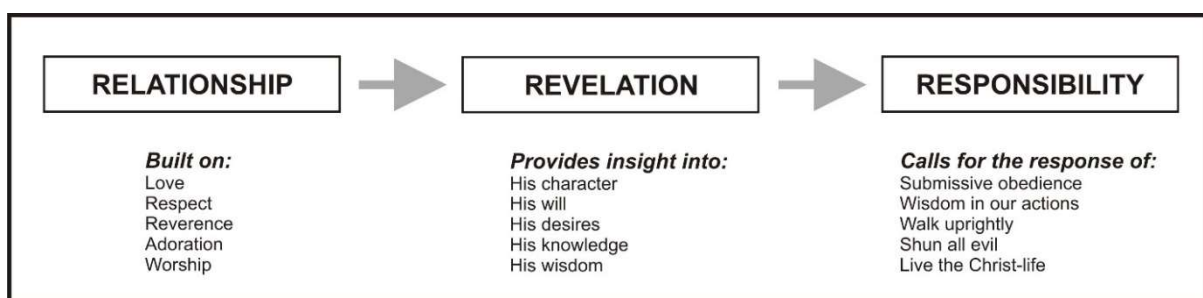


## Fear of the Lord – Learned and Applied

Last time we looked at the importance of living in the “fear of the Lord”, as this is the only way in which we can gain and operate by the wisdom, understanding and knowledge of the Lord. We looked at the link between Reverence and Obedience and the Fear of the Lord and concluded that:

- The “Fear of the Lord” is the action or result of the reverence and respect you have for Him.
- Your inward reverence and respect is expressed by your outward actions. Your actions demonstrate your reverence, respect, submission and obedience, and thereby show that you operate in the “fear of the Lord”.

To further understand the linkage between reverence and obedience and the fear of the Lord we looked at the 3 R’s: Relationship, Revelation and Responsibility.



We saw that the **relationship** we have with God is matured through the reverence, respect and adoration we have for Him. As we draw near to Him He **reveals** Himself and His ways, His wisdom, knowledge and understanding to us. As we come to the revelation of who He is and His plans and purpose for us we see the **responsibilities** we are required, and privileged, to fulfill as His ambassadors. As we submit and obey we demonstrate our real love for Him, our **fear of the Lord**.

### Willing but not doing

We can resolve to walk in the fear of the Lord, but our resolution to do so is only of value if we act upon it.

2 Cor 8:11 as translated in various version of the bible:

- (Today’s English Version) ... *“On with it, then, and finish the job! Be as eager to finish it as you were to plan it ...”*
- (ESV) ... *“So now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it...”*
- (NIV) ... *“Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it ...”*
- (Revised Version) ... *“As there was a readiness to will, so let there be a performance also.”*

While the road of our lives may be paved with good intentions, Paul’s advice here is that we should always and immediately put into action the resolve of our hearts.

You see, cheques issued are perfectly legitimate if there's money in your bank account to honour their payment, but if not, then the issuing of cheques is crime and fraud. Our resolution to walk in the fear of the Lord, if forgotten or not acted upon, is no better.

The habit of promptly carrying out our resolves is one that, like all other habits, can be cultivated. It is good for us to cultivate habits in small steps in the smallest of things in our daily lives, in order that it may be a fixed custom of our minds when great resolves have to be made. Walking constantly and continuously in the "fear of the Lord" is a major and vitally important resolve.

At the end of Romans 7, where Paul was lamenting the fact that he did not always do the things he should do, he cried, *"Who shall deliver me?"* and then answered, *"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord"*, and therein lies the secret: keep near Him, trust Him, and open your hearts the influences of the Divine Spirit who sets us free from the law of sin and death (the law that causes us to so easily flop back and do nothing when we should be putting legs to our resolutions).

Phil 2:12-13 ... *"work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."*

So learning and putting into action a lifestyle, a habit, of living in the "fear of the Lord" is a matter to which we will now give consideration.

### **Mature sons, true ambassadors**

We are living in a day and age where the world is on a steep downward spiral in terms of depraved morals and values, but a time in which I believe the Lord wants to bring in a mighty harvest. But remember Jesus' words (Matt 9:37), *"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few"*.

