

The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Knowledge

How do you gain knowledge to be holy as God is holy? Proverbs informs us that the “fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” What is it about God that we should fear?

The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge;
Ignorant fools despise wisdom and discipline. (Prov 1:7, LSB)

1. In many instances, God Himself says not to fear Him. What do you observe in God’s words to Abram? Can you observe what fear God is referring to?

After these things the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision, saying,
“Do not fear, Abram,
I am a shield to you;
Your reward shall be very great.” (Gen 15:1, LSB)

2. As Jesus informs His disciples whom they should fear, carefully observe what that fear is based on.

And do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matt 10:28; LSB)

“But I say to you, My friends, do not fear those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him! (Luke 12:4-5, LSB)

3. How does your understanding of “fear the Lord” affect your understanding of the Proverbs 1:7 - “The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge; Ignorant fools despise wisdom and discipline?”

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Teacher Notes

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Inform the student: the book of Proverbs is a series of wisdom writings collected over a period of time. They are intended to teach one who how to live successfully. It can be seen as precepts for the Believer to live rightly before God.

1. In many instances, God Himself says not to fear Him. What do you observe in God’s words to Abram? Can you observe what fear God is referring to?

After these things the word of Yahweh came to Abram in a vision, saying,
“Do not fear, Abram,
I am a shield to you;
Your reward shall be very great.” (Gen 15:1, LSB)

Ask the student: what do you observe God telling Abram about Himself?

Do not fear Me; I am your protector.

Ask the student: is this a contradiction to Proverbs 1:17: the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge? Share your thoughts.

2. As Jesus informs His disciples whom they should fear, carefully observe what that fear is based on.

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Ask the student: carefully observe the two recorded instances where Jesus tells His disciples who they should fear. Who is capable of doing what Jesus is warning of?

Jesus tells us to fear God, because He is the only One who can kill both soul and body.

Ask the student: God tells Abram – do not fear and Jesus tells His disciples – fear God. How do you reconcile this? Allow some time for discussion.

Do not fear God as a Person; but, fear His authority to judge.

3. How does your understanding of “fear the Lord” affect your understanding of the Proverbs 1:7 - “The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge; Ignorant fools despise wisdom and discipline?”

Ask the student: when Proverbs speaks of fearing the Lord’s authority to judge, how does that affect your attitudes towards Him?

Respecting and honoring God gives cause for learning His words of knowledge.

Ask the student: how does your view of God affect your view of His word? What is the difference in receiving a word of advice from a friend in contrast to receiving a word of advice from the King who can destroy both soul and body? What do you observe of the contrast, “ignorant fools despise wisdom and discipline?”

When you respect and honor God, then you will see His words as wisdom and live by them.

The basis of God’s judgment is compliance to His word. When you understand God’s abhorrence of sin, then you fear His authority to kill both soul and body.

The Old Testament defines “fool” as a non-Believer. This person does not see God’s word as wisdom nor as a way to live.