Our True North : The Fear of the Lord 8.10.08

What is "The Fear of the Lord?"

Definition: Authentic awe, honor, and reverence for God that influences the way we live our lives.

- *the beginning of knowledge 1:7*
- *the beginning of wisdom…knowledge of the Holy One is insight. 9:10*
- *is instruction in wisdom 15:33*
- *Something we are commanded to do (3:7, 23:17, 24:21)*

"The Fear of the Lord" serves as the TRUE NORTH for the COMPASS that the Book of Proverbs provides.

What Difference Does it Make?

1. Makes sure we have the right picture of God.
    a. For some, our picture is too harsh. For others, too Soft.
    b. A biblical, **BALANCED** picture is key.
2. Makes sure we have the right response to God.
    a. Affects our worship both gathered and scattered.
    b. Affects the way we approach our sin (14:2).
        i. *Whoever walks in uprightness fears the Lord, but he who is devious in his ways despises him Proverbs 14:2*
    c. Affects how we view the cross and the Gospel.

Do I have a balanced picture of God? Does the way I live reflect an appropriate 'fear of God' in my life?

3. Practical Benefits Seen Clearly in Proverbs:
    - Prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short (10:27)
    - Provides a strong confidence (14:26)
    - Provides a refuge for our children (14:26)
    - It is a fountain of life (14:27)
    - Leads to a better quality of life. *Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it* (15:16)
    - Causes us to turn away from evil and sin. *By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord one turns away from evil (16:6).*
    - Leads to life and satisfaction (19:23).
    - Keeps us from harm (19:23).
        - *The fear of the Lord leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm (19:23).*
    - Along with humility, leads to riches, honor and life (22:4)
        - *The reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life (22:4).*
    - Leads to blessing upon our lives (28:14)
        - *Blessed is the one who fears the Lord always, but whoever hardens his heart will fall into calamity (28:14).*

How Do We Walk in It?

1. We have to choose it (1:29-31).
    a. *Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way, and have their fill of their own devices. (1:29-31)*
2. We have to seek it (2:1-5)
    a. *My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, 2 making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; 3 yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, 4 if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, 5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. (2:1-5)*

This is an "if…then…statement." (You do *this* and *this* will happen.)

1. Receive my words
2. Treasure my commandments
3. Make your ear attentive to wisdom
4. Incline your heart to understanding
5. Call out for insight, raise your voice for understanding
6. Seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures

Are these actions a habit in our lives? If not, what needs to change?

Closing Thought:

Our souls are like gardens. The "fear of the Lord" must be constantly cultivated in that garden. It is best cultivated within community. That's why groups/relationships with other people who "fear the Lord" matter so much.

Homework:

1. Meditate on this concept of the "Fear of the Lord." Are you walking in it in this moment? In that moment?
2. Do a word search on "fear Lord" at esv.org. Examine the other passages (both Old and New Testaments, in context) that lay out this concept as well.
3. Read a chapter of Proverbs a day (31 chapters). Soak in it!
4. Pray for wisdom like Solomon did. God will answer this prayer!
5. Continue asking "*Where does my character need formation?"* Ask God. Ask others.
6. Begin asking ***"What is the WISE choice in this situation?"***

Visit www.crossinglouisville.com for more helpful resources.

Works Consulted : Expositor's Bible Commentary, Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, Messages by Steve Hart, Tim Keller, Darrin Patrick, Mark Driscoll, Introduction to the Old Testament