

Week Eleven

The Intrinsic Significance of Fearing the Lord in the Economy of God

Hymns: 578

Scripture Reading: Prov. 1:1, 7; 2:4-5; 3:5-10; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:2, 26-27; 15:16, 33a; 16:6; 19:23

Outline

§Day 1

- I. **The first principle for man to live a proper human life is for him to fear the Lord, to revere the Lord; to fear the Lord is to be in fear of offending Him, of losing His presence, and of not receiving Him as our reward in the next age; we should be in fear of missing the Lord's smile in this age and His reward in the next—Prov. 1:1, 7; Eph. 4:30; 2 Cor. 5:9-10:**
 - A. **To fear the Lord is to consider and regard Him in everything, never forgetting that He is the wonderful God who has created us (Isa. 43:7); fearing the Lord stops us from doing evil; it also causes us to be touched by the sufferings of others and to show mercy and compassion to them.**
 - B. **To fear the Lord is not only fleeing from sins but also, and even more, rejecting the self; fearing the Lord is not merely to fear that we have sinned or that we are worldly but to fear that what we are doing is out of ourselves, not out of the Lord—Matt. 16:24; 2 Cor. 4:5.**
 - C. **The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding; knowledge, wisdom, and understanding come from God; if we fear Him, revere Him, these will be our possessions—Prov. 1:1, 7; 2:4-5; 3:5-10; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:2, 26-27; 15:16, 33a; 16:6; 19:23.**

- II. Isaiah prophesied that the Spirit of Jehovah—the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge, and the Spirit of the fear of Jehovah—would rest upon Christ—Isa. 11:1-2:**
- A. The Spirit was with the Lord Jesus all the time and was one with Him; He walked by the Spirit and lived a life in, with, by, and through the Spirit; Isaiah 11:2 shows that in the Lord’s human living the Spirit was manifested with all the above attributes—Luke 4:1, 14; 10:21; John 1:32; Matt. 12:28.**
 - B. In His human living, Jesus was filled with the Spirit of the reverential, obedient fear of the Lord; He also delighted in the fear of the Lord; in His resurrection He is now the all-inclusive, bountifully supplying Spirit of Jesus Christ as the Spirit of the fear of Jehovah, who includes the indescribable human living and ministry of the Lord Jesus—Isa. 11:2-3; Phil. 1:19:**
 - 1. No human being ever feared God as much as Jesus did; in carrying out God’s New Testament ministry, the Lord Jesus told us that He never did anything out of Himself (John 5:19), He did not have His own work (4:34; 17:4), He did not speak His own word (14:10, 24), He did everything not by His own will (5:30), and He did not seek His own glory (7:18).
 - 2. Jesus lived a life in which He did everything in God, with God, and for God; God was in His living, and He was one with God; this is the reality in Jesus (Eph. 4:20-21); we need to ask the Lord as the Spirit of reality to guide us into the reality of experiencing His life of submission and His life of obedience to the Father (John 16:13; Phil. 2:5-11).
 - 3. Day by day we need to completely and absolutely open to the Father and ask Him to fill us with the resurrected Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit, which is also the Spirit of the fear of the Lord that includes the human living and ministry of the Lord Jesus—Luke 11:5-13.

§Day 2

- III. To fear God is to trust in Him—Prov. 3:5-8, 26; 16:1, 9, 20, 33; 19:21; 30:5-6:**

