



Eternal PERSPECTIVE Proverbs

BIBLE TEXT | PROVERBS 14:19-35

19 The evil bow down before the good, the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

20 The poor is disliked even by his neighbor, but the rich has many friends.

21 Whoever despises his neighbor is a sinner, but blessed is he who is generous to the poor.

22 Do they not go astray who devise evil? Those who devise good meet steadfast love and faithfulness.

23 In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty.

24 The crown of the wise is their wealth, but the folly of fools brings folly.

25 A truthful witness saves lives, but one who breathes out lies is deceitful.

26 In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge.

27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.

28 In a multitude of people is the glory of a king, but without people a prince is ruined.

29 Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.

30 A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.


31 Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him.

32 The wicked is overthrown through his evildeed, but the righteous finds refuge in his death.

33 Wisdom rests in the heart of a man of understanding, but it makes itself known even in the midst of fools.

34 Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

35 A servant who deals wisely has the king's favor, but his wrath falls on one who acts shamefully.



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DEVOTIONAL FOR PROVERBS 14:19-35

AUTHOR: CLARESSA BARRETT

How would you define "the fear of the Lord"? When I think about that phrase, one of the first things that comes to mind for me is my earthly father. Growing up, my daddy was a man of few words. He never seemed to get angry or really show much emotion in general, but he loved his family well in the way that he provided for us, and took care of us. I respected him immensely. I was a pretty good kid, by comparison, but one of the reasons for this was my respect for him. I wasn't afraid of him, or what he would do to me, I just did not in any way want to disappoint my daddy.

While that picture in my mind, comes close to describing what "fearing" the Lord looks like, it still falls short. Hebrews 12:28-29 does a better job explaining: "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, *with reverence and awe*, for our God is a consuming fire." While "fear of the Lord" for an unbeliever has to do with the fear of the judgement of God (Luke 12:5), for a believer, it is a reverence and awe of the Lord. Yes, I do not want to disappoint my heavenly Father, but even more than that, I'm in awe of who He is and what He has done for me. No one else deserves my worship and my allegiance more than the Creator of the universe and of my life, my Savior, my King, my everything.

As we have seen in Proverbs so far, until we truly understand who God is, have a reverential respect for Him, and trust fully in Him, we cannot have true wisdom (Proverbs 1:7). Verses 26-27 in this passage from chapter 14 both begin with the words: "the fear of the Lord". What I love about these verses is what follows those words. Having a proper reverence and awe of the Lord, a proper relationship with Him, leads us FROM self confidence (a.k.a. self-reliance...does anyone else resonate?) TO a strong confidence in the Lord. It leads us to a place of rest and refuge. And when we are rooted firmly in Him, it is life giving. I don't know about you, but this is where I long to be! Lord, help me to "fear" you more!

Questions:

1. Do you have a proper "fear of the Lord"? Do you have an intimate relationship with Him? Why or why not?
2. When do you tend to rely upon yourself rather than the Lord? Where does that lead?
3. What is one practical step you need to take today to grow in your reverence and awe of the Lord?