

**The Fear of the Lord,
The Beginning of Wisdom**



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31 Day Bible Study

By

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The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY ONE

Leaders Who Fear the Lord

“But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.” Exodus 18:21 NIV

In the Old Testament in the book of Exodus, Moses had led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt where they had been in slavery and bondage to the evil Pharaoh and the Egyptians for four hundred and thirty years. Once they were delivered from the Egyptian tyranny, the Israelites had to establish a new way of thinking, living, believing, and cohabitating. Even though they were no longer slaves, their minds and lives had been programmed to have a slave mentality. They had to be set free from the old ways of Egyptian living and to become established in the ways of the Lord God Almighty.

Because of their newly found freedom from Egypt coupled with their inability to fully trust the One True God who had delivered them from bondage, the Israelites had many disputes among themselves. Moses, the one used by the Lord to deliver them from slavery, was the sole judge over all the people. The number of people at the time of exodus from Egypt was over 600,000 men. Including women and children, that number could have easily exceeded two million people. Moses was in charge of them all.

Because of their many disputes, Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, encouraged Moses to select men as leaders to help govern smaller groups of the massive numbers of people. These men were to govern by groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. These leaders were to possess certain godly character traits; however, not just *anyone* could be chosen to lead. *“But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. ²² Have them serve as judges for the people at all times but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves.”* (Exodus 21:21-22 NIV)

According to the Word of the Lord, the men chosen for leadership amongst the Israelites had to possess the following qualities. They must be capable, have a fear of God, be trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain. In this scripture, the Hebrew word for “capable” is “hayil” which means virtue, valor, strength, trained, worthy, power, might, and having moral substance. These “capable” men were morally a cut above the ordinary. The Hebrew word for “fear” is “yare” which means fearing, morally reverent, afraid, and fearful. These men had to possess a healthy fear and reverence of the Lord. The Hebrew word for “trustworthy” is “emet” which means

stability, certainty, truth, faithful, sure, right, established, reliable, and having true doctrine. These men had to walk in the Truth of God's Word. The Hebrew word for "dishonest gain" is "besa" which means covetousness, plunder, unjust gain, or gain acquired by violence. These men had to be honest with money.

The men chosen by Moses to aid him in judging the affairs of the Israelites had to possess a reverential fear of the Lord which prompted them to live a moral, godly life. These leaders were selected because of their godly character traits, not because of any other criteria. They simply loved God, revered Him in their lives, and chose to live honestly in all their affairs. When we have an authentic fear of the Lord in our hearts, we will choose to live the same way. We will desire to reverence Him in everything we think, say, and do. We will desire to live a life of being capable, reverent, trustworthy, and honest, according to the scriptures.

REFLECTION

How do you show reverence to God in your life? Do you desire to be a capable, reverent, trustworthy, and honest person? How does reverencing the Lord help you to become a godly person? Or a godly leader? Do you have a reverential fear of the Lord that encourages you to be a godly leader, one who has godly character and is a cut above the rest?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for all the ways I have not revered You in my life. Help me to see You in all Your splendor, glory, and majesty so that I may have a healthy fear and reverence toward You. Lord, forgive me for all the ways I have not been capable, reverent, trustworthy, and honest in my life. Please cleanse me with the precious, holy Blood of Jesus. Holy Spirit, teach me the Truth. Teach me Your ways, Lord. Transform my life with Your Word and conform me to the image of Jesus. Help me to be capable, reverent, trustworthy, and honest in all I think, say, and do. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Exodus 18 NIV

Jethro Visits Moses

18 Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

² After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro received her ³ and her two sons. One son was named Gershom, for Moses said, “I have become a foreigner in a foreign land”; ⁴ and the other was named Eliezer, for he said, “My father’s God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.”

⁵ Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, together with Moses’ sons and wife, came to him in the wilderness, where he was camped near the mountain of God. ⁶ Jethro had sent word to him, “I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons.”

⁷ So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent. ⁸ Moses told his father-in-law about everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel’s sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the LORD had saved them.

⁹ Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. ¹⁰ He said, “Praise be to the LORD, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. ¹¹ Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly.” ¹² Then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses’ father-in-law in the presence of God.

¹³ The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. ¹⁴ When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?”

¹⁵ Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. ¹⁶ Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and instructions.”

¹⁷ Moses’ father-in-law replied, “What you are doing is not good. ¹⁸ You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it

alone. ¹⁹ Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. ²⁰ Teach them his decrees and instructions and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. ²¹ But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. ²² Have them serve as judges for the people at all times but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter because they will share it with you. ²³ If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.”

²⁴ Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. ²⁵ He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. ²⁶ They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves.

²⁷ Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY TWO

Fear of God Keeps Us from Sin

“Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.” Exodus 20:20 NIV

In the Old Testament in the book of Exodus, Moses had delivered the Israelites out from the bondage and slavery of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Because the Israelites had been slaves for over four hundred years, they had no other concept of life other than living in Egypt, living under Egyptian idolatry and rule, living with Egyptian laws and customs, and living under the Pharaoh's tyranny and brutality. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (the fathers of their faith) had been forgotten by many and seemed very distant until their rescue. Much of their ability to worship the One True God had been squelched by the Egyptians. Many of the Israelites had, for the most part, been estranged from their faith and their God. He seemed a distant memory.

Once Moses delivered the Israelites from Egypt, they had a new journey before them. Not only were they to travel to the land God had promised them, but they had to be reintroduced to the God of their fathers. They also had to be delivered from being slaves who had been entrenched in the Egyptian lifestyle, culture, and way of thinking. They were out of Egypt, but they needed to get Egypt out of them! Along this journey to the promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the Lord revealed Himself, His character, and His nature to them. He also revealed laws or commandments by which to live. These laws were not given as a punishment, nor were they given out of anger and control. These laws were given as life parameters for safety and protection. The Lord God Almighty gave the Israelites laws by which to govern their lives so that they would dwell in a place of safety, protection, and blessing. The laws were given out of love!

When Moses gave the commandments to the children of Israel, the Lord God Almighty spoke the commandments with the sound of His own voice with thunders and lightnings. *“When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance¹⁹ and said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.”²⁰ Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.” (Exodus 20:18-20 NIV)*

In this scripture, the Word states that the fear of God would be *with* them and would *keep* them from sinning. The same is true for us today. The fear of the Lord will be *with us* and *keep us* from sinning. That is a powerful statement. When we, just like the Israelites of old, have a healthy fear and reverence for the Lord, then we will be able to abstain from sinning. Hence, without a

healthy fear or reverence of the Lord, we are prone to sin. Fear and reverence of the Lord keeps us in a place of safety and protection from the evil one. Our God is a powerful awesome God! To fear and reverence Him is having a respect for the magnitude of His splendor, glory, and majesty. To fear and reverence Him is an acknowledgement of the fact that HE IS GOD! Fear and reverencing Him is an act of worship, adoration, and love. Without the Lord in our lives, we can easily end up in bondage and captivity to the evil one. We reverence God for WHO HE IS, and we fear being away from Him and His goodness. In response, the fear of God keeps us from sinning, which in turn keeps us in a place of intimacy with God, safety, and blessing.

REFLECTION

Have you ever refrained from doing something out of fear of harm or injury? How has having a healthy fear of God kept you from calamity and mischief? In what ways do you fear and reverence the Lord in your life? Do you remember a time when you refrained from joining in with friends in an unhealthy activity because your love for God caused you to fear what might happen if you did? How does the fear of the Lord keep you from sinning?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me enough to give me laws for my safety and wellbeing. Thank You for loving me enough to desire for me to dwell in safety, protection, and blessing. Father, please forgive me for not having a healthy fear and reverence for You and Your commandments. Holy Spirit, write the laws of God upon my heart that I might not sin against You. Help me to abide in a place of reverential fear, awe, and worship of my God. Help me to love the commandments of the Lord for they are life for me and my family. Lord, I love and worship You. In Jesus name, amen.

Exodus 20 NIV

The Ten Commandments

20 And God spoke all these words:

² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

³ "You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴ "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the

sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷ “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

¹² “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³ “You shall not murder.

¹⁴ “You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵ “You shall not steal.

¹⁶ “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

¹⁸ When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance ¹⁹ and said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.”

²⁰ Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.”

²¹ The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

Idols and Altars

²² Then the LORD said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites this: ‘You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you from heaven: ²³ Do not make any gods to be alongside me; do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold.

²⁴ “Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you. ²⁵ If you make an altar of stones for me, do not build it with dressed stones, for you will defile it if you use a tool on it. ²⁶ And do not go up to my altar on steps, or your private parts may be exposed.’

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY THREE

The Fear of God Yields Love, Obedience, and Blessing

“See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse— ²⁷the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; ²⁸the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.” Deuteronomy 11:26-28 NIV

In the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament, the children of Israel had been delivered from the bondage of Egypt. Then the Lord Himself had given them the Ten Commandments, laws by which to live their lives. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses was reiterating the laws that had been given by God to His people. Moses then explained to the Israelites that the Lord had delivered them out of Egypt because of His great love for the fathers and their faith, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses continued to explain to the people that the Lord desired to walk in a covenant love relationship with them as He had with the fathers of their faith. The desire of the Lord was for the Israelites to love Him in return.

In the book of Deuteronomy chapter eleven, Moses begins to recount the journey that the Israelites had taken with the Lord from Egypt, through the wilderness, and ready to enter the promised land. Moses reminded the Israelites of all the signs, wonders, and miracles they had witnessed which brought great awe and fear of the Lord to their hearts. He encouraged them to teach their children and retell the stories they had experienced, so their children would reverence the Lord as well.

In this passage of scripture, Moses reminded the Israelites to love the Lord with all their hearts and to obey all the commandments of the Lord; and he warned them to be careful not to worship idols from other nations. He described in detail all the blessings of the land flowing with milk and honey that the Lord had promised them if they followed and obeyed Him. Moses also warned them of the curses that would ensue if they strayed away from the Lord and followed other false gods. He reminded them of how the earth swallowed up Korah and all who rebelled against God by worshiping a golden calf. One might say that Moses *“put the fear of the Lord in them”!*

The heart of our heavenly Father Yahweh is to have a people with whom He can share an intimate covenant relationship. His plan is and has always been to have a loving relationship with Israel and with all who accept His Son Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Within the bond of that covenant, the Lord has promises and blessings for us all to receive and enjoy. He created us to be loved by Him and to love Him in return. If we reject Him and His love, we remove ourselves from His umbrella of protection, and we make ourselves sitting targets for the enemy of our souls to

deceive and take into bondage. The fear of the Lord gives us a desire to stay close to God. The fear of the Lord causes us to be afraid of being outside the bond of covenant intimacy with Him. The fear of the Lord causes us to love the God who loves, saves, heals, and delivers us!

REFLECTION

As a child were you ever afraid to disobey your parents because you feared the consequences of a bad choice? When you love someone dearly, do you desire to put healthy boundaries around your relationship to protect it? Why do you think the Lord desires to place boundaries around His people?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your great love for me. Thank You that You desire intimacy with me. Thank You that You desire to place healthy boundaries in my life in order to save, heal and deliver, and protect me. Father, please forgive me for all the ways I have pursued other idols and gods. Forgive me for not loving You with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. Wash me clean with the precious, holy blood of Jesus. Holy Spirit, teach me how to walk in the fear of the Lord. Teach me how to love and obey the Lord and His commandments. Help me live my life to be pleasing unto You. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Deuteronomy 11

Love and Obey the LORD

11 Love the LORD your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws, and his commands always. ² Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of the LORD your God: his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm; ³ the signs he performed and the things he did in the heart of Egypt, both to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his whole country; ⁴ what he did to the Egyptian army, to its horses and chariots, how he overwhelmed them with the waters of the Red Sea as they were pursuing you, and how the LORD brought lasting ruin on them. ⁵ It was not your children who saw what he did for you in the wilderness until you arrived at this place, ⁶ and what he did to Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab the Reubenite, when the earth opened its mouth right in the middle of all Israel and swallowed them up with their households, their tents and every living thing that belonged to them. ⁷ But it was your own eyes that saw all these great things the LORD has done.

⁸ Observe therefore all the commands I am giving you today, so that you may have the strength to go in and take over the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ⁹ and so that you may live long in the land the LORD swore to your ancestors to give to them and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey. ¹⁰ The land you are entering to take over is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you planted your seed and irrigated it by foot as in a vegetable garden. ¹¹ But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven. ¹² It is a land the LORD your God cares for; the eyes of the LORD your God are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end.

¹³ So if you faithfully obey the commands, I am giving you today—to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul— ¹⁴ then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine, and olive oil. ¹⁵ I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.

¹⁶ Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. ¹⁷ Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will shut up the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you. ¹⁸ Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ¹⁹ Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ²⁰ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, ²¹ so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

²² If you carefully observe all these commands I am giving you to follow—to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him and to hold fast to him— ²³ then the LORD will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations larger and stronger than you. ²⁴ Every place where you set your foot will be yours: Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea. ²⁵ No one will be able to stand against you. The LORD your God, as he promised you, will put the terror and fear of you on the whole land, wherever you go.

²⁶ See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse— ²⁷ the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; ²⁸ the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known. ²⁹ When the LORD your God has brought you into the land you are entering to possess, you are to proclaim on Mount Gerizim the blessings, and on Mount Ebal the curses. ³⁰ As you know, these mountains are across the Jordan, westward, toward the setting sun, near the great trees of Moreh, in the territory of those Canaanites living in the Arabah in the vicinity of Gilgal. ³¹ You are about to cross the Jordan to enter and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you. When you have taken it over and are living there, ³² be sure that you obey all the decrees and laws I am setting before you today.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY FOUR

Tithing Teaches Us to Fear the Lord

“You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year ²³ And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always.” Deuteronomy 14:22-23 NKJV

In the Old Testament in the book of Deuteronomy, Moses was continuing to give instructions to the children of Israel as they were about to enter into the promised land. In Deuteronomy fourteen, Moses was addressing various issues of life and how to live and respond in accordance with the Word of God. He addressed improper mourning, eating clean and unclean meat, and principles of tithing. These were everyday issues which God desired for them to live out according to His ways, not the ways of Egypt.

In Deuteronomy chapter fourteen verses twenty-two through twenty-seven, Moses was specifically giving instruction concerning the tithe or the tenth of their increase. He instructed them to give a tithe which was the tenth portion of the first fruits of their grain, wine, oil, herds, and flocks. *“You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. ²³ And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always.”* (Deuteronomy 14:22-23 NKJV) In this scripture, the Hebrew word for “tithing” is “asar” which means to take or to give a tenth, surely or truly. The Hebrew word for “fear” is “yare” which means to fear, morally to revere, to be afraid, dreadful, fearful, to be in reverence, to stand in awe of, to honor or respect, or to be astonished by. According to this scripture, Moses was communicating to the children of Israel that tithing was directly related to and resulted from a healthy reverence and fear of God. Tithing was part of the method the Lord used to instill a healthy reverence and fear of God within the hearts of the Israelites.

Because the Lord created mankind, He alone is the one who knows the hearts of men better than men know themselves. The Lord knows that the desires, passions, and love of our hearts are directly tied to wherever or to whomever we give our money. The Word of God states, *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* (Matthew 6:21 NKJV) The passions of our hearts dictate where and how we spend our money. The Lord was trying to teach the Israelites that giving one tenth of the first of their increase to Him was helping them to develop a love and passion for the Lord. He was teaching them to bind their hearts to His. Because love is tied to fear and reverence, and fearing the Lord is tied to tithing, then tithing is a reverential expression of love. Just like the Israelites in the Old Testament, when we love the Lord with all our hearts,

we will desire to please Him and obey Him. Tithing one tenth of the first fruits of our increase, or income, is an outward expression of a heart reverentially yielded to the Lord in love and obedience.

REFLECTION

Do you give the Lord one tenth of the first fruits of your income as an outward expression of your love and obedience to Him? Where do you spend your extra money? On family? Friends? Entertainment? Is your expenditure of money a true reflection of whom or what you love the most? How can you redirect your money to reflect whom or what your heart truly loves?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for not reverencing You with the first fruits of my income. Please forgive me for not placing the proper priorities on how to manage my money. Help me to express my love for You in obedience to Your Word by tithing one tenth of the first fruits of my increase, or income. Lord, I desire to love You and reverence You with my whole heart. Help me to obey You and yield to Your heavenly instructions. In Jesus name, amen.

Deuteronomy 14 NKJV

Improper Mourning

14 “You *are* the children of the LORD your God; you shall not cut yourselves nor shave the front of your head for the dead. ² For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who *are* on the face of the earth.

Clean and Unclean Meat

³ “You shall not eat any detestable thing. ⁴ These *are* the animals which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, ⁵ the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the mountain goat, the antelope, and the mountain sheep. ⁶ And you may eat every animal with cloven hooves, having the hoof split into two parts, *and that* chews the cud, among the animals. ⁷ Nevertheless, of those that chew the cud or have cloven hooves, you shall not eat, *such as* these: the camel, the

hare, and the rock hyrax; for they chew the cud but do not have cloven hooves; they *are* unclean for you. ⁸ Also the swine is unclean for you, because it has cloven hooves, yet *does* not *chew* the cud; you shall not eat their flesh or touch their dead carcasses.

