LIFE OR DEATH, YOUR CHOICE

Part One - THE FEAR OF THE LORD

**DATE: 6/12/2016 pm**

**TEXT: Proverbs (varied)**

**INTRODUCTION**

Life or Death is a choice everyone needs to make

**Proverbs 12:28 – *“In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death”***

The Bible is talking about Eternal things, not temporal

Everyone is living for the here and now

Temporal – relating to time, brief

In today’s society there is such an emphasis on Living

-- Live for today

-- Living for the weekend

-- Living for self

**Luke 12:19 –** ***“And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry”***

If that isn’t today’s philosophy, I don’t know what is

People are so consumed with living that they totally forget about dying

It’s so sad that many never stop to consider that physical life is so brief

**James 4:14 –** ***“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away”***

I’d like to begin tonight to start to look at this thought …

**“Life or Death – Everyone’s Choice” …**

And 4 Topics that go along with it, found in the Book of Proverbs

Fear of the LORD; True Life; Death; & Sowing and Reaping

The 1st thought we’ll look at is **“The Fear of the LORD”**

Reverence and Submission before God

**~~~Prayer~~~**

The Fear of the LORD is …

**I. THE BASIS FOR TRUE LIFE**

According to the Bible …

Life is much more than mere physical existence

**Matthew 6:25 – *“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?”***

**John 17:3 –*“And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent”***

**I John 5:20 – *“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life”***

Man will live a Conscious life for Eternity

The Book of Proverbs tells us that the Basis for True Life is the Fear of the LORD

The Fear of the LORD is …

**A. The ‘Source’ – 14:27**

The Source of All Life

***“The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death”***

The Bible equates man’s need for water and its life giving qualities to our relationship with God

The Fear of the Lord will bring Life

Both physical and Eternal

**1.** The Fear of the Lord leads ultimately to …

**John 4:14 -** ***“a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life”***

***“springing up” –*** *speaks of going beyond*

When we really realize that God ***“is”*** …

And a ***“rewarder of them that diligently seek Him”***

We go beyond this life into life eternal

**2.** The Fear of the Lord will keep a man from the folly of sin which often leads to an untimely death

**14:27b - *“to depart from the snares of death”***

**3.** The Fear of the Lord will ultimately prevent someone from facing the second death

**Revelation 20:14 *– “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death”***

**4.** Closely related to the Fear of the Lord is Faith in

the Lord

As we Fear Him, we will Trust Him and that leads to

everlasting life

**The ‘Source’ of True Life is the Fear of the LORD**

The Fear of the LORD is …

**B. The ‘Foundation’**

The Foundation of Wisdom and Knowledge

Foundations hold things up / support

**A Foundation –** *is the underlying basis or principle for something, the truth that supports a belief*

The Fear of the LORD being the Beginning of Wisdom and Understanding is supported by the Word of God

**Proverbs 9:10, 11 - *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is***

***understanding” “For by Me (\*wisdom) thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased”***

(\*Ultimately this speaks of Jesus who is the Wisdom of God – **I Cor. 1:24**)

**Proverbs 1:7 – *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction”***

**Proverbs 15:33 – *“The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility”***

At first glance, it seems that the authors of the Bible use the words ***“wisdom,” “knowledge,”*** and a 3rd term, ***“understanding,”*** almost interchangeably

But a closer examination shows a difference in the way the 3 terms are used

This difference is very important for our understanding

Simply put, these gifts (as they are called in the Bible) are defined as -

**1.** Knowledge – *are the facts (Truth)*

**Proverbs 18:15 –** ***“The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge”***

There is a lot of Emphasis on learning today

The Wise learn Bible Principles on Purpose

**I Timothy 2:4 –*“Who (God) will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth”***

God has equipped man with intellect (For Salvation)

(Though many never use it)

Those with Knowledge are able to collect, remember, and access information

But, it is possible to have Knowledge and lack Understanding and Wisdom

Someone might have the facts, but not know what they mean or what to do next

The Warning …

**Colossians 2:8 –*“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ”***

**Proverbs 18:2 –*“A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself”*** (Highly opinionated)

**2.** Understanding – *ability to translate meaning from the facts*

**Psalm 119:130 –** ***“The entrance of Thy Words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple”***

**Proverbs 3:5-7 –*“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil”***

**Philippians 1:9, 10 -*“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;” “That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;”***

Those with Understanding are able to extract the meaning out of information / facts

They *“see through”* the facts to the dynamics of What, How, and Why

Understanding is a lens which brings the facts into crisp focus and produces principles

**3.** Wisdom – *knowing what to do next, given an understanding of the facts and circumstances*

**Proverbs 18:13 – *“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him”***

**Proverbs 16:20 –*“He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he”***

**Ecclesiastes 8:1 *– “Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed”***

**James 3:17 –*“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, (to deal with) full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy”***

(This is not how we are all the time)

Those with Wisdom know which principle to apply in a given context

Understanding without Wisdom can appear contradictory

**Proverbs 26:4, 5 –** ***“Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him” “Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit”***

For example, the statement, *“He who hesitates is lost,”* is true, but so is the idea that *“haste makes waste”*

Which principle to use depends on the context

Those with Wisdom know what actions to take next

They do the right thing in the given situation

And the only way they can do that, is if they are saved and walking with the LORD

They have the mind of Christ

**Philippians 2:5 –** ***“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”***

In contrast, there are many who have great Knowledge and Understanding, but who consistently do the wrong thing

