

Proverbs 9:10 The Fear of the Lord

10 **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Proverbs 9:10**

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. ESV

The Fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment. NLT

Outline for today:

- What is the fear of the Lord?
- What does it look like in operation?
- What can walking in the fear of the Lord produce in us?
- What can happen if we lose sight of it?

What is the fear of the Lord?

1st Reverence – A sense of Awe! – Deep Respect

A) Think of God – He is awesome in his power and majesty

B) He is Holy – He is a consuming fire

1) But his heart is not to burn me up – but to burn in me – to brighten me up

C) It is significant that Proverbs 9:10 connects the fear of the Lord to his Holiness.

1) Having a proper fear of the Lord is going to center around the reality that God is Holy.

The Holiness of God?

A) He is completely pure in his being and in all his ways – Song of Revelation: True and righteous are your judgments oh Lord.

B) He is completely pure- no flaws- no imperfections, in his Person his Character, dealings, personality

1) He is not capable of evil or guile

C) He is light and in Him there is no darkness!

D) Attached to his Holiness is also His Power, glory and his majesty

So when we talk about the fear of the Lord – there is a sense of being awestruck by his awesomeness

A) Being overwhelmed by the wonder of the greatness and majesty of God

B) There is a sense of Adoration that only grows as the foundation of my understanding of who he is grows

It means that, because of his bright holiness and magnificent love, you find him “fearfully beautiful.” Tim Keller

Think of it this way

A) When you find yourself in the presence of someone you revere, someone you are in awe of, there is fear

B) It is a positive fear that motivates you - You don't want to disappoint, dishonor this person.

C) I had two interactions with Pastor Chuck Smith before I became a Pastor

1) Too be honest I had no real idea of the magnitude of who he was

2) and the impact he had made for the Kingdom of God.

D) Part of the Beauty of PC -he always seemed so normal.

The First encounter was actually on the football field – I was in 6th grade around 11 years old

A) Safety – bulldozed me – Wow that is my Pastor

B) The next encounter I would have come about 6 years later –

1) I was 17th and had just finished my JR. Year of High School

C) We went to Church at CCCM and my 2nd High School Pastor in 3 years was leaving for some reason.

1) At that point I felt like our HS ministry was firing on all cylinders –

2) It was the biggest it had ever been – 175 kids – it was fun

D) I was really involved and invested.

So one Sunday after a Service – I waited in the line courtyard to speak to Pastor Chuck

A) I asked him that before he made a decision on who the next High School Pastor would be –

B) That He himself would come and check out what was happening.

1) Later I thought – how stupid was that – like he isn't going to be able to hear from the Lord – pick the right guy.

C) He never came but he sent Richard Cimino to come –

1) God would use Richard to change the whole trajectory of my life

2) I would not be in ministry today if it wasn't for Richard's influence

D) Moment of truth – Jesus is a part of your life but not the focus – not the center

So those were my first two encounters with PC

A) Fast forward 17 years later – I am now the Pastor of the Church here in Vista – I had to meet with PC about something.

B) BY now I had a better idea of who He was and the impact he had made on the kingdom of God –

1) Pastor conferences – stories

C) I was awestruck in a good way – There was a big time respect – I knew his time was Valuable

I went into his office – felt a bit intimidating – I didn't want to do or say anything stupid

A) I wanted to make a good impression – I wanted him to like me!

B) I remember walking out thinking – that did not go well 😊

C) For years I never felt like PC liked me –

1) In fact in some ways I felt like he blamed me for Brian moving to England – taking Cheryl and grand kids

2) When Brian first brought up the idea to PC – You go and leave Cheryl and the kids here.

D) I always felt that PC blamed me for coming so Brian could leave!

1) It took years before I felt like he liked me

Now this is the advantage that we have in the Lord as believers in Jesus Christ.