⁹ “These you may eat of all that *are* in the waters: you may eat all that have fins and scales. ¹⁰ And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it *is* unclean for you.

¹¹ “All clean birds you may eat. ¹² But these you shall not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, ¹³ the red kite, the falcon, and the kite after their kinds; ¹⁴ every raven after its kind; ¹⁵ the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after their kinds; ¹⁶ the little owl, the screech owl, the white owl, ¹⁷ the jackdaw, the carrion vulture, the fisher owl, ¹⁸ the stork, the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe and the bat.

¹⁹ “Also every creeping thing that flies is unclean for you; they shall not be eaten.

²⁰ “You may eat all clean birds.

²¹ “You shall not eat anything that dies *of itself*; you may give it to the alien who *is* within your gates, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner; for you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God.

“You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.

Tithing Principles

²² “You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. ²³ And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. ²⁴ But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry *the tithe*, or if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the LORD your God has blessed you, ²⁵ then you shall exchange *it* for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. ²⁶ And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before

the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household. ²⁷ You shall not forsake the Levite who *is* within your gates, for he has no part nor inheritance with you.

²⁸ “At the end of *every* third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store *it* up within your gates. ²⁹ And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY FIVE

Fear of God, No Fear of the Enemy

“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.” Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV

In the Old Testament in the book of Deuteronomy, Moses had been giving instructions to the Israelites before they entered the promised land. He gave them complete directions on how to live their lives in agreement with the laws and ways of God. He told them how the Lord had made a covenant with the fathers of their faith, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He told them of the promises and blessings they would receive by coming into a covenant relationship with the Lord for themselves. Moses also warned them of the dangers of straying away from the Lord through sin and worshiping the idols and false gods of other nations. Moses taught the children of Israel the value of walking in the fear of God.

In Deuteronomy chapter thirty-one, Moses was giving a final exhortation to the Israelites to walk in a covenant love relationship with God. He knew his days on the earth were about to come to an end, and he would not enter into the promised land. However, he informed the children of Israel that the Lord Himself would enter into the promised land before them, He would make a way for them, He would be with them, and He would not leave them. The very God who rescued them from the slavery and bondage of Egypt was making covenant with His people, the Israelites; and He was personally escorting them into the land He had promised to give them. Moses encouraged the children of Israel to be strong, to have good courage, and to **not fear**.

In Deuteronomy chapter thirty-one verse six, Moses said, *“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.”* (Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV) The fear of the Lord was the chief thing that would bring the Israelites into a covenant love relationship with God, reverencing and respecting Him. As the children of Israel made a holy covenant with the God of their fathers in reverential fear, they would not have to be afraid of any threats of their enemies. Having a holy fear of the Lord would bring them into a place of the safety and protection of the One True God and King of the Universe. God would be with them, He would never leave them, He would protect them, and He would defend them. Holy reverential fear keeps us close to God and keeps us from fearing the attacks of our enemies. Having a holy reverential fear of the Lord gives us confidence and faith in our God to be with us, to protect us and to never leave us.

REFLECTION

Do you fear sickness, disease, war, famine, or destruction? If so, how strong do you think your confidence and faith in God's ability to protect you is? Is the fear of evil attacking you stronger than your holy reverential fear of the Lord? How can you develop a deeper reverence, confidence, and trust in the Lord?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for not having a holy reverential fear of you. Please forgive me for allowing fear of the enemy of my soul to be greater than my confidence and trust in You. Holy Spirit, help me to put my trust, faith, and confidence in God alone. Help me to have a healthy reverential fear of God which draws me into an intimate covenant relationship with Him. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Deuteronomy 31 NKJV

Joshua the New Leader of Israel

31 Then Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. ²And he said to them: "I *am* one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer go out and come in. Also, the LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross over this Jordan.' ³The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you; He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua himself crosses over before you, just as the LORD has said. ⁴And the LORD will do to them as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites and their land, when He destroyed them. ⁵The LORD will give them over to you, that you may do to them according to every commandment which I have commanded you. ⁶Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He *is* the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

⁷Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. ⁸And the LORD, He *is* the One who goes

before you. He will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.”

The Law to Be Read Every Seven Years

⁹ So Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. ¹⁰ And Moses commanded them, saying: “At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, ¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. ¹² Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who *is* within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, ¹³ and *that* their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess.”

Prediction of Israel’s Rebellion

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, the days approach when you must die; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting, that I may inaugurate him.”

So, Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of meeting. ¹⁵ Now the LORD appeared at the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood above the door of the tabernacle.

¹⁶ And the LORD said to Moses: “Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go *to be* among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. ¹⁷ Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, ‘Have not these evils come upon us because our God *is* not among us?’ ¹⁸ And I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they have done, in that they have turned to other gods.

¹⁹ “Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel. ²⁰ When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, of which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant. ²¹ Then it shall be, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify against them as a witness; for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants, for I know the inclination of their behavior today, even before I have brought them to the land of which I swore *to give them.*”

²² Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day and taught it to the children of Israel. ²³ Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, “Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you.”

²⁴ So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, ²⁵ that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying: ²⁶ “Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you; ²⁷ for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. *If today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death?* ²⁸ Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them. ²⁹ For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands.”

The Song of Moses

³⁰ Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were ended:

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY SIX

Ruling in the Fear of God

“The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me: ‘He who rules over men must be just, Ruling in the fear of God.’” II Samuel 23:3 NKJV

In the Old Testament in the book of II Samuel, King David was giving his last words as the King of Israel to his son Solomon, his successor. In this passage of scripture, King David was giving a word of prophecy instead of giving a benediction, which was the custom. He was describing what the character and nature of a just king ought to be. David was referring to himself as the reigning king of Israel, referring to his son Solomon as the future king of Israel, and above all referring to King Jesus as the King of all kings.

In the book of II Samuel chapter twenty-three verse three, King David received this prophetic word spoken to him by the “Rock of Israel”. The Rock of Israel is King Jesus Himself. David received a prophetic word spoken to him in the spirit by King Jesus. The words spoken to David by Jesus were, *“He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord.”* (II Samuel 23:3b) In this scripture, the Hebrew word for “rules” is “massal” which means to have dominion, to govern, to reign, to have power, or to have rule over. The Hebrew word for “just” is “sadiq” which means just, lawful, and a righteous man. The Hebrew word for “fear” is “yira” which means reverence, dreadful, exceeding fear, terror, respect, and piety. Hence, the word of the Lord that came from King Jesus Himself through King David to the future King Solomon was as follows: the one chosen to govern, have dominion, power, rule, and reign over men **must be** a just, lawful, and righteous man, ruling with respect, reverence, fear, and piety toward the Lord. In essence, he must walk in the fear and reverence of the Lord, desiring to please God alone in all his decisions, rulings, acts, and attitudes. He must not fear man or what his enemies could do to him, nor should he try to please man.

King David was given to a life of covenant love and worship of the One True God of Israel. He walked in a reverential fear of the Lord and ruled with an attitude of desiring to please God and God alone. This was the very thing that marked David and was the reason why the Lord had chosen him to lead Israel, he walked in the fear of God! In this scripture, David was encouraging his son Solomon to do the same, to walk in the fear of God. David was also prophesying about the soon coming King Jesus who lay down His own will and life as a ransom for many. This scripture also applies to us as believers in Jesus. We are to lead in our families, in our work and place of business, in ministry, and in all the affairs of life...in the fear of God. We are to desire to please the Lord in everything we think, say, and do. We are to desire to live a life of covenant

love with our God in reverential fear. Even as we rule over our own lives, we must do it in the fear of the Lord, desiring to please Him, obey Him, and live according to His statutes.

REFLECTIONS

In what ways do you rule or govern your own life and the life of others? Do you rule with an attitude of the fear of the Lord? Do you desire to please God over pleasing yourself and man? In what ways can you change how you rule in your family, at work, in ministry, and in life? How can you walk in the fear of the Lord?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me with everlasting love. Thank You for the love covenant You have extended to me through the cross of Jesus. Lord, please forgive me for trying to rule in my family, work, ministry, and life with my own intellect, desires, and ways. Holy Spirit, help me to rule in every area of my life through the reverential fear of God. Help me to seek You, Lord, for Your wisdom, counsel, and understanding. Help me to be a just and righteous ruler in every area of my life. In the name of Jesus, amen.

2 Samuel 23:1-7 NKJV **David's Last Words**

23 Now these *are* the last words of David.

Thus says David the son of Jesse;

Thus says the man raised up on high,

The anointed of the God of Jacob,

And the sweet psalmist of Israel:

²“The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me,

And His word *was* on my tongue.

³The God of Israel said,

The Rock of Israel spoke to me:

‘He who rules over men *must be* just,

Ruling in the fear of God.

⁴ And *he shall be* like the light of the morning *when* the sun rises,
A morning without clouds,
Like the tender grass *springing* out of the earth,
By clear shining after rain.'

⁵ "Although my house *is* not so with God,
Yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all *things* and secure.
For *this is* all my salvation and all *my* desire;
Will He not make *it* increase?

⁶ But *the sons* of rebellion *shall* all *be* as thorns thrust away,
Because they cannot be taken with hands.

⁷ But the man *who* touches them
Must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear,
And they shall be utterly burned with fire in *their* place."

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY SEVEN

Judging in the Fear of the Lord with Faithfulness and a Loyal Heart

“Now, therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes.” II Chronicles 19:7 NKJV

“And he commanded them, saying ‘Thus you shall act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with a loyal heart:’” II Chronicles 19:9 NKJV

In the Old Testament in the books of I and II Chronicles, a record of all the kings of Israel and Judah are given along with the history of the Israelites and how faithfully they walked in covenant with God. In II Chronicles chapter nineteen, the tribes of Israel had been split into two kingdoms, the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah. Ahab, the king of Israel, was dead and Jehoshaphat was the reigning king of Judah. King Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem to reign and was greeted by Jehu, the son of Hanani the seer. Jehu was a second-generation prophet who welcomed the king back into Jerusalem and gave him clear direction from the Lord.

In the book of II Chronicles chapter nineteen verse seven, the prophet Jehu first confronted King Jehoshaphat about his former willingness to partner with the ungodly and to love those who hated the Lord. He warned Jehoshaphat that his actions had provoked the Lord to anger. Secondly, Jehu commended King Jehoshaphat for destroying the groves of idol worship, and for preparing his heart to seek the Lord. Jehu also encouraged Jehoshaphat to walk in the fear of the Lord as he ruled over Judah. He equated walking in the fear of the Lord with abstaining from sin and iniquity, not showing favoritism or partiality, and not taking gifts or bribes. *“Now, therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do it, for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes.”* (II Chronicles 19:7 NKJV) One might conclude that walking in the fear of the Lord was like being a straight arrow, having no crooked way found within one’s heart.

After this exhortation from Jehu the prophet, King Jehoshaphat began to make some changes in the kingdom. First, he gathered all the people and brought them back from the surrounding areas unto the Lord God of their fathers. Next, he fenced and fortified the cities for the safety and protection of the people. Then, he set judges over each one of the cities who would judge in the fear of the Lord. Finally, he instructed the judges saying, *“And he commanded them, saying ‘Thus you shall act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with a loyal heart:’”* (II Chronicles 19:9 NKJV) The Hebrew word for “fear” in this scripture is “yira” which means reverence, dreadful, exceeding fear, morally reverent, fear, terror, respect, piety, and to revere. The Hebrew word for “faithful” is “emuna” which means moral fidelity, stability, steady, truly, truth, and verity. The Hebrew

word for “loyal” is “saalem” which means friendly, peaceful, perfect, quiet, whole, safe, complete, as in keeping a covenant. Hence the judges over the cities were to walk in the fear, respect, piety, and reverence of the Lord with moral fidelity, stability, steadiness, faithfulness and in truth, having a loyal, friendly, peaceful, perfect, quiet, whole, safe, and complete heart toward the Lord and others. They should judge every matter according to the laws, statutes, and ways of the Lord. If they judged in this manner, with courage and fear, the Lord would be with them.

In the same way, the Lord requires us to walk in the fear of the Lord as well. In all the matters and issues of life regarding family, friends, work, church, ministry, and life, we are to walk in the fear of the Lord in all our decisions and judgments. We too are to have reverence, respect, and piety toward the Lord. We are to be found faithful, steadfast, stable, and having moral fidelity. We are to be loyal, friendly, perfect, quiet in spirit, and be complete in our hearts toward the Lord. Walking in the fear of the Lord will bring godly character to our lives, making us excellent judges in our life affairs on this earth.

REFLECTION

Think about a time when you needed to make a clear judgment between right and wrong. Did you consider the standard and ways of the Lord? Do you think the outcome of your decision would have been better if you would have sought the counsel of the Lord? How does walking in the fear of the Lord help you to navigate through difficult life choices?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for all the judgments and decisions I have made without Your counsel. Forgive me for not following Your statutes and Your ways. Wash me clean with the precious holy blood of Jesus. Holy Spirit, help me to always make decisions according to what You deem to be right. Help me to walk in the fear of the Lord, be faithful and have a loyal heart toward You. In the name of Jesus, amen.

2 Chronicles 19 NKJV

Jehoshaphat's Additional Reforms

19 Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem. ²And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to King Jehoshaphat, “Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Therefore, the wrath of the LORD *is* upon

you. ³ Nevertheless good things are found in you, in that you have removed the wooden images from the land, and have prepared your heart to seek God.”

The Reforms of Jehoshaphat

⁴ So Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem; and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim and brought them back to the LORD God of their fathers. ⁵ Then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, ⁶ and said to the judges, “Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD, who *is* with you in the judgment. ⁷ Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do *it*, for *there is* no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes.”

⁸ Moreover in Jerusalem, for the judgment of the LORD and for controversies, Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the chief fathers of Israel, when they returned to Jerusalem. ⁹ And he commanded them, saying, “Thus you shall act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with a loyal heart: ¹⁰ Whatever case comes to you from your brethren who dwell in their cities, whether of bloodshed or offenses against law or commandment, against statutes or ordinances, you shall warn them, lest they trespass against the LORD and wrath come upon you and your brethren. Do this, and you will not be guilty. ¹¹ And take notice: Amariah the chief priest *is* over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king’s matters; also the Levites *will be* officials before you. Behave courageously, and the LORD will be with the good.”

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY EIGHT

The Fear of God Brings Success

“He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done. He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. As long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success.” II Chronicles 26:4-5 NIV

In the Old Testament in the book of II Chronicles, the days of King Uzziah of Judah were recorded. Uzziah was crowned king of Judah when he was sixteen years old. He reigned for fifty-two years. Much was accomplished during his reign in the kingdom of Judah. He restored cities, built a powerful army, cultivated the land to produce crops, dug cisterns, farmed livestock, and became a powerful ruler. Under his leadership, Judah became a thriving nation. His fame spread far and wide to many other kingdoms and peoples.

One of the qualities that distinguished Uzziah from other kings was his devotion to the Lord. In the book of II Chronicles chapter twenty-six verse five, that word states, *“He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. As long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success.”* Uzziah was taught by the prophet Zechariah who understood the visions of God. In this scripture the Hebrew word for “instructed” is “bin” which means to understand, consider, direct, inform, instruct, and teach. The Hebrew word for “sought” is “daras” which means to follow in pursuit of, to search for, and to seek in worship. The Hebrew word for “success” is “saleah” which means to become mighty, to be profitable, to prosper, and to succeed. Therefore, Uzziah was taught, directed, instructed, and informed to seek in worship and prayer, to follow after, to pursue, and to search for the Lord in holy reverence and fear. As long as he continued to seek the Lord Uzziah became mighty, he prospered, he profited, and he had great success as a king.

In His great mercy and kindness, the Lord gave Uzziah the key to blessing, the fear of the Lord. In our lives the key to blessing is the same. The Lord desires for us to walk with him in a covenant love relationship just as Uzziah did. The Lord desires to save, heal, deliver, bless, restore, and prosper us in this life. The key to receiving all the promises and blessings of God is to pursue Him in prayer and worship in holy reverential fear. As long as we are seeking the Lord with all our hearts and we are doing what is right in His sight, we will prosper spiritually, financially, emotionally, physically, and in every area of life.

REFLECTION

Do you have areas in your life that need a touch from God? Financial breakthrough? Healing? Restoring a relationship? Are you currently pursuing God with all your heart? Are you walking in the ways of God desiring to please Him? How can you change your relationship with God to align yourself with His ways and Truth?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for not pursuing you with all my heart. Please forgive me for following the ways of the world instead of Your ways. Wash me clean by the precious holy blood of Jesus. Holy Spirit, transform my life. Help me to seek the Lord in reverential fear. Help me to worship and pray daily. Help me to read the Bible and receive Truth from Your Word. Lord, transform my life so that I might have great success in every way. In the name of Jesus, amen.

2 Chronicles 26 NIV **Uzziah King of Judah**

26 Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah. ² He was the one who rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah after Amaziah rested with his ancestors.

³ Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years. His mother's name was Jekoliah; she was from Jerusalem. ⁴ He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done. ⁵ He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. As long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success.

⁶ He went to war against the Philistines and broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod. He then rebuilt towns near Ashdod and elsewhere among the Philistines. ⁷ God helped him against the Philistines and against the Arabs who lived in Gur Baal and against the Meunites. ⁸ The Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah, and his fame spread as far as the border of Egypt, because he had become very powerful.

⁹ Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate and at the angle of the wall, and he fortified them. ¹⁰ He also built towers in the wilderness and dug many cisterns, because he had much livestock in the foothills and in the plain. He had people working his fields and vineyards in the hills and in the fertile lands, for he loved the soil.

¹¹ Uzziah had a well-trained army, ready to go out by divisions according to their numbers as mustered by Jeiel the secretary and Maaseiah the officer under the direction of Hananiah, one of the royal officials. ¹² The total number of family leaders over the fighting men was 2,600. ¹³ Under their command was an army of 307,500 men trained for war, a powerful force to support the king against his enemies. ¹⁴ Uzziah provided shields, spears, helmets, coats of armor, bows and slingstones for the entire army. ¹⁵ In Jerusalem he made devices invented for use on the towers and on the corner defenses so that soldiers could shoot arrows and hurl large stones from the walls. His fame spread far and wide, for he was greatly helped until he became powerful.

¹⁶ But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. ¹⁷ Azariah the priest with eighty other courageous priests of the LORD followed him in. ¹⁸ They confronted King Uzziah and said, "It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD. That is for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the LORD God."

¹⁹ Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the LORD's temple, leprosy broke out on his forehead. ²⁰ When Azariah the chief priest and all the other priests looked at him, they saw that he had leprosy on his forehead, so they hurried him out. Indeed, he himself was eager to leave because the LORD had afflicted him.

²¹ King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in a separate house—leprous and banned from the temple of the LORD. Jotham his son had charge of the palace and governed the people of the land.

²²The other events of Uzziah's reign, from beginning to end, are recorded by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. ²³Uzziah rested with his ancestors and was buried near them in a cemetery that belonged to the kings, for people said, "He had leprosy." And Jotham his son succeeded him as king.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY NINE

The Fear of the Lord is Wisdom

“And to man He said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.’” Job 28:28 NKJV

In the Old Testament in the book of Job, the Lord had allowed his servant Job to be tested in his faithfulness and trust in the Lord. Job loved the Lord with all his heart and was devoted to worshiping Him and serving Him all the days of his life. The enemy of our souls, Satan, petitioned God to remove His hand of protection from Job and his family so he could attack and afflict him. The desire of the enemy was to cause Job to turn his heart away from loving and trusting the Lord. As Job was severely attacked by the enemy, he remained faithful to his covenant relationship with the Lord. Even though he suffered tragic loss and a near-death illness, His love for God never wavered.

In the book of Job chapter twenty-eight, Job had already gone through much suffering and heartache. Job’s three friends had come to visit him and had confronted him as to why he had been afflicted so terribly. In the book of Job chapter twenty-eight, Job is responding to the words spoken to him by his friends, who had implied that Job had sinned and needed to repent. In this passage of scripture, Job is rendering a discourse on wisdom. Job states, *“And to man He said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.’”* (Job 28:28 NKJV)

In this passage of scripture, the Hebrew word for “wisdom” is “hakma” which means wisdom, skill, shrewdness, and prudence. The Hebrew word for “evil” is “ra” which means wickedness, mischief, adversity, bad, vicious acts, naughtiness, and evil. The Hebrew word for “understanding” is “bina” which means understanding, wisdom, knowledge, and discernment. Job was stating that walking in *the fear of the Lord* was indeed true wisdom, shrewdness, and prudence. He also stated that departing from evil, wickedness, mischief, adversity, vicious acts, naughtiness, and badness was acting with wisdom, understanding and prudence. When we have a holy reverential fear of the Lord, we too will desire to walk in the wisdom of the Lord. We will desire to abstain from all evil and even the appearance of evil. Even when the enemy of our souls tries to afflict us with ill-health, calamity, and mischief, we must stand in our faith, love, and trust in the Lord God Almighty. We must be found faithful in our covenant with Him.

REFLECTION

What is your first response when you get hit with sickness, tragedy, or misfortune? Do you blame God? Do you blame others? Do you blame the enemy? How can trusting in God and His promises help you when you go through difficult times?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for blaming You when my life seems to fall apart. Please forgive me for not turning to You when I need help navigating through life. Please forgive me for turning my heart away from You when the circumstances of life go awry. Lord, I plead the blood of Jesus over me, my family, my home, my job, and every aspect of my life. Let the blood of Jesus save us, heal us, deliver us, sanctify us, and protect us. Holy Spirit, help me to put my faith, love, and trust in God alone. Help me to walk in the fear of the Lord even when life gets difficult. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Job 28 NKJV

Job's Discourse on Wisdom

28 "Surely there is a mine for silver,
And a place *where* gold is refined.
² Iron is taken from the earth,
And copper *is* smelted *from* ore.
³ *Man* puts an end to darkness,
And searches every recess
For ore in the darkness and the shadow of death.
⁴ He breaks open a shaft away from people;
In places forgotten by feet
They hang far away from men;
They swing to and fro.
⁵ *As for* the earth, from it comes bread,
But underneath it is turned up as by fire;
⁶ Its stones *are* the source of sapphires,

And it contains gold dust.

⁷ *That* path no bird knows,

Nor has the falcon's eye seen it.

⁸ The proud lions have not trodden it,

Nor has the fierce lion passed over it.

⁹ He puts his hand on the flint;

He overturns the mountains at the roots.

¹⁰ He cuts out channels in the rocks,

And his eye sees every precious thing.

¹¹ He dams up the streams from trickling;

What is hidden he brings forth to light.

¹² "But where can wisdom be found?

And where *is* the place of understanding?

¹³ Man does not know its value,

Nor is it found in the land of the living.

¹⁴ The deep says, '*It is* not in me';

And the sea says, '*It is* not with me.'

¹⁵ It cannot be purchased for gold,

Nor can silver be weighed *for* its price.

¹⁶ It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir,

In precious onyx or sapphire.

¹⁷ Neither gold nor crystal can equal it,

Nor can it be exchanged for jewelry of fine gold.

¹⁸ No mention shall be made of coral or quartz,

For the price of wisdom *is* above rubies.

¹⁹ The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it,

Nor can it be valued in pure gold.

²⁰ "From where then does wisdom come?

And where *is* the place of understanding?

²¹ It is hidden from the eyes of all living,

And concealed from the birds of the air.

²² Destruction and Death say,

'We have heard a report about it with our ears.'

²³ God understands its way,

And He knows its place.

²⁴ For He looks to the ends of the earth,

And sees under the whole heavens,

²⁵ To establish a weight for the wind,

And apportion the waters by measure.

²⁶ When He made a law for the rain,

And a path for the thunderbolt,

²⁷ Then He saw *wisdom* and declared it;

He prepared it, indeed, He searched it out.

²⁸ And to man He said,

'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom,

And to depart from evil *is* understanding.'"

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY TEN

Fear of His Splendor Yields Righteousness

“For I dreaded destruction from God, and for fear of his splendor I could not do such things.” Job 31:23 NIV

In the Old Testament in the book of Job, ill-health, destruction, and severe loss had befallen Job. The enemy of our souls, Satan, had brutally assaulted Job while trying to destroy his love and commitment to the Lord. In the book of Job chapter thirty-one, Job was responding again to the accusations of his friends. He was defending his character by declaring his purity of heart and innocence of soul. He was asking God to examine his heart and judge his life if he had sinned in any way.

In the book of Job chapter thirty-one verse twenty-three, Job stated the reason why he did not dare to sin. Job had a holy reverential fear of the Lord. *“For I dreaded destruction from God, and for fear of his splendor I could not do such things.”* (Job 31:23 NIV) In this passage of scripture, the Hebrew word for “dreaded” is “pahad” which means greatly feared, terror, and sudden alarm. The Hebrew word for “destruction” is “ed” which means misfortune, calamity, mischief, distress, and disaster. The Hebrew word for “splendor” is “se et” which means highness, dignity, excellency, and exaltation. Therefore, Job stated that he understood the greatness, magnitude, highness, excellence, and exaltation of the Lord for who He is. Because of God’s supreme majesty and power, Job stood in the reverence and fear of the Lord. Job understood that living a life of sin would place him in a position to be judged by the Just Judge of the Universe. He understood that sin would separate him from the Lord. He understood that sin would make him an open target for the enemy to attack and sabotage. In this scripture, Job was declaring that he refused to live a life of sin against the Lord because of his reverential fear, respect, and honor of the Lord. He did not want anything to separate him from the covenant love relationship he had with the Lord. Job was stating his case before his friends that he was living a life of purity, innocence, and righteousness in the fear of the Lord.

When we see the Lord God Almighty for who He really is, we begin to walk in a healthy, holy, reverential fear of Him. When we perceive and understand the magnitude of His love for us, we will desire to love Him in return and to never be separated from Him. When we see the marvelous glory of the Lord, we will desire to please Him and live according to His laws, statutes, and ways. When we are captured by the love of God, we will desire to live a life of purity, innocence, and righteousness before Him.

REFLECTION

Do you see the Lord for who He really is in all His splendor, glory, and majesty? Do you have a reverential fear of His magnificence and power? Do you have a desire to live a sinless life before Him? Do you desire to love Him, please Him, and obey Him?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for not loving You with my whole heart. Wash me clean with the precious blood of Jesus. Holy Spirit, lead me and guide me into all truth. Help me to turn away from all sin. Help me to love You with all my heart. Help me to live in the reverential fear of the Lord, fearing to be separated from You by sin. Help me to live a righteous life. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Job 31 NIV

31 “I made a covenant with my eyes

not to look lustfully at a young woman.

² For what is our lot from God above,

our heritage from the Almighty on high?

³ Is it not ruin for the wicked,

disaster for those who do wrong?

⁴ Does he not see my ways

and count my every step?

⁵ “If I have walked with falsehood

or my foot has hurried after deceit—

⁶ let God weigh me in honest scales

and he will know that I am blameless—

⁷ if my steps have turned from the path,

if my heart has been led by my eyes,

or if my hands have been defiled,

⁸ then may others eat what I have sown,
and may my crops be uprooted.

⁹ “If my heart has been enticed by a woman,
or if I have lurked at my neighbor’s door,

¹⁰ then may my wife grind another man’s grain,
and may other men sleep with her.

¹¹ For that would have been wicked,
a sin to be judged.

¹² It is a fire that burns to Destruction;
it would have uprooted my harvest.

¹³ “If I have denied justice to any of my servants,
whether male or female,
when they had a grievance against me,

¹⁴ what will I do when God confronts me?
What will I answer when called to account?

¹⁵ Did not he who made me in the womb make them?
Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?

¹⁶ “If I have denied the desires of the poor
or let the eyes of the widow grow weary,

¹⁷ if I have kept my bread to myself,
not sharing it with the fatherless—

¹⁸ but from my youth I reared them as a father would,
and from my birth I guided the widow—

¹⁹ if I have seen anyone perishing for lack of clothing,
or the needy without garments,

²⁰ and their hearts did not bless me
for warming them with the fleece from my sheep,

²¹ if I have raised my hand against the fatherless,
knowing that I had influence in court,

²² then let my arm fall from the shoulder,

let it be broken off at the joint.

²³ For I dreaded destruction from God,
and for fear of his splendor I could not do such things.

²⁴ “If I have put my trust in gold
or said to pure gold, ‘You are my security,’

²⁵ if I have rejoiced over my great wealth,
the fortune my hands had gained,

²⁶ if I have regarded the sun in its radiance
or the moon moving in splendor,

²⁷ so that my heart was secretly enticed
and my hand offered them a kiss of homage,

²⁸ then these also would be sins to be judged,
for I would have been unfaithful to God on high.

²⁹ “If I have rejoiced at my enemy’s misfortune
or gloated over the trouble that came to him—

³⁰ I have not allowed my mouth to sin
by invoking a curse against their life—

³¹ if those of my household have never said,
‘Who has not been filled with Job’s meat?’—

³² but no stranger had to spend the night in the street,
for my door was always open to the traveler—

³³ if I have concealed my sin as people do,
by hiding my guilt in my heart

³⁴ because I so feared the crowd
and so dreaded the contempt of the clans
that I kept silent and would not go outside—

³⁵ (“Oh, that I had someone to hear me!
I sign now my defense—let the Almighty answer me;
let my accuser put his indictment in writing.

³⁶ Surely I would wear it on my shoulder,

I would put it on like a crown.

³⁷ I would give him an account of my every step;

I would present it to him as to a ruler.)—

³⁸ “if my land cries out against me

and all its furrows are wet with tears,

³⁹ if I have devoured its yield without payment

or broken the spirit of its tenants,

⁴⁰ then let briers come up instead of wheat

and stinkweed instead of barley.”

The words of Job are ended.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY ELEVEN

The Fear of the Lord Yields a Reward

“The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” Psalm 19:9 NKJV

In the Old Testament in the book of Psalms, King David is the author of many of the psalms, poems, and songs that were written to exalt the Lord. In the book of Psalms chapter nineteen King David, the author, was declaring and giving a description of the perfect revelation of the Lord. David described the glory of the Lord as being revealed in the heavens and the earth. He described the heavens and the earth as tabernacles for the sun, thus comparing the brilliance, light and glory of God to the sun itself. He also compared the glory of the Lord to a bridegroom coming out of his chamber in all his splendor, glory, and majesty. David continued to describe the law of the Lord as perfect, sure, right, and pure. David truly saw the Lord for who He really is, the brilliant, holy, majestic, magnificent God who created the heavens, the earth, and all therein.

In the book of Psalms chapter nineteen verse nine, King David states, *“The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”* (Psalm 19:9 NKJV) The Hebrew word for “clean” in this scripture is “taor” which means pure in a physical, chemical, ceremonial, or moral sense, and pure ethically. The Hebrew word for “judgments” is “mishpat” which means a favorable verdict, or a formal decree. The Hebrew word for “true” is “emet” which means certainty, trustworthiness, faithful, verity, and truth. The Hebrew word for “righteous” is “sadaq” which means to cleanse, to justify, and righteousness. Therefore, King David stated that walking in the reverential fear of the Lord is clean, moral, ethical, and pure. He also stated that all the judgments, verdicts and decrees of the Lord are righteous, clean, and just. Because the Lord God Almighty is just and righteous in all His ways, living our lives in deep communion with Him in reverence and honor to Him is part of our covenant love relationship with Him.

In the book of Psalm chapter nineteen, the word continues, *“More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.¹¹ Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.”* (Psalms 19:10-11 NKJV) In this scripture, King David was stating that the reverential fear and honor of the Lord, the holy laws and statutes of the Lord, and the righteous judgments of the Lord are to be greatly desired. These are to be desired above all things, for living a life consecrated to God is to be treasured more than gold. Living a life consecrated to God in love, obedience and purity is sweeter than honey. King David also states that living a life consecrated to God brings a great reward from the

Lord! In this scripture, the Hebrew word for “reward” is “eqeb” which means a good result, compensation, gain, a good end, and a good consequence.

The Word also states, *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”* (Hebrews 11:6 NKJV) Our God is an awesome God! He loves us with a passionate eternal love! He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, those who have a reverential fear of Him, those who desire to obey His laws and statutes, and those who desire His righteous judgments. King David understood that living in a covenant love relationship with the Lord was the BEST way of life. God desires for us to live in covenant relationship with Him too.

REFLECTION

Do you remember a time when the Lord gave you an unexpected reward? Were you specifically seeking Him at that time? Are there any areas of your life that could be altered to walk in deeper intimacy with God?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I desire to walk with You in a deep covenant love relationship. I want to know You intimately. I desire to have holy reverential fear, honor, and respect for You. I desire to obey Your laws and statutes and walk in Your ways. I desire to receive Your righteous decrees of Your promises and blessings in my life. I desire to consecrate my life to You and live in expectation of a good reward from You. Thank You for Your love for me. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Psalm 19 NKJV

The Perfect Revelation of the LORD

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

19 The heavens declare the glory of God;

And the firmament shows His handiwork.

² Day unto day utters speech,

And night unto night reveals knowledge.

³ *There is* no speech nor language

Where their voice is not heard.

⁴ Their line has gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.

In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,
⁵ Which *is* like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
And rejoices like a strong man to run its race.

⁶ Its rising *is* from one end of heaven,
And its circuit to the other end;
And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

⁷ The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;
⁸ The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;
⁹ The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.

¹⁰ More to be desired *are they* than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover by them Your servant is warned,
And in keeping them *there is* great reward.

¹² Who can understand *his* errors?
Cleanse me from secret *faults*.

¹³ Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous *sins*;
Let them not have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless,
And I shall be innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight,
O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY TWELVE

The Fear of the Lord Establishes Covenant

“The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.” Psalm 25:14 KJV

In the Old Testament in the book of Psalms, King David is the author of Psalm twenty-five. In this scripture, David was presenting his soul: his mind, will, and emotions to the Lord. He was crying out to the Lord to forgive his sins and deliver him from his enemies. King David had the weight of the world on his shoulders. He was distraught. David needed God to intervene. So, he cried out to God and appealed to His mercies and His loving kindness.

