

## Message Eleven

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

EM Hymns: 22, 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

Prov 1:1	The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, the king of Israel:
Prov 1:7	The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; / Fools despise wisdom and instruction.
Prov 2:4	If you seek her like silver / And search for her like hidden treasures,
Prov 2:5	Then you will understand the fear of Jehovah / And find the knowledge of God.
Prov 3:5	Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, / And do not rely on your own understanding;
Prov 3:6	In all your ways acknowledge Him, / And He will make your paths straight.
Prov 3:7	Do not be wise in your own eyes; / Fear Jehovah, and depart from evil.
Prov 3:8	It will be healing to your body / And refreshment to your bones.
Prov 3:9	Honor Jehovah with your substance / And with the firstfruits of all your produce;
Prov 3:10	Then your barns will be filled with plenty, / And your vats will burst open with new wine.
Prov 8:13	The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil; / Pride and arrogance and the evil way / And the perverse mouth, I hate.
Prov 9:10	The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom, / And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
Prov 10:27	The fear of Jehovah prolongs days, / But the years of the wicked will be shortened.
Prov 14:2	He who walks in his uprightness fears Jehovah, / But he who is perverse in his ways despises Him.
Prov 14:26	In the fear of Jehovah is strong confidence, / And his children will have a place of refuge.
Prov 14:27	The fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life, / That one may turn aside from the snares of death.
Prov 15:16	Better is a little with the fear of Jehovah / Than great treasure and turmoil with it.
Prov 15:33a	The fear of Jehovah is the instruction of wisdom, ...
Prov 16:6	By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is expiated, / And by the fear of Jehovah men depart from evil.
Prov 19:23	The fear of Jehovah leads to life, / And he who has it will lodge in contentment; / He will not be visited with evil.

### 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:

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| Prov 1:1   | The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, the king of Israel:   |
| Prov 1:7   | The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; / Fools despise wisdom and instruction.  |
| Eph 4:30   | And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed unto the day of redemption.   |
| 2 Cor 5:9  | Therefore also we are determined, whether at home or abroad, to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him.   |
| 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. |
- 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.
- Isa 43:7      Everyone who is called by My name, / Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory.
- 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.
- Matt 16:24    Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

- 2 Cor 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.
- 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.
- Prov 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, the king of Israel:
- Prov 1:7 The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; / Fools despise wisdom and instruction.
- Prov 2:4 If you seek her like silver / And search for her like hidden treasures,
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- Prov 3:5 Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, / And do not rely on your own understanding;
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- Prov 15:16 Better is a little with the fear of Jehovah / Than great treasure and turmoil with it.
- Prov 15:33a The fear of Jehovah is the instruction of wisdom, ...
- Prov 16:6 By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is expiated, / And by the fear of Jehovah men depart from evil.
- Prov 19:23 The fear of Jehovah leads to life, / And he who has it will lodge in contentment; / He will not be visited with evil.

**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:**

- Isa 11:1 Then a sprout will come forth from the stump of Jesse, / And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Luke 4:1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, while being tempted for forty days by the devil.
- Luke 4:14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. And reports about Him went out through all the surrounding region.
- Luke 10:21 In that hour He exulted in the Holy Spirit and said, I extol You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for thus it has been well pleasing in Your sight.

John 1:32 And John testified saying, I beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He abode upon Him.  
Matt 12:28 But if I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

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:

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.

Isa 11:3 He will delight in the fear of Jehovah: / He will neither judge by what His eyes see, / Nor decide by what His ears hear.

Phil 1:19 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

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).

John 5:19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, The Son can do nothing from Himself except what He sees the Father doing, for whatever that One does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

John 4:34 Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.

John 17:4 I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do.

John 14:10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.

John 14:24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.

John 5:30 I can do nothing from Myself; as I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 7:18 He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him, this One is true, and unrighteousness is not in Him.

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).

Eph 4:20 But you did not so learn Christ,

Eph 4:21 If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him as the reality is in Jesus,

John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming.

Phil 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,

Phil 2:6 Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal with God a treasure to be grasped,

Phil 2:7 But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;

Phil 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross.

Phil 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

Phil 2:10 That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Phil 2:11 And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

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.

