

A Necessary Ingredient For Spiritual Progress

Introduction

- A. Spiritual progress is not the result of so-called "luck"! The Bible is clear in teaching us that such advancement comes through our cooperation with God in practicing the provision He has made for us.
- B. What value can we place on spiritual progress? It probably heads the list - no matter how it would be evaluated. Most of those things for which we work so hard are of temporary help, they are limited in value, and can be taxed.
- C. If we could see ourselves from the perspective of eternity, we would have a radical change in the area of priorities, values, and the use of our time. What must we do in order to make spiritual progress?

I. The Fear of the Lord Qualifies One for Service, Exodus 18:21.

Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

Observation: This counsel of Jethro to Moses was seemingly approved by God. We could summarize the qualifications in this verse and point out that fearing God was one characteristic which enabled these men to grow spiritually which in turn enabled them to be leaders. This principle holds in our lives today.

II. The Fear of the Lord Will Keep One From Sin, Exodus 20:20.

And Moses said unto the people, Fear not, for God is come to prove you and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

Observation: Now we understand what is meant by "fearing God". The people were at Mt. Sinai. God spoke the Ten Commandments so they could hear Him. This made them afraid. Now we see the meaning of true fear. It means to have a relationship with God that could be called the "reverence of love". When Mt. Sinai shook and the people heard the voice of God they were just "frightened" or "scared". True fear is to know God and give Him His rightful place in our lives.

III. The Fear of the Lord Will Enable One to Obey God, Deut. 5:29.

O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

Observation: To truly understand Who God is and what He wants to do in our lives will result in giving Him the "reverence of love" and this will result in keeping His Word. God is absolute in truth, love and holiness. He has made every provision for us in Jesus Christ so that we can be forgiven and live in truth, love and holiness. To know and live like this will result in daily obedience.

IV. The Fear of the Lord is a Necessity for Spiritual Progress, Job 1:8,9

And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth (forsaketh) evil? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

Observation: Here we see that God was proud of Job. This man had learned how to walk with God. It is interesting to see that the first area that Satan wanted to break down in Job's life was his fear of God. He knew that if he could break down Job's "reverence of love" for God he could work with destruction in the other areas of Job's life. This should be a great lesson to us.

V. The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom and Knowledge.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, a good understanding have all they that do His commandments, His praise endureth for ever. Psalm 111:10.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction, Proverbs 1:7.

Observation: We often hear the question, "Where do I begin - in order to make spiritual progress?" These verses present us with the answer. We must begin with Who God is and what it means to think and live in harmony with Him, His truth, love and holiness, and His will as expressed in the Scripture. To correctly fear Him will enable us and motivate us to live in fellowship with Him. This is the key.

VI. The Fear of the Lord is the Summary of Solomon's Counsel, Ecclesiastes 12:13.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

Observation: Solomon wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes when he had drifted far from God. He had tried everything available to him to fill the empty void in his life and to find fulfillment. His conclusion is before us. We need to accept this counsel. It is Biblical advice. It is important to see the relationship between fearing God and keeping His commandments. This is a truth found in all of Scripture.

VII. The Fear of the Lord Will Cause Us to be Remembered by God, Malachi 3:16,17.

Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels, and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Observation: These verses indicate how important it is to fear the Lord. This is presented here as a characteristic of a true Christian. It is a comfort to know that God will remember us and protect us in the day of judgment.

VIII. The Fear of the Lord Will Cause Us to Live in Fellowship with God, Acts 9:31.

Then had the churches rest throughout, all Judea and Galilee and Samaria and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and, in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied.

Observation: Fearing God is a characteristic of a godly life.

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