A) God doesn't just LIKE US – He LOVES US – redeemed us

B) We are in a Covenantal relationship with Him through Jesus

1) He is committed to us as his beloved Children

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

C) Often when the Bible talks about **Knowing God** it uses a word that speaks of knowing him in a intimate way!

D) The more our knowledge grows the More our Reverence grows – sense of awe struck grows

1) But also the More we enjoy Him

What the fear of the Lord looks like in operation? Exodus 19 – turn

A) Beautiful picture of relationship with God – mixed with a healthy fear of the Lord

B) God has delivered the People of Israel from 400 year of bondage in Egypt

C) In Exodus 19 God is going to reveal himself to His redeemed people.

1) Notice how he starts

In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, {exactly 2 months after the Israelites were delivered from Egypt} on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai. 2 For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain.

3 And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians {Power}, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. {tenderness and protection} 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom

of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

C) So Picture this: it starts with this beautiful message of His loves and devotion to these people.

1) Moses delivers it to the People – they are like right on – we are all in!

D) But that beautiful message is contrasted by the Ominous of what happens next

⁹ Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will come to you in a thick cloud, Moses, so the people themselves can hear me when I speak with you. Then they will always trust you.”

Moses told the LORD what the people had said. ¹⁰ Then the LORD told Moses, “Go down and prepare the people for my arrival. Consecrate them today and tomorrow, and have them wash their clothing. ¹¹ Be sure they are ready on the third day, for on that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai as all the people watch. ¹² Mark off a boundary all around the mountain. **Warn the people, ‘Be careful!’** Do not go up on the mountain or even touch its boundaries. Anyone who touches the mountain will certainly be put to death

So the Lord’s descent to the mountain was preceded by careful preparation and exacting instructions

A) The people had to be purified; no one could touch the mountain unless they were invited further up.

¹⁴ So Moses went down to the people. He consecrated them for worship, and they washed their clothes. ¹⁵ He told them, “Get ready for the third day, and until then abstain from having sexual intercourse.”

¹⁶ On the morning of the third day, **thunder roared and lightning flashed, and a dense cloud came down on the mountain.** There was a long, loud blast from a ram’s horn, and all the people trembled. ¹⁷ Moses led them out from the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ **All of Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the LORD had descended on it in the form of fire. The smoke billowed into the sky like smoke from a brick kiln, and the whole mountain shook violently.** ¹⁹ As the blast of the ram’s horn grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, **and God thundered his reply.** ²⁰ The LORD came

down on the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses climbed the mountain.

Picture this:

A) When the Lord descended there was thunder, lightning, fire everywhere, thick smoke, trumpet blasts, and the mountain shook violently.

B) The entire MT is ablaze – there is fire – but it doesn’t consume

C) It is a bigger version of the burning bush that Moses saw earlier!

Imagine being in that crowd standing there transfixed and full of awe

A) You have never seen or felt anything like this before.

B) A message of intimacy – followed by a display of Awesomeness

1) This is the God who has pledged his allegiance to you.

C) So For Moses, the fear of the Lord was inseparable from God’s promise that Israel was his treasured possession.

D) A true fear of the Lord realizes you can’t run from God, and the only option is to run to him.

We see Moses do that exact thing later in the book of Exodus – He is on this same Mt with the Lord again -

A) Moses asks -the Lord – Can you show me your glory!

B) This is something that happens when we grow in the fear of the Lord/ the Knowledge of the Holy One

1) Hunger for MORE –

C) You have to love the boldness of Moses – Show me your glory

God responds to Moses – No one can see my face and live!

A) Moses that can’t happen – but this is what I will do – **I will allow my goodness to pass before you.**

B) Goodness? Isn't the glory of God a matter of his greatness, not his goodness? Apparently not.

C) God then tells Moses that he will HIDE him in the cleft of the rock, so his backside can pass by –

1) He is going to allow Moses to see a small glimpse of his glory

D) In that Moment – God proclaims his name to Moses - Exodus 34 ESV

⁶The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.” ESV

Now I think this is surprising to us

A) Our deepest instincts expect God to be a thundering, gavel swinging, judgment relishing ruler

B) We expect the bent of God’s heart to be retribution to our waywardness.