In Psalm twenty-five verse fourteen, David declared, *“The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.”* (Psalm 25:14 KJV) In this passage of scripture, the Hebrew word for “secret” is “sod” which means being in close proximity to someone, a secret counsel, and intimacy. The Hebrew word for “fear” is “yare” which means fearing, reverent, and afraid. The Hebrew word for “show” is “yada” which means to know, to perceive, to understand, and to know by experience. The Hebrew word for “covenant” is “berit” which means covenant, alliance of marriage, pledge, and alliance of friendship. Therefore, King David declared that the secret of the Lord, being in close proximity to the Lord, and being in the secret counsel of the Lord is with those who fear, reverence, and respect Him. The Lord will show those who fear Him how to understand, perceive and know by experience His covenant, alliance of marriage and friendship, and pledge. The fear of the Lord brings covenant intimacy with God.

In the book of Psalms chapter twenty-five verses twelve through fourteen, *“What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.¹³ His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth. ¹⁴ The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant”* (Psalm 25:12-14 KJV) King David was stating that the ones who choose to fear the Lord will reap the blessings of the Lord. They will be taught the ways of the Lord. Their children will inherit the earth. They will walk in intimacy with the Lord. They will know the Lord through His covenant with them. The fear of the Lord establishes intimacy with God. Even though King David experienced trouble in his life, his covenant relationship with God brought him out of it all.

REFLECTION

Have you ever wondered what it is like to have a covenant, alliance of friendship with God? Have you ever been in a distressing situation and cried out to the Lord for His mercy? How do you think having a holy reverence for the Lord will draw you into a deeper relationship with Him?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for offering a deep loving covenant relationship to all those who would be Yours. Thank You that through the blood of Jesus we are able to enter into a covenant relationship with You. Thank You that Your mercies and loving kindness are available to us through the secret place of intimacy with Jesus. Lord, I desire to know You in the secret place of intimacy. I desire to have a covenant relationship with You. Holy Spirit, draw me close to You. Help me to live a life of holy fear, reverence, and respect for the Lord. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Psalm 25 KJV

25 Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

² O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

³ Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

⁴ Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

⁵ Lead me in thy truth and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

⁶ Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old.

⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.

⁸ Good and upright is the LORD: therefore, will he teach sinners in the way.

⁹ The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

¹⁰ All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

- ¹¹ For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.
- ¹² What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.
- ¹³ His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.
- ¹⁴ The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.
- ¹⁵ Mine eyes are ever toward the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.
- ¹⁶ Turn thee unto me and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.
- ¹⁷ The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.
- ¹⁸ Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.
- ¹⁹ Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.
- ²⁰ O keep my soul and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.
- ²¹ Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.
- ²² Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY TWELVE

The Fear of the Lord Delivers

“Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy, ¹⁹ To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.” Psalm 33:18-19 NKJV

In the Old Testament in the book of Psalms chapter thirty-three, King David was declaring the Sovereignty of the Lord. David was exhorting the righteous to rejoice, praise, make melody, sing, and play instruments to magnify God. David continued to extol the greatness of God by stating that everything in the heavens and the earth was created by the spoken word of the Lord. David also declared that the counsel of the men of the earth would come to nothing; but the counsel of the Lord will stand forever. Then he stated that kings, mighty men, horses, and armies cannot save us; but the Lord, in His great mercies, is our Savior and our Deliverer.

In the book of Psalms chapter thirty-three verses eighteen through nineteen, David states, *“Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy, ¹⁹ To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.”* (Psalm 33:18-19 NKJV) In this scripture the Hebrew word for “eye” is “ayin” which means not only the physical eye of the Lord, but also His mental and spiritual faculties, His face and countenance, and His attention and emotions. The Hebrew word for “hope” is “yahal” which means to wait, to tarry, and to expect. The Hebrew word for “mercy” is “hesed” which means loving kindness, favor, beauty, goodness, and faithfulness. In verse nineteen, the Hebrew word for “deliver” is “nasal” which means to rescue, to save, to escape, to pluck out, or to be snatched away. The Hebrew word for “soul” is “nepes” which means life, person, self, living being, or man. The Hebrew word for “famine” is “ra ab” which means famine, hunger, and death. Thus, those who fear the Lord and who live in covenant love relationship with Him will experience the eye, face, countenance, attention, and emotions of the Lord turned toward them. They will have hope, and expectation for His mercy, loving kindness, goodness, favor, beauty, and faithfulness as they tarry and wait upon Him. The Lord God Almighty will deliver, rescue, save, pluck out of trouble, and snatch away their lives, persons, and selves from death. He will keep them alive in famine, in hunger and in deadly situations. Hallelujah!

In troubling times on the earth, we who live a life in the fear of the Lord in a covenant love relationship with Him can trust in the Lord to be with us, to help us, and to save us from calamity, mischief, and evil. We must not put our trust and faith in man, for men will surely fail us. We must put our trust and faith in God alone! For only the Most Holy God can save and deliver us. So, rejoice and be glad, for Jesus has paid the price for our salvation, and He has redeemed us by His blood!

REFLECTION

Have you ever been in a situation where you were in desperate need of help? Did you cry out to God to help you? Did the Lord deliver you from that situation? In times of distress, how does asking the Lord for help bring you out of that situation faster? Think about a covenant relationship. How does a covenant making, covenant keeping God respond to those with whom He is in covenant?

PRAYER

Lord, I give you praise! I exalt Your holy name forever! I worship You for who You are, the sovereign King of the Universe! Lord, I give you glory! I give You my heart and my life! Jesus, forgive me of my sin, wash me with Your precious, holy blood, and fill me with the Holy Spirit. Lord, I choose to live a life in the fear of the Lord and to be in a covenant relationship with You. I trust in You to save me, heal me, deliver me, and restore me to intimacy with You. Thank You for rescuing me in times of trouble. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Psalm 33 NKJV

The Sovereignty of the LORD in Creation and History

33 Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous!

For praise from the upright is beautiful.

² Praise the LORD with the harp;

Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings.

³ Sing to Him a new song;

Play skillfully with a shout of joy.

⁴ For the word of the LORD *is* right,

And all His work *is done* in truth.

⁵ He loves righteousness and justice;

The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

⁶ By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,

And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap;
He lays up the deep in storehouses.

⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD;
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

⁹ For He spoke, and it was *done*;
He commanded, and it stood fast.

¹⁰ The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.

¹¹ The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
The plans of His heart to all generations.

¹² Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD,
The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.

¹³ The LORD looks from heaven;
He sees all the sons of men.

¹⁴ From the place of His dwelling He looks
On all the inhabitants of the earth;

¹⁵ He fashions their hearts individually;
He considers all their works.

¹⁶ No king *is* saved by the multitude of an army;
A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.

¹⁷ A horse *is* a vain hope for safety;
Neither shall it deliver *any* by its great strength.

¹⁸ Behold, the eye of the LORD *is* on those who fear Him,
On those who hope in His mercy,

¹⁹ To deliver their soul from death,
And to keep them alive in famine.

²⁰ Our soul waits for the LORD;
He *is* our help and our shield.

²¹ For our heart shall rejoice in Him,

Because we have trusted in His holy name.

²² Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us,

Just as we hope in You.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY THIRTEEN

Angels Protect Those Who Fear the Lord

“The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. ⁸Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. ⁹Fear the LORD, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing.” Psalm 34:7-9 NIV

In the Old Testament in the book of Psalms, David was the author of Psalm thirty-four. In this Psalm, David is giving thanks to God for delivering him out of the hands of King Achish of Gath who was later remembered as Abimelek. David had escaped from King Saul, who wanted to kill him, and went to King Achish hoping for a place of refuge. However, King Achish recognized him as the one who had killed Goliath of Gath, the champion of the Amalekite army. So, David, being afraid for his life, pretended to be insane, which allowed him to escape once again. David was praising and thanking God for rescuing him out of another life-threatening situation.

In Psalm thirty-four verses seven through nine, David is describing the benefits of living in a covenant relationship with the One True God. In this scripture David states, *“The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. ⁸Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. ⁹Fear the LORD, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing.”* (Psalm 34:7-9 NIV) In verse seven, the Hebrew word for “angel” is “malak” which means ambassador, angel, king, messenger, and representative of God. The Hebrew word for “encamps” is “hana” which means abides, pitches a tent, dwells, and rests. Hence, for those who fear the Lord, God dispatches His holy angels, messengers, ambassadors, and representatives of the Lord to encamp, pitch a tent, abide, dwell and rest near and with you. In Psalm thirty-four verse eight, we are instructed to taste and see that the Lord is good. The Lord desires to open our spiritual senses and experience His presence and goodness in our lives. In Psalm thirty-four verse nine, the Word instructs us to fear, reverence, and respect the Lord. When we truly have a reverential fear and respect of the Lord, we are considered to be His holy people.

The Word continues to encourage us to fear the Lord, because living in a reverential fear and respect for the Lord brings us to a place where we lack nothing. In this scripture, the Hebrew word for “lack” is “mahsor” which means deficiency, impoverishment, need, poverty, and want. Hence, the Lord promises that those who live a life in covenant relationship with Him and have a reverential fear of Him will have no lack, no need, no want, not be impoverished, not be poverty-stricken, and not have deficiency. In the New Testament the Bible also states, *“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:19 NKJV) Having a fear of the Lord brings protection, provision, a new identity, and His goodness in our lives.

REFLECTION

Have you ever been in a situation where you needed money, food, a home, or a resolution to a major problem? Did you call upon the name of the Lord for assistance? How did the Lord come to your aid? Have you ever sensed the presence of a holy angel around you to protect you?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for all the times You have saved me and rescued me out the hands of the evil one. Thank You for protecting me every day. Thank You for sending Your holy angels to guard, protect and minister to me daily. Lord, help me stay in the place of intimacy with You. Help me to keep a holy reverence for You daily. Help me to be faithful to You. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Psalm 34 NIV

Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left.

- ¹ I will extol the LORD at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
- ² I will glory in the LORD;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
- ³ Glorify the LORD with me;
let us exalt his name together.
- ⁴ I sought the LORD, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.
- ⁵ Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.
- ⁶ This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.

⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,
and he delivers them.

⁸ Taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

⁹ Fear the LORD, you his holy people,
for those who fear him lack nothing.

¹⁰ The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

¹¹ Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

¹² Whoever of you loves life
and desires to see many good days,

¹³ keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from telling lies.

¹⁴ Turn from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.

¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and his ears are attentive to their cry;

¹⁶ but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil,
to blot out their name from the earth.

¹⁷ The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;
he delivers them from all their troubles.

¹⁸ The LORD is close to the brokenhearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

¹⁹ The righteous person may have many troubles,
but the LORD delivers him from them all;

²⁰ he protects all his bones,
not one of them will be broken.

²¹ Evil will slay the wicked;
the foes of the righteous will be condemned.

²² The LORD will rescue his servants;
no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY FOURTEEN

The Fear of the Lord Produces Worship

“All people will fear; they will proclaim the works of God and ponder what he has done.” Psalm 64:9 NIV

In the book of Psalms chapter fourteen verse nine, King David is proclaiming that **all** people will eventually come to fear the Lord. From the place of awe, reverence, and respect for the Lord, they will begin to magnify His name with worship proclaiming the glorious works of His mighty hands. They will begin to stand in awe and wonder at all that He has done.

In Psalm fourteen, David was again in perilous circumstances. He was crying out to the Lord to rescue him from the hands of his wicked enemies. He described the evil hearts and plans of his enemies toward him. He asked the Lord to deliver him, to protect him, and to hide him. Then David declared that the mighty hand of God would rise up to defend him and defeat his enemies. In verse nine David exclaims, *“All people will fear; they will proclaim the works of God and ponder what he has done.”* (Psalm 64:9 NIV) In this scripture the Hebrew word for “works” is “po al” which means acts, deeds, acquisition of treasure, and maker. The Hebrew word for “ponder” is “sakal” which means to understand, to be wise, and to consider. The Hebrew word for “doings or things done” is “ma ase” which means deeds, labor, workmanship, acts, work, and achievements. Hence, David declared that all people, especially those who desired to do evil deeds unto him would eventually fear, reverence, and respect the Lord. When the eyes of all people are opened and they see the Lord for who He truly is and all that He has done, then all people will proclaim the works, acts, and deeds of Almighty God. All people will ponder, understand, become wise, and consider what the Lord has done, all His deeds, his labor, His workmanship, His acts, His work, and His achievements.

Just as in David’s day, the Lord will perform mighty deeds and great acts for those who love Him and are in a reverential covenant relationship with Him. Even though the enemy of our souls desires to “sift us like wheat”, as he did with Peter the apostle, our God will surely display His splendor, glory, and majesty to those who oppose us. When the Lord destroys the evil plans of the enemy against us, all people will see His mighty acts and they will worship Him for who He is and all He has done. Our God is a covenant making, covenant keeping God! Living a life in reverential fear, awe, and respect for Him in a covenant love relationship produces worship in our lives and the lives of all who see the work of His hand.

REFLECTION

Have you ever been in an impossible situation where you cried out to God for help? Have you ever seen the hand of God move in your life to such an extent that others were amazed? How do you think you can alter your lifestyle to live in a covenant relationship with God?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for rescuing me out the hand of the evil one time and time again. Thank You for displaying Your power, glory, and majesty in the face of my enemies. Thank You for saving, healing, and delivering me time and time again! Thank You for Your covenant love relationship available to me by the blood of Jesus and the Cross of Calvary. Lord, help me to be faithful to You, Your heart, and Your ways. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Psalm 64 NIV

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

¹ Hear me, my God, as I voice my complaint;
protect my life from the threat of the enemy.

² Hide me from the conspiracy of the wicked,
from the plots of evildoers.

³ They sharpen their tongues like swords
and aim cruel words like deadly arrows.

⁴ They shoot from ambush at the innocent;
they shoot suddenly, without fear.

⁵ They encourage each other in evil plans,
they talk about hiding their snares;
they say, "Who will see it?"

⁶ They plot injustice and say,

“We have devised a perfect plan!”

Surely the human mind and heart are cunning.

⁷ But God will shoot them with his arrows;
they will suddenly be struck down.

⁸ He will turn their own tongues against them
and bring them to ruin;
all who see them will shake their heads in scorn.

⁹ All people will fear;
they will proclaim the works of God
and ponder what he has done.

¹⁰ The righteous will rejoice in the LORD
and take refuge in him;
all the upright in heart will glory in him!

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY FIFTEEN

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.” Psalm 111-10 KJV

In the Old Testament in the book of Psalms, the identity of the psalmist of Psalm one hundred eleven is not known. Psalm one hundred eleven was written as an acrostic psalm which means that the first line begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and each line following begins with each consecutive letter of the alphabet. In this Psalm, God is being glorified for who He is, for all His good works, for His amazing character and nature, for His holiness and righteousness, for His faithfulness and justice, and for keeping His covenant to those who love Him.

In the book of Psalms chapter one hundred eleven verse ten, the psalmist states, *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.”* (Psalm 111-10 KJV) In this scripture, the Hebrew word for “wisdom” is “hakma” which means skillful wisdom, wisely, shrewdness, and prudence. The Hebrew word for “understanding” is “sekel” which means intelligence, success, discretion, prudence, good sense, insight, and cunning. The Hebrew word for “praise” is “tahilla” which means praise, song or hymn, adoration, thanksgiving, renown, fame, and glory. The Hebrew word for “forever” is “ad” which means eternity, perpetual duration, everlasting, and without end. Therefore, the psalmist was declaring that having a fear, reverence, and respect for the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, shrewdness, and prudence. A good understanding, intelligence, success, discretion, prudence, good sense, insight, and cunning is had by all those who love Him and obey His commandments. His praise, adoration, thanksgiving, renown, fame, and glory will last forever, for eternity, from everlasting to everlasting, and will be without end. Hallelujah!

Just like the psalmist in Psalm one hundred eleven, we too may experience the goodness and greatness of our God within our own lives. When we walk in the place of reverential fear and respect for Him in an intimate covenant relationship obeying His commandments, we will have wisdom and understanding. His praise and adoration will forever be on our lips because of who He is and all He has done for us.

REFLECTION

Think about the goodness of the Lord in your life. Think about all the ways He has been faithful to you. Do you feel like You have gained wisdom and understanding in your life from following the Lord?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for sending Jesus to die on the cross for me. Thank You, Jesus, for your blood that saves, heals, and delivers me. Thank you for Your amazing love, goodness, grace, and mercy! Holy Spirit, teach me how to reverence and respect God the Father with my body, soul, and spirit. Teach me how to worship, praise and adore Jesus with all my heart, soul, and spirit! In the name of Jesus, amen.

Psalm 111 KJV

Praise to God for His Faithfulness and Justice

111 Praise the LORD!

I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart,
In the assembly of the upright and *in* the congregation.

²The works of the LORD *are* great,
Studied by all who have pleasure in them.