- A. Proverbs 3:5-8 charges us to trust in the Lord with all our heart and not rely on our own understanding; in all our ways we should acknowledge Him, and He will make our paths straight; we should not be wise in our own eyes; we should fear the Lord and depart from evil; this will be healing to our body and refreshment to our bones.**
- B. “Blessed is the man who trusts in Jehovah / And whose trust Jehovah is. / And he will be like a tree transplanted beside water, / Which sends out its roots by a stream, / And will not be afraid when heat comes; / For its leaves remain flourishing, / And it will not be anxious in the year of drought / And will not cease to bear fruit”—Jer. 17:7-8:**
1. According to God’s economy, the one who trusts in God is like a tree planted by water, signifying God as the fountain of living waters—2:13.
 2. A tree grows beside a river by absorbing all the riches of the water; this is a picture of God’s economy, which is carried out by His dispensing; in order to receive the divine dispensing, we as the trees must absorb God as the water—cf. 1 Cor. 3:6.
 3. The riches of the supplying God dispensed into us as the trees constitute us with God’s divinity and cause us to grow into God’s measure (Col. 2:19); in this way we and God become one, having the same element, essence, constitution, and appearance (Rev. 4:3; 21:11).
- C. He who gives heed to the word will find good, and blessed is he who trusts in the Lord (Prov. 16:20); the Lord will be our confidence, and He will keep our foot from being caught (3:26).**
- D. Those who love God learn the fear of God by coming to the Lord in the Scriptures (2:3-5; John 5:39-40); we are commanded to cleave to and obey the Word of God as the evidence of our fear of God (Deut. 6:2).**

§Day 3

IV. To fear the Lord means that we also honor Him:

- A. Proverbs 3:9-10 says that we must honor the Lord with our**

substance and with the firstfruits of all our produce; then our barns will be filled with plenty, and our vats will burst open with new wine.

- B. We should not be those who make more money to lay up treasure for our future; at least one-tenth, the firstfruits, of our produce must be given to God; we should always be generous in giving of the things that God has given us; this honors God—Mal. 3:7-12; 2 Cor. 9:6-8.**
- C. We should beseech the Lord to make our heart single in fearing His name; “Teach me, O Jehovah, Your way; / I will walk in Your truth. / Make my heart single in fearing Your name”—Psa. 86:11.**
- D. We need to “cleans[e] ourselves from all defilement of flesh and of spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”; the fear of God here is not daring to touch things that do not belong to God or are not related to Him—2 Cor. 7:1; 6:17.**
- E. To be in the fear of Christ is to fear offending Him as the Head; this involves our being subject to one another; we need to serve the Lord with fear; then we will love the Lord in order to rejoice in and enjoy the Lord—Eph. 5:18-21; Psa. 2:11-12; Heb. 12:28.**

§Day 4

- F. We all should have a proper fear of God because we believers in Christ will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; at that time Christ will judge His believers at His coming back, not concerning their eternal salvation but concerning their dispensational reward—2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 4:4-5; 3:13-15; Rom. 14:10.**
- G. Fearing the Lord is a way to lengthen life (Prov. 10:27); God loves, saves, protects, blesses, and provides for those who fear Him (Psa. 103:11, 13, 17; 85:9; 60:4; Prov. 14:26-27; Psa. 115:12-13; 34:9; 111:5).**
- H. Examples of those who feared the Lord are Noah (Heb. 11:7),**

Abraham (Gen. 22:12), Joseph (42:18), David (Psa. 2:11-12; 5:7), Nehemiah (Neh. 1:11; 5:9, 15), and the early church (Acts 9:31).

- V. The holy fear of the Lord is actually a source of joy (Psa. 2:11) as a fountain of life (Prov. 14:27) and as a tree of life (11:30) to dispense God into us for the carrying out of His economy:**
- A. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may turn aside from the snares of death; to fear the Lord, to trust in the Lord, and to take refuge in the name of the Lord are to walk on the paths of life (2:19; 5:6; 10:17; 14:27; 19:23; Psa. 16:11); the paths of life are the paths of the tree of life, the source of which is God Himself (Prov. 3:13, 18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4).**
 - B. The fear of the Lord leads to life; it is the constricted way (the way of the few, not of the many) that leads to life; the paths of life are for us to live in God and thus to touch and obtain life; these paths are the highways that God has put in our heart for us to enter into Him—19:23; Matt. 7:13-14; Psa. 84:5.**
 - C. The ways of death are the ways of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the source of which is Satan and which is manifested in our self; to live in the self is to be without God's presence, to walk in the ways of darkness, and to be void of life—Prov. 2:13; 3:5-7; 14:12; 16:25; Eph. 5:2, 8-9.**

§Day 5

- VI. God promised to give us, His people, one heart and one way, to fear Him all the days, for our own good and for the good of our children after us, and He puts His fear into our hearts, so that we will not turn away from Him—Jer. 32:39-40:**
- A. We, the chosen people of God, should all have one heart—to love God, to seek God, to live God, and to be constituted with God that we may be His expression—and one way—the Triune God Himself as the inner law of life with its divine capacity—v. 39; 31:33-34; John 14:6a; Rom. 8:2.**
 - B. This one heart and one way are the one accord (Acts 1:14; 2:46;**

4:24; Rom. 15:6); divisions result from having a heart for something other than Christ and taking a way other than Christ.