Luke 11:5 And He said to them, Who among you will have a friend and will go to him at midnight and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves,

Luke 11:6 Since a friend of mine has come to me from a journey and I have nothing to set before him;

Luke 11:7 And that one, from inside, will answer and say, Do not trouble me; the door is already shut and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise up and give you anything?

Luke 11:8 I say to you, Even though he will not rise up and give him anything because he is his friend, surely because of his shameless persistence he will rise and give him what he needs.

Luke 11:9 And I say to you, Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you.

Luke 11:10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.

Luke 11:11 But what father among you whose son shall ask for a fish will instead of a fish hand him a snake?

Luke 11:12 Or if he shall also ask for an egg will hand him a scorpion?

Luke 11:13 If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father who is from heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!

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

Prov 3:5 Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, / And do not rely on your own understanding;

Prov 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, / And He will make your paths straight.

Prov 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; / Fear Jehovah, and depart from evil.

Prov 3:8 It will be healing to your body / And refreshment to your bones.

Prov 3:26 For Jehovah will be your confidence, / And He will keep your foot from being caught.

Prov 16:1 The plans of the heart belong to man, / But the answer of the tongue is from Jehovah.

Prov 16:9 A man's heart devises his way, / But Jehovah directs his steps.

Prov 16:20 He who gives heed to the word will find good, / And blessed is he who trusts in Jehovah.

Prov 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, / But everything it decides is from Jehovah.

Prov 19:21 There are many devices in a man's heart, / But it is the counsel of Jehovah that will stand.

Prov 30:5 Every word of God is tried; / He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.

Prov 30:6 Do not add to His words, / Lest He reprove you and you be found a liar.

- 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.

Prov 3:5 Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, / And do not rely on your own understanding;

Prov 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, / And He will make your paths straight.

Prov 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; / Fear Jehovah, and depart from evil.

Prov 3:8 It will be healing to your body / And refreshment to your 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.

Jer 2:13 For My people have committed two evils: / They have forsaken Me, / The fountain of living waters, / To hew out for themselves cisterns, / Broken cisterns, / Which hold no water.

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.  
1 Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.
  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).  
Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.  
Rev 4:3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and there was a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.  
Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.
- 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).  
Prov 16:20 He who gives heed to the word will find good, / And blessed is he who trusts in Jehovah.  
Prov 3:26 For Jehovah will be your confidence, / And He will keep your foot from being caught.
- 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).  
Prov 2:3 Indeed, if you cry out for discernment / And lift up your voice for understanding;  
Prov 2:4 If you seek her like silver / And search for her like hidden treasures,  
Prov 2:5 Then you will understand the fear of Jehovah / And find the knowledge of God.  
John 5:39 You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me.  
John 5:40 Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.  
Deut 6:2 That you may fear Jehovah your God and keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I am commanding you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life; and that your days may be extended.

#### **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.  
Prov 3:9 Honor Jehovah with your substance / And with the firstfruits of all your produce;  
Prov 3:10 Then your barns will be filled with plenty, / And your 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.  
Mal 3:7 From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you, says Jehovah of hosts. But you say, How shall we return?  
Mal 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me. But you say, How have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings.  
Mal 3:9 With the curse you are cursed, yet you, even the whole nation, rob Me.  
Mal 3:10 Bring the whole tithe to the storehouse that there may be food in My house; and prove Me, if you will, by this, says Jehovah of hosts, whether I will open to you the windows of heaven and pour out blessing for you until there is no room for it.  
Mal 3:11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sake, and for your sake he will not destroy the fruit of the ground; and for your sake the vine will not lose its fruit in the field, says Jehovah of hosts.

