***The Summary of the Fear of the Lord

Colossians 1:3-8

COL-079***

Our subject is "Prayer for the Colossians, segment number 13, in Colossians 1:9-14.

Adam and Eve, as we all know, were not created as botched-up human beings with qualities that made them dysfunctional. For some period of time, they lived in Eden, perfectly coordinated with each other in spirit, soul, and body. They knew God intimately, and they were in perfect fellowship with Him at all times. The more doctrine they learned each evening, from the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ, the more wonderful God became to them, and the more wonderful they became to each other. Adam and Eve lived flawless lives in a perfect environment with the Holy God, Who was their Creator and their Friend. Adam and Eve experienced unlimited happiness as totally functional human beings, which is the way God intended them to be.

However, the day that Eve chose to be negative to the authority of God by violating the commandment against eating from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she became a dysfunctional human being. Everything suddenly changed from wonderful to terrible. Adam, when he had discovered what she had done, voluntarily and deliberately chose to follow the leading of his feminist wife, and to also become dysfunctional with her. The result of their act was that they became dysfunctional because the sin nature had now been injected into their beings because of their sin of negative volition. Up to this time, they had no such thing as a propensity to do evil. They had no such thing as a sin nature. They could not commit a single sin except one, and that was negative volition to a commandment of God. And that's the one, therefore, that the devil zeroed in on, and was able to get them to commit.

However, the entrance of the sin nature then caused Adam and Eve to die spiritually, and to terminate immediately their fellowship with God. They themselves were no longer free, as they had been up to this point. They were now slaves to that sin nature which suddenly came to being within them. Adam then passed on his newly acquired propensity to evil, to all his posterity that have descended from him. And that's why we have a sin nature as well.

So, today everybody is born into the human race dysfunctional. They are dysfunctional from God's design and purpose, and therefore, everyone needs an experience to correct this dysfunction. The means for correcting that condition is to develop the seven characteristics of the humanity of Jesus Christ, which are listed in Isaiah 11:2: "The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon Him." This is speaking of the humanity of the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ: "The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and strength; and, the spirit of knowledge and the spirit of the fear of the Lord."

The Spirit of the Lord resting upon a human being is the first step to becoming a functional person. That means to be born-again spiritually and it means to be in temporal fellowship with God the Father.

Then there are three doubled virtues that are put together that also characterize a normal human being. There were the intellectual virtues that naturally deal with the mind. Wisdom is the ability to apply pertinent doctrine to a situation in one's life. Understanding is the ability to discern the truth in a matter, and the consequences of one's actions. The second set of virtues were experiential virtues that had to deal with the will of the soul. Counsel is divine viewpoint advice of the indwelling Holy Spirit in guiding us in our choices. Secondly was strength: the power from God to achieve spiritual victory, and to produce divine good works in God's service. The third set of virtues were the attitudinal virtues which had to do with the emotion of the soul. The first of these was knowledge: the grasp of Bible doctrine through the grace system of perception, and the storing in one's human spirit reservoir, the divine viewpoint that constitutes the mind of God.

Now we've come to the final characteristic of a functional human being. And the second of the attitudinal virtues is the fear of the Lord. We showed you in the previous session that this Hebrew word indicated a dread of violating the holiness of God by personal evil – being scared of God because of Who He is, and of His holiness. This produces in us a reverential awe, and a respect and an honor toward God, Who judges and punishes evil with His perfect justice. He does not play favors with human beings no matter who you are. The justice of God may be counted upon to be exercised in keeping with His holiness. Man's recognition of his finiteness against the mind-boggling infinity of God the Creator is essential. That's being fearful of God – to recognize how limited you are, and how great He is. The madness of a dysfunctional person is the one who rejects the revelation of God in Scripture, and he views the human viewpoint of His disoriented sin-tainted mentality as superior in finding wisdom to live by.

The summary to the Jewish people of this concept of having a fear of the Lord was amply stated in Deuteronomy 10:12. I was interested to notice in the previous session, the comments of some of you – that that verse was indeed an awesome verse on which to close our consideration. Deuteronomy 10:12: says it all: "And now Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God; to walk in all his ways; to love Him; and, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul."

