

THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR SUCCESS

By John Gagliardi



Every structure that is to last must be built on a strong foundation – the Bible tells us very clearly that if a building is to stand up against storms and winds, it must be built on a rock, not sand.

The same truth applies to establishing a business – if we want any enterprise to last and be successful, we must build it on a strong foundation. That great and time-honored business consultant King Solomon says that wisdom will give us discretion in decision-making (Proverbs 2: 10 and 11), great creative ideas (Proverbs 8: 12) and lead us to “riches and honour” (Proverbs 3: 16; 8: 18) and full treasures (Proverbs 8: 21).

And how do we get this “wisdom” that is so important for Kingdom business professionals? James says we can simply ask God for it (James 1: 5) – but every promise of God is conditional. And the condition here is that we must build on the strong foundation of the fear of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10; 15: 33). Before we can expect God to give us wisdom, and all the benefits flowing from it, we need to be sure we are walking in the fear of the Lord.

In Christian circles today, there is a dangerous trend to treat God with levity rather than reverence and fear. Of course God is “Abba Father”, and our friend – but He is also the fearsome judge, testing all our works with fire. We get this balance out of kilter at our peril – it is time for Christians in all walks of life to rediscover the fear of the Lord, and His holiness.

We are to worship Him in the beauty of holiness (1 Chronicles 16: 29), not in trivial mindlessness. We need a new revelation of who God really is – Jesus Himself tells us His Name is to be “hallowed” (Matthew 6: 9), that is, made holy, revered, venerated and held in awe.

We need wisdom every day of our lives, to live successfully, make good decisions and see prosperity and wealth come as God promises many places in His Word. But we must keep the balance right – wisdom is built on the strong foundation of the fear of the Lord.

There is no doubt that God will increasingly start to transfer the wealth of the “wicked” to His people (Proverbs 13: 22) – but only if we are clean and pure vessels. He will pour out the untold riches “stored up”, but He will bring it through us, His people.

We are the conduits, the vessels through which He will pour the transferred wealth – but if we are clogged up with dirt and worldliness, it won’t flow cleanly and smoothly. We need to “ream out” our lives, scrape out everything that smacks of self and the world. Friendship with the world is enmity with God (James 4: 4) – we say that oh so glibly, but do we ever stop to think what it really means? The closer we turn to the world, the further we turn from God.

Quite correctly, there has been a lot of teaching over the past few years about Biblical economics – the very first command He gave to mankind was to “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1: 28); He gives us the power to get wealth (Deuteronomy 8: 18), and even promises to increase us a thousand-fold (Deuteronomy 1: 11). But – He also tells us to “Be Holy, for I am Holy (1 Peter 1:16). We must be holy in all our conduct, not just when we have our “church” face on.

Renowned international speaker and teacher John Bevere, at a major Christian conference in Australia recently, said he believed we were on the verge of the “greatest ever move of God”. That God was drawing people to His heart, but – He was also refining and purifying His Church.

God is calling us to an unprecedented revival and a new understanding of who God really is, but we can only walk into His call if we are prepared to come in true humility, holiness and in the admonition and fear of the Lord.

John Bevere emphasized God is “greatly to be feared and held in reverence” (Psalm 89: 7), and reminded us that even as great a figure as Isaiah, when he saw the Lord in all His holiness and glory, could only shriek in terror: “Woe is me, for I am undone!” (Isaiah 6: 5).

If that is how Isaiah reacted when he saw the Lord, and the seraphim calling “Holy, Holy, Holy”, then how much more should we seek to come into a proper understanding of God’s glory and holiness, bowing before Him, and crying out, “Hallowed be Thy Name!”

Rev Bevere said that you fear God when you obey Him – that obedience and the fear of the Lord are inextricably intertwined. In John 15: 14, Jesus says that if we love Him, we will keep His commandments, and then He says He will then pray to the Father that He will send us the Spirit of Truth – the Holy Spirit.

In the Australian conference, Rev Bevere prayed that people would be “baptized in the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord”, basing his prayer on Isaiah 11: 1-3. Let the Spirit of the Lord rest upon us, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Let us “delight in the fear of the Lord” – for if we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us the desire of our hearts (Psalm 37: 4).

We are to “fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and truth” (Joshua 24: 14), because what more does the Lord require of us, than to “fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” (Deuteronomy 10: 12)

If we ask Jesus to baptize (fill, immerse) us with the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord, and to help us obey Him implicitly, we can expect to move up to a new level of power and effectiveness in our daily walk with God:

- Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding (Job 28: 28);
- The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever (Psalm 19: 9);
- Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him (Psalm 34: 9);
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments (Psalm 111: 10);
- Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on the earth ... wealth and riches will be in his house ... (Psalm 112: 1-3);
- You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield ... He will bless us ... He will bless those who fear the Lord, both small and great (Psalm 115: 11-13);
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by Me, your days will be multiplied, and years of life will be added to you (Proverbs 9: 10 and 11);
- In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death (Proverbs 14: 26 and 27);
- The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, and before honour is humility (Proverbs 15: 33)
- By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honour and life (Proverbs 22: 4)
- Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the Lord all the day; for surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off (Proverbs 23: 17 and 18);
- Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, and the strength of salvation; the fear of the Lord is His treasure (Isaiah 33: 6);
- Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied (Acts 9: 31); and
- Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

So Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, who tells us in the Book of Proverbs that the fear of the Lord is the beginning and instruction of wisdom, concludes after much heart searching in Ecclesiastes that man's "all" is to fear God and obey Him.

So the message from God's own business instruction manual is clear – to keep our priorities right. To be successful and fulfill our destiny, we must have God's wisdom – but we can't have wisdom, if we don't first fear the Lord and keep His commandments.

Fear the Lord, trust Him and obey Him – and we can be sure we are building the towering edifice of a long and blessed life on a strong and enduring foundation. "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ ... if anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward". (1 Corinthians 3: 11 and 14)