³His work *is* honorable and glorious,
And His righteousness endures forever.

⁴He has made His wonderful works to be remembered;
The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.

⁵He has given food to those who fear Him;
He will ever be mindful of His covenant.

⁶He has declared to His people the power of His works,
In giving them the heritage of the nations.

⁷ The works of His hands *are* verity and justice;

All His precepts *are* sure.

⁸ They stand fast forever and ever,

And are done in truth and uprightness.

⁹ He has sent redemption to His people;

He has commanded His covenant forever:

Holy and awesome *is* His name.

¹⁰ The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom;

A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments*.

His praise endures forever.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY SIXTEEN

The Fear of the Lord Brings Great Delight

“Praise the LORD. Blessed are those who fear the LORD, who find great delight in his commands.”
Psalm 112 NIV

In the Old Testament in the book of Psalms chapter one hundred twelve, David is the psalmist. Psalms one hundred eleven and one hundred twelve are both similar in that they both are acrostic psalms and they both exalt the name of the Lord. In Psalm one hundred twelve, David also declares the blessings of all those who fear the Lord and walk in obedience to His Word. He states that their children will be mighty, they will be blessed with wealth and riches, and their righteousness will endure forever. David continues to declare that the righteous will walk in light, good will befall them, they will walk in justice, and they will fear no evil. In addition, he states that the upright will have hearts that are steadfast and secure, and they will receive honor. All these promises of the Lord are yes and amen to all those who love Him and obey His Word! *“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.”* (Corinthians 1:20 NKJV) What a mighty God we serve!

In Psalm one hundred twelve verse one, David states, *“Praise the LORD. Blessed are those who fear the LORD, who find great delight in his commands.”* (Psalm 112 NIV) In this scripture, the Hebrew word for “blessed” is “eser” which means happy, blessed, happiness and blessedness. The Hebrew word for “delight” is “hapes” which means delight, desire, favor, pleasure, and to be pleased. Hence, David was stating that those who walk in reverential fear and respect for the Lord will be blessed and happy. They will delight, desire, and take pleasure in His commandments. They will choose to obey Him because of their great love for Him and His goodness. *“Jesus replied, ‘Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.’”* (John 14:23 NIV)

The heavenly Father desires to dwell in and among His people. Through the blood of Jesus and His death on the cross, we have access to an intimate relationship with the Father. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the holy Trinity, and He dwells in us. When we receive the love of the Father expressed through His Son Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will desire to return that love to Him, we will delight to obey His commands, and we will desire to walk in the reverential fear of the Lord. As we walk in the fear of the Lord, we will be blessed by God.

REFLECTION

When you were a child, do you remember a time when obeying your parents kept you out of potential trouble? Do you remember a time when disobeying your parents brought trouble into your life? How do you think that obeying your heavenly Father will bring blessings into your life? How do you think that disobeying Him will bring trouble?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for all the times and ways I have disobeyed Your Word and Your commands. Please forgive me for not giving You first place in my heart and life. Wash me clean with the precious holy blood of Jesus. Holy Spirit, help me to draw close to God. Help me to fear the Lord. Help me to obey His commands. I desire to delight in obeying You. Lord, bring Your blessings into my life. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Psalm 112

¹ Praise the LORD.

Blessed are those who fear the LORD,
who find great delight in his commands.

² Their children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

³ Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.

⁴ Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,
for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous.

⁵ Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely,
who conduct their affairs with justice.

⁶ Surely the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be remembered forever.

⁷ They will have no fear of bad news;
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

⁸ Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.

⁹ They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor,
their righteousness endures forever;
their horn will be lifted high in honor.

¹⁰ The wicked will see and be vexed,
they will gnash their teeth and waste away;
the longings of the wicked will come to nothing.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY SEVENTEEN

The Fear of the Lord Brings Family Blessings

“Blessed is everyone that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways...⁴ Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.” (Psalm 128:1,4 KJV)

In the Old Testament, in the book of Psalms chapter one hundred twenty-eight, the author is unknown. This Psalm, however, was placed among the “Songs of Degrees”, written by King David and King Solomon, which are the fifteen psalms read upon ascending the steps into the temple of the Lord. Psalm one hundred twenty-eight encourages every believer to live a life in full commitment and covenant with the Lord. This psalm displays the advantages, benefits, and blessings for those who walk in the fear of the Lord.

In the book of Psalms chapter one hundred twenty-eight verse one, the scripture states, *“Blessed is everyone that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways...⁴ Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.”* (Psalm 128:1,4 KJV) In this scripture, the Hebrew word for “blessed” is “*eser*” which means happy, happiness, blessed, and blessedness. The Hebrew word for “feareth” is “*yare*” which means fearing morally, reverent, and afraid. The Hebrew word for “walketh” is “*halak*” which means to walk, to continue, and to follow. The Hebrew word for “ways” is “*derek*” which means a course of life, customs, ways, manner, or journey. Therefore, all who fear, reverence, and respect the Lord and that walk, continue, or follow in His ways, course of life, customs, or manner shall be blessed and happy.

In the book of Psalms chapter one hundred twenty-eight verses two through six, the Word continues to reveal that those who walk in the fear of the Lord will attain many more blessings. They shall be happy and blessed. They shall have plenty of provision and fruitfulness from the work of their hands. All the affairs of their lives will go well with them. Their spouses will be fruitful in all their endeavors. Their children will be like olive plants will fruit and oil abounding. The Lord Himself will bless them and they will see the good of Jerusalem. They will live a long life in order to see their grandchildren, blessings for generations.

Walking in the fear of the Lord brings blessing and happiness to your life, your spouse’s life, your children’s lives, and your grandchildren’s lives. Living a life in pursuit of the Lord, His character, His ways, His nature, and His heart, will bring safety and provision. The Word of God states that the promises of the Lord are yes and amen for those who believe in Him. *“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.”* (2 Corinthians 1:20 NKJV) All those who walk in the fear of the Lord will be blessed, will be happy, and will receive His promises. All those who walk in the fear of the Lord will receive family blessings.

REFLECTION

If you are married, is your spouse happy with his/her life and fruitful in his/her endeavors? If not, what do you think you can change in your personal relationship with the Lord that will bring a blessing in the life of your spouse? Are you experiencing the blessings and promises of the Lord in your own life? If not, what do you think you can change in your personal relationship with the Lord that will bring the blessings and promises of the Lord into your life and your children's lives?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your promises and blessings that are available to me and my family. Lord, please give me a revelation of Your magnificence so that I may have an appropriate fear, reverence, and respect for You. Lord, please forgive me for not revering You with my whole heart. Holy Spirit, please help me to have a holy fear of the Lord so that my family will receive Your many blessings and promises. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Psalm 128 KJV

128 Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.

² For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.

³ Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.

⁴ Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.

⁵ The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.

⁶ Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY EIGHTEEN

Fear of the Lord, Beginning of Knowledge

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”
Proverbs 1:7 NKJV

In the Old Testament the book of Proverbs was written by King Solomon for his son, his children, and others. In the book of Proverbs chapter one, Solomon set the tone for the entire book. In chapter one he wrote that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. In other words, the first step in attaining true knowledge is to have a holy reverential fear and respect for Almighty God. Solomon continued to instruct his son that it is foolish **not** to fear the Lord. He stated that fools despise wisdom and instruction.

In Proverbs chapter one, King Solomon taught his son how to live a godly life and how to lead a life given to the Lord. First Solomon instructed his son to fear the Lord. Then he taught him to shun evil, evil people, and evil situations. Lastly, he warned his son to listen to the voice of wisdom when she calls. He cautioned his son **not** to ignore godly wisdom and notes the negative consequences of refusing to walk in the fear of the Lord. *“Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. ²⁹ Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the LORD...”* (Proverbs 1:38-29 NKJV) Sadly, people who choose not to walk in the fear of the Lord are actually choosing to be away from the Lord, His goodness, kindness, love, and tender mercies. They are choosing to live a life away from the protection of the Lord and to be exposed to the fiery attacks and lies of the enemy.

In the book of Proverbs chapter one verse seven, the Word states, *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”* (Proverbs 1:7 NKJV) In this scripture, the Hebrew word for “beginning” is “re sit” which means the beginning, the chief thing, first fruits, and choice part. The Hebrew word for “knowledge” is “da at” which means knowledge, to know, cunning, to be aware, wittingly, perception, skill, wisdom, understanding, and discernment. The Hebrew word for “fools” is “evil” which means silly, foolish, perverse, one who despises wisdom, one who mocks, one who is quarrelsome, and one who is licentious (promiscuous). The Hebrew word for “wisdom” is hakma” which means wisdom, wisely, skill, shrewdness, and prudence. The Hebrew word for “instruction” is “musar” which means chastisement, correction, discipline, doctrine, rebuke, and instruction. Therefore, Solomon was stating that walking and living in the fear of the Lord is the chief thing and the first fruits (the tithe offering) of your spiritual walk with God; and it is the beginning of knowledge, wisdom, perception, skill, understanding and discernment. However, fools or silly, perverse, and foolish people who despise wisdom, mock, quarrel and are licentious hate and despise wisdom

shrewdness, and prudence. They also despise instruction, chastisement, correction, discipline, sound doctrine, and rebuke.

Interestingly, the Word of the Lord states that the Lord disciplines those whom He loves. *“...because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”* (Hebrews 12:6 NIV) When we accept Jesus as our personal Savior and make Him the Lord of our lives, we are adopted in the family of God, and we become His sons and daughters. As His sons and daughters, the chief thing or our first fruits of our covenant love relationship with Him is to reverence and respect Him for who He is, Almighty God, the Creator of the Universe and everything therein. Because we love Him, we desire to please Him, and we desire to be transformed into the image and likeness of Jesus. This desire in us to become one with the Lord causes us to welcome the discipline and correction of the Lord, because we know that the Lord loves us and desires to draw us closer and closer to Him. Our desire for oneness with the Lord and to know Him intimately compels us to love Him and fear Him in wisdom and in truth. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of truly knowing Him in an intimate way.

REFLECTION

Have you ever been in a situation where you were given godly counsel, you ignored it, and the situation ended badly? If you had the opportunity to go back and heed the wise counsel, would you do it? How do you think your life would be different if you heeded the wisdom of the Lord in difficult situations?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for all the times I did not heed godly wisdom and counsel. Lord, please forgive me for despising wisdom and understanding. Open my ears and my spirit and help me to listen and hear Your wisdom and truth in my life. Draw me close to You and lovingly discipline me when I need it. Thank You, Lord, for Your great love for me. In the name of Jesus, amen.

1 NKJV

The Beginning of Knowledge

1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

²To know wisdom and instruction,
To perceive the words of understanding,
³To receive the instruction of wisdom,
Justice, judgment, and equity;
⁴To give prudence to the simple,
To the young man knowledge and discretion—
⁵A wise *man* will hear and increase learning,
And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,
⁶To understand a proverb and an enigma,
The words of the wise and their riddles.

⁷The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Shun Evil Counsel

⁸My son, hear the instruction of your father,
And do not forsake the law of your mother;
⁹For they *will be* a graceful ornament on your head,
And chains about your neck.

¹⁰My son, if sinners entice you,
Do not consent.

¹¹If they say, “Come with us,
Let us lie in wait to *shed* blood;
Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause;
¹²Let us swallow them alive like Sheol,
And whole, like those who go down to the Pit;
¹³We shall find all *kinds* of precious possessions,
We shall fill our houses with spoil;
¹⁴Cast in your lot among us,
Let us all have one purse” —
¹⁵My son, do not walk in the way with them,

Keep your foot from their path;
¹⁶ For their feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed blood.
¹⁷ Surely, in vain the net is spread
In the sight of any bird;
¹⁸ But they lie in wait for their *own* blood,
They lurk secretly for their *own* lives.
¹⁹ So *are* the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain;
It takes away the life of its owners.

The Call of Wisdom

²⁰ Wisdom calls aloud outside;
She raises her voice in the open squares.
²¹ She cries out in the chief concourses,
At the openings of the gates in the city
She speaks her words:
²² “How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity?
For scorners delight in their scorning,
And fools hate knowledge.
²³ Turn at my rebuke;
Surely I will pour out my spirit on you;
I will make my words known to you.
²⁴ Because I have called and you refused,
I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded,
²⁵ Because you disdained all my counsel,
And would have none of my rebuke,
²⁶ I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when your terror comes,
²⁷ When your terror comes like a storm,
And your destruction comes like a whirlwind,
When distress and anguish come upon you.

²⁸ “Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;
They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.

²⁹ Because they hated knowledge
And did not choose the fear of the LORD,

³⁰ They would have none of my counsel
And despised my every rebuke.

³¹ Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way,
And be filled to the full with their own fancies.

³² For the turning away of the simple will slay them,
And the complacency of fools will destroy them;

³³ But whoever listens to me will dwell safely,
And will be secure, without fear of evil.”

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY NINETEEN

The Fear of the Lord Brings Healing

“Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. ⁸ It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.” Proverbs 3:7 ESV

In the Old Testament in the book of proverbs chapter three, King Solomon continued to instruct his son and others in the wisdom of God. In this chapter, Solomon taught his son to trust in the Lord with all his heart, to have the wisdom of God instead of man’s wisdom, and to avoid evil people and evil situations. King Solomon *explains*, *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him, he will make straight your paths. ⁷ Be not wise in your eyes; **fear the LORD** and turn away from evil. ⁸ It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.”* (Proverbs 3:7-8 ESV) In Solomon’s instructions in this verse, having the fear of the Lord brings healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

In the book of Proverbs chapter three verse seven, the Hebrew word for “wise” is “hakam” which means wise, cunning, skillful, shrewd, learned, prudent and wise both ethically and religiously. The Hebrew word for “in your own eyes” is “ayin” which means eye, showing mental qualities, and mental and spiritual faculties. The Hebrew word for “turn away” is “sur” which means turn away, depart from, remove, turn aside, withdraw from, and reject. The Hebrew word for “evil” is “ra” which means evil, adversity, calamity, affliction, distress, great grief, harm, misery, naughtiness, wretchedness, wrong, wickedness, trouble, and anything bad. Therefore, verse seven instructs us **not** to place our wisdom in our own wisdom, skillfulness, shrewdness, learnedness, and prudence; but to have the wisdom of God Himself and place all our trust in Him and in His Word, which is walking in the fear of the Lord. In doing so, we should also turn away from, depart from, remove ourselves from, turn aside from, and totally reject all forms of evil, adversity, calamity, affliction, naughtiness, wretchedness, wickedness, trouble, and everything bad.

In Proverbs chapter three verse eight Solomon continued, *“It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.”* (Proverbs 3:7 ESV) The Hebrew word for “healing” is “rip ut” which means a cure or health, and healing. The Hebrew word for “flesh” is “sor” which means navel, and umbilical cord. The Hebrew word for “refreshment” is “siqquy” which means beverage, moisture, drink, marrow, and refreshment. The Hebrew word for “bones” is “esem” which means a bone, strength, body, life, substance, and self. Hence, King Solomon was saying that walking in the fear of the Lord will result in having healing, a cure, and health to your flesh, navel, and umbilical cord (supply of nutrients for life), and it will bring refreshment, moisture, drink, and marrow (healthy body fluids) to your bones, strength, body, and life substance. Walking in the

fear of the Lord brings health and life to your body, soul, and spirit! The fear of the Lord is a wellspring of life to those who love the Lord and walk in His ways. In the New Testament in the book of third John the Word states, *“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers”*. (3 John 2 NKJV) It is the heart of the Lord for you and I to prosper mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. It is His desire for us to be in complete health and wholeness with a healthy sound mind, will and emotions, which is our soul. Seeking the Lord and His wisdom in all things will quickly place us on the path to a healthy, happy life.

REFLECTION

Do you currently struggle with illness, weakness, or any area in your life where you are suffering emotionally, spiritually, or physically? Are you leaning on your own wisdom or the wisdom of man to help you solve your life struggles? How do you think that walking in the fear of the Lord and His wisdom will help you resolve your current struggles in life and health?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for trying to solve my life problems without consulting You. Forgive me for seeking my own wisdom or the wisdom of man. Lord, I am asking for Your wisdom to help me find and receive all that You have for me: my health, healing, life, Your promises, and Your blessings for my life. Help me to trust You and Your Word above all. Help me to walk in the fear of the Lord concerning every area of my life. Help me to love You with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Proverbs 3 ESV

Trust in the LORD with All Your Heart

3 My son, do not forget my teaching,

but let your heart keep my commandments,

² for length of days and years of life

and peace they will add to you.

³ Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you;

bind them around your neck;

write them on the tablet of your heart.

⁴ So you will find favor and good success
in the sight of God and man.

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

⁷ Be not wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD and turn away from evil.

⁸ It will be healing to your flesh
and refreshment to your bones.

⁹ Honor the LORD with your wealth
and with the first fruits of all your produce;

¹⁰ then your barns will be filled with plenty,
and your vats will be bursting with wine.

¹¹ My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline
or be weary of his reproof,

¹² for the LORD reproves him whom he loves,
as a father the son in whom he delights.