**The Summary of the Fear of the Lord**

The fear of the Lord has some very practical applications, of course.

1. **The Decorum of Worship Services**

One of those has to do with this room and the public services which we hold in it. The fear of the Lord is demonstrated by the decorum with which we conduct ourselves in these worship services, and by how we treat the times of the gathering of the believers. This is why I commented on our singing songs such that the words have the content of sound doctrine set to quality melodies which convey a respect for God. Music is a very powerful factor, as you know. It does create very powerful emotions. And it can create emotions that create a sense of dignity and a respect for God; or it can create a spirit of being a bunch of jungle savages, running and jumping around a fire. We should be singing songs that have sound doctrinal content, and which have melodies that are dignified in the impact that they have upon our souls.

Our songs should have no trite repetitive words, and no mindless emotional hand-clapping or body gyrations, all of which appeal to the sin nature of people. So many church services you go to, they have a jumping jiving time, and all this under the guise of worshiping God. And it is anything but that. When you are undignified, and when you make a fool of yourself, that is not compatible with treating God with respect. Instead, there should be a quietness of spirit. Before the service begins, there should be a quietness of spirit. There should be a preparation for instruction in the Word of God. There should not be any raucous talking, or laughter, or carrying on.

It always amazes me how, from time-to-time, we have somebody in our congregation who, when the piano will begin playing, which is a signal that everything now should become quite silent and dignified, and some joker is in the middle of the congregation, finishing a little conversation, oblivious to the piano, and talking and disturbing everybody who wants to start thinking about the things of God. If you're fearful of God, you will not make that kind of a disturbance.

Making this a little recreation center is another way to demonstrate your lack of the fear of the Lord – bringing drinks and snacks during the worship service to distract your awareness and the other people's awareness of the presence of God. God is here. He's right up here. We're worshiping Him, and you're snacking on a little bit of refreshment. And one of the things that upsets our church custodian, who cleans up this auditorium and prepares it, are the paper wrappers he finds on the floor; and people who have been eating cookies, and they dribble from their mouths, and the crumbs are all over the floor. Now, that's nice to leave something behind for somebody else who may be a poor person and hungry, but if you're going to have your snack during the service, keep your wrappers and keep your crumbs. That is at least some dignity. But it would be better not to be snacking in church.

If we're going to have a service that is respectful of God and decorous, we shouldn't have any outbursts of an emotional riot, such as talking in tongues babbling, as some do; the guys who pretend that they're healing people; or, the holy laughter. When our poor friend Bob Tilton saw things coming down, and crashing in on his head, and that his con job couldn't be carried anymore, and in trying to desperately rally his congregation out there by the highway, he went somewhere. I think it was in Canada where he was with somebody, and this husband and wife preacher team in this church were conducting holy laughter. And the holy laughter group was getting people to just break loose and laugh like crazy until they didn't know what they were laughing about.

Now, sometimes you do see something that is humorous, and you laugh to where you think you can't laugh anymore, and you can hardly catch your breath, if he really hits you. These people are deliberately creating that. Tilton said, "Aha, that's how I'll rally everybody." And he came back, and he started teaching people how to have a holy laughter, and the whole congregation was ha-ha-ing in worship of God. And God is sitting there watching this. Can you imagine what He's thinking? That is not acting with the fear of the Lord. That's acting in contempt. That's mindlessness.

There is also the fake prophesying that takes place in these circles, not to mention the strutting around of the leader on the platform in order to get the approbation lusts from the people that he desires. Needless to say, if we are in fear of God during the church service, we'll not be distracting people with talking and disturbing those around us. And we'll not bring anything into the service, like a small child who will babble in his tongues experience, and disturb all the people around him. It is amazing how people think that that's all right to do. We don't think that's all right to do even in any kind of a social event. It is not a thing to do when you attend some entertainment, like a concert – somebody around you is babbling and talking and disturbing. We say, "That's really bad manners." Yet how often are we doing that very thing when we're sitting in church, and the eternal truths of God's Word are being proclaimed?

