

## **The Fear of the LORD is...**

The fear of the LORD is mentioned many times throughout Scripture but there are ten verses in which there is a definition given of what the fear of the LORD is.

1. Job 28:28 - "And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding."
  - Wisdom is mentioned in relation to the fear of the LORD in five of the ten verses listed here. It is no surprise that the concept of the fear of the LORD as the beginning of wisdom appeared in the earliest book of the Bible.

In this discourse of Job, Job is speaking of where wisdom can be found (Job 28:12). Job says many incorrect things through the book but in chapter 28 he is correct in his statements about wisdom. To fear God and His ability to cast man into hell (Matthew 10:28, 1 John 4:18) is truly the beginning of wisdom, as it leads to our faith in Him for salvation. Job recognized this even without the full revelation of the Scriptures (Job 19:25-27). All who place their faith in Christ start with a fear of God, because a man must recognize his need for a savior before he can trust in one (Romans 1:28-2:1).

2. Psalm 19:9 - The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
  - The fear of the LORD is clean or pure, which means there is no defilement or deception in it. This can be seen in the Garden of Eden when God clearly laid out the law, what torment would happen for breaking it, and then followed through when it was broken (Genesis 2:16-7, 5:5). God will eventually bring every work into judgment (Revelation 20:12, 22:12), making the fear of Him pure from beginning to end.
  - This pure fear will also last forever because God created man as an eternal creature (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Man will experience the effects of his response to this fear for eternity (Matthew 25:46).
3. Psalm 111:10 - The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.
  - Psalm 111 is about praising God for his wonderful works and his precepts. The last verse has our second statement about the fear of the LORD being the beginning of wisdom. The reason this statement is in a Psalm about God's works is because the recognition of God being the Creator and Sustainer is wisdom that will lead to recognition of needing a savior (Romans 1:18-21).
4. Proverbs 1:7 - The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.
  - The book of Proverbs is dedicated to knowing wisdom, instruction, and understanding (Proverbs 1:2). Here we see that the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. The word translated "knowledge" simple means

“to know.” But if non-believers know things without the fear of the LORD, then what knowledge is this verse talking about?

The answer can be found in the next chapter:

If you seek [wisdom] as silver, and search for [wisdom] as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God

*Proverbs 2:4-5*

The general knowledge that the fear of the LORD produces in the knowledge of God, which is attributes of Himself which in turn produce application for us. Applying this knowledge is when it becomes wisdom.

1. Proverbs 8:13 - The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate.
  - If the fear of the LORD is clean (Psalm 19:9), then the opposite of the fear of the LORD must be evil. A personification of Wisdom is talking in chapter 8 of Proverbs and tells us that hating evil is the fear of the LORD, which means the LORD also hates evil. She then defines what this evil is: pride, arrogance, evil way, and a perverse mouth. If we are to respond correctly to our fear of the LORD, we are to hate these things and not walk in them in our lives.
2. Proverbs 9:10 - “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”
  - Here is another example of the fear of the LORD being the beginning of wisdom but “knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” is added. Since fear is a recognition of the ability of the feared thing to cause torment, knowledge of God includes His abilities. The word translated “understanding” means “an accurate perception of life.” You cannot have a correct understanding of life on earth without fear and knowledge of the LORD.
3. Proverbs 14:26 - In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, and his children will have a place of refuge.
  - This verse shifts to a different point of view of the fear of the LORD providing confidence instead of terror. When there is an understanding of God’s abilities to cause torment, it should be balanced with God’s ability to save from that torment both eternally and temporally. God sent His son to die for us to save us from the very judgement God has for us and our sin. And if He provides eternal salvation, will He not also provide temporal salvation (Romans 8:32)? What confidence and place of refuge!
4. Proverbs 14:27 - The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death.
  - Not only is the fear of the LORD a refuge but it is a fountain of life. For what purpose? To keep us from dying physically, not spiritually. While physical death is inevitable for everyone, sin can lead to an early death

(James 1:15). The fear of the LORD will give us longer life on earth to serve God before we are taken home (Philippians 1:21-26).

5. Proverbs 15:33 - The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, and before honor is humility.
  - Not only is the fear of the LORD the beginning of wisdom, but it also continues to teach us. If we are humble, we will be instructed by the LORD and gain more wisdom. This will produce honor that wisdom herself will bestow us with (Proverbs 4:8-9).
6. Isaiah 33:6 - Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, and the strength of salvation; the fear of the LORD is His treasure.
  - The fear of the LORD is a treasure to Himself because it produces wisdom in which His servants become “thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). How interesting to know that God values the very thing that will make us valuable to Him.

May we have confidence that the fear of the LORD will produce wisdom in our lives to better bring God glory!

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

*1 Peter 5:10-11*