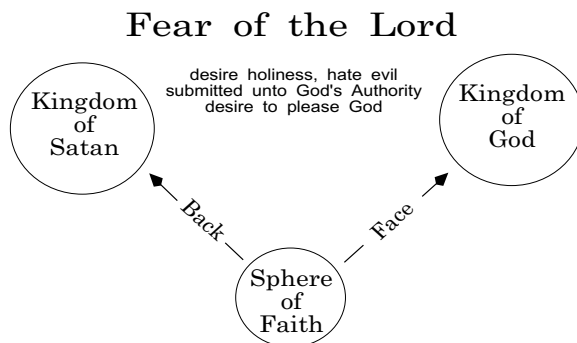


THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Job, David, and Solomon all said that the *"beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord,"* Pr. 9:10, and that its reward is *"riches, honor, and life,"* Pr. 22:4. And since this book deals with God's Wisdom, or His intimate counsel, this is where we will begin. Fear is often translated, 'reverence or awe.' And truly, if we believe as Christ said that God is the *"creator of creation,"* Mark 13:19, one would be a fool not to honor and esteem Him for the countless wonders which have come forth from His hands. For how can one observe the splendor of the heavens, or the variety of wildlife, marine life, and the insect world and not be awed? But there is much more to be conveyed by the word fear. Let's look further into this word and see what we can discover. The fear of the Lord is illustrated below with its three primary facets.



To fear God is to desire holiness and hate evil. Therefore, life in the Sphere of Faith defines such a fear, for this believer has his focus upon God through Jesus Christ, Master of the Kingdom of God (KOG), and has his back to Satan, master of the Kingdom of Satan (KOS). It is the Kingdom of Satan which is full of pride, arrogance, evil, and perverted speech, and a Holy God hates all these (Pr. 8:13).

The fear of the Lord also refers to the humble submission to authority. In the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 17, verses 19 and 20, we read, *"..learn to fear the Lord .. God, by carefully observing all the words of this law ... and that [one's] heart not be lifted up..."* The best illustration I can give of such a fear is the experience of a fresh recruit at boot camp. Here we have an individual who is learning a whole new way of life—a life structured to survive in a hostile environment, rather than a peaceful existence. And in that experience, he is learning to fear (respect) his drill instructor. And when his drill instructor yells, "Jump," he'll jump.

Basic training teaches young men and women the wisdom of submission to authority. And it is not for a personal dislike that the DI yells and screams and orders, but because it's his job to train and motivate these men and women, who perhaps were rebellious at home, to survive in a combat situation. The young recruits fear various things: fear of being disciplined or humiliated by their drill instructor, fear of the destructive power of military ordnance, and the enemy that they may one day have to fight. This fear perks their concentration and allows them to learn survival techniques, so that under a wartime situation, they might apply that learning so as to return home safe and sound. Application of knowledge is wise action (Mt. 7:24). Therefore, if we are to become wise, we must learn humility and submit to God's authority. Proverbs 11:2b says, "*But with the humble is wisdom*"

God's authority is represented through His Son, Jesus Christ, the Lord of God's Kingdom. Christ's authority was established during His earthly ministry by miracles (Jn. 5:36), scripture (Jn. 5:39), and the voice of God from heaven (Jn. 5:37). Christ's authority is written down for us in His Word, the Bible, and we must not only believe it but submit to it as well. By believing in God's Word, submitting to its mandates, we are seeking glory from God, not men. And it is Christ and His Word we must set our hope on, and not the empty promises of the world. If we fix on Christ, we will not lose our way.

And lastly, and I believe most importantly, fear means the *fear to displease*. If we love someone, foremost in our thinking should be to act or speak in such a way so as not to displease them. This to me is fundamental in a loving relationship. And with this thought, we must extend it to God our heavenly Father. And we must constantly ask ourselves when we are faced with decisions: Will this decision please or displease My Father in heaven? If we come to the conclusion that such a decision would indeed displease our Father, we must then at that moment change our decision. Such an attitude indicates true fear of the lord.

THE FAITHFUL SHALL BE REWARDED

In the natural realm, we desire to please the object of our focus, the center of our attention, the apple of our eye. Likewise, in the spiritual realm, the Sphere of Faith resident has his focus upon Christ and desires to please Him and accomplish His will. And the faithful shall be rewarded with "*riches, honor, and life*" and gain the glory of Christ. Now glory comes from the Greek word *Doxa*, and means "a

glorious condition and state," like that of a king or great ruler. But in our context, it also ascribes to their 'resources, wealth, to the magnificence and greatness of their cities, and fertile lands, and their thronging populations" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*). We see this thought expressed in Is. 53:12.