In carnal Christian circles, the church services that they conduct demonstrate the truth of Romans 3:18, where the apostle Paul says, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." And that's the problem. And when there's no fear of God before your eyes, then you act in a way that demonstrates that. Notice the contrast in Revelation 1:17-18. The apostle John sees Jesus Christ in a powerful symbolic demonstration. All the glory of God is shining forth, and John says. "When I saw Him, I fell at his feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me saying, 'Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, and the living one. And I was dead, and, behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." We do not have to be fearful of God in the sense of being in His presence. When you're a believer, you do. You better believe it. Those of you who are believers, you have the righteousness of God imputed to you through Christ. You have the righteousness of Christ, you are justifying. Therefore, you don't have to be fearful of being in the presence of God – that you have a sin problem. All of that's been resolved. We're talking about respecting God for Who He is.

John here, however, when he came into the presence of the living God, had that respect that caused him to fall to his knees in awe before the person of Jesus Christ.

Then, one final expression of the fear of God, when we think of it in terms of respect, is coming to the church services on time. After all, that's what you do if somebody invites you to dinner. Why do you do that? Out of respect for your host. And when we walk in here, Who is our Host? It is God. And out of respect for Him, we arrange our lives to do the best (we can't always make it, but do the best) to be here on time.

It is interesting that the bread which is used at the Lord's Supper is referred to as the "host" (H O S T). And in certain denominational groups, they speak about serving the Host. Why do they use that word? Because it refers to Jesus Christ. He is the one to Whom we have gathered, as today.

Now, the fear of the Lord means respect, then, which is due to God. God is our sovereign Lord. He is not our servant to be treated as our equal. He is not just one of the boys. George Burns made it to a hundred years old, and that was all the grace that God gave that Jewish man. He never got it together. He never came to a knowledge of Christ as personal savior. He never put it together that this was the Messiah that he, as a Jew, was looking for. So, he went into a Christless eternity, and they put some of his favorite cigars with him in the casket. However, they did not put any matches in there, because he won't need them, where he has ended up. That is very sad that someone who had that much of a lifespan, and that much of an opportunity, should have missed the boat. And I heard him express his lack of fear of the Lord Jesus Christ shortly before he died, when he was talking to someone. And I don't know how Jesus Christ came into it. He was talking to some Christian group on something, and in the course of it, he said, "Well, Jesus was one of our boys," meaning that he was Jewish. That's the kind of thing that people who are dysfunctional will do in speaking of the person of God.

Our overall guideline is Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether then you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Why should I do all to the glory of God in whatever I'm doing? Whatever I eat; whatever I drink; or, whatever I do, do it all to the glory of God because He's always there. That's why. Because He's always present. And you know that when the teacher is in the class, the kids are more fearful of being disruptive and having bad conduct when they know that that the teacher is there. To them, that teacher is God. And this is the problem for us to realize – that the Lord God is always where we are.

**It Keeps us from Evil**

So, today we direct our attention to the nature of godly fear, from Scripture. There are certain things that demonstrate to us (that the Word of God teaches us) why being in fear of God is essential to being a normal functioning human being. First of all, it keeps us from doing what is evil. Notice Exodus 20:18-20: "And all the people perceived the thunder, and the lightning flashes, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking. And when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood at a distance." Moses is up on the top of Mount Sinai receiving the Mosaic Law code. People are down below, and they're seeing the lightning, the thunder, and the clouds, and something very fearful rises up within them: "Then they said to Moses, 'Speak to us yourself, and we will listen, but let not God speak to us, lest we die.'" That is an expression of a people who have a deep fear of the holiness of God – a respect for Him: "And Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid, for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."

Now, if you had that kind of a personal experience with God, nobody would ever have to teach you to act in the fear of God. But you don't have to have the experience. You just have to have the record, which we have in Scripture, of what did happen, and the fact that God did act in this way, and it was to make it clear Who He is, and the power that He is, and the fear that should be there toward Him.