- C. God made an eternal covenant, the new covenant; it is by this covenant that God will not turn away from us, and He puts His fear into our hearts, so that we will not turn away from Him—Jer. 32:40.
- D. When we fear God, we are instructed by God concerning the way that we should choose, and we are able to know God's intimate counsel and His covenant; only those who fear God can have God's revelation of His covenant, and He gives His intimate counsel only to those who fear Him—Psa. 25:12, 14.

VII. The fear of the Lord and the love of the Lord are two wonderful results of the forgiveness of our sins:

- A. God's forgiveness does not cause man to become audacious and reckless; the grace of God's forgiveness brings man into the fear of the Lord; "With You there is forgiveness, / That You would be feared"—130:4.
- B. The grace of God's forgiveness also causes us to love God; the reason the sinful woman in Luke loved the Lord much is that she was forgiven much by the Lord—7:39-50.
- C. The more the Lord forgives us, the more we fear Him; and the more we fear Him, the more we love Him; on the negative side, because we fear Him, we refrain from doing things that are displeasing to Him; on the positive side, because we love Him, we do things that are pleasing to Him.

§Day 6

VIII. Proverbs 31 presents to us two models of those who fear the Lord; on the one hand, we should be like a king, a royal man like the Lord, having the authority to rule; on the other hand, we should be a worthy woman, knowing how to arrange, manage, take care of, and provide for the needs of the saints in the house of God:

A. Proverbs 31:3 through 9 speaks of a reigning king—one who does not drink wine but who speaks for the rights of others and ministers justice (typifying Christ and His overcomers); only this kind of person can reign:

1. Our Lord was fully under God's restriction; hence, He could reign for God; if we can be restricted by God and thus deal with ourselves, we will be able to reign for God.
2. In ruling over the people, the king first had to be instructed, governed, ruled, and controlled by the word of God; the principle should be the same with the elders in the churches—Deut. 17:14-20:
 - a. In order to administrate, to manage, the church, the elders must be reconstituted with the holy word of God; as a result, they will be under God's government, under God's rule and control.
 - b. Then spontaneously, God will be in their decisions, and the elders will represent God to manage the affairs of the church; this kind of management is theocracy.

B. Proverbs 31:10 through 31 describes a worthy woman (12:4; 19:14; Ruth 3:11)—one who is wise, kind, diligent, and capable and who can arrange, manage, and provide for her household; “Her price is far above corals” (Prov. 31:10); her glory surpasses all her peers (v. 29); this worthy woman typifies the church and the saints who love the Lord:

1. The main characteristic of a worthy woman is that she fears the Lord (reverently worshipping, obeying, serving, and trusting the Lord with awe-filled respect); “Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; / But a woman who fears Jehovah, she will be praised”—v. 30.
2. The heart of the husband of a worthy woman trusts in her; “She does him good and not evil / All the days of her life” (v. 12); “Her husband is known in the gates, / When he sits among the elders of the land” (v. 23).
3. Such a worthy and prudent woman is from the Lord as the crown of her husband (12:4); her children and husband rise up and call her blessed (31:28); her husband also praises her by saying that she surpasses all others (v. 29).
4. A husband should be able to see with his own eyes his wife's “pure manner

of life in fear”; her adorning should not be the outward plaiting of hair and putting on of gold or clothing with garments, “but the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God”—1 Pet. 3:1-4.