- Mal 3:12 And all the nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says Jehovah of hosts.
- 2 Cor 9:6 But take note of this: He who sows sparingly shall also sparingly reap; and he who sows with blessings shall also with blessings reap;
- 2 Cor 9:7 Each one as he has purposed in his heart, not out of sorrow or out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver.
- 2 Cor 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound unto you, that, in everything always having all sufficiency, you may abound unto every good work;
- 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 “cleanse 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.
- 2 Cor 7:1 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.
- 2 Cor 6:17 Therefore "come out from their midst and be separated, says the Lord, and do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you";
- 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.
- Eph 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,
- Eph 5:19 Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming with your heart to the Lord,
- Eph 5:20 Giving thanks at all times for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father,
- Eph 5:21 Being subject to one another in the fear of Christ:
- Psa 2:11 Serve Jehovah with fear, / And rejoice with trembling.
- Psa 2:12 Kiss the Son / Lest He be angry and you perish from the way; / For His anger may suddenly be kindled. / Blessed are all those who take refuge in Him.
- Heb 12:28 Therefore receiving an unshakable kingdom, let us have grace, through which we may serve God well-pleasingly with piety and fear;
- 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.
- 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.
- 1 Cor 4:4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself; but I am not justified in this, but He who examines me is the Lord.
- 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, and then there will be praise to each from God.
- 1 Cor 3:13 The work of each will become manifest; for the day will declare it, because it is revealed by fire, and the fire itself will prove each one's work, of what sort it is.
- 1 Cor 3:14 If anyone's work which he has built upon the foundation remains, he will receive a reward;
- 1 Cor 3:15 If anyone's work is consumed, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.
- Rom 14:10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God,
- 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).
- Prov 10:27 The fear of Jehovah prolongs days, / But the years of the wicked will be shortened.

- Psa 103:11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, / So great is His lovingkindness upon those who fear Him.
- Psa 103:13 As compassionate as a father is toward his children, / So compassionate is Jehovah toward those who fear Him.
- Psa 103:17 But Jehovah's lovingkindness is from eternity / Unto eternity upon those who fear Him, / And His righteousness is to the children's children;
- Psa 85:9 Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, / That glory may dwell in our land.
- Psa 60:4 You have given a banner to those who fear You, / To be displayed because of the truth. Selah.
- Prov 14:26 In the fear of Jehovah is strong confidence, / And his children will have a place of refuge.
- Prov 14:27 The fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life, / That one may turn aside from the snares of death.
- Psa 115:12 Jehovah has been mindful of us; He will bless us; / He will bless the house of Israel; / He will bless the house of Aaron;
- Psa 115:13 He will bless those who fear Jehovah, / Both small and great.
- Psa 34:9 Fear Jehovah, you who are His saints; / For there is no lack with those who fear Him.
- Psa 111:5 He gives food to those who fear Him; / He remembers His covenant forever.
- 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).
- Heb 11:7 By faith Noah, having been divinely instructed concerning things not yet seen and being moved by pious fear, prepared an ark for the salvation of his house, through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.
- Gen 22:12 And He said, Do not stretch out your hand upon the boy, nor do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.
- Gen 42:18 And Joseph said to them on the third day, Do this and live, for I fear God.
- Psa 2:11 Serve Jehovah with fear, / And rejoice with trembling.
- Psa 2:12 Kiss the Son / Lest He be angry and you perish from the way; / For His anger may suddenly be kindled. / Blessed are all those who take refuge in Him.
- Psa 5:7 But as for me, in the abundance of Your lovingkindness / I will come into Your house; / I will bow down toward Your holy temple / In fear of You.
- Neh 1:11 I beseech You, O Lord, let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and to the prayer of Your servants, who take delight in fearing Your name; and cause Your servant to prosper today, and grant him to find compassion before this man. Now I was cupbearer to the king.
- Neh 5:9 Then I said, The thing that you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations our enemies?
- Neh 5:15 But the former governors, who were before me, laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them food and wine, besides forty shekels of silver; even their servants tyrannized the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God.
- Acts 9:31 So then the church throughout the whole of Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it was multiplied.