This is also illustrated to us in Proverbs 16. The fear of the Lord keeps us from doing things that are evil. Proverbs 16:6: "By lovingkindness." That's the Old Testament word for "grace:" "And truth, iniquity is atoned for. And by the fear of the Lord, one keeps away from evil. By the fear of the Lord, one keeps away from evil.

Now, when you get that in your mind – that God is the teacher, and He is always there, then you will have second thoughts about a moral evil. You will understand that you are saying to Him, "How do you like this, God? I know You said not to do this, but watch me." And he's standing there, observing. What you would not dare do (what you would be ashamed to do in the presence of human beings), you're not ashamed, let alone fearful, of doing it in the presence of God. But once you understand Who He is, and you do have a healthy fear of the Lord, it will keep you from doing evil.

In the New Testament, this same principle is enunciated in 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" – acting in holiness because you are afraid of God.

1. **Happiness and Prosperity**

Secondly, the nature of godly fear is the basis for great personal happiness and prosperity. If you want to have great personal happiness, and if you want to have great personal financial prosperity, get a good healthy fear of God. Psalm 112:1-3: "Praise the Lord. How blessed is the man who fears the Lord, and who greatly delights in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on earth. The generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in His house, and His righteousness endures forever."

The fear of the Lord will bring you personal happiness and personal financial prosperity. This is also reiterated in Psalm 128:1-4: "How blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, and who walks in His ways." Every time it talks about fearing the Lord, it is demonstrated by obeying His rules. You walk according to His principles: "When you shall eat of the fruit of your hands, you'll be happy, and it'll be well with you. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; and, your children like olive plants around your table. Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord."

1. **Preserve your Physical Life**

The fear of the Lord will preserve your physical life. Do want a long life? Have a great and healthy fear of the Lord, and you'll go a very long way toward that. Not only will you have a long life, but you'll have a life of great physical capacity. Deuteronomy 6:2: "So you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, that your days may be prolonged." And there you have the connection again: the fear of the Lord – how do I express it? I obey doctrine. What is the result of that? Great physical wellbeing. When you are in great doctrinal compatibility with God, you also improve your physical condition.

Proverbs 10:27 may be added to this: "The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be shortened." That's very clear.

Proverbs 14:27 adds this to this principle: "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may avoid the snares of death." Those who do not fear the Lord engage in practices forbidden by God, and they end up with deadly diseases. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, because people avoid doing the things that bring on deadly diseases. But the one who does not care, and has no fear of the Lord, will do the things that are forbidden morally by the Word of God, and they find themselves in the snares of death.

1. **God Favors those who Fear Him**

God favors those who fear him. Psalm 147:11: "The Lord favors those who fear him – those who wait for His lovingkindness."

Psalm 103:17: "But the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him." If you want to be under God's favor, stand in a great respectful awe of Him.

1. **Prevent Financial Abuse of Others**

The fear of the Lord will prevent financial abuse of others. Now that's good to know. In Leviticus 25:14-17, these principles are enunciated to the Jewish people for their culture, and they are eternal principles that apply to us today as well: "If you make a sale, moreover, to your friend, or buy from your friend's hand, you shall not wrong one another (no cheating in business). Corresponding to the number of years after the jubilee, you shall buy from your friend. He is to sell to you according to the number of years of crops." Every 50 years was the year of Jubilee under the theocracy of Israel. And all debts were canceled. And anybody who had sold property that was in their family, that property went back to the family. Everything was restored, and everybody began from scratch once more, and everybody was given a new beginning. So, that's what he's talking about here. If you're going to sell a man a piece of land, you don't cheat him by charging him more than he can get in return in crops he grows on that land, because he can count how many years there are until the Jubilee when he's going to have to give that land back to you: "In proportion to the extent of the years, you shall increase its price. And in portion to the fewness of the years, you shall diminish its price. For it is a number of crops that he is selling to you. So you shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God, for I am the Lord your God."

