

Two Minute Review

Week 1:

Wisdom and Folly

- Proverbs opens with 9 chapters of speeches
- Collections of wise (probability) sayings from chps. 10-31
- “Wisdom” personified as a key attribute of God, yet available to humans through relationship with the Lord

Week 2:

Everything Flows from the Heart

- The heart is our interior life
- Includes emotions, thoughts, volition/will, conscience, affections/allegiances
- Hard to perceive and can lead us astray, our actions proceed from the heart condition
- The heart needs discipleship

A person's hands are holding an open book, with the pages slightly curved. The background is dark and out of focus. Overlaid on the book is white text.

Character in the Proverbs: “The Fear of the Lord”

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 1:7

10:27 Fear of the LORD lengthens one's life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.

14:27 Fear of the LORD is a life-giving fountain; it offers escape from the snares of death.

15:16 Better to have little, with fear for the LORD, than to have great treasure and inner turmoil.

16:6 Unfailing love and faithfulness make atonement for sin. By fearing the LORD, people avoid evil.

23:17 Don't envy sinners, but always continue to fear the LORD.

Assorted Proverbs (NLT)

A person is holding an open book, with their hands visible on the left and right sides. The book is open to two pages of text. The background is dark and out of focus. Overlaid on the center of the image is the text "Defining the 'Fear of the Lord'" in a white, sans-serif font.

Defining the “Fear of the Lord”

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Fear of the Lord (*yir’at YHWH/elohim* Hebrew)

The semantic range runs from respect to horror. In most occurrences it is a virtue that leads to right behavior and good results. Some occurrences are negative. It is misleading to say that it always means “fear” or “respect.” Awe is a candidate for translation because it connotes veneration of the sacred, i.e., worship.

It is a character trait of those who believe God is able and certain to do what he said he would do.

The Character Trait of the “Fear of the Lord” Explains More than One Emotion

Applied to “fools,” “mockers,” or “the simple,” an initial response might be terror. But for the “wise” and any who mourn their sin, this emotion will move through repentance and into awe, reverence, and thanksgiving. This is most perfectly true in the gospel of Jesus.

⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. ¹¹ If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” ¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

Using Psalm 139:7-12 to Weigh the Range of “The Fear of the Lord”

A person is holding an open book, with their hands visible on the left and right sides. The book is open to a page with some text, though it is not legible. The background is dark and out of focus. Overlaid on the book is the text "Applying the 'Fear of the Lord' to Our Hearts" in a white, serif font.

Applying the “Fear of the Lord” to Our Hearts

How Might Developing “the Fear of the Lord” as a Character Trait Impact Discipleship of the Heart

	Needs/Issues	Fear of the Lord Addresses
Emotions	Emotions are always real, but not always true	
Thoughts	Internal narratives steer our life, are also not always true	
Volition/Will	Desire and choice can be selfish or evil; needs direction and order	
Affections/Allegiances	Our loves get out of order	
Conscience	Can become polluted/hardened; Needs purification	

How Might Developing “the Fear of the Lord” as a Character Trait Impact Discipleship of the Heart

	Needs/Issues	Fear of the Lord Addresses
Emotions	Emotions are always real, but not always true	Refines and stabilizes our emotions
Thoughts	Internal narratives steer our life, are also not always true	Provides divine narrative and truth and external evaluation
Volition/Will	Desire and choice can be selfish or evil; needs direction and order	Bounds many choices, guides all others
Affections/Allegiances	Our loves get out of order	Unmasks idolatry; Orders and purifies loves
Conscience	Can become polluted/hardened; Needs purification	Sensitizes the conscience; Grows moral awareness

The Character Trait of the “Fear of the Lord” is Developed Through Worship

Considering the greatness of God, his attributes of holiness, power, and presence, as well as his knowledge, permanence, and even his great love for his people... through mediation, prayer, silence, prostration, song, and more... These fix in our hearts the character trait that revere's God and his esteem above all other things.

I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw ... someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword.

A Vision Steeped in the Fear of the Lord; Revelation 1:12-18

His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

A Vision Steeped in the Fear of the Lord; Revelation 1:12-18