

Fear of the Lord

By Scott Moller

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

(Proverbs 9:10 NIV)

The Bible uses the phrase "the fear of Lord" approximately 30 times. In most cases, the writer is referring to reverence, respect, and/or awe of God. There is also a proper place for legitimate fear of God as our Judge and fear of His wrath. For the most part, we find ourselves living in a generation that has lost its "fear of the Lord" as described above. Unfortunately, this is often true in both the world and the Church. The world is taking the position, by and large, that God does not even exist. The Church has also lost much of its understanding of God's Holy character and His abhorrence towards sin.

Once we come to the understanding that there is very little "fear of the Lord" in society today, the foolishness of this age makes more sense, because according to Scripture, "fear of the Lord" is the "beginning" of wisdom. In effect, if one does not start seeking wisdom from the true source, it will never be obtained. Many people in this world are seeking wisdom and understanding, but they do not start out with "fear of the Lord." Without this "fear of the Lord," one never starts on the correct path of finding wisdom. Therefore, according to the Bible, it is impossible to obtain true wisdom apart from God.

The Apostle Paul addresses this in Romans 1:21-22: *"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools...."* Here Paul holds all mankind accountable to the knowledge of God's existence. Even though man knows this in his heart, he willingly chooses not to glorify or give thanks to God. According to Paul, when man turns his back on God in this manner, it causes his thinking to become futile. Even though man claims to be wise, God declares that he has actually become a fool. The prophet Isaiah declares this warning: *"Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight"* (Isaiah 5:21).

As Christians, we must be careful not to become wise in our own eyes. This is a form of pride and is dangerous. We must be aware that we are all susceptible to this temptation. We must acknowledge first and foremost that our source of wisdom and understanding in all things must come from God. He is the beginning of wisdom; therefore, we should always start with God first. James encourages us with these words: *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him"* (James 1:5). By humbly going to God first for wisdom, we put matters in proper perspective. It demonstrates our dependence on God. It acknowledges that God is the source of true wisdom. And God promises that He will give generously to those who ask Him. Let us not behave as the world does, seeking wisdom apart from God, but let us always turn to God as our source of wisdom. God will not disappoint.

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

(Isaiah 55:9)