**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:**

- Psa 2:11 Serve Jehovah with fear, / And rejoice with trembling.
- Prov 14:27 The fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life, / That one may turn aside from the snares of death.
- Prov 11:30 The fruit of the righteous man is a tree of life, / And he who is wise wins souls.
- 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).
- Prov 2:19 None who go to her ever return, / Nor do they attain to the paths of life;

- Prov 5:6 She does not make straight the path of life: / Her ways wander, and she does not know it.
- Prov 10:17 He who heeds instruction is on the path of life, / But he who forsakes reproof goes astray.
- Prov 14:27 The fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life, / That one may turn aside from the snares of death.
- Prov 19:23 The fear of Jehovah leads to life, / And he who has it will lodge in contentment; / He will not be visited with evil.
- Psa 16:11 You will make known to me the path of life; / In Your presence is fullness of joy; / At Your right hand there are pleasures forever.
- Prov 3:13 Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, / And the man who gains understanding.
- Prov 3:18 She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her, / And happy are those who hold her fast.
- Prov 11:30 The fruit of the righteous man is a tree of life, / And he who is wise wins souls.
- Prov 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, / But when what is desired comes, it is a tree of life.
- Prov 15:4 A soothing tongue is a tree of life, / But perverseness in it is a breaking of the spirit.
- 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.
- Prov 19:23 The fear of Jehovah leads to life, / And he who has it will lodge in contentment; / He will not be visited with evil.
- Matt 7:13 Enter in through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it.
- Matt 7:14 Because narrow is the gate and constricted is the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it.
- Psa 84:5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, / In whose heart are the highways to Zion.
- 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.
- Prov 2:13 From those who forsake the paths of uprightness / To walk in the ways of darkness,
- Prov 3:5 Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, / And do not rely on your own understanding;
- Prov 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, / And He will make your paths straight.
- Prov 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; / Fear Jehovah, and depart from evil.
- Prov 14:12 There is a way which seems right to a man, / But the end of it is the ways of death.
- Prov 16:25 There is a way which seems right to a man, / But the end of it is the ways of death.
- Eph 5:2 And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.
- Eph 5:8 For you were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light
- Eph 5:9 (For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),

**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:**

- Jer 32:39 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.
- Jer 32:40 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.
- 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.
- Jer 32:39 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.

- Jer 31:33 But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares Jehovah: I will put My law in their inward parts and write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.
- Jer 31:34 And they will no longer teach, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for all of them will know Me, from the little one among them even to the great one among them, declares Jehovah, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.
- John 14:6a Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; ...
- Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.
- 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.
- Acts 1:14 These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.
- Acts 2:46 And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart,
- Acts 4:24 And when they heard this, they lifted up their voice with one accord to God and said, Sovereign Master, You are the One who has made heaven and earth and the sea and all things in them,
- Rom 15:6 That with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus 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.
- Jer 32:40 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.
- 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.
- Psa 25:12 Who then is the man who fears Jehovah? / Him will He instruct concerning the way that he should choose.
- Psa 25:14 The intimate counsel of Jehovah is to those who fear Him, / And His covenant will He make known to them.

## **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.
- Luke 7:39 But when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said within himself, This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching Him, because she is a sinner.
- Luke 7:40 And Jesus answered and said to him, Simon, I have something to say to you. And he said, Teacher, say it.
- Luke 7:41 A certain moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii and the other fifty.
- Luke 7:42 But since they had nothing with which to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more?
- Luke 7:43 Simon answered and said, I suppose the one whom he graciously forgave the more. And He said to him, You have judged correctly.

- Luke 7:44 And turning to the woman, He said to Simon, Do you see this woman? I entered into your house; you did not give Me water for My feet, but she, with her tears, has wet My feet and with her hair has wiped them.
- Luke 7:45 You did not give Me a kiss, but she, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing My feet affectionately.
- Luke 7:46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but she has anointed My feet with ointment.
- Luke 7:47 For this reason I say to you, Her sins which are many are forgiven, because she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, he loves little.
- Luke 7:48 And He said to her, Your sins are forgiven.
- Luke 7:49 And those who were reclining at table with Him began to say within themselves, Who is this who even forgives sins?
- Luke 7:50 But He said to the woman, Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.
- 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.

**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:**

Prov 31 be omitted.

