

# 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY WISDOM Part 3

## Fear of the Lord is the Foundation

→ *"Society is not particularly good at choosing who it endorses as wise."*  
*Discuss!*

Fear of the Lord must be the FOUNDATION, the BEGINNING, where wisdom COMES from (Prov 9:10, 15:33, Psalm 111:10, Isa 33:6).  
Your pursuit of wisdom must be BUILT ON the fear of the Lord & if it's rooted in ANYTHING else, it will NOT be wisdom.

### **DEFINITION of the FEAR OF THE LORD**

A deep, strong, weighty REVERENCE & RESPECT for the HOLINESS of God, the PERSON of the Lord Jesus & the PRESENCE of the Holy Spirit.  
THE CRUCIAL BALANCE: Though we are called into INTIMACY of RELATIONSHIP, that does not for a second take away from the AWESOMENESS of GOD (Psalm 33:8, 99:1).

→ *What does the expression 'Fear of the Lord' mean to you? Do you personally have it? Does the church have it? What does it look like in a church service context?*

→ *How easy or difficult is it to maintain that crucial balance? What does it look like if the pendulum slips too far in either direction? Has the church world, in general, got the balance right?*

### **The BEGINNING of Wisdom must NOT be**

1. The intimidating SQUEEZE of the CULTURAL AGENDAS of the WORLD
2. Your EMOTIONS
3. FEAR of MAN
4. SELF-PRESERVATION

→ *Do any of those 4 tend to wrestle for your attention, personally, & if so, how? What other potential candidates are there that could be on this list?*

→ *If you choose each of those four as the foundation for your wisdom, what are the likely outcomes?*

### **3 ASPECTS OF THE FEAR OF THE LORD**

#### **1. The Fear of the Lord TREMBLES at His WORD**

(Isa 66:2, Psalm 119:161, Prov 18:14, Col 3:16).

- \* It is IMPOSSIBLE to have a strong, close, passionate relationship with the LORD UNLESS you have a strong, close, passionate relationship with HIS WORD.
- \* If the thing masquerading as wisdom CLAIMS to be wisdom, TEST it against the Word. If it OPPOSES the Word, REJECT it. If it is

unscriptural, contradictory, dissenting or sacrilegious, call it what it is: FOOLISHNESS.

→ *What does it mean to 'tremble at His Word?' What are the benefits of doing so? What are the possible outcomes if you don't?*

→ *Do you agree that the strength of your relationship with God is directly proportional to the strength of your relationship with His Word?*

#### **2. The Fear of the Lord SHUNS EVIL (Prov 3:7, 8:13).**

- \* It goes without saying that there is NO wisdom in SIN (Prov 10:23, 18:2, 26:11, Matt 7:26).
- \* If it LOOKS like evil, RUN (1 Thess 5:22).
- \* The god of this world working overtime to REDEFINE evil & RECAST evil as GOOD, so you are NO LONGER shunning it or running from it as you ONCE DID.
- \* The danger is a slow, subtle, demonic DRIFT away from the fear of the Lord ... and then you WONDER WHY 'wisdom from above' is ELUSIVE.
- \* The FURTHER you get from the fear of the Lord, the LESS you'll SEE through GOD'S EYES & the more VULNERABLE you become to folly, seduction & deception.

→ *"Hopefully it goes without saying, there is no wisdom in sin, unbelief, pride, lust, greed, immorality. In fact, there's another word for that stuff: foolishness!" Discuss!*

→ *How does the drift away from the fear of the Lord take place? In what ways do people start to drift? How can you tell when someone has drifted? Why is the enemy so keen for that drift to take place, both for you individually and for us corporately?*

#### **3. The Fear of the Lord does not GRIEVE or RESIST the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30, 1 Thess 5:19, Acts 7:51).**

##### **The problems come when we**

- a) IGNORE Him: You KNOW what the Word says, but do the OPPOSITE anyway.
- b) RESIST Him: Nobody has yet fought with God & WON.
- c) GRIEVE Him: Ignore that deep inner voice of CONVICTION & choose the path of UNHOLINESS.

The DEEPER you CULTIVATE your relationship with the Holy Spirit, the WISER you will become.

→ *How do you 'resist' the Holy Spirit? How do you 'grieve' the Holy Spirit? How do you 'quench' the Holy Spirit? What are the likely consequences of each and how do they move us away from 'wisdom from above?'*

→ *Would you say you were 'aware of the Dove on your shoulder?' What does it feel like when you offend or startle Him? How do you become more aware? What part does the fear of the Lord play in that?*