I believe the Lord is calling for his children to become **mature sons** and daughters who will step up and represent Him out in the harvest. He is looking for **true ambassadors** to represent Him.

Now in August last year I shared a message entitled "Journey Plans" in which we looked at the definition of **"adoption as sons"**. We found that there were different words used in the Greek language in respect of the various stages we go through in life namely:

- νήπιος (nēpios) – infant, one not yet speaking, a babe, the unlearned;
- παιδίον (paidion) – child (in relation to parents, of either sex, at any stage of life from infancy to adulthood); they're your children no matter how old they grow, they're yours.
- τέκνον (teknon) – child; or τεκνίον (teknion) – little child
- υἱός (huios) – son (implies connection in respect of membership, service, resemblance, manifestation, destiny)

Eph 1:3-6 ... *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to **adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."*

The words translated into English – “adoption as sons” – come from the Greek word υιοθεσία (huiiothesia), which is a composite of the words υἱός (huios) which means “son”, and τίθημι (tithēmi) which means “to place” or “set.” So combining these two words the more literal translation is “placing or setting as a son.”

It is a term of **relation**, expressing our sonship in respect of **standing or position**.

In the west, adoption is the taking of a child from one family and making it a member of another family. But in the Greco-Roman culture of the day in which Paul is writing, a father adopted none as a son but his own child. Birth made him a child, adoption gave him sonship. Between birth as a child and adoption or ‘placing or setting as son’, there was growth, education and discipline. Learning the ways of the father and his business.

An English writer R.B. Jones makes this clear. “To be a son is infinitely more than to be a child, and the terms are never loosely used by the Holy Spirit. It is not the difference in relationship, but in position. Every ‘born again’ child of God has in him the nature of his Father, and is a beloved member of his father’s family. Adoption cannot make the child any nearer or dearer, yet it gives the child the status he did not enjoy before, a position he did not occupy. It is his recognition as an adult son, the attaining of his majority, the seal upon his growth to maturity of mind and character. A child is one born of God; a son is one taught of God. A child has God’s nature; a son has God’s character.”

### **Learning and Applying the Fear of the Lord**

So, developing God’s **character** and coming to maturity in Christ comes through **learning and living** in the “**fear of the Lord**.” It’s all about Relationship and Revelation which leads to Responsibility.

Deut 17:18-19 ... “Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may **learn to fear the LORD** his God, by **carefully observing** all the words of this law and these statutes.”

Deut 31:11-13 ... “when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, the men and the women and children and the alien who is in your town, so that they may hear and **learn and fear the LORD** your God, and be **careful to observe** all the words of this law. Their children, who have not known, will hear and **learn to fear the LORD** your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.”

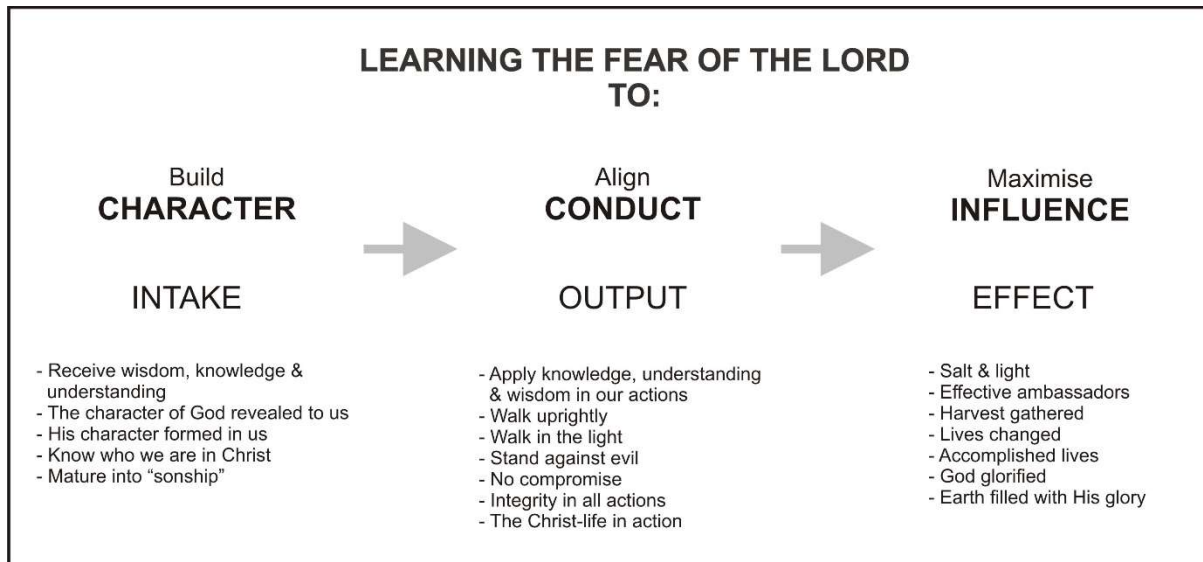
Psalms 34:11 ... “Come, you children, listen to me; I will **teach you the fear of the LORD**.”