So, if you are in fear of God, you will not abuse other people financially. You will not cheat from them. You will not steal from them. You will not take that which is not yours. Now, this is an amazing thing – how often Christians are willing to demonstrate that they do not fear God by the way they steal and cheat and take from others.

I heard of a man who worked in a business, and he was guilty of embezzling from that business. And it was kind of shocking to realize that somebody would do this, because he had on that front of being a nice person. I thought it was ironic to hear, a year or two later, that this man was up in the attic of his mother or mother-in-law's house, doing some wiring, and he gets electrocuted. He is killed. I doubt not that that was a judgment of God upon somebody who did not fear the Lord, and was willing to hazard a person's life and business by embezzlement. And that's what this verse is all about. If you fear the Lord, you're going to be honest. You're not going to cheat. And when you stand at the counter at the bank, and the clerk gives you an extra $100, you don't play dumb. You give it back. If you fear God, you will not steal, even from those rich bankers.

1. **Political Leaders**

Political leaders who govern in the fear of the Lord will act in biblical righteousness, and they then are a source of refreshment and blessing to the citizens of the nation. This is indicated to us in 2 Samuel 23:3-4: "The God of Israel said, 'The rock of Israel spoke to Me. He who rules over men righteously, and He who rules in the fear of God, it is as the light of the morning when the sun rises, and a morning without clouds, when the tender grass springs out of the earth through sunshine after rain." And that's where that phrase comes from that song: "Like the sunshine after a rain – the peace that Jesus gives.

So, here is somebody who is a political entity (a political administrator) in the nation, and God says, "The one who rules with the fear of the Lord is going to be a source of refreshment to the people, and a source of great blessing to the nation."

1. **Local Church Ministries will be Prospered**

A local church which operates in a fear of the Lord will be prospered by God in its ministry. Acts 9:31 illustrates how that was true in the early New Testament church: "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up and going on in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase." And you'll notice that along with the fear of the Lord, they got the comfort of the Holy Spirit. And the reason they got the comfort of the Holy Spirit was because these people were under great persecution by the Jews and by the Roman authorities, and they needed that comfort that comes from the Holy Spirit. But because they feared God, they acted with integrity, even under that persecution, and the result was that it encouraged people to join them and become part of those local believers.

1. **God Determines One's Eternal Destiny to Heaven or Hell**

God is to be feared because he has authority to determine one's eternal destiny to heaven or hell. That is a primary reason to have a healthy respect for God. He is the gatekeeper, and He keeps it on principles that He has clearly enunciated. Luke 12:4-5: "Jesus said, 'I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more they can do. But I will warn you Whom to fear. Fear the One, who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him." And who is it that can put a physical body to death, and send that person to hell? God Himself. And that's what he is saying: "Have fear of the fact that God has this authority."

1. **Civil Authority**

Those who are placed in positions of civil authority in a society are to be, themselves, men who fear the Lord. If you find a politician who does not fear the Lord, and does not demonstrate that by his subjection to the principles of Scripture and to the moral code, don't vote for him. This is a very simple guideline here. Whatever else may be true about him, if he does not demonstrate a fear of God by his subjection to the principles of the Word of God, and especially the moral code of God, you're playing a very dangerous game. And you're out of line with the will of God to put such a person in authority over the nation. Exodus 18:21: "Furthermore, you shall select, out of all the people, able men who fear God – men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain, and you shall place over them as leaders of thousands; of hundreds; of fifties; and, of tens. You shall place these over them as leaders of thousands; of hundreds; of fifties; and, of tens" – whatever the category: from the nation; down to the state; down to the county; down to the city; and, down to the smallest entities. You do not vote for somebody who violates this principle of demonstrating that they have a fear of the Lord.

1. **Respect for the Physically Challenged, and the Aged**

The fear of the Lord prevents abuse of the physically handicapped, and creates respect for those who are aged. Leviticus 19:14: "You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind. But you shall revere (you shall fear) your God. I am the Lord."