Blessed Is the One Who Finds Wisdom

¹³ Blessed is the one who finds wisdom,
and the one who gets understanding,

¹⁴ for the gain from her is better than gain from silver
and her profit better than gold.

¹⁵ She is more precious than jewels,
and nothing you desire can compare with her.

¹⁶ Long life is in her right hand;
in her left hand are riches and honor.

¹⁷ Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
and all her paths are peace.

¹⁸ She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her;
those who hold her fast are called blessed.

¹⁹ The LORD by wisdom founded the earth;
by understanding he established the heavens;

²⁰ by his knowledge the deeps broke open,
and the clouds drop down the dew.

²¹ My son, do not lose sight of these—
keep sound wisdom and discretion,

²² and they will be life for your soul
and adornment for your neck.

²³ Then you will walk on your way securely,
and your foot will not stumble.

²⁴ If you lie down, you will not be afraid;
when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

²⁵ Do not be afraid of sudden terror
or of the ruin of the wicked, when it comes,

²⁶ for the LORD will be your confidence
and will keep your foot from being caught.

²⁷ Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,
when it is in your power to do it.

²⁸ Do not say to your neighbor, “Go, and come again,
tomorrow I will give it”—when you have it with you.

²⁹ Do not plan evil against your neighbor,
who dwells trustingly beside you.

³⁰ Do not contend with a man for no reason,
when he has done you no harm.

³¹ Do not envy a man of violence
and do not choose any of his ways,

³² for the devious person is an abomination to the LORD,
but the upright are in his confidence.

³³ The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked,
but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous.

³⁴ Toward the scorners he is scornful,
but to the humble he gives favor.

³⁵ The wise will inherit honor,
but fools get disgrace.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY TWENTY

Fear the Lord: Hate Evil, Pride and Arrogance

“To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.”
Proverbs 8:13 NIV

In the Old Testament in the book of Proverbs chapter eight, King Solomon equated the fear of the Lord to hating evil, pride, arrogance, evil behavior, and perverse speech. In chapter eight verse thirteen, he stated, *“To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.”* (Proverbs 8:13 NIV) In the New Testament in the book of First Peter, the Word of the Lord teaches us that God is holy, and His desire for us is to be holy as He is holy. The Word states, *“...because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”* (1 Peter 1:16) Our God is a holy God. He is perfect and righteous in all His ways. There is no evil, corruption, or perverseness found in Him. Everything evil and perverse comes from the enemy of our souls, Satan. Everything that comes from the evil one is in direct opposition to our God and King. Therefore, no evil can dwell in the midst of a holy God. As believers in Jesus, when we have a healthy holy fear of the Lord, we will love what God loves and hate what God hates, namely evil.

In the book of Proverbs chapter eight verse thirteen, the Hebrew word for “hate” is “sane” which means to hate, to be an enemy of, and to be in opposition to. The Hebrew word for “evil” is “ra” which means bad, evil, wickedness, vexation, wretchedness, wrong, mischief, and naughtiness. The Hebrew word for “pride” is “ge a” which means pride and arrogance. The Hebrew word for “arrogance” is “ga on” which means pride, arrogancy, swelling, and exalting self. The Hebrew word for “behavior” is “derek” which means manner, way, journey, direction, path, course of life, and moral character. The Hebrew word for “perverse” is “tahpukot” which means perversity, fraud, and a froward thing. The Hebrew word for “speech” is “pe” which means the mouth, speech, and talk. Therefore, the Word of God is teaching us that “to fear the Lord” is to hate, be an enemy of, and to be in opposition to all evil, bad, wickedness, vexation, wrongdoing, mischief, and naughtiness. For God hates pride, arrogancy, the swelling of our heads, and self-exaltation. He also is the enemy of evil behavior, having an evil manner or way, and following an evil path, course, or journey in life. He is in opposition to a perverse, fraudulent, froward, or contrary mouth, speech, or talk. When we fear the Lord, we will desire to be holy as He is holy. We will desire to walk in His ways, His truth, and His righteousness. We will desire to be transformed into His image and likeness.

REFLECTION

Look at the direction or path of life on which you are currently walking. Do you find yourself walking on a path that leads to the heart of God, or that leads you away from His love? Do your closest friends encourage you to follow after God and His holiness? Or are they encouraging you to live a sin-filled life? What steps can you take to find and walk on a holy path that will lead you closer into the heart and love of God?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for living a life of sin, perverseness, and evil. Forgive me for loving and participating in the things that You hate. Jesus, wash me clean with Your precious holy blood. Holy Spirit, help me to live a holy life before You. Help me to walk in the fear of the Lord. Help me to love Jesus with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Proverbs 8 NIV

Wisdom's Call

8 Does not wisdom call out?

Does not understanding raise her voice?

² At the highest point along the way,
where the paths meet, she takes her stand;

³ beside the gate leading into the city,
at the entrance, she cries aloud:

⁴ "To you, O people, I call out;
I raise my voice to all mankind.

⁵ You who are simple, gain prudence;
you who are foolish, set your hearts on it.^[a]

⁶ Listen, for I have trustworthy things to say;
I open my lips to speak what is right.

⁷ My mouth speaks what is true,
for my lips detest wickedness.

⁸ All the words of my mouth are just;
none of them is crooked or perverse.

⁹ To the discerning all of them are right;
they are upright to those who have found knowledge.

¹⁰ Choose my instruction instead of silver,
knowledge rather than choice gold,

¹¹ for wisdom is more precious than rubies,
and nothing you desire can compare with her.

¹² "I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence;
I possess knowledge and discretion.

¹³ To fear the LORD is to hate evil;
I hate pride and arrogance,
evil behavior and perverse speech.

¹⁴ Counsel and sound judgment are mine;
I have insight, I have power.

¹⁵ By me kings reign
and rulers issue decrees that are just;

¹⁶ by me princes govern,
and nobles—all who rule on earth.

¹⁷ I love those who love me,
and those who seek me find me.

¹⁸ With me are riches and honor,
enduring wealth and prosperity.

¹⁹ My fruit is better than fine gold;
what I yield surpasses choice silver.

²⁰ I walk in the way of righteousness,
along the paths of justice,

²¹ bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love me
and making their treasuries full.

²² “The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works,
before his deeds of old;

²³ I was formed long ages ago,
at the very beginning, when the world came to be.

²⁴ When there were no watery depths, I was given birth,
when there were no springs overflowing with water;

²⁵ before the mountains were settled in place,
before the hills, I was given birth,

²⁶ before he made the world or its fields
or any of the dust of the earth.

²⁷ I was there when he set the heavens in place,
when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,

²⁸ when he established the clouds above
and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,

²⁹ when he gave the sea its boundary
so the waters would not overstep his command,
and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.

³⁰ Then I was constantly at his side.
I was filled with delight day after day,
rejoicing always in his presence,

³¹ rejoicing in his whole world
and delighting in mankind.

³² “Now then, my children, listen to me;
blessed are those who keep my ways.

³³ Listen to my instruction and be wise;
do not disregard it.

³⁴ Blessed are those who listen to me,
watching daily at my doors,
waiting at my doorway.

³⁵ For those who find me find life
and receive favor from the LORD.

³⁶ But those who fail to find me harm themselves;
all who hate me love death.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY TWENTY-ONE

The Fear of the Lord brings Uprightness, Family Safety, and Life

“Whoever fears the LORD walks uprightly, but those who despise him are devious in their ways.”
Proverbs 14:2 NIV

“Whoever fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for their children it will be a refuge. ²⁷ The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death.” Proverbs 14:26-27 NIV

In the book of Proverbs chapter fourteen, Solomon is verse by verse comparing and contrasting the lives of two types of people. One personality type is described as an evil doer, foolish, a fool, a liar, quick-tempered, simple, wicked, a false witness, devious, and lazy. The other personality type is described as wise, prudent, righteous, kind, blessed, hard-working, a truth-teller, patient, faithful, honest, and upright. In each verse of Proverbs fourteen, King Solomon reveals the blessings of being a wise and righteous person, as well as the curses that follow a foolish and wicked person. A wise and righteous person is a person who fears the Lord. A foolish and wicked person is one who mocks God and refuses to walk in covenant with Him.

In the book of Proverbs chapter fourteen verse two the Word states, *“Whoever fears the LORD walks uprightly, but those who despise him are devious in their ways.”* (Proverbs 14:2 NIV) Clearly, all those who have a holy fear and reverence of the Lord Jesus, will desire to walk uprightly before Him. Because they love the Lord and are in a covenant relationship with Him, they desire to live a holy life and to obey His Word. However, those who do not fear and respect the Lord do not desire to live a holy life, nor do they desire to obey His Word. In this scripture, the Hebrew word for “uprightly” is “yoser” which means right, meet, upright, moral straightness, and doing what is right. The Hebrew word for “despise” is “baza” which means despise, disdain, contemptible, scorn, despicable, vile, and worthless. The Hebrew word for “devious” is “luz” which means perverseness, froward, crooked, to go wrong, and to depart from the right way. Therefore, verse two reveals that whoever fears and reverences the Lord walks or lives uprightly, has moral straightness, and does what is right. But those who despise, disdain, have contempt, scorn, are despicable, are vile, or are worthless toward the Lord, are devious, perverse, froward, crooked, wrong, and depart from the right way of life.

In the book of Proverbs chapter fourteen verses twenty-six through twenty-seven, the Word of God states *“Whoever fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for their children it will be a refuge. ²⁷ The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death.”* (Proverbs 14:26-27 NIV) All those who choose to walk in a covenant relationship with the Lord by the fullness of the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary, have a place secure fortress for

themselves and for their children. Walking in the fear of the Lord will establish a fountain of life for protecting them from the snares of death. In this scripture the Hebrew word for “fortress” is “mibtah” which means refuge, security, assurance, confidence, hope, surety, and trust. The Hebrew word for “refuge” is “mahase” which means shelter from danger and falsehood, place of hope, trust, and refuge. In verse twenty-seven, the Hebrew word for “fountain” is “maqor” which means source of water, source of happiness and wisdom, a well-spring, source of joy and life, and purification. The Hebrew word for “life” is “hay” which means alive, fresh water, living thing, reviving, sustenance, and renewal. Hence, in verse twenty-seven, the Word teaches that walking and living in the fear of the Lord is a fortress, refuge, security, assurance, hope, surety, and trust; and walking in the fear of the Lord will bring a place of refuge, shelter from danger and falsehood, and a place of hope and trust for your children. Walking and living in the fear and reverence of the Lord will be a fountain, well-spring, source of fresh living water, source of happiness and wisdom, and a source of life and joy. Living in a covenant relationship with the Lord in holy fear and respect for Him will bring life, fresh living water for your soul, revival, refreshment, and renewal to your being. It will keep you from the snares and entrapments of the enemy who desires to steal, kill, and destroy your life. The fear of the Lord brings uprightness, family safety, and life.

REFLECTION

After reading the entire passage of Proverbs chapter fourteen, do you find yourself relating to the person who is upright before the Lord or the person who is ungodly? How do you think that seeking the Lord, His presence, and His Word will help you walk in deeper intimacy with Him in the fear of the Lord?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for making a way for me to walk with You in deep intimacy. Thank You for loving me enough to give me Your wisdom. Thank You for helping me to draw closer and closer to You by teaching me how to walk and live in the fear, reverence, and respect of the Lord. Holy Spirit, transform me more and more into the image and likeness of Jesus! Help me to be completely Yours! Help me to fear, reverence, and respect You and to obey Your Word. Lord, give me Your wisdom so that I might live in You as my fortress and well-spring of life. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Proverbs 14 NIV

14 The wise woman builds her house,
but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.

- ² Whoever fears the LORD walks uprightly,
but those who despise him are devious in their ways.
- ³ A fool's mouth lashes out with pride,
but the lips of the wise protect them.
- ⁴ Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty,
but from the strength of an ox come abundant harvests.
- ⁵ An honest witness does not deceive,
but a false witness pours out lies.
- ⁶ The mocker seeks wisdom and finds none,
but knowledge comes easily to the discerning.
- ⁷ Stay away from a fool,
for you will not find knowledge on their lips.
- ⁸ The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways,
but the folly of fools is deception.
- ⁹ Fools mock at making amends for sin,
but goodwill is found among the upright.
- ¹⁰ Each heart knows its own bitterness,
and no one else can share its joy.
- ¹¹ The house of the wicked will be destroyed,
but the tent of the upright will flourish.
- ¹² There is a way that appears to be right,
but in the end it leads to death.
- ¹³ Even in laughter the heart may ache,
and rejoicing may end in grief.
- ¹⁴ The faithless will be fully repaid for their ways,
and the good rewarded for theirs.

- ¹⁵ The simple believe anything,
but the prudent give thought to their steps.
- ¹⁶ The wise fear the LORD and shun evil,
but a fool is hotheaded and yet feels secure.
- ¹⁷ A quick-tempered person does foolish things,
and the one who devises evil schemes is hated.
- ¹⁸ The simple inherit folly,
but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.
- ¹⁹ Evildoers will bow down in the presence of the good,
and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.
- ²⁰ The poor are shunned even by their neighbors,
but the rich have many friends.
- ²¹ It is a sin to despise one's neighbor,
but blessed is the one who is kind to the needy.
- ²² Do not those who plot evil go astray?
But those who plan what is good find love and faithfulness.
- ²³ All hard work brings a profit,
but mere talk leads only to poverty.
- ²⁴ The wealth of the wise is their crown,
but the folly of fools yields folly.
- ²⁵ A truthful witness saves lives,
but a false witness is deceitful.
- ²⁶ Whoever fears the LORD has a secure fortress,
and for their children it will be a refuge.
- ²⁷ The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,
turning a person from the snares of death.

- ²⁸ A large population is a king's glory,
but without subjects a prince is ruined.
- ²⁹ Whoever is patient has great understanding,
but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.
- ³⁰ A heart at peace gives life to the body,
but envy rots the bones.
- ³¹ Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker,
but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.
- ³² When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down,
but even in death the righteous seek refuge in God.
- ³³ Wisdom reposes in the heart of the discerning
and even among fools she lets herself be known.
- ³⁴ Righteousness exalts a nation,
but sin condemns any people.
- ³⁵ A king delights in a wise servant,
but a shameful servant arouses his fury.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY TWENTY-TWO

The Splendor of His Majesty Brings the Fear of the Lord

“Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from the fearful presence of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty!” Isaiah 2:10 NIV

“People will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from the fearful presence of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.” Isaiah 2:19 NIV

In the Old Testament in the book of Isaiah, the prophet Isaiah was called by God to warn the people of Judah and Jerusalem of what was to come in the last days. In the first portion of the passage of scripture, Isaiah prophesied about the mountain of the Lord’s temple coming to the earth. Isaiah foretold of God dwelling in His temple, the people of all the nations coming to worship Him, the people of the earth desiring to know God and His ways, and peace between all the nations of the earth. In the second portion of this passage of scripture, Isaiah prophesied of a great shaking coming to the earth. Isaiah described the people in the last days as being arrogant, idol worshipers, followers of pagan rituals, having great wealth and pride, full of superstitions, and practicing divination. Isaiah foretold of all these people trying to run and hide to escape the great shaking. Isaiah concludes this chapter by warning the people not to trust in mere humans.

In the book of Isaiah chapter two verses ten and nineteen, the prophet of God was foretelling of a great shaking coming to the earth that would cause the people flee and hide in rocks, caves, and in holes in the ground. *“Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from the fearful presence of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty!”* (Isaiah 2:10 NIV) *“People will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from the fearful presence of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.”* (Isaiah 2:19 NIV) In these two scriptures, the Hebrew word for “fearful” is “pahad” which means alarm, dread, fear, and terror. The Hebrew word for “splendor” is “hadar” which means magnificence, beauty, excellency, glorious, splendor, honor, and majesty. The Hebrew word for “majesty” is “ga on” which means excellency, glory, exaltation, and majesty. Therefore, the prophet Isaiah was warning the people to flee in caves, rocks, and holes in the ground to escape the fearful presence, alarm, dread, and terror of the manifestation of the of the splendor, magnificence, beauty, gloriousness, honor and majesty of the Lord’s excellency, glory, exaltation, and majesty.

In the Old Testament in the book of Exodus, Moses inquired of the Lord to see His glory. In response, the Lord allowed Moses to hide in a rock and look upon His back while He passed by Moses, for no one may see His glory and live. *“Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”¹⁹ And the LORD said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my*

name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. ²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."²¹ Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. ²² When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen." (Exodus 33:18-23 NIV) The glory of the presence of the Lord is so spectacular, brilliant, and powerful that the appearance of His being would cause humanity to fall down as dead and tremble at the sight of Him.