C) And then Exodus 34 stops us in our tracks because we see that the bent of God’s heart is mercy.

1) His glory is seen in his goodness.

Consider the words of Exodus 34:6–7.

A) “Merciful and gracious.” These are the first words out of God’s own mouth after proclaiming his name (“the Lord,” or “I am”).

B) God does not reveal his glory as, “The Lord, exacting and precise,”

1) or, “The Lord, disappointed and frustrated.”

2) The Lord, powerful and mighty

C) No the first thing that he proclaims to Moses about himself is that he is merciful and gracious

D) That is His highest priority and deepest delight and the first reaction of his heart.

1) How AMAZING IS THAT!

“Slow to anger.”

A) The Hebrew phrase is literally “long of nostrils.”

B) You know what is the opposite of Long Nostrils? –

C) Picture an angry bull, pawing the ground, breathing loudly, nostrils flared.

1) That would be, so to speak, “short-nostrils.” – ready to charge! – Ready to destroy

But the Lord is long-nosed. He doesn't have his finger on the trigger.

A) Unlike us, who are often emotional dams ready to break, God can put up with a lot.

B) It takes much accumulated provoking to draw out his fury.

C) Consider this: We are told in the OT dozens of times in books like Deut, 1-2 Kings, Jeremiah –

1) God was provoked to Anger!

But not once are we told that God is “provoked to love” or “provoked to mercy.”

A) Here is My point His anger requires provocation;

B) where as his love and mercy is pent up, ready to gush forth.

C) We tend to think the opposite: We think His divine anger is pent up, spring-loaded;

1) And his divine mercy is slow to build. But It’s just the reverse

D) His Divine Love and mercy is ready to burst forth at the slightest prick.

1) That is Who He is – the Core of His being

2) His Anger is what has to be provoked and stirred up

“Abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.”

A) This is covenant language.

B) There is one Hebrew word underlying the English phrase “steadfast love.”

1) It is the word hesed, which refers to God’s special commitment to the people with whom he has gladly bound himself in an unbreakable covenant bond.

C)The word “**faithfulness**” gets at this too—His love is constant!

1)and he can always be counted on to respond in a way that has His peoples best interest at heart!

D)Therefore he is not simply existing in large-hearted covenant commitment but abounding in it.

1)His determined commitment to us never runs dry.

“Keeping steadfast love for thousands.”

A)This could equally be translated “keeping steadfast love to a thousand generations,” as is explicitly stated in Deuteronomy 7:9:

“Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.”

B)This does not mean that his goodness shuts off with generation number 1,001. ☺

C)It is God’s own way of saying: There is no termination date on my commitment to you.

1)You can’t get rid of my grace to you.

D)You can’t outrun my mercy. You can’t evade my goodness. My heart is set on you.

“Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and fourth generation.”

A)This closing element, though initially hard to hear, is vital—and, on reflection, fosters further comfort.

B)This statement brings us into the clearest picture of the Fear of the Lord seen in his justice and mercy

C) God is not a softie. In the Holiness of his Character he cannot overlook Sin

Sin and guilt pass down from generation to generation.

A)We see this all around us in the world. –

B)We feel guilty because we are guilty and we are constantly dealing with the consequences of sin

C)Yes, our sins and the consequences of them will be passed down to our children and grandchildren.

1)But God’s goodness will be passed down in a way that inexorably swallows up all our sins.

D)His mercies travel down a thousand generations, far eclipsing the third or fourth generation.

That is who God is. That, according to his own testimony, is his heart.

A) His Mercy love loom large;

Aa)Where as His retributive justice is acknowledged but almost as a necessary afterthought.

B)Note the response of Moses

⁸So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped.

