

The Faithful Follower | The Discipleship Spiral, Part 5

I. The Relationship between the Discipleship Spiral and the Fear of the Lord

- The Discipleship Spiral is made up of two key parts — the mountain and the path that winds its way around the mountain.
- There are really only two mountains. There's the mountain of God and the mountain of self.
- Ascending the mountain of God will result in us becoming more like God. Ascending the mountain to self will result in us becoming knowledgeable, discerning, and Delusionally Wise, but for our own purposes and in our own power. We'll be nothing more than disciples of self.
- The mountain of God results in us receiving the blessings of being a faithful follower of Christ, and the mountain of self leads to the volcanic destruction of leaning on our own understanding and doing what's right in our own eyes.
- Therefore, it's extremely important that we climb the right mountain. It's eternally vital that we follow Christ instead of our own desires.

II. The Nature of the Fear of the Lord

- As an unbeliever, there should be nothing scarier to us than the Living God. If we live in defiance to Him, we will receive the consequences of that choice both now and for all eternity.
- As a believer we learn the reverent God in holy awe.
 - A Christian should be in absolute awe as to His grace and mercy and long-suffering and kindness and the immeasurable riches He daily pours on me as a child of God.
 - However, it doesn't stop there. We don't just substitute dread for reverence. There is still an element of dread within the fear of the Lord. As a follower of Christ, I'm not afraid of God; I'm afraid of displeasing God. I Corinthians 9:27
- To fear the Lord is to respect and admire Him so much because He's so amazing and we're afraid to displease Him.

III. God Expects us to Fear Him

- Proverbs 3:7, 23:17; I Peter 2:17; Revelation 14:7; II Corinthians 5:11
- In Proverbs 3:7, there are three commands. 1. Don't be wise in your own eyes. Don't be delusional. Don't have mere Didactic Wisdom. 2. Fear the Lord, and 3. Turn away from evil. What's interesting is that you can't do one of those without the others. If you're wise in your own eyes, you're not doing the other two. If you're biblically turning away from evil, that is a result of fearing the Lord and not leaning on your own understanding.
- From the first book of the Bible ever written to the book that details the beginning of eternity, God commands everyone everywhere to fear Him.
- Is that the single most important desire you have for those in your life?
- The very core of biblical discipleship is a discipler who follows Christ and does his very best to convince others to genuinely follow Christ too.
- The problem is that we too often take all of our talk time discussing sports and grades and chores and friends and entertainment, but we rarely discuss how the fear of the Lord must not only be the most important aspect of all of that, it must be the very root of all of it.
- If we're not persuading others, the real issue is that we don't really know the fear of the Lord ourselves.

IV. There are Consequences for Not Fearing the Lord

- Romans 3:10-18; 1:18-32
- These passages show the results of people who know and understand certain divine truths, but they don't wisely live in the reality of them because they have chosen not to fear the Lord.
- And the consequences are so sad.

V. The Blessings of Fearing the Lord

- Proverbs 10:27, 14:26-27, 15:16, 16:6, 18:23, 22:4, 31:30; Acts 9:31
- We will never experience any lasting, genuine, and worthwhile spiritual success in this life if we do not fear God.
- The Fear of the Lord Helps Us Learn Better
 - Proverbs 1:7, 29
 - When we start with the fear of the Lord, we will approach learning very differently. This is why so many people who don't fear the Lord hate learning. Fools despise wisdom and instruction.
- **The Fear of the Lord Helps Us Understand Better**
 - Proverbs 9:10, 111:10
- **The Fear of the Lord Helps Us Live Better**
 - Proverbs 9:10, 15:33
 - We may have Didactic Wisdom without fearing God. We may put a man on mars or transplant a heart, but we will lose our souls if they don't fear God. We need Divine Wisdom, and that only comes from the fear of the Lord.

VI. The Fear the Lord Requires Work

- Proverbs 2:2-5
- We need to teach our disciples how to search for the knowledge and understanding, that will result in the wise application of the fear of the Lord.
- **To fear the Lord we must turn away from evil.**
 - Proverbs 3:7, 8:13, 24:21, 23:17
 - The fear of the Lord is not only going to cause me to turn away from the evil outside of me, it will cause me to turn away from the evil inside of me.
 - But not only are we to turn away from evil in the form of behavior, we must also turn away from the people who are evil.
- **To fear the Lord we must turn to righteousness.**
 - Proverbs 14:2; II Corinthians 7:1; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14
 - Turning from sin to the Savior, turning from evil to righteousness, is known as repentance.
 - The grand and glorious end of what it is to fear God is perfecting holiness.
- If we're fearing God, we'll be growing in our holiness. If we're not growing in holiness, we're not fearing God.
- Whether our disciples are living righteously or wickedly, even if it's hidden from our eyes, God is going to judge it. And there's not a single person who has or will ever live who can escape this reality. Therefore, we must fear God and keep His commandments. Those are completely indivisible realities. If we fear God, we will keep His commandments. If we're not keeping His commandments, we're not fearing God. In the same way, a person who fears the Lord will learn and understand and live accordingly. But a person who refuses to learn and understand and live accordingly absolutely is not fearing God.