the Lord said to Satan concerning Job:

> Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless [perfect] and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? (Job 1:8).

Thus we can say that perfection toward God consists of *a right attitude toward God* and *a right attitude toward evil*. There is no neutrality in perfection toward God. You do not compromise with anything that is unpleasing to Him; you are absolutely committed to obedience—no matter what it costs. And be reminded, it does cost something to be approved of God!

If we read the books of Kings and Chronicles, we see that the kings were more or less assessed by whether or not their hearts were perfect toward God. Of Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and others, it is said that they had a heart perfect toward God. But the great example of a man whose heart was perfect toward God was David. He was the measuring stick against which other kings were assessed.

Keep in mind that we are not talking about a heart that is perfect, but a heart that is *perfect toward God*. David was not always morally perfect. As you know, he committed adultery. Although the Scripture does not condone adultery, it is not here speaking about moral perfection; rather, it is speaking of David's attitude toward God.

In Exodus 20:1–3 we find the first requirement for having a heart that is perfect toward God. "And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me." To be perfect toward God means that one has no other gods before Him. The real issue for David, and for us, is "Who is your god?"

This same basic question, "Who is your god?" was again set before Israel by Moses in Deuteronomy, just prior to their entering the promised land. Their answer to it determined the destiny of their lives. Later, when the Holy Spirit fell on Israel at Elijah's sacrifice on Mt. Carmel, all they needed to say was, "The Lord, He is God" (1 Kings 18:39). When you can say that—you may have problems, make mistakes, or even commit sins—but you will come out on top.

This brings us to the point of personal assessment with regard to this basic question. We must ask ourselves, "How do we know who our God is?" In Genesis 31:41, Jacob, talking to Laban, said, "You have changed my wages ten times." But God did not let him get away with it. He continued, "Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed" (v. 42). Notice the language—"the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac." Jacob used the description "the Fear of Isaac" when he spoke of the God of Isaac. In essence, then, *whatever you fear is your god!*

Some people make cancer their god. They are so afraid of cancer that they fear it more than they fear God. Likewise, people who delve into witchcraft, divination and sorcery come under such a tremendous bondage of fear to these satanic powers that they become their god. I want to fear nothing except the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! If a person really fears God, it is all he ever needs to fear in life.

Defining the Fear of the Lord

In defining the fear of the Lord I want first to point out four kinds of fear that are *not* the fear of the Lord.

1. Natural fear

In certain situations it is natural to fear. For example, a person is driving along the highway and he has a blowout. The car veers off the road into a ditch. It is a natural response to experience fear in this situation. It is not the fear of the Lord, but it is not evil. Actually, this type of fear is protective. Fear and pain are two devices that God has put within man to protect him. If you put your hand into scalding water, the pain that you feel causes you to draw it out. If there were no pain, your hand would be burned by

the water. So there is a natural pain and there is a natural fear which are God's protective mechanisms.

2. Demonic fear

Second Timothy 1:7 says, "God has not given us a spirit of fear." The mark of that spirit is stated in 1 John 4:18, "Fear involves torment." The demon of fear torments; the fear of the Lord does not torment.

3. Religious fear

This kind of fear is one that is taught by man. Isaiah 29:13 says, "Therefore the Lord said: 'Inasmuch as these people draw near to Me with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men.'" I had that kind of fear for years. It is a type of fear familiar to most of us who have grown up in churches. It is the fear of doing the wrong religious thing. We are trained to believe that a certain type of behavior is appropriate to church, and a certain type is not. For example, for years I thought it was a sin to cough or speak out loud or display any kind of excitement in church!

Another characteristic of religious fear is that it seeks to maintain the status quo. Jesus rebuked the religious leaders in His day because they refused to acknowledge what God was doing in their midst. They were afraid of the resultant changes in their behavior.

4. Fear of man

This kind of fear is found in Proverbs 29:25. "The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe." Notice the contrast: If you fear man, you are not trusting in the Lord; if you trust in the Lord, you do not need to fear man. "The fear of man brings a snare."

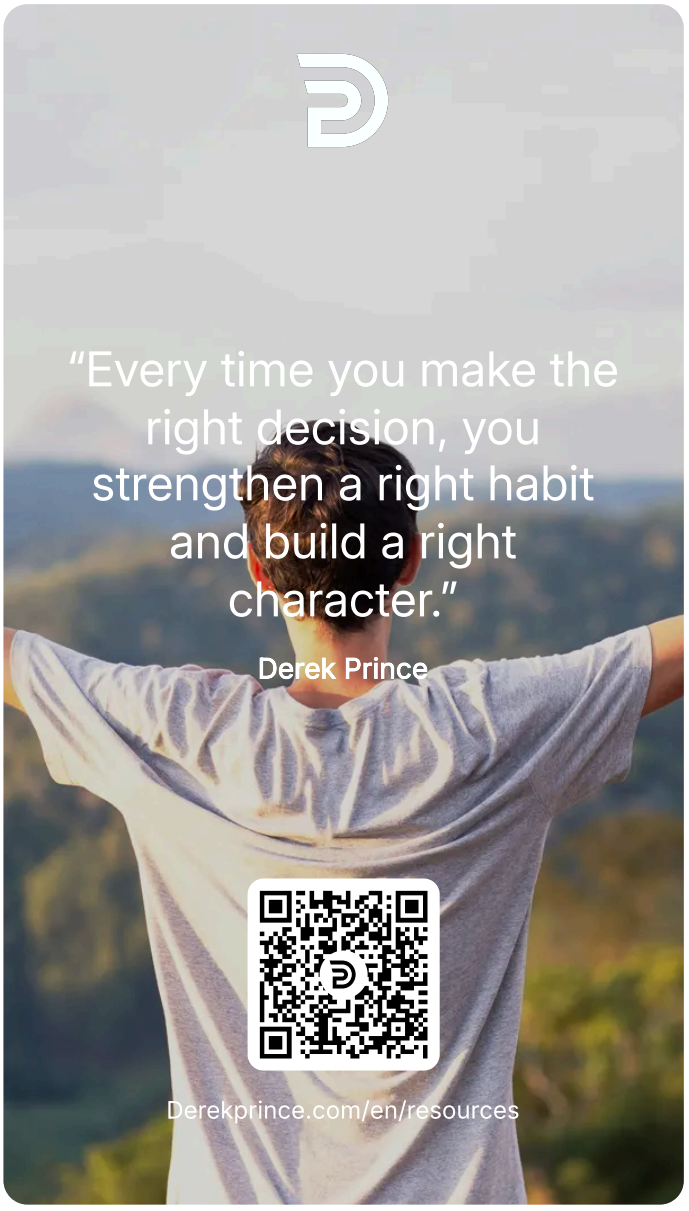
Frequently, ministers come to me and say, "Brother Prince, I am baptized in the Holy Spirit. I even have the gifts of the Spirit, but somehow I am bound." And I respond, "Maybe it is the fear of man! You fear what your board will say; what your synod will think; what your presbytery will do; what your members will say." Peter said, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Where there is a clear-cut choice between obeying God and man, the decision is already made for us in the Word of God. We do not have any problem. In my opinion, at least fifty percent of God's people today are not fully free because they are still bound by the fear of man.

We have seen that natural fear, demonic fear, religious fear, and the fear of man are four types of fear that are not the fear of the Lord. In my next letter, we will consider what the fear of the Lord is.

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Teaching Letter

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