In the last days when the Lord rises to reveal Himself in all His splendor, glory and magnificence, the people of the earth will shake and tremble at the sight of Him. Those who once put their trust in other human beings and in their own human wisdom and achievement will be in shock and awe when they behold Him in the magnitude of His glory. There is nothing or no one in heaven or on this earth who can compare to the unfathomable magnificence and splendor of our God and our King. King Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

REFLECTION

Have you ever had an encounter with the presence of the Lord? If so, did you experience His glorious presence? How do you think seeing God in all His glory would affect you? How would experiencing the Lord in this way change your life focus?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for any and all idol worship, superstitions, pagan customs, and divination. Wash me clean by the blood of Jesus. Lord, I want to know You and Your ways. Lord, I want to see You in all Your glory like Moses did. I want to encounter You in all Your splendor, glory, and majesty. Lord, please show me Your glory and help me to how to walk in the fear, reverence, and respect of the Lord that You deserve because You are the One True God. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Isaiah 2 NIV

The Mountain of the LORD

2 This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

² In the last days

the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established
as the highest of the mountains;

it will be exalted above the hills,
and all nations will stream to it.

³ Many peoples will come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the temple of the God of Jacob.

He will teach us his ways,
so that we may walk in his paths."

The law will go out from Zion,
the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

⁴ He will judge between the nations
and will settle disputes for many peoples.

They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.

⁵ Come, descendants of Jacob,
let us walk in the light of the LORD.

The Day of the LORD

⁶ You, LORD, have abandoned your people,
the descendants of Jacob.

They are full of superstitions from the East;
they practice divination like the Philistines
and embrace pagan customs.

⁷ Their land is full of silver and gold;
there is no end to their treasures.

Their land is full of horses;
there is no end to their chariots.

⁸ Their land is full of idols;
they bow down to the work of their hands,

to what their fingers have made.

⁹ So people will be brought low
and everyone humbled—
do not forgive them.

¹⁰ Go into the rocks, hide in the ground
from the fearful presence of the LORD
and the splendor of his majesty!

¹¹ The eyes of the arrogant will be humbled
and human pride brought low;
the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

¹² The LORD Almighty has a day in store
for all the proud and lofty,
for all that is exalted
(and they will be humbled),

¹³ for all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty,
and all the oaks of Bashan,

¹⁴ for all the towering mountains
and all the high hills,

¹⁵ for every lofty tower
and every fortified wall,

¹⁶ for every trading ship
and every stately vessel.

¹⁷ The arrogance of man will be brought low
and human pride humbled;
the LORD alone will be exalted in that day,

¹⁸ and the idols will totally disappear.

¹⁹ People will flee to caves in the rocks
and to holes in the ground
from the fearful presence of the LORD
and the splendor of his majesty,
when he rises to shake the earth.

²⁰ In that day people will throw away
to the moles and bats
their idols of silver and idols of gold,
which they made to worship.

²¹ They will flee to caverns in the rocks
and to the overhanging crags
from the fearful presence of the LORD
and the splendor of his majesty,
when he rises to shake the earth.

²² Stop trusting in mere humans,
who have but a breath in their nostrils.
Why hold them in esteem?

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY TWENTY-THREE

The Holiness of God Causes the Fear of the Lord

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” ⁴ *At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook, and the temple was filled with smoke.* ⁵ *“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”* Isaiah 6:3-6 NIV

In the Old Testament in the book of Isaiah chapter six, the Lord was calling and commissioning Isaiah to become a prophet, His voice on the earth. King Uzziah had been the king of Judah at that time in history, however he died. In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah had a powerful encounter with the Lord God Almighty. In this encounter, Isaiah was either taken up to heaven or he had an open vision of the throne room of God. In this experience, he recounted seeing the Lord high and lifted up and seated on His throne. He also described seeing the train of the Lord’s robe filling the entire temple in heaven. Next, Isaiah described the angelic seraphim, the protectors of the throne of God, as having six wings: two which covered their faces, two which covered their feet, and two which were used for flying. These angelic creatures were calling out to each other saying, *“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”* (Isaiah 6:3 NIV) Then, Isaiah described that the pillars and doorposts of the temple were shaken, and smoke filled the temple.

After witnessing the Lord God Almighty seated on His throne in all His splendor, glory, and majesty, after seeing the marvelous angelic creatures surrounding the throne of God crying out “Holy, holy, holy!”, after seeing the doorposts of the temple shake from the powerful presence of the Lord, and after seeing the smoke of God’s glory fill the temple, Isaiah was undone! The powerful presence of the Almighty Creator of the Universe was more than he could bear. The intensity of the presence of the Lord in all His magnificence, magnitude, and majesty caused Isaiah to become aware of his humanity and sinful nature. He was in the presence of the one true, holy God! The holiness and power of God emanating from His being caused Isaiah to have a holy reverence, respect, and fear of the Lord.

In the book of the Revelation in the New Testament, the apostle John had a similar encounter with Jesus, the King of kings. *“On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,* ¹¹ *which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.* ¹² *I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,* ¹³ *and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.* ¹⁴ *The hair on his head was*

white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵ His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. ¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades." (Revelation 1:12-18 NIV) When we have a throne room encounter with the holiness of the One True God, we too will fall on our faces as dead in the fear of the Lord. The revelation of the Lord in all His splendor, glory, majesty, and holiness causes us to fall down and worship Him in the fear, reverence, and respect of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Have you ever had an encounter with the holiness of the Lord? If so, how did you respond? If not, how do you think you would respond if you had a similar encounter to that of Isaiah or John? Why do you think the Lord gives encounters to people?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for my limited understanding of who You are and forgive me for not revering You for who You are. Lord, I desire to have a revelation of Your holiness, splendor, glory, and majesty. Lord, show me Your glory that I may fear You. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Isaiah 6 NIV

Isaiah's Commission

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory."

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook, and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵ “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

⁹ He said, “Go and tell this people:

“Be ever hearing, but never understanding;
be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’

¹⁰ Make the heart of this people calloused;
make their ears dull
and close their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed.”

¹¹ Then I said, “For how long, Lord?”

And he answered:

“Until the cities lie ruined
and without inhabitant,
until the houses are left deserted
and the fields ruined and ravaged,

¹² until the LORD has sent everyone far away
and the land is utterly forsaken.

¹³ And though a tenth remains in the land,
it will again be laid waste.

But as the terebinth and oak
leave stumps when they are cut down,
so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY TWENTY-FOUR

The Holy Spirit Is the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord

“The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.” Isaiah 11:2 NKJV

In the Old Testament in the book of Isaiah chapter eleven, the prophet Isaiah was declaring that the Messiah would be born, King Jesus. Isaiah not only prophesied of His coming, but he also gave detailed and accurate descriptions of the Lord in all His splendor and glory. In chapter eleven of the book of Isaiah, the prophet painted a picture of the earth and the inhabitants of the earth when Jesus returns to bring His kingdom.

In the book of Isaiah chapter eleven verses one through two, Isaiah stated that a chute would come out of the stump of Jesse, which describes King David. Out of the chute (King David) would arise a Branch, which is King Jesus, the Savior of the world. The prophet continued by stating that the Branch, King Jesus, would bear much fruit. In verse two, Isaiah prophesies that The Spirit of the Lord would rest on Him, Jesus. The Word states, *“The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.”* (Isaiah 11:2 NKJV)

In the book of Isaiah chapter eleven verse two, Isaiah describes Jesus as the One that The Holy Spirit would “rest upon”. In this scripture the Hebrew word for “rest” is “nu ah” which means to dwell, the fall upon, and remain upon. The Hebrew word for “wisdom” is “hakma’ which means wisdom, wise, skilled, shrewdness, prudence, and skilled for war. The Hebrew word for “understanding” is “bina” which means knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and discernment. The Hebrew word for “counsel” is “esa” which means advise, counsel, and purpose. The Hebrew word for “might” is “gebura” which means might, strength, power, and mighty acts (signs, wonders, and miracles). The Hebrew word for “knowledge” is “da at” which means cunning, knowledge, skill, discernment, understanding, and wisdom. The Hebrew word for “fear” is “yira” which means fear, reverence, exceedingly fearful, awestruck, revered, respect, and piety.

The Spirit of the Lord is **The Holy Spirit**. In this scripture, Isaiah was declaring that the Promised One, King Jesus, would have The Holy Spirit rest, dwell, reside, fall upon, and remain upon Him. The Holy Spirit would rest upon Him with wisdom, skill, shrewdness, and prudence. The Holy Spirit would rest upon Him in counsel, advice, and purpose. The Holy Spirit would rest upon Him with might, strength, power, and mighty acts. The Holy Spirit would rest upon Him with knowledge, cunning, skill, discernment, understanding, and wisdom. The Holy Spirit would rest upon Him with the fear, reverence, respect, and piety of the Lord. Even King Jesus, the King of all

kings and the Lord of all lords walked the face of this earth in the reverential respect of the Almighty God, His heavenly Father. Jesus modelled to us what it looks like to walk in a deep, loving, covenant relationship with the Father in perfect unity and oneness. Just as Jesus walked in the fear of the Lord, we too must live a life with the fear of the Lord resting, dwelling, and remaining on us.

REFLECTION

Do you have the Holy Spirit resting on and dwelling in you? Do you have The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and the fear of the Lord dwelling in you? How do you think you can acquire The Spirit of the fear of the Lord to rest upon you?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for making a way for us to live a life of intimacy with You through the precious, holy blood of Jesus. Lord, purge everything out of us that is not of You. Lord, save us, cleanse us, heal us, deliver us, sanctify us, justify us, and glorify us by the blood of the Lamb. Holy Spirit, we desire for You to rest upon us like You did on Jesus while He was on this earth. Holy Spirit, please let Your wisdom, understanding, counsel and might, understanding and the fear of the Lord rest upon and remain upon us. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Isaiah 11 NKJV

The Reign of Jesse's Offspring

11 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

²The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

³His delight *is* in the fear of the LORD,
And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes,
Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;

⁴ But with righteousness He shall judge the poor,
And decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,
And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins,
And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

⁶ “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.

⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze;
Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸ The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole,
And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den.

⁹ They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
As the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰ “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse,
Who shall stand as a banner to the people;
For the Gentiles shall seek Him,
And His resting place shall be glorious.”

¹¹ It shall come to pass in that day
That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time
To recover the remnant of His people who are left,
From Assyria and Egypt,
From Pathros and Cush,
From Elam and Shinar,
From Hamath and the islands of the sea.

¹² He will set up a banner for the nations,
And will assemble the outcasts of Israel,
And gather together the dispersed of Judah
From the four corners of the earth.

¹³ Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart,
And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off;
Ephraim shall not envy Judah,
And Judah shall not harass Ephraim.

¹⁴ But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west;
Together they shall plunder the people of the East;
They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab;
And the people of Ammon shall obey them.

¹⁵ The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt;
With His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River,
And strike it in the seven streams,
And make *men* cross over dry-shod.

¹⁶ There will be a highway for the remnant of His people
Who will be left from Assyria,
As it was for Israel
In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY TWENTY-FIVE

Fear the One Who Controls Your Eternal Destiny

“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” Matthew 10:28 NIV

In the New Testament in the first of the four Gospels, the book of Matthew chapter ten, Jesus had already been born, was grown, and had called his twelve disciples to follow Him. He gave them authority to drive out impure spirits, demons, and to heal every manner of sickness and disease. He instructed them, *“Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.”* (Matthew 10:8 NIV)

As Jesus sent them out two by two to bring the Kingdom of God to earth, He gave them stern warnings about how they would be received and treated as ambassadors of heaven. Jesus told them they would be sheep among wolves, they would be beaten, they would be arrested, they would be hated, they would be persecuted, they would be betrayed by loved ones, and they would even be put to death. Then Jesus urged them not to be afraid. He said, *“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”* (Matthew 10:29 NIV) Jesus was warning them to have a holy fear of the Lord, not a fear of man. He was revealing the truth that this earthly life in our physical bodies is temporal and finite; however, our souls will live far beyond this earthly realm in eternity. We will either live forever in hell being tormented by demons, or we will live forever in the glory of heaven with the Lord.

When we have a holy reverential fear of the Lord, we will draw close to our heavenly Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. We will decide to live fully for Him in surrender to His Lordship. We will desire to obey Him no matter what the cost. We will love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. The One who paid the ultimate price for our salvation is worthy!

REFLECTION

Do you fear your boss, your enemies, the government, family, or so-called friends? Have you ever been afraid of what others might say or do when you needed to speak the truth? How do you think having a fear of the Lord would alter how you fear man?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for fearing what man can do to me instead of having a holy reverential fear of You. Lord, I desire to love You, honor You, revere You, and have a holy fear of You. Lord, I desire to live with You throughout all eternity. Holy Spirit, please impart the fear of the Lord to me. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Matthew 10 NIV

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

10 Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

²These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. ⁶Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. ⁷As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ ⁸Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

⁹“Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts— ¹⁰no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep. ¹¹Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. ¹²As you enter the home, give it your greeting. ¹³If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

¹⁶ “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. ¹⁷ Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. ¹⁸ On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹ But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time, you will be given what to say, ²⁰ for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

²¹ “Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. ²² You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. ²³ When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

²⁴ “The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

²⁶ “So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed or hidden that will not be made known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. ²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

³² “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

³⁴ “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn ““a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—

³⁶ a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’

³⁷ “Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸ Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

⁴⁰ “Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹ Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. ⁴² And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY TWENTY-SIX

The Fear of the Lord Yields Holiness

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” II Corinthians 7:1 NKJV

In the New Testament in the book of Second Corinthians chapter seven, the apostle Paul was writing a letter to the church of Jesus Christ in Corinth. Paul had written several letters and had personally visited the Corinthian church in order to encourage and exhort them to continue to follow Jesus. The church in Corinth had had many trials. Paul was instructing them to keep the promises of the Lord in focus, to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect themselves in holiness in the fear of the Lord. *“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”* (II Corinthians 7:1 NKJV)

In the book of Second Corinthians chapter seven verse one, the Greek word for “cleanse” is “katharizo” which means to cleanse, to make clean, to purify, to purge, to free from the defilement of sin, to consecrate, and to dedicate. The Greek word for “filthiness” is “molysmos” which means stain, immorality, filthiness, and defilement. The Greek word for “flesh” is “sarx” which means flesh, body, human nature, carnally minded, fleshly, and earthly nature apart from divine influence. The Greek word for “spirit” is “pneuma” which means breath, human spirit, soul, Holy Spirit, spirit, and wind. The Greek word for “perfecting” is “epiteleo” which means perform, perfect, accomplish, finish, and complete. The Greek word for “holiness” is “hagiosyne” which means sacredness, holiness, and moral purity.

Therefore, the apostle Paul was urging the people in the church of Corinth to remember and seek after the promises of God by cleansing, purifying, purging, and freeing themselves from the defilement of sin from the filthiness, stain, immorality, and defilement of the flesh, body, human nature, and carnal mind and the spirit, human spirit, and soul. He was urging them to perfect, finish, and complete the process of holiness, sacredness, and moral purity in the fear, reverence, honor, and respect of the Lord.

In the New Testament in the book of Philippians the Word states, *“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”* (Philippians 2:12 KJV) Just as in the days of the apostle Paul and the New Testament church, we too are exhorted by the Word of God, the Holy Bible, to purify our hearts, souls (mind, will, and emotions), and our bodies. We are to put to death the old man, or the fleshly human nature, and consecrate ourselves, body, soul, and spirit

to the Lord Jesus Christ. We must purify our lives purging all sin and worldliness from ourselves in the fear of the Lord. When we truly love God, we will desire to honor Him with our lives. We will desire to walk in purity and holiness before Him. We will desire to be transformed into the image and likeness of Jesus, our beloved Bridegroom King!

REFLECTION

What are the areas in your life that are unholy and impure? Do you have bad thoughts, wrong motives, or ungodly emotional outbursts? Do you use your body, the temple of the Lord, to commit sin? Do you participate in unholy or worldly activities? How can walking in the fear of the Lord help you to consecrate your life to Him?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for all the ways I have compromised living a life of holiness before You. Please, forgive me for sin of my body, soul, and spirit. Wash me clean by the precious holy blood of Jesus. Holy Spirit, please give me a holy fear, reverence, and respect for the Lord so that I may consecrate my life to You. Purify my heart, soul, body, and spirit. In the name of Jesus, amen.

2 Corinthians 7 NKJV

The Corinthians' Repentance

7 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

The Corinthians' Repentance

²Open *your hearts* to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one. ³I do not say *this* to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. ⁴Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, great *is* my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.

⁵ For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside *were* conflicts, inside *were* fears. ⁶ Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ⁷ and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

⁸ For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. ⁹ Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. ¹⁰ For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. ¹¹ For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, *what* clearing of yourselves, *what* indignation, *what* fear, *what* vehement desire, *what* zeal, *what* vindication! In all *things* you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. ¹² Therefore, although I wrote to you, *I did* not *do it* for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.