C)When we grow in our Understanding of the Holy one and how he operates

D)A Lifestyle of Worship and adoration and being awestruck at who God is the natural result

E)Our hearts are overwhelmed by the reality that He invites us to draw near to him and live in relationship with Him

I like to define the fear of the Lord as a radical God-centeredness that shapes everything else in life, that you’re building your life around God. You take God more seriously than anything else, whether that’s other priorities or the opinions of people in your life. Jeremy Treat - Reality Church LA

What can walking in the fear of the Lord produce in us? Deep dive in coming weeks

A)**Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil**

Proverbs 19:23 – “The fear of the LORD leads to life, and he who has it will abide in satisfaction;

Proverbs 10:27 – “The fear of the LORD prolongs days

Proverbs 14:27 – “The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death

Proverbs 14:26 – “In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge.”

B) This last one – I want to close our time by illustrating what that strength and confidence looked like in the life of a King named Uzziah

C) We will also see what happened when Uzziah lost sight of the fear of the Lord in his life

³Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. ⁴And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. ⁵He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, **who instructed him in the fear of God**, and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper. 2 Chronicles 26:3-5 ESV

Note he was instructed in the fear of God –

A) The fear of God is something that we can learn – something that we can be growing in!

B) So you have this really young guy in Uzziah who asked Zechariah to teach him to walk in the fear of the Lord

C) What did Uzziah do walking in the fear of the Lord?

- V. 6 Made war – advanced Israel
- V.9 He built Towers and fortified the city
- V.10 He dug wells to nourish refresh and replenish the city
- V.11 He built up the Army v.13 over 307,000 troops
- V.15 He trained the army – special fighting forces

D) So under the fear of the Lord people do brave things and big things for God –

1) because they are moving with a sense of confidence that the almighty God is on their side

E) Accomplish the impossible for God – Uzziah is doing all of that

But Then V.16 happens

¹⁶But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the LORD his God and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. ¹⁷But Azariah the priest went in after him, with eighty priests of the LORD who were men of valor, ¹⁸and they withstood King Uzziah and said to him, “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the LORD God.” ¹⁹Then Uzziah was angry. Now he had a censer in his hand to burn incense, and when he became angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of the LORD, by the altar of incense.

Now he is overstepping, now he is taking on things that are not his to take on

A) Now he is thinking more highly of himself than he ought –

B) No longer walking in the fear of the Lord

1) I can do this – I am something – I don’t need a priest – I don’t need a mediator

C) He is punished for this and eventually dies

Interesting – when Uzziah was King – A great King – he made Israel great again

A) But The people lost sight of the fear of the Lord!

B) We read in Isaiah 6 –

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, **and the train of His robe filled the temple**. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!” – Isaiah 6:1-3

So when Uzziah died – Isaiah gets this Vision of the Lord in Glory majesty

A) Angelic beings crying out in natural response to HIS GLORY

B) NOTICE Isaiah’s response -

4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 So I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone!

Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts.”

C)Isaiah is brought face to face with his Sin – shortcomings – He is undone in the presence of Glory

1)He is experiencing the Fear of the Lord – I am a mess

D)But then notice the grace and subsequent response to receiving God’s grace

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said:

“Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.” Isaiah 6:6-7

God moves toward Isaiah in Love and mercy and Grace

A)Notice the response

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:
“Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?”
Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” Isaiah 6:8

B)Here we see this amazing beautiful picture of a healthy fear of the Lord

C)Isaiah is blown away by the majesty – but not to the point of running away –

1)The glory of God only brings him face to face with his own imperfections

D)Which God meets with Grace, mercy and forgiveness

E)Then Isaiah is drawn in – I want to help – I want to be on the team –

1)I want to be a vessel you can work in and work through

That is the fear of the Lord –

A)I am nothing – God is Ominous - but also approachable

B)Here I am send me – he is NOT terrified that he is cowering and wants to run -

Final thought – God proclaimed His name to Moses

A)That is clearly seen in the person of Jesus in the NT

John 1:12 We beheld his glory

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.