Drop down to Leviticus 19:32: "You shall rise up before the gray-headed, and honor the aged, and you shall fear your God. I am the Lord." So when Glenn Wright walks in, you stand up respectfully in his presence, out of respect for his gray hair – the snow that gives him dignity on the mountain top. You respect the elders. You do not speak about them with contempt. And you do not abuse those who are physically disabled. You don't take advantage of them if you fear God. The consequences will be very serious if you do.

1. **Obey God's Laws, and Life will go Well for you**

God desires His children to fear him so that they will obey His laws, and life will go well for them and for their families. Deuteronomy 5:29: "O, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me (God is speaking about His nation Israel), and keep all My commandments always." And there you have it again. By fearing God, you're saying, "I'll keep His doctrines, and I'll keep His moral code:" "And it may be well with them, and with their sons forever." God says, "If they would just fear Me, things would be so great for them and for their families. That's the heritage that a husband and father should be giving his family.

Deuteronomy 28:58-61: "If you are not careful to observe all the Words of this Law which are written in this book, to fear this honored and awesome name, the Lord your God, then the Lord will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, even severe and fasting plagues, and miserable and chronic sickness. And He shall bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt of which you are afraid, and they shall cling to you. Also every sickness and every plague which is not written in the book of the Law, the Lord will bring on you until you are destroyed."

Now, Israel was given this medical principle for their physical wellbeing. If you exercise a fear of the Lord, demonstrating that in all these various ways that we've read about, primarily by being obedient to His Word, and by being obedient to the guidance of the Spirit of God – by saying "yes," and not quenching Him, and by saying "yes" when He lays something upon your heart, God says, "I'm going to take care of you physically." And all those terrible diseases that you used to see back in Egypt: the leprosy; the boils; the venereal diseases; and, all the terrible things that were destroying the people of Egypt, none of those things will be upon you. I'll protect you from all of those.

1. **Learning Doctrine**

The fear of the Lord is developed through the learning of doctrine. Deuteronomy 31:9-12: "So, Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto all the elders of Israel. Then Moses commanded them, saying, "At the end of every seven years, at the time of the year of remission of debts, at the Feast of Booths, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing." It was established in the theocracy of Israel that there was time when their leaders would simply stand up before the people, and they would read the Bible to them. That is a proper practice to this very day – just to read the Bible to people when they're assembled together.

Verse 12, "Assemble the people: the men; the women; the children; and, the alien who is in your town, in order that they may hear and learn and fear the Lord your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this Law." Did you notice that when they're reading, it's to be read to the men; to the women; to the children; and, to those who were not part of the nation of Israel? They were all responsible to know what the Word of God says. The children? The children are supposed to sit in church and listen? Aren't you supposed to bring color books for them, and crayons so that they can amuse themselves? The children are going to sit there and do nothing but listen to the Word of God? How different from our culture? You come to a large auditorium sometimes, and there are children all over the place, running their little art sessions, and playing with their little tinker toys all during the church service. What have the parents taught that child? "That what is being said up there from the pulpit is not important. Amuse yourself."

Now, if they want to teach your children the fear of the Lord, you'll bring them; you will line them up; they will sit here; and, you'll say, "Keep your eyes glued to that good-looking guy at the pulpit, and listen attentively to what he says. They are the words of God. Therefore, they are the words of life."

Deuteronomy 31:13, "And their children who have not known will hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live in the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess." So, I would think twice before you say, "My kid is too small. He's too immature. He can't learn anything." You're wrong. The Lord Jesus Christ, by the He was 12, had such a magnificent grasp of doctrine that He could sit there with the Doctors of Theology, and set them back on their ears with the answers that He gave, and with the questions that He could ask. Your children, from their earliest days (the earliest times of their lives) should learn to sit quietly in church, and they should learn to be attentive – not to see how much they can distract themselves from the Word of God. Then it says, "Your children will learn to fear the Lord your God."