The Joy of Titus

¹³ Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. ¹⁴ For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true. ¹⁵ And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. ¹⁶ Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY TWENTY-SEVEN

The Fear of the Lord Works Out Salvation

“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” Philippians 2:12-13 NIV

The book of Philippians in the New Testament was written by the apostle Paul to the church in Philippi. This was an epistle, or letter, written while Paul was in prison. In Philippians chapter two, Paul began by exhorting the people in the church of Philippi to have the humility and humbleness of Jesus Christ. Next, he instructed them to do everything without grumbling and arguing. Third, Paul encouraged them to receive Timothy and Epaphroditus as his co-workers in the ministry. In this letter, Paul explains that he was imprisoned for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul exhorted the Philippian church to remain steadfast in their faith and to become obedient to the Lord, even unto death. He also encouraged them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

In the book of Philippi chapter two verses twelve through thirteen, the apostle Paul wrote, *“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”* (Philippians 2:12-13 NIV) Paul greeted the people in the church of Philippi as his dear friends. He had sewn his life into helping them mature as believers in Christ from being spiritual babes into becoming sons and daughters of God. In this scripture, Paul commended them for their obedience especially when he was not there to oversee and supervise them. Then he exhorted them to continue to work out their salvation daily in fear and trembling.

In this scripture, the Greek word for “work out” is “katargazomai” which means to accomplish, to work fully, to finish, to perform, achieve, to work out, and to bring about. The Greek word for “salvation” is “soteria” which means rescue or safety, deliverance, health, salvation, save, and preservation. The Greek word for “fear” is “phobos” which means to fear, alarm, to be afraid, and to be in terror. The Greek word for “trembling” is “tromos” which means trembling or quaking in fear. Therefore, the apostle Paul was instructing the people in the church in Philippi to continue to work out, work fully, finish, perform, achieve, and bring about their salvation, rescue or safety, deliverance, health, salvation, and preservation with fear, alarm, and terror. He was teaching them to work out their salvation with trembling and quaking in fear. Paul was exhorting the Philippian church to walk in the light of their Savior daily in holy reverence, respect, and fear, being afraid to be separated from the Lord through a life of compromise and sin. Each and every day, we must choose to walk with Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. We must

choose to die to the things of this world and live for Him. We must wrestle with our flesh and the human nature, putting to death the old man, and allowing the Holy Spirit to conform us into the image of Jesus Christ. We were created by God to be His sons and daughters, to walk with Him in holiness and purity as kings and priests, the true Bride of Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION

In light of this scripture, is your view of salvation different than before? Did you once believe “once saved always saved”? How do you view the concept of “working out” your salvation daily, whether anyone else is looking or not?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for not working out my salvation daily in the fear of the Lord. Holy Spirit, help me to desire to walk in the fear of the Lord. Help me to die daily to the lust of the flesh and the things of this fallen world. Help me to desire to walk with You in a deep loving covenant relationship. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Philippians 2 NIV

Imitating Christ’s Humility

2 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing

by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Do Everything Without Grumbling

¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

¹⁴ Do everything without grumbling or arguing, ¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky ¹⁶ as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. ¹⁷ But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. ¹⁸ So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

Timothy and Epaphroditus

¹⁹ I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. ²⁰ I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. ²¹ For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²² But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me

in the work of the gospel. ²³ I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. ²⁴ And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

²⁵ But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. ²⁶ For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. ²⁷ Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad, and I may have less anxiety. ²⁹ So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, ³⁰ because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY TWENTY-EIGHT

The Fear of the Lord, Entering His Rest

“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.” Hebrews 4:1 NKJV

In the New Testament, the book of Hebrews was written to a Christian community whose faith was wavering due to the strong persecution against Christians by the unbelieving Jews and the Romans. The first church consisted mainly of Jewish believers in Messiah, Jesus. This letter was written to fortify the Christian beliefs within that specific Christian community. The unknown author was trying to build up the faith of the people by reminding them of their Jewish heritage and how Jesus Christ gave them a better covenant as their sacrificial lamb and as their great High Priest. The overall theme of the book of Hebrews is **faith**.

In the book of Hebrews chapter four, the author was reminding this body of believers to remember the promise of one day entering into the rest of the Lord. The author also warned the believers not to take this promise for granted. He encouraged them to have a holy fear that they might come short of the promise, thus motivating them to stay in the faith and live in obedience to the Lord Jesus. *“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.”* (Hebrews 4:1 NKJV)

In the book of Hebrews chapter four verse one, the Greek word for “rest” is “katapausis” which means abode, rest, calming of the winds, and the heavenly blessedness in which God dwells. The Greek word for “fear” is “phobeo” which means to frighten, to be alarmed, to be scared, and to do something for fear of harm if you so not do it. The Greek word for “come short” is “hystereo” which means to fail, to lack, to be behind, and to come short. Hence, the author of the book of Hebrews was urging the people to remember that the promise of the rest, abode, calming winds, and heavenly dwelling place of the Lord remains to be experienced. Therefore, the people should have a holy fear, be frightened, be alarmed, be scared or be afraid of harm if they do not stay close to the Lord by falling short, failing, or lacking in faith. The unknown author was trying to persuade this group of believers to keep the faith even in the midst of persecution in order to inherit the eternal promise of rest in the Lord.

In our day, there are trials, tribulations, persecutions, false accusations, and in some cases death for believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of the Lord for us is the same as it was for this community of believers in the book of Hebrews. We are to hold fast to the promise of God that we may enter into the rest of the Lord on that day. We must have a holy fear of the Lord that

motivates us to cling to Him and His promises to us. Even in the midst of trials, tribulations, persecutions, and death, we must cleave to Jesus, our glorious Bridegroom King!

REFLECTIONS

Have you ever been in fear of what someone will think or say if you told them that you were a believer and follower of Jesus? Have you ever been ridiculed, rejected, or taunted for being a Christian? What do you think you could do to strength your inner resolve to love and follow Jesus at any cost?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please forgive me for fearing what man can do to me instead of fearing to be away from You. Lord, I forgive anyone who has ridiculed, rejected, or taunted me for being a Christian. Lord, I ask that You reveal Yourself to them and save their souls. Holy Spirit, please help to strengthen me in my inner man. Help me to have complete resolve to love, obey, and follow You no matter what the cost. Lord, I desire to enter into Your rest and heavenly presence on that appointed day. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Hebrews 4 NKJV

The Promise of Rest

4 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. ² For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it*. ³ For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said:

“So, I swore in My wrath,
‘They shall not enter My rest,’”

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴ For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh *day* in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”; ⁵ and again in this *place*: “They shall not enter My rest.”

⁶ Since therefore it remains that some *must* enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, ⁷ again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said:

“Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts.”

⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. ⁹ There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. ¹⁰ For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God *did* from His.

The Word Discovers Our Condition

¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.

Our Compassionate High Priest

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY TWENTY-NINE

The Fear of the Lord Gives Grace to Serve God

“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. ²⁹ For our God is a consuming fire.”
Hebrews 12:29 NKJV

In the New Testament in the book of Hebrews chapter twelve, the unknown author was writing to a group of believers encouraging them to stay the course. First, he persuaded them to run the race of faith that was set before them pursuing Jesus. Next, he explained the benefits of being loved and chastened by the Lord. Then, he encouraged them to renew their spiritual vitality by pursuing peace and holiness. Next, he described the glorious company of holy angels in heaven with Jesus and the Father. Finally, he revealed that the voice of the Lord would be released to cause a great shaking on the earth. This great shaking would cause people to have a holy fear of the Lord.

In the book of Hebrews chapter twelve verse twenty-nine, the Word states, *“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. ²⁹ For our God is a consuming fire.”* (Hebrews 12:28-29 NKJV) In this scripture, the Greek word for “grace” is “charis” which means grace, favor, thanks, pleasure, good will, and loving-kindness that leads us to Christ. The Greek word for “serve” is “latreuo” which means to minister, render religious homage, worship, and serve. The Greek word for “reverence” is “aidos” which means modesty, awe, honor, respect, and regard. The Greek word for “godly fear” is “eulabeia” which means properly, with caution, reverence, piety, fear, discretion, circumspection, and veneration. The Greek word for “consuming” is “katalalisko” which means to utterly consume. The Greek word for “fire” is “pyr” which means fire and fiery. Therefore, the author was revealing that the great shaking coming to the earth would cause the people to receive the unshakable kingdom of God. The grace, favor, pleasure, good will, and loving-kindness of the Lord would empower the people to serve, to minister to, to give homage to, and to worship the Lord, with an acceptable attitude and demeanor of modesty, awe, honor, respect and the highest regard for the Lord, and with godly fear, caution, reverence, piety, and veneration toward the Lord. The people would minister to the Lord because He is an all-consuming fire!

In our generation, the Lord is currently shaking everything that can be shaken. Through governments, wars, poverty, inflation, pestilence, plagues, and the rise of blatant sin, the nations of the world are being shaken. Everything that is not of God will fall, and the Kingdom of God will rest upon the believers in Jesus Christ. All will see the glory of God manifest on the earth and

the fear of the Lord cause all to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth for who He is, an all-consuming fire!

REFLECTION

Are you going through a shaking in your family, job, health, or any aspect of your life? Is the shaking causing you to draw nearer to the Lord? Are you seeking Him in reverence and holy fear for who He is?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, please let Your holy fire burn everything out of me that is not of You. Lord, baptize me with Your holy fire so my heart will burn for You. Lord, please allow Your kingdom to take up residence in my heart and life. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Hebrews 12 NKJV

The Race of Faith

12 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The Discipline of God

³For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. ⁴You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. ⁵And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

⁶ For whom the LORD loves He chastens,
And scourges every son whom He receives.”

⁷ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Renew Your Spiritual Vitality

¹² Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, ¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

¹⁴ Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: ¹⁵ looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; ¹⁶ lest there *be* any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. ¹⁷ For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

The Glorious Company

¹⁸ For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, ¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard *it* begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. ²⁰ (For they could not endure what was commanded: “And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.” ²¹ And so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.”)

²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are* registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of* Abel.

Hear the Heavenly Voice

²⁵ See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more *shall we not escape* if we turn away from Him who *speaks* from heaven, ²⁶ whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” ²⁷ Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. ²⁹ For our God *is* a consuming fire.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY THIRTY

The Fear of the Lord as Sojourners

“And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.” I Peter 1:17 NKJV

In the New Testament the apostle Peter, one of the twelve original disciples of Jesus, wrote the book of First Peter to the believers in Christ living in the five Roman provinces of Asia Minor. During this time, Christians were being persecuted and killed for their faith. He wrote this epistle to strengthen and encourage the believers in their faith, to prepare them for the fiery trials ahead, and he taught them how to respond to persecution with their focus on eternity.

In First Peter chapter one, Peter began the letter with a greeting to the “elect”, those called by God to be His. Next, he began to encourage them by reminding them of their heavenly inheritance that is incorruptible, Jesus Christ. Then he exhorted them to gird up the loins of their minds by living before God the Father in obedience and holiness. Also, he instructed them to purify their souls in obedience to the truth of the Word of God through the spirit with sincere love.

In chapter one verse seventeen of the book of First Peter, the Word states, *“And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear.”* (I Peter 1:17 NKJV) In this scripture, the Greek word for “work” is “ergon” which means to work, toil, deed, labor, doing, undertaking, acts, and thing accomplished by the hand. The Greek work for “conduct” is “anastrepho” which means behave yourself, remain, live, and abide. The Greek word for “stay” is “paroikia” which means foreign residence, sojourning as strangers, and dwelling in a strange land. The Greek word for “fear” is “phobos” which means to be in fear, exceeding fear, terror, alarm, dread, reverence for one’s husband. Hence, Peter was stating that during trying times, the believers should call on the Father who judges each person’s work, toil, deeds, acts, and undertakings fairly and without partiality. He also instructed them to conduct themselves, behave, live, remain, and abide in the fear and reverence toward God throughout their stay, sojourning, and dwelling in a strange land called earth. In other words, their focus should be on Jesus and the heavenly realm, not on the trials and tribulations of the earthly realm. Their true home was in heaven, not on the earth.

As in the days of the Bible, we also face trials, tribulations, persecutions, ridicule, and threats for loving Jesus. As we draw closer and closer to the final days, we too will experience the trials and testing of our faith. But we are merely foreigners here on this earth. Our true home is in heaven with our Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Each and every one of us will one day stand before

the One True God for His judgment concerning our lives. We will either hear Him say, *“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.”* (Matthew 25:21 NKJV) **Or** we will hear, *“I never knew you: depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”* The key ingredient to remain in faith and to live a life acceptable to the Lord is to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. When we love Him deeply, we will desire to read and obey His Word, to please Him, to live in holiness, to worship Him, to pray, and to follow Him all the days of our lives. Fearing to be cast away from Him on that day of judgment, will keep us in a place of surrender to Him.

REFLECTION

If you were standing before the Lord on that day of judgment, how do you think He would respond to your life at this time? How would you respond if you heard Him say, “Well done”? How would you respond if you heard Him say, “Depart from Me”? What changes do you think you need to make in your life to make sure you hear Him say, “Well done”?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, on the day of judgment, I honestly desire to hear You say to me, “Well done...enter in...”. Lord, I never want to hear You say, “Depart from Me”. Lord, please give me a holy fear and reverence for You. Lord, help me to stay strong in my faith in You. Lord, draw me closer to You and help me to know You, trust You, love You, and obey You. In the name of Jesus, amen.

1 Peter 1 NKJV

Greeting to the Elect Pilgrims

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

A Heavenly Inheritance

³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.

¹⁰ Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the *grace that would come* to you, ¹¹ searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹² To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

Living Before God Our Father

¹³ Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; ¹⁵ but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”

¹⁷ And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; ¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by

tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. ²⁰ He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you ²¹ who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

The Enduring Word

²² Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, ²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, ²⁴ because,

“All flesh *is* as grass,

And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass.

The grass withers,

And its flower falls away,

²⁵ But the word of the LORD endures forever.”

Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

The Fear of the Lord, the Beginning of Wisdom

DAY THIRTY-ONE

Revelation of God's Holiness Produces the Fear of the Lord

"Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested." Revelation 15:4 NKJV

In the New Testament in the book of Revelation, the apostle John recorded an encounter he had while in prison on the Isle of Patmos. In this encounter, John was taken to heaven and was given a revelation of Jesus as the King of Glory and a revelation of all the events that will take place on the earth during the Great Tribulation. John, being one of the original disciples and "the one that Jesus loved" was entrusted with this amazing experience to share with all who had ears to hear and eyes to see what the Lord was saying and doing.

In the book of Revelation chapter fifteen, John described the sea of glass mingled with fire which flows from the throne of God in heaven. There amidst the sea of glass were the saints who were able to have the victory over the beast, over his image, over his mark, *and* over the number of his name. In other words, these were the ones who did not bow their knees to the evil one and his evil world system. They were standing on the sea of glass, and they played their harps and sang songs of victory and deliverance like the Israelites who had been delivered from the hand of Pharaoh when they crossed the Red Sea. These saints standing on the sea of glass had been delivered from the evil beast and his evil beast system of the great tribulation by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony of Jesus.

In this scripture, John heard the saints in heaven sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. The song resounded, *"Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."* (Revelation 15:4 NKJV) In this song of victory, the saints ask the question, "Who shall not fear You...and glorify Your name?" It is interesting to note that the fear of the Lord is associated with glorifying the name of Jesus. Then the song continues to say that all the people of the nations will come and worship the Lord. When we see the Lord in all His splendor, glory, and majesty, we will know that He is **GOD!** Seeing Him in His magnificence and brilliance, and experiencing His powerful, electric presence will cause us to bow in fear and trembling at His awesomeness and worship Him in the beauty of His holiness.

Our God is an all-consuming fire! He is the King of Glory and the King of the Universe! He is the God of all Creation and the Giver of Life! He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life! He is the One True God! Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world! He is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End! He is the Son of the Living God! He

is our Savior and our Lord! The Holy Spirit is our comforter! He is our friend and teacher! He is the one who leads us and guides us into all Truth! He empowers us to live in the holy fear of the Lord! When we have a holy reverential fear and respect for the Lord, we will love Him, honor Him, praise Him, and worship Him for who He is!

REFLECTION

Do you have a holy fear, reverence, and respect for God? Do you live a life surrendered to Him? Are you ready to stand before Him? Do you worship Him for who He is?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I worship You for who You are! I bow before You! I sing Your praises! Lord, help me to walk, live and desire the fear of the Lord so I will draw close to You and never turn away. Help me seek You with all of my heart and know You! Lord, I give You all of me! Keep me in Your presence and in Your heart forever! Prepare me to be Your Bride and walk and live with You in deep intimacy, unity, and oneness. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Revelation 15 NKJV

Prelude to the Bowl Judgments

15 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

² And I saw *something* like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark *and* over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. ³ They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

“Great and marvelous *are* Your works,

Lord God Almighty!

Just and true *are* Your ways,

O King of the saints!

⁴ Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?

For *You* alone *are* holy.

For all nations shall come and worship before You,

For Your judgments have been manifested.”

⁵ After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. ⁶ And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. ⁷ Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. ⁸ The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

A Word from the Author

Beloved of the Lord,

It has been my desire to search out the scriptures to find the heart of the Lord in regard to specific themes and subjects, as I am led by the Holy Spirit. Understanding the Lord's passion for us, His desire to protect us, His desire to bless us, His desire to become intimate with us, and His desire to dwell in us and with us, helps us to grasp the fear of the Lord in a more personal way. As you read and meditate on these scriptures, I pray the Lord will reveal Himself to you powerfully and help you to walk in the fear of the Lord.

In His Love,

Mary Greene

Sources:

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