The Holy Spirit is calling us, He’s saying, “I want to teach you the fear of the Lord so that you can come to maturity as sons and fulfill the Father’s purpose and plan for your life. So that you can be ‘fruit bearers’ and ‘intercessors’.” Remember we are here to abide in the Vine (Relationship) and, as His representative ambassadors (Having received Revelation), to “bear fruit” (Responsibility), and we are also here to be intercessors who bring heavens will down to meet earth’s needs.

It’s a call to yield to the Holy Spirit, our Teacher, so He can teach us how to live in the fear of the Lord. A life in which we learn from Him so we can apply His wisdom, knowledge and understanding in our lives.

We need to learn the fear of the Lord as this is the source of wisdom, knowledge and understanding, without which we cannot come to maturity and live accomplished and victorious lives.

In the process of learning the fear of the Lord we bow before Him, we **Relate** to Him, so He can build His **character** in us through embraced **Revelation**. We submit and obey His instruction so that our **conduct** is upright and consistent with His ways. Then as we carry out our **Responsibilities**, as we apply wisdom in our actions we **influence** the world around us for God's glory. Let's look at this graphically.



Romans 8:28-29 states ... *"God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become **conformed to the image of His Son**."* And so the whole process of **learning the fear of the Lord** is to bring us to the conformity to the image of His Son – that Christ may be formed in us and operate through us to the glory of the Father.

#### How to Learn the Fear of the Lord:

To learn the fear of the Lord requires a decision, determination, discipline and diligence on our part. These are required if we are to develop the "habit" of continually walking in the fear of the Lord. This means we have to:

Prov 4:1 ... **"give attention** that you may gain understanding"...

2 Tim 2:15 (KJV) ... **"Study** to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Prov 2:1-12 ... *"My son, if you will **receive** my words and **treasure** my commandments within you, <sup>2</sup>Make your ear **attentive** to wisdom, **incline** your heart to understanding; <sup>3</sup>For if you **cry** for discernment, **lift** your voice for understanding; <sup>4</sup>If you **seek** her as silver and **search** for her as for hidden treasures; <sup>5</sup>Then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God. <sup>6</sup>For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. <sup>7</sup>He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, <sup>8</sup>guarding the paths of justice, and He preserves the way of His godly ones. <sup>9</sup>Then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity and every good course. <sup>10</sup>For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; <sup>11</sup>Discretion will guard you,*

*understanding will watch over you, <sup>12</sup> To deliver you from the way of evil, from the man who speaks perverse things."*

We learn the fear of the Lord by spending time in God's presence, relating to Him, talking to Him, studying His word, and receiving the enlightenment, teaching and revelation of the Holy Spirit.

First there are the **conditions** (v1-4):

Note the number of times there is the conditional statement ... **"If you"** ...

Then note the action words: ... **"receive"** ... **"treasure"** ... **"attentive"** ... **"incline"** ... **"cry"** ... **"lift your voice"** ... **"seek"** ... **"search"** ...