- 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:
- Prov 31:3 Do not give your strength to women, / Nor your ways to that which destroys kings.
- Prov 31:4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; / Nor for princes to say, Where is strong drink?
- Prov 31:5 Lest they drink and forget what is decreed, / And pervert the rights of all the afflicted.
- Prov 31:6 Give strong drink rather to one who is perishing, / And wine to the bitter in soul;
- Prov 31:7 Let him drink and forget his poverty, / And remember his misery no more.
- Prov 31:8 Open your mouth for the dumb, / And for the rights of all those who are passing away.
- Prov 31:9 Open your mouth; judge righteously, / And minister justice to the poor and needy.
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:
 

Deut 17:14 When you enter the land which Jehovah your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it, and you say, I will set a king over me like all the nations which surround me;

Deut 17:15 You must set a king over you whom Jehovah your God will choose; from among your brothers you shall set a king over you; you may not put a foreigner, who is not your brother, over you.

Deut 17:16 However, he shall not amass horses to himself, and he shall not turn the people back to Egypt so that he may amass horses, since Jehovah has said to you, You shall never again return that way.

Deut 17:17 And he shall not amass wives to himself, so that his heart does not turn aside; nor shall he amass silver and gold to himself in great amounts.

Deut 17:18 And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write out for himself a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the Levitical priests.

Deut 17:19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, in order that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes and doing them,

- Deut 17:20 So that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers and he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right or to the left; that he and his sons may extend their days over their kingdom in the midst of Israel.
- 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:
- Prov 31:10 Who can find a worthy woman? / For her price is far above corals.  
 Prov 31:11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, / And he will have no lack of gain.  
 Prov 31:12 She does him good and not evil / All the days of her life.  
 Prov 31:13 She seeks wool and flax, / And delights to work with her hands.  
 Prov 31:14 She is like the merchant ships; / She brings her food from afar.  
 Prov 31:15 She rises also while it is still night / And gives food to her household, / And their task to her serving girls.  
 Prov 31:16 She considers a field and buys it; / With the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.  
 Prov 31:17 She girds her loins with strength / And makes strong her arms.  
 Prov 31:18 She samples her merchandise to be sure it is good; / Her lamp does not go out by night.  
 Prov 31:19 She lays her hands to the distaff, / And her hands hold on to the spindle.  
 Prov 31:20 She stretches out her hand to the afflicted, / And she reaches out her hands to the needy.  
 Prov 31:21 She does not fear for her household when it snows, / For all her household are clothed with scarlet.  
 Prov 31:22 She makes coverings for herself; / Her clothing is fine linen and purple.  
 Prov 31:23 Her husband is known in the gates, / When he sits among the elders of the land.  
 Prov 31:24 She makes linen garments and sells them / And delivers girdles to the merchant.  
 Prov 31:25 Strength and dignity are her clothing, / And she happily looks forward to the time to come.  
 Prov 31:26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, / And the law of kindness is on her tongue.  
 Prov 31:27 She watches closely over the ways of her household / And does not eat the bread of idleness.  
 Prov 31:28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; / Her husband also, and he praises her, saying:  
 Prov 31:29 Many daughters have done worthily, / But you surpass them all.  
 Prov 31:30 Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; / But a woman who fears Jehovah, she will be praised.  
 Prov 31:31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, / And let her works praise her in the gates.  
 Prov 12:4 A worthy woman is the crown of her husband, / But she who brings shame is like rotteness in his bones.  
 Prov 19:14 House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, / But a prudent wife is from Jehovah.  
 Ruth 3:11 And now, my daughter, do not fear. All that you say, I will do for you; for all the assembly of my people know that you are a worthy woman.
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).
    - Prov 12:4 A worthy woman is the crown of her husband, / But she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones.
    - Prov 31:28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; / Her husband also, and he praises her, saying:
    - Prov 31:29 Many daughters have done worthily, / But you surpass them all.
  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.
    - 1 Pet 3:1 In like manner, wives, be subject to your own husbands, that even if any disobey the word, they will be gained without the word through the manner of life of their wives,
    - 1 Pet 3:2 Seeing with their own eyes your pure manner of life in fear.
    - 1 Pet 3:3 Let your adorning not be the outward plaiting of hair and putting on of gold or clothing with garments,
    - 1 Pet 3:4 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.
  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.
    - Titus 2:3 Older women likewise to be in demeanor as befits those who engage in sacred things, not slanderers, nor enslaved by much wine, teachers of what is good,
    - Titus 2:4 That they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,
    - Titus 2:5 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.
- 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.