5. In the proper church life the sisters should “adorn themselves in proper clothing with modesty and sobriety [self-restraint], not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, what befits women professing godly reverence, by good works”; godly reverence is a godly fear toward God, a revering and honoring of God, as is fitting for one who worships God—1 Tim. 2:9-10.
6. Older women should be reverent in their behavior, their deportment, so that “they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be of a sober mind, pure, workers at home, good, subject to their own husbands, that the word of God would not be blasphemed”—Titus 2:3-5.

C. In the aspect of overcoming, we should be like a king; in the aspect of loving the Lord, we should be like a worthy woman; being like this will cause us to have value and glory before the Lord.

WEEK 11 — DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Prov. 1:7 The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge...

15:16 Better is a little with the fear of Jehovah than great treasure and turmoil with it.

Isa. 11:2 And the Spirit of Jehovah will rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of Jehovah.

The first principle of human conduct is fearing the Lord (Prov. 1:7, 29; 2:5; 3:7; 8:13; 9:10). We may do many things, but we must not offend the Lord. Fearing the Lord is not merely to fear that we have sinned or are worldly but to fear that what we are doing is out of ourselves, not out of the Lord.

Proverbs almost always refers to God as Jehovah—the word God is used in only a few places—because God today is the God who has a relationship with man. In Proverbs Jehovah is man's wisdom. We do not know how to deal with people and things, but we can depend on God. (CWWL, 1956, vol. 1, p. 501)

The branching out of Jehovah is altogether a matter of the Spirit. Christ was born of the Spirit (Matt. 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35); that is, He was constituted of the Spirit as His divine essence....The Spirit was with Him all the time and was one with Him (Luke 4:1, 14; 10:21; John 1:32; Matt. 12:28). He walked by the Spirit and lived a life in, with, by, and through the Spirit. (Isa. 11:2, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

The first principle for man to live a proper human life is revering God. We should not only worship God but also revere Him. To revere God is to consider and regard Him in everything, never forgetting that He is the wonderful God who has created us. When we are about to lose our temper, we should revere God. Revering God stops us from doing evil. Revering God

also causes us to be touched by the sufferings of others and to show mercy and compassion to them.

Even though I was born into Christianity, before I believed in the Lord Jesus I never revered God. But from the day I got saved, I began to revere God. In everything I respected and regarded God. That caused a great change in my life.

To revere God is to fear God. The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 15:33a). Knowledge, wisdom, and understanding come from God. If we fear Him, revering Him, these will be our possession. If we seek wisdom like silver and search for her like hidden treasures, then we will understand the fear of Jehovah and find the knowledge of God (2:4-5). The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil (8:13). The fear of Jehovah prolongs days, but the years of the wicked will be shortened (10:27). He who walks in his uprightness fears Jehovah, but he who is perverse in his ways despises Him (14:2). In the fear of Jehovah is strong confidence, and his children will have a place of refuge. The fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life, that one may turn aside from the snares of death (vv. 26-27). Better is a little with the fear of Jehovah, than great treasure and turmoil with it (15:16). If we are rich in the fear of Jehovah, we will have peace. (Life-study of Proverbs, pp. 7-8)

Isaiah prophesied that the Spirit of Jehovah—the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge, and the Spirit of the fear of Jehovah—would rest upon Christ (Isa. 11:2). In the human living of Jesus, the branch of Jesse, people saw the Spirit of God with all these attributes. He was full of the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and the fear of Jehovah. No human being has ever feared God as much as Jesus did. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 5, “Crystallization-study of the Humanity of Christ,” p. 378)

Further Reading: Life-study of Proverbs, msg. 2; CWWL, 1990, vol. 1, “The Triune God to Be Life to the Tripartite Man,” ch. 14; CWWL, 1961-1962, vol. 4, “The All-inclusive Christ,” ch. 11

WEEK 11 — DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

Prov. 3:5 Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding.

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear Jehovah...

Jer. 17:7-8 Blessed is the man who trusts in Jehovah and whose trust Jehovah is. And he will be like a tree..., which sends out its roots by a stream,... and it will not be anxious in the year of drought and will not cease to bear fruit.