I will allot Him [Christ] a portion with the great [the mature believer and He [Christ] will divide the booty [the spoils, the treasures, the wealth of conquered kings] with the strong [spiritually matured].

These are the glory blessings, and every Christian has been called to receive his share of the wealth. However, not every Christian will HEED the call, and therefore will not partake of the sharing of the wealth of our lord and Savior.

But not only does God call us to receive the glory blessings, He provides the means and way to make it all possible. We had a hint of this from John 9, but now we have some specifics. These are found in 2 Thess. 2:13-14.

God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. And it was for this He called you ... that you may gain the glory [blessings] of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And in I Thess. 4:3, Paul states, *"This is the will of God, your sanctification [spiritual purity]."* Sanctification [walking by faith, not sight] is the only state by which we can come to know God in a personal way. Therefore, it is this state of sanctification that provides us the means by which we may gain the glory blessings. From our study in *THE POWER SPHERES*, we learned that biblical sanctification is residence within the SPHERE OF FAITH, whereas he who participates in adulterous activities (turning from God to give his allegiance to Satan) resides in the SPHERE OF EVIL, or the SPHERE OF CARNALITY. So Paul tells us that we are called to receive the glory blessings and it is God's will, pleasure, and purpose that we live in the Sphere of Faith. Those whose orbital path or walk revolves around the Sphere of Faith please God. *"...you ought to walk [orbit around the Sphere of Faith] and please God, that you may excel still more,"* 1 Thess. 4:1.

The Sphere of Faith is the fertile environment of Luke 8:8 or *'the good ground'* for sowing righteousness. *"And other seed fell into the good ground and grew and produced a crop a hundred times as great."*

The product, yield or reward of our sowing righteousness is wisdom, which will result in a life made FULL OF JOY (Jn. 16:24).

“But he who sows righteousness gets a true reward [wisdom]. He who is steadfast in righteousness [sowing] will attain to life,” Pr.11: 18,19. And it is by wisdom that we grow in grace. And from this sphere, or realm of sanctification, we will reach orbit 9.

And in that day you will ask Me no question [for you will have understanding]. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you shall ask the Father for anything, He will give it to you in My name...ask and you will receive that your joy may be made full. (Jn. 16.23,24)

THE SOWING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

But before the appointed time, there is work to be done. And it is to be done exclusively within the Sphere of Faith. It is here the believer is receptive and responsive to God's will, desires, and pleasures. It is in this spiritual environment, which is unseen and unfelt, that we are to sow righteousness with a view of God's wisdom, so that we might GROW. The concept of sowing righteousness is critical in our Christian life, and is a major point of confusion between so many Christians because of false teachings which are so popular amongst Charismatics, Evangelicals, and Pentecostals. Therefore, let's define the biblical concept of SOWING.

Sowing was a term every Israelite in Christ's day understood since their economy was largely an agricultural one. Sowing was planting seed into the ground with a view of a crop to harvest. Therefore, it was laboring in the ground of God's fertile land, Israel. We, too, as Christian believers, are to be *sowers*, much like the farmer, with a view towards wisdom. God's Word is our righteous seed which God has supplied to us through the written canon of scripture. The Sphere of Faith or the realm of sanctification is the good land of the believer's heart, and wisdom is the crop we wish to harvest. The sowing of righteousness (i.e., biblical study), therefore, is to be our vocation in life. It is to be the single most important aspect to our lives and it is commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do not work for the food which perishes, but [work, sweat, labor and perspire] for the food [wisdom] which endures to eternal life. (Jn. 6.27)

Many years back, when I considered myself a charismatic, I heard Kenneth Copeland say something that I *still* agree with today. Paraphrasing, he said, "Our careers, jobs, or professions should be nothing more than avocations. Our faith is to be our vocation." The Apostle Paul was so convinced that devotion to Christ was foremost, he advocated celibacy. But for those who cannot accept this lifestyle, let us not miss his point. He said that we should be 'concerned *about the things of the Lord,*' and to give "*undistracted devotion to the Lord,*" 1 Cor. 7:32,35. Certainly spouses, families, jobs are gifts from God, yet they are temporary. So our *primary focus must* be upon Christ, heaven, and the desire to glorify our Father in heaven. For let us remember, we are eternal beings and our eternal status is dependent upon the time and effort we give unto pleasing God the Father. Paul said this.

