

FEARING GOD / FEARING PARENTS

Psalms 111:10 ... "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do his commandments..."

Proverbs 8:13 ... "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil..."

When the Bible speaks of the fear of God, which it does throughout the Scriptures, it is in the context of a deep reverence for God. If you have a deep reverence for someone, you will most likely respect that person, listen carefully to his or her wisdom, and obey their instructions. Today's verse from Psalms tells us that our fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Wisdom causes us to understand God's instructions. The Proverbs passage tells us that the fear of God is the opposite of sin, which comes from an evil heart. I am sure that you understand and believe these truths, as they are fundamental to our faith. However, do you understand how the relationship between parents and children benefit from this same truth?

Remember, much of what we read and learn from the Bible with regard to God's character and our relationship with him, are models of how we are to relate to one another. For example, when God's love fills us, it is intended to overflow so we can love others. When God blesses us, it is so we can bless others. When God forgives us, we have an obligation to forgive others.

When we fear God – when we respect and revere him – it produces wisdom, obedience and blessings for us. We can apply this same teaching to the relationship between children and parents. We guide and instruct our children to protect them and give them the skills they need to lead productive lives. If the child does not respect the parent or appreciate that guidance and instruction, the child can experience terrible trials and troubles. And, parents who do not give their children proper guidance, instruction and affection, deprive their children of the skills they will need as adults. It is a mirror image of what happens when we do not respect God and value his guidance and instruction. Proverbs 13:1 reads: "A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke." We could say the same thing about our relationship with God. We are wise to heed God's instruction, but fools if we do not listen to his correction.

Please to not interpret this teaching as permission from God to make your children afraid of you. That is not what the Bible says. We are to love our children, and children are to love their parents. Love fails when torment, abuse, and unkindness are present. Instead, show one another respect. Parents, listen closely: If you want your children to respect you, you must EARN their respect by respecting them! The proper home and family environment is when parents and children respect one another, seek the wisdom of elders, accept correction, and practice love. That is the same environment that God desires to have with us.

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