To revere God is also to trust in Him. Proverbs 3:5-8 charges us to trust in Jehovah with all our heart and not to rely on our own understanding. In all our ways we should acknowledge Him, and He will make our paths straight. We should not be wise in our own eyes; we should fear Jehovah and depart from evil. This will be healing to our body and refreshment to our bones.

In my frequent travels by airplane, many times Satan has threatened me within by saying that my plane would crash. At those times I spoke to the Lord, saying, "Lord, I am not in a plane; I am in You. You are my plane." This is to trust in the Lord.

According to 3:26, Jehovah will be our confidence, and He will keep our foot from being caught. Every word of God is tried; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. We should not add to His words, lest He reprove us and we be found a liar (30:5-6). We must not change His word by adding something to it according to our point of view. (Life-study of Proverbs, pp. 8-9)

Today's Reading

According to God's economy, the one who trusts in God is like a tree planted by water, signifying God as the fountain of living waters (Jer. 2:13a). A tree grows beside a river by absorbing all the riches of the water. This is a picture of God's economy, which is carried out by His dispensing. In order to receive the divine dispensing, we as the trees must absorb God as the

water (cf. 1 Cor. 3:6). The riches of the supplying God dispensed into us as the trees constitute us with God's divinity and cause us to grow into God's measure (Col. 2:19). In this way we and God become one, having the same element, essence, constitution, and appearance (Rev. 4:3; 21:11). (Jer. 17:8, footnote 1)

We must make a distinction between reverence and godliness. God's people in the Old Testament revered Him, but in the New Testament His people have a godly living. With respect to the living God, man should have reverence, but with respect to the God of resurrection, man should express godliness. In the Old Testament God was manifested as the living God; hence, His people needed to revere Him. In the New Testament God is manifested as the God of resurrection; hence, the New Testament believers need godliness.... As God's New Testament people, we need not only reverence but also godliness. This means that in our living we should not only express the living God but also the God of resurrection.

To revere God is to deal with sin, the flesh, and the world in our living. To be godly is not only to have the absence of sin, the flesh, and the world but to be mingled with and to express God. Some believers revere God, but others possess godliness. Such believers do not exhibit sin, the flesh, or the world. On the contrary, they exhibit something mysterious, something that is both man and God. This is God being manifested in man. This is godliness.

The apostle Paul says, "Exercise yourself unto godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7). This means that, on the one hand, we should revere God and not touch sin, the flesh, or the world. On the other hand, we should follow God and express Him in our living. If God does not move, neither should we. We should move only when God moves. This is a great lesson that needs much learning and exercise. (CWWL, 1957, vol. 3, "The Living God and the God of Resurrection," pp. 28, 30)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1957, vol. 3, "The Living God and the God of Resurrection," chs. 1, 4; Life-study of Proverbs, msg. 3, 5; CWWL, 1932-1949, vol. 2, pp. 5-6

WEEK 11 — DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

Prov. 3:9-10 Honor Jehovah with your substance and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will burst open with new wine.

To revere God means that we also honor God. Proverbs 3:9-10 says that we must honor Jehovah with our substance and with the firstfruits of all our produce.... If we make more money to lay up treasure for our future, that is pitiful. At least one tenth, the firstfruits, of our produce must be given to God. We should always be very generous in giving of the things that God has given us. This honors God. (Life-study of Proverbs, p. 9)

Today's Reading

God demands that His children be holy. In 2 Corinthians 7:1, Paul says, "Therefore since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and of spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." This verse shows us that our holiness is very much related to our fear of God. God is holy, and the more we draw near to Him, the more we feel our uncleanness. The more we serve God, the more we fear ourselves. When we first learn to fear the Lord, it is natural that we fear the self-element in everything we do. For example, your son may come and ask what he should do. If you fear God, you will be afraid of the self-element in your answer. This is the meaning of fear. Suppose a brother asks you for help. If you fear God, you will be afraid of yourself in rendering help to your brother. But at the same time, you will also be afraid of yourself in refusing to help your brother. You are constantly in fear of yourself.... In your acquaintance with the brothers and sisters, you may constantly be afraid of any mixture of the self...To fear is to be afraid of the self in everything that you do. In criticizing or praising others, a person may have the fear that this criticism or praise comes from the self. Having a fearful heart is being afraid of the mixture of self-element. (CWWN, vol. 37, p. 163)