*... do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men;
knowing that from the Lord you will receive the
reward of the inheritance [eternal life, glory blessings, rulership]. It
is the Lord Christ whom you serve. (Col.3:23-24)*

THE WORK OF GOD

Now exactly how do we "*sow righteousness?*" Let's examine this question from the standpoint of 'the work of God.' The Jews asked Jesus how to do God's work and He responded this way. "*This is the work of God, that you believe in Him who He has sent,*" Jn. 6:29.

The word BELIEVE is a multifaceted word, and is best defined within its context and the spirit of the scripture from which it is taken. Jesus defines this word for us in the 5th chapter of John. However, since space does not allow us a full study, let me give you a 5-point outline of belief which will give us a general definition of our vocation in life.

1. Accept as fact the writings of Moses (v. 47)
2. Search the scriptures (v. 39)
3. Have God's Word abiding in you (v. 38)
4. Willingness to submit to Christ's authority (v. 40)
5. Seek the glory that is from God (v. 44)

In other words, it is a total commitment to seek out God's Wisdom, store it in our hearts, and act upon it on a daily basis, regardless if it

smacks square against current societal conventions. This is being biblically correct.

Paul summed up this *working belief* to Timothy in his second letter to him. Most bible students are familiar with this verse.

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. (2Tim. 2:15)

So “believe” in our context of sowing righteousness becomes our vocation, our lifework as we prepare for eternal life to come. But it is imperative we believe and remain committed to the *right thing* in the right way, or else we may have a rude awakening on judgement day (Mt. 7:21-23). For example, in my own youth, I **firmly** believed I was heaven bound. I based this on the belief that I was a decent, law-abiding, church-going individual, who believed Christ was the Son of God. However, I was committed to the wrong concept of faith. First, I didn't have a revelation that salvation is by grace, not works. Decency, respect for the law, tithing, and going to church—no matter how often or regular—had nothing to do with gaining salvation. Yet, I thought it did. And secondly, my faith was in name only. For me, Christianity was just a confession—something which respectable people partook. Yet, there was never a commitment on my part to serve Christ—neither heart nor soul. Perhaps this was why I considered myself more of an Episcopalian, than a Christian. So my faith was just a mental exercise. There was no courage or true faith to make it my lifestyle.

Therefore, as we have learned, *believing in Jesus* is more than an intellectual assent, as indicated by the 5-point outline from John 5. Spiritual kinship is not the result of lip service and strict adherence to rites and rituals (Mt. 15:8-9), but is the result of death to self-rule and full submission to Christ's lordship. Jesus said, “*My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it,*” Luke 8:21. It is these who have been born again, who have taken God's word into their hearts. These are the true worshipers, who “*worship in spirit and truth,*” unlike those without revelation knowledge, who worship a God of their own minds, of their own making, of their own madness. Christ said, “*God is spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth,*” John 4:24.

It is this abiding or implanted Word within man's soul which has the power and ability to save (James 1:21). This abiding word is God's wisdom, and it is extracted from God's Word. God's Word contains

objective and factual knowledge about Himself, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It tells us about faith, hope, and love. It teaches us the difference between right and wrong, and many other things we must know to survive in Satan's cosmos. It is knowledge for anyone to read or hear, whether he be a resident of the Sphere of Evil, Carnality, or Faith. It is knowledge that can have an immediate and lasting impact upon the community of man in terms of morality, decency, and fellowship. But knowledge discerned only by the mind or intellect without a desire for the person of Christ has no true spiritual consequence. Therefore, God's Word, in and of Itself, has no power to save, nor can it build a soul. It must be spiritually discerned before it will be of benefit towards salvation of the spirit (regeneration), soul (transformation), and body (restoration).

KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM: IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

To help distinguish the difference between knowledge and wisdom, let's go to the Greek. The Greek word for knowledge is *GNOSIS*. It is simply information and facts. Joseph H. Thayer, in his *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, published by Zondervan, 1975, defines gnosis as "general knowledge." But knowledge, he states, which is "precise and correct" is called *EPIGNOSIS*. Epignosis is "knowledge of the one true God which has illumined the soul." This illumination of the soul is knowledge which has been spiritually discerned and understood for application to life—life as God desires it. *SOPHIA*, another word from the Greek, is the intelligence or divine wisdom of God, and is synonymous with epignosis. Furthermore, "where gnosis and sophia are used together the former seems to be knowledge regarded by itself, the latter wisdom as exhibited in action." (Thayer). Therefore, epignosis or sophia is treasure from heaven and, when believed in the heart, the believer has made a gain towards spiritual life, maturity, and health. His heart then becomes a **TREASURE CHEST**, for it holds life's most valuable of commodities, wisdom.

Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven [wisdom or epignosis] where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure [that which is believed] is, there will be your heart also. (Mt. 6.20-21)

What we believe in the heart is what we act upon. We act upon it for we are convinced that such action is in our best interests. Therefore our beliefs are valuable and precious to us and we hold them in high regard. (This is one reason it is extremely difficult to change another's

mind, for you are asking him to go against and abandon those beliefs he has held to for his peace of mind. Therefore, if you are to change a person's mind, you must convince him the beliefs he holds to will ultimately cause him harm.)

Now with that in mind, it is critical you discern the difference between God's Word and God's Wisdom if you are to advance to Orbit 9, and receive God's glory blessings. God's wisdom is not His Word in your mind, but His COUNSEL in your heart. "*Wisdom rests in the heart of one who has understanding,*" Pr. 14:33. Paul speaks of this in Ephesians.

May [God] give to you a spirit of wisdom [sophia] and of revelation in the knowledge [epignosis] of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart [your belief system] may be enlightened, so that you may know [the truths of God] (Eph. 1:1 7,18)

Without spiritual discernment in the heart, you have no Godly wisdom to act upon and apply to life's tests and trials. If all you have is intellectual knowledge of scripture, you will find yourself without conviction and impotent in the face of tribulation. Satan is little deterred by those who possess only head knowledge of scripture. He will quickly "subdue and overpower" (Acts 19:16) you in your thought life.

There was a certain movie made about Dracula some years ago that illustrates the above point. I remember this particular man, obsessed with destroying this king of all vampires, who was acting upon information to his whereabouts. Armed with only a wooden cross, the man sets out to find him. However, Dracula finds him first. The man becomes overwhelmed with fear, but manages to hold up his wooden cross to stop his advances. At that point, Dracula only laughs, snickering, "That (the cross) only works if you have faith."

Exactly! If God's Word is not cherished in the heart, one will not be inclined to act upon it. This is why the faithless man does not experience the reality of God's Word. His Word will not work without faith. Therefore, when Satan comes up against us, and he will, what we need is not mind-knowledge alone of scripture, but wisdom. Epignosis is such wisdom and it is God's private counsel and explanation of His Word (Mk. 4:34) to His children.

His private counsel is with the upright [the Sphere of Faith believer]. (Pr. 3.32)

The secret [counsel or intimacy] of the Lord is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant. (Ps. 25:14)

I call God's Wisdom, IC, an acronym for "intimate counsel." The thought behind IC is this: I *SEE the spiritual content of God's Word*. Basically, this is spiritual discernment or revealed knowledge, or "epignosis." Therefore, IC is the building material of the soul by which we grow in faith and conviction, so that we might glorify God and receive our inheritance, the glory blessings.

The word of His grace ... is able to build up [your soul] and to give you [Orbit 9 believers] the inheritance among all those who are sanctified [Sphere of Faith residents]. (Acts 20.32)

To state this more clearly, biblical knowledge in and of itself does NOT build the soul, but it IS the INGREDIENT by which IC or wisdom comes. Therefore, to keep wisdom flowing, it is most necessary that we daily study the Word, or "sow righteousness." I like Ps. 37:3, which states, "*Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.*"

The cultivation of our faith or, if you like, the sowing of righteousness, is our work towards harvesting IC, or God's wisdom, to feed one's soul. By dwelling, abiding, and remaining in the Sphere of Faith, we cultivate our hearts. That is, they are prepared to be responsive, positive, and diligent towards doctrine, or scriptural teaching. Therefore, we sow God's Word, His righteous seed. And from our studies, when we receive wisdom, we receive the nutrient by which our soul is built. Again, we must read God's Word on a daily basis for MAXIMUM growth. "*Heed instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates,*" Pr. 8:33-34.

SPIRITUAL JUNK FOOD