1. **Preservation from Idolatry**

The fear of the Lord preserves one from idolatry and of worshiping the false gods. Joshua 24:14-15: "Now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the river, and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourself today whom you you'll serve – whether the gods which your fathers served, which were beyond the river; or, the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua said, "Now you can go ahead and be stupid, and start serving these gods in this land that we've conquered. But as for me and my house, my kids are going to learn to fear God, and they're going to worship Him. They're not going to worship anyone else. And the gods of these Canaanites are not going to be dignified. We're not going to have diversity of religious equality. We're not going to say that all religious systems are equal, and all cultures equal. We're going to make it very clear that biblical cultures are superior to non-biblical ones.

1. **Preservation from Military Conquest**

The fear of the Lord preserves the nation for military conquest by its enemies. 2 Kings 17:39, "But the Lord your God you shall fear, and He will deliver you from the hand of your enemies." If you fear God, a nation is delivered from the hands of its enemies.

1. **Receive Mercy for Sin**

The fear of the Lord secures infinite mercy from God for those who do fall in the sin. We're not all going to make it all the time. We are going to fall into sin. We're going to fall short of what we know. And that's why we want to include this. When we talk about being afraid of the holiness of God, we also want to remind you that we have a way back. And that's why He said to John, "You don't have to be afraid of Me. I've taken care of the sin problem. All you have to be concerned about is that you don't confess and get back in fellowship with Me. Psalm 103:8-11: "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep his anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness (His grace) toward those who fear Him." He has given us a way back into His fellowship with our personal confession.

1. **Close Friends**

Believers should be close friends only with those who fear the Lord. If you want to run around and be buddy-buddy with the ungodly type of this world, or because they happen to be in your circle of friends, you're going to have some sorry moments. Believers should not become close friends with unbelievers. You have to associate with the world. You have to do business with the world. You have to be interrelated to them. But you keep them at arm's length. You don't pretend that they have become wonderful people. I remind you again that the Bible says that the unbeliever (and this is true of the carnal Christian) is compared to a dog and to a pig. Don't ever look upon them as being what they pretend to be. Psalm 119:63: "I am a companion of all those who fear You, and of those who keep Your precepts." This is very simple. I'm the friend of those who show a healthy fear for God. And how do they do it? They obey the Word of God.

1. Israel was told to fear the Lord God before she was told to love the Lord God. Isn't that interesting? In Deuteronomy 6:1-2, she's told to fear God before she's told to love God. What goes on in our society today? The big thing is love. Whatever goes on, as long as you have love, everything's okay. No. Deuteronomy 6:1-2: "Now this is the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess, so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all of His statues and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, that your days may be prolonged."

They're about to go into the land. Moses knows, because of his disobedience at the rock incident (hitting it a second time instead of speaking to it), that he would not enter the land. So, he sits down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and he writes this final book of the Pentateuch – the five books of Moses: Deuteronomy. It's his final message to the nation. It is what God says: "Here's the thing you must tell these people, because they're about to cross to Jordan into that vile territory of the Canaanites. And what does He tell them to do? First up: "Be downright afraid of your God. You're going to find these sex gods very attractive. You're going to find them very tempting. You're going to find them even very glamorous in some respects. But don't be fooled. Don't fall for them."

Then drop down to Deuteronomy 6:5: "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might." So, here, as Moses is laying out what they should know, first he tells them, "Far God; and, then he tells them to love Him." When you fear Him, you'll be capable of loving Him.

1. **Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom**

And finally, the fear of the Lord is the beginning point in the wisdom of applying doctrine (Psalm 111:10). If you're going to apply the Word of God to your life, and if you're going to have that wisdom, it has to start with the fact that you fear the holiness of God and of violating his holiness: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and it is the beginning of the knowledge of doctrine.

Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction." So, the fear of the Lord is the beginning point of having God's wisdom, and it is the beginning point of grasping doctrine, and having a command of the thinking of God.

So, this is the whole picture. We have put it all together – how to be a functional human being. It is all based upon the magnificent preview of Isaiah 11:2. A normal functioning human being – the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and strength; the spirit of knowledge; and, the fear of the Lord.

Our Father, we thank You for this instruction. And we pray that we shall profit by what we have learned in these many weeks, and that what was characteristic of our Lord in His humanity may be the norm for us. Please bless our offerings which we bring to You.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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