To revere God means to fear offending Him. Reverence is an

indispensable attitude that fallen man should possess.... Man is fallen because sin has entered into man, human nature has become flesh, and the world has been produced. Sin, the flesh, and the world are incompatible with God. If man is slightly careless by giving room to sin, the flesh, or the world, he sins against, offends, opposes, and resists God. Therefore, there is a need for man to revere God. (CWWL, 1957, vol. 3, "The Living God and the God of Resurrection," pp. 28-29)

We should fear Christ [Eph. 5:21]....Being in the fear of Christ indicates that our subjection to one another is in the mood, realm, and atmosphere of fearing Christ. Here Paul speaks of the fear of Christ for the sake of our relationships and contact with the people around us....We can only be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

Ephesians emphasizes Christ as the Head of the Body. One another in verse 21 refers to the members of the Body. Being subject to one another establishes a normal relationship among the members under the Head. For example, if the hand has a problem with the arm, is the hand not subject to the arm or the arm not subject to the hand? According to our natural concept, the lesser should be subject to the greater, and thus, the hand should be subject to the arm. But if the arm does not want the hand, then the arm is not being subject to the hand. We often have the thought that wives should be subject to their husbands, not that husbands should be subject to their wives. However, should husbands be subject to their wives? "Being subject to one another in the fear of Christ" in verse 21 is the general subject, but only then does Paul speak of wives being subject to their own husbands. Therefore, not only should wives be subject to their husbands in the fear of Christ, but husbands should also be subject to their wives in the fear of Christ. (CWWL, 1953, vol. 2, pp. 467-469)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1952, vol. 2, "The Vision, Ministry, and Leading of the Lord's Serving Ones," ch. 2; CWWL, 1959, vol. 2, "Knowing and Experiencing Christ as Life," ch. 12

WEEK 11 — DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

1 Cor. 4:5 So then do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts...

2 Cor. 5:10 For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done through the body according to what he has practiced, whether good or bad.

The apostle Paul says, "I am conscious of nothing against myself; but I am not justified in this, but He who examines me is the Lord. So then do not judge anything before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts" (1 Cor. 4:4-5). In Romans Paul says that we will all stand before the judgment seat of God and give an account concerning ourselves to God (14:10, 12). Each one of us will come under God's great judgment. Today we may criticize and judge our brothers, but in that day God will make us explain our words of criticism and judgment. The Lord said that we will render an account of every idle word on the day of judgment, for by our words we will be justified or condemned (Matt. 12:36-37). The day of judgment is awesome. Regardless of who we are, in that day "we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done through the body according to what he has practiced, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). (CWWL, 1957, vol. 3, "The Living God and the God of Resurrection," pp. 40-41)

Today's Reading

We revere God because He is the living God, and we express godliness because He is the God of resurrection. But He is also the judging God. On the day of judgment His eyes will be like a flame of fire, His feet will be like shining bronze that has been fired in a furnace, and out of His mouth will proceed a sharp two-edged sword (Rev. 1:14-16; 19:12). He will indeed be

frightening. If on the day of judgment we still have things that are not of God or are incompatible with God, such as sin, the flesh, natural affections, the world, and the self, they will be searched out by the flaming fire in His eyes, cut off by the sharp sword from His mouth, and trampled on by His feet of shining bronze.

We thank the Lord that today He is judging us in the course of our life in order to give us new opportunities and new beginnings before His consummate judging. This is His mercy; otherwise, we would be condemned along with the world. In this process every judgment is a reminder and a deliverance. With each new beginning, God gives us fresh grace. If we do not receive His judging, we will face His judgment on the ultimate day of His judgment. May the Lord have mercy on us so that we would know Him as the judging God who is not mocked. (CWWL, 1957, vol. 3, "The Living God and the God of Resurrection," p. 41)

The paths of life are in contrast to the ways of death....To fear the Lord (Prov. 10:27; 14:2, 26-27; 15:16, 33; 16:6; 19:23), trust in the Lord (16:1, 9, 20, 33; 19:21), and take refuge in the name of the Lord (18:10) is to walk on the paths of life. The opposite of this is to walk in the ways of death.

Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25 both say, "There is a way which seems right to a man, / But the end of it is the ways of death." Walking in the ways of death is to be wise in our own eyes and rely on our own understanding (3:5-7).

The paths of life are the paths of the tree of life, the source of which is God Himself; the ways of death are the ways of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the source of which is Satan and which is manifested in our self. Thus, we must learn to be delivered from the self so as to live in God. Proverbs teaches us the proper way of human conduct; the secret is to reject the self to live in God. (CWWL, 1956, vol. 1, p. 514)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1988, vol. 4, "The Excelling Gift for the Building Up of the Church," chs. 1, 6

WEEK 11 — DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

Jer. 32:39-40 And I will give them one heart and one way, to fear Me all the days, for their own good and for the good of their children after them. And I will make an eternal covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put My fear into their hearts, so that they will not turn away from Me.

We, the chosen people of God, should all have one heart—to love God, to seek God, to live God, and to be constituted with God that we may be His expression—and one way—the Triune God Himself as the inner law of life with its divine capacity (Jer. 31:33-34; John 14:6a). This one heart and one way are the one accord (Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; Rom. 15:6). Divisions result from having a heart for something other than Christ and taking a way other than Christ. (Jer. 32:39, footnote 1)

This eternal covenant is the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 13:20). It is by this covenant that God will not turn away from us and will plant us in Christ, our good land..., and Christ in all His aspects will be bought by us (Jer. 32:40-44), that is, gained by us through our paying the price to forget the things that are behind and pursue Christ (Phil. 3:8-14). (Jer. 32:40, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

How can we truly know and understand God's covenant? Psalm 25:14 tells us: "The intimate counsel of Jehovah is to those who fear Him, / And His covenant will He make known to them."...You may hear others speak of God's covenant, and you may also know a little about the matter of a covenant, but unless God reveals it, you will still have no power, and you still cannot hold fast God's word. Therefore, God must show it to us in our spirit.

What kind of person can have God's revelation?...The Lord gives His intimate counsel only to those who fear Him and His covenant to those who fear Him....To fear means to magnify, to exalt, Him. A person who fears God

is one who seeks God's will with a full heart, with the intention of completely submitting to God's way....Those who are lazy, careless, double-minded, proud, and complacent can never expect God to reveal His intimate counsel to them. Neither can they expect God to reveal His covenant to them. The Lord only gives His intimate counsel and reveals His covenant to those who fear Him....Therefore, if we truly want to know God's covenant, we need to learn to fear God. (The New Covenant, 2nd ed., pp. 37-38)

People think that God's forgiveness will cause man to become audacious and reckless. Little do they know that the grace of God's forgiveness is to bring man into the fear of God (Psa. 130:4). Our experience tells us that the more we are forgiven by God, the more we fear Him; the more we have received the grace of God's forgiveness, the more we have the fear toward God. Only those who have never been forgiven by God and who have never tasted the grace of God's forgiveness can behave in an audacious and reckless manner, doing whatever they please. Once we have tasted the grace of God's forgiveness, we immediately have a fearful heart and we also hate sin.

The grace of God's forgiveness causes us not only to fear God but also to love God. On the negative side, because we fear Him, we refrain from doing things that are displeasing to God; on the positive side, because we love Him, we do things that are pleasing to Him.... In Luke 7, the sinful woman, having been forgiven by the Lord, not only ceased from her sinful living but also poured out all she had and all she was on the Lord to express her love toward Him. The law, which condemns us, cannot free us from sin, but grace, which forgives us, can.... The more we have been forgiven by God, the more we love God. The reason that sinful woman loved the Lord much was that she was forgiven much by the Lord. Therefore, God's forgiveness of man results in man's fearing Him and loving Him. (Truth Lessons—Level One, vol. 3, pp. 122-123)

Further Reading: Truth Lessons—Level One, vol. 3, lsn. 36; CWWL, 1957, vol. 1, "God's Plan concerning the Church," ch. 4

WEEK 11 — DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

Prov. 31:4 ...It is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes to say, Where is strong drink?