Why? Because they aren’t saved or walking with the LORD

They don’t understand the Truth about God’s Love and Justice

**Proverbs 9:10 - *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding”***

**Quote:** Charles Spurgeon once wrote *“Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom”*

**The ‘Source’**

**The ‘Foundation’**

**C. The ‘Prerequisite’ 6/26/16 pm**

The Prerequisite of All that is Worthwhile in Life

A Prerequisite is *something that is needed as a prior condition*

The Fear of the LORD is the Prerequisite for everything that men count important in life

For example, the Fear of the LORD is needed if we want

**1.** Happiness and Contentment

**28:14 – *“Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief”***

**15:16 *– “Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith”***

**2.** Peace and Security

**19:23 *– “The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil”***

**14:26 *– “In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge”***

**3.** Physical Well-Being

**3:7, 8 *– “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil” “It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones”***

**10:27 *– “The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened”***

**4.** Material Blessings and Honour

**22:4 – *“By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life”***

**31:30 – *“Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised”***

**Psalm 147:11 – *“The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy”***

**THE BASIS FOR TRUE LIFE**

The Fear of the LORD is …

**II. MANIFESTED BY A HOLY LIFE**

When someone truly Fears God, they will demonstrate that by a willingness to live a Holy Life Style

(I didn’t say “Holier than thou”)

Don’t get self-righteous

**II Corinthians 5:17 –** ***“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”***

The Fear of the LORD is Manifested by …

**A. Upright Conduct**

**14:2 – *“He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth Him”***

The Fear of the LORD is Manifested by …

**B. Separation from Evil**

**8:13 – *“The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate”***

**14:16 *– “A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident”***

**16:6 – *“By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil”***

**II Corinthians 6:17 *– “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,”***

The Fear of the LORD is Manifested by a …

**C. Separation from the Wrong Kind of People**

**24:21, 22 – *“My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not (get involved) with them that are given to change” “For their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both?”***

Everybody wants to change the Old Paths today

The True and Tried Paths, they’ve worked for centuries

Got to have a New Bible, New Worship, New Music

They are never satisfied with the right ways

**Proverbs 23:17, 18 –*“Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long” “For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off”***

**THE BASIS FOR TRUE LIFE**

**MANIFESTED BY A HOLY LIFE**

The Fear of the LORD is …

**III. INCREASED THROUGH GOD’S WORD**

In order to Reverence God, you must seek too

Many are not interested in Reverencing God

They are controlled by passion not principles and see no value in it

Such are fools and eternity will reveal them as such

**2:1, 2, 5 – *“My son, if thou wilt receive My Words, and hide My Commandments with thee;” “So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;” “Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God”***

**A. The Reasons (Our motives)**

The reason for seeking is twofold

The first reason for seeking is …

**1.** To Learn

**v. 1 - *“If thou wilt receive My Words, and hide My Commandments with thee”***

The Words **“*Receive”*** and **“*hide”*** emphasize the desire to Have

To have it in the heart, to possess it, to know it

The second reason for seeking is …

**2.** To Live

**v. 2 - *“So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding”***

The words ***“incline”*** and ***“apply”*** emphasize the desire to Do

This separates the wise from the fools

Some just want the knowledge; they do not want to apply it to their lives

But the genuine seeking of wisdom is done in order to live it

**B. The Results (Our Rewards)**

**v. 5 - *“Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God”***

Only when we desire to Reverence God, will we begin to obtain it

The results of Fearing God are great

**1.** We Will RecognizeIt

**v. 5a - *“Then Shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD”***

We have Confidence in our God and His relationship with us

***“The fear of the LORD"*** is another name for wisdom

**Job 28:28 – *“And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding”***

A disrespectful attitude towards God is the opposite

Our Nation evidences a great disrespect for God which shows that our land is a land of fools

When you truly Reverence God, you will recognize that it involves respect and honor for God

**2.** We Will Receive It

**v. 5b - *“And Find the knowledge of God”***

The knowledge of God is Wisdom – **Job 28:28**

The ignorance about God in our land shows

Those who seek wisdom earnestly are far and few between, but there are those who have it

They will possess true Reverence; they will know about God / they will KNOW God

The Fear of the LORD is …

**THE BASIS FOR TRUE LIFE**

**MANIFESTED BY A HOLY LIFE**

**INCREASED THROUGH GOD’S WORD**

Now let me change it up in Closing and say …

Refusing to Fear the LORD …

**IV. BRINGS TROUBLE AND JUDGMENT**

**1:28 – 32 –** ***“Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me:” “For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the Fear of the LORD:” “They would none of My counsel: they despised all My reproof” “Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices” “For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them”***

**A. Rejection – vs. 28 – 30**

When calamity comes and only in desperation do the fools call upon God

But God doesn’t respond

**Isaiah 55:6 –** ***“Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near”***

I believe there is a day of visitation

**Isaiah 49:8 –** ***“Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;”***

**Luke 1:68 – *“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,”***

**Luke 19:44 –*“And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation”***

**B. Reaping – vs. 31, 32**

***“Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way …” “the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them”***

Sow wild oats and you will reap wild oats

Smoke like a steam engine and you get lung cancer

Drink like a fish and your liver goes bad

Live wild and you will die in the wilderness

Turn away good advice and you will pay for it

***“Prosperity”*** is the temporary success of evil

And it lulls the sinner into sleep

So that retribution will come upon him without repentance

The gain, the fruit of evil, will indeed destroy the sinner

**CONCLUSION**

**THE BASIS FOR TRUE LIFE**

**MANIFESTED BY A HOLY LIFE**

**INCREASED THROUGH GOD’S WORD**

**BRINGS TROUBLE AND JUDGMENT**