9 Open your mouth; judge righteously, and minister justice to the poor and needy.

10-12 Who can find a worthy woman? For her price is far above corals. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.

The last chapter [of Proverbs] presents two models: a reigning king and a worthy woman. On the one hand, we should be a king, a royal man like the Lord, having the authority to rule. On the other hand, we should be a worthy woman, knowing how to arrange, manage, take care of, and provide for the needs of the saints in the house of God.

Proverbs 31:3 through 9 speaks of a reigning king—one who is not licentious and does not drink wine but who speaks for the rights of others and ministers justice. This typifies Christ and His overcomers. Only this kind of person can reign. Many brothers cannot restrict themselves; therefore, they cannot reign as kings. Our Lord was fully under God's restriction; hence, He could reign for God. We should conduct ourselves and handle our affairs like royal princes....Those who restrict themselves are revered by others [cf. S. S. 6:4b]. If we can be restricted by God and thus deal with ourselves, we will be able to reign for God.

Proverbs 31:10 through 31 describes a worthy woman—one who is wise, kind, diligent, and capable and who can take care of, arrange, manage, and provide for her household. "Her price is far above corals" (v. 10); her glory surpasses all her peers. This worthy woman typifies the church and the saints who love the Lord. We should all be like this worthy woman in loving the Lord. (CWWL, 1956, vol. 1, p. 529)

Today's Reading

These two models signify that we should be like a king on the one hand and like a worthy woman on the other hand. In the aspect of overcoming, we should be like a king; in the aspect of loving the Lord, we should be like a worthy woman. Being like this will cause us to have value and glory before the Lord.

The proverbs are not ordinary exhortations; rather, they speak of how we should conduct ourselves before God.... Only in this way can we match the standard of human conduct seen in the book of Proverbs.

After the first thirty chapters of Proverbs present the principles and details of human conduct as well as general words of wisdom, its last chapter shows two models for our human conduct. These two models signify two great figures in the universe—God and man. God is the reigning King, and man is the worthy woman. From Genesis to Revelation there is a line concerning these two great figures. In the New Testament these two great figures are Christ and the church. On the one hand, we should conduct ourselves as a reigning king, like Christ, having the authority to rule; on the other hand, we should conduct ourselves as a worthy woman, knowing how to arrange, manage, and provide for God’s household. The meaning of these two models is very deep and can cause us to receive many teachings related to human conduct, typology, our spiritual life, and practical application. It is worthy of our learning. (CWWL, 1956, vol. 1, pp. 529-530, 535-536)

In holding marriage in honor man’s faithfulness is the base. Regarding this, Proverbs 5:5-19 gives us a warning about the “strange woman,” whose feet go down to death and whose steps hold fast to Sheol. She does not make straight the path of life. Her ways wander, and she does not know it (vv. 5-6).

Whereas in holding marriage in honor man’s faithfulness is the base, woman’s virtues are the building up. A gracious woman lays hold of honor (11:16a). A worthy woman is the crown of her husband (12:4a). The wise woman builds her house—14:1a. Regarding woman’s virtues, we need to read 31:10-31. (Life-study of Proverbs, p. 15)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1956, vol. 1, pp. 529-536

<< WEEK 11 — HYMN >>

Hymns, #578 My will is weak, my strength is frail

Experience of Christ — Trusting Him

1

**My will is weak, my strength is frail,
And all my hope is nearly gone;
I can but trust Thy working true
To gently hold and lead me on.**

2

**I've tried my best, but still have failed,
E'en as before I've failed and erred;
Thy patience is my only trust
To hold and keep me to Thy word.**

3

**Whene'er my heart is lifted up,
How very near I am to fall;
I dare not do, I dare not think,
I need Thyself in great or small.**

4

**Thou art my Savior, strength and stay,
O Lord, I come to seek Thy face;
Though I'm the weakest of the weak,
My strength is nothing but Thy grace.**