It is clear that there is a decision, determination, discipline and diligence we have to exercise.

Then there are the promises or rewards (v 5-12):

The promise is declared by the ... **"then you will"** ...

Look back at Deut 17:18-19 ... **"that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes."**

Deut 31:11-13 ... **"so that they may hear and learn and fear the LORD your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law."**

Prov 7:1-2 ... **"My son, keep my words and treasure my commandments within you. Keep my commandments and live, and my teaching as the apple of your eye."**

Prov 4:13 ... **"Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life"**.

Prov 4:20-23 ... **"My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your sight; keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life to those who find them and health to all their body. Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life."**

Prov 8:32-35 ... **"Now therefore, O sons, listen to me, for blessed are they who keep my ways. Heed instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at my doorposts. For he who finds me finds life and obtains favor from the LORD."**

Advice to the not so wise; to those who are not diligent in learning the fear of the Lord and who expect God to come to their rescue whenever they click their fingers. These folks misquote Ps 81:10 which says ... **"open wide your mouth and I will fill it"**...

These folks would do well to consider Matt 12:34 ... **"the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart"**... and Prov 4:23 ... **"Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life"**...

It's quite simple; whatever your heart is full of will come flowing out of you. You have to first draw near to God and His word, be filled with His wisdom and His Spirit, learn and put on His character, and then in your time of need the Holy Spirit will have something to work with and to quicken to you. He will help you speak out of that which fills your heart.

Learning the fear of the Lord is all about “*putting on Christ*” and involves the training of your words and actions. It’s about aligning your character, words and actions with His. Christ is in us, and He is our prime example. Listen to these scriptures:

John 8:26, 28, 38 ... *“He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world” ... “I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me” ... “I speak the things which I have seen with My Father.”*

John 10:30 ... *“I and the Father are one.”*

John 14:9 ... *“He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”*

John 14:31 ... *“but so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me.”*

So similarly, we, in training to be His sons, as His true ambassadors, His representatives, the ones who show Christ to the world, must say and do only that which you have heard from Him or seen in Him.

Rom 13:14 ... *“put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lust”.*

Learning the fear of the Lord, which is part and parcel of the renewing of the mind, has one goal – it’s about “*putting on Christ*”. The focus is on (1 Cor 1:30) ... *“Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God”* ...

Christ is in us and He is wisdom. What we need is a revelation of Christ as our wisdom, and Eph 1: 17 tells us to pray that ... *“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him”*.

So we are urged to pray that Christ may be revealed in and to us. That we may receive revelation of His attribute of wisdom and of His character. Our heart cry should be like Paul’s (Phil 3:10) ... *“that I may know Him.”* See also John 17:3.

1 Cor 2:16 .... *“We have the mind of Christ.”*

Col 1:27 ... *“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”*

In the same way that Christ is in us (Col 1:27) we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16). Part of what it means to ‘grow in Christ’ or ‘put on Christ’ is to ‘learn and put on His mind’. What we need is a revelation of Christ and His mind (His wisdom, knowledge and understanding). That’s why we need to draw near to Him and walk in an intimate relationship based on our respect and love for Him, as He will only reveal himself to those who walk in a deep relationship of respect, submission and obedience.

2 Chr 16:9 ... *“For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is **completely** His”.*

There is no room for compromise or lukewarmness. Remember what we said at the beginning of this discussion: we can resolve to walk in the fear of the Lord, but our resolution to do so is only of value if we act upon it. Cheques issued with no money in your bank account to honour their payment,

constitute crime and fraud. Our resolution to walk in the fear of the Lord, if forgotten or not acted upon, is no better.

### Final word

There's one more passage of scripture I would like to look at in closing:

Prov 3:1-26 ... *"My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; <sup>2</sup>for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. <sup>3</sup>Do not let kindness and truth leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. <sup>4</sup>So you will find favour and good repute in the sight of God and man. <sup>5</sup>Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. <sup>6</sup>In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. <sup>7</sup>Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil. <sup>8</sup>It will be healing to your body and refreshment to your bones. <sup>9</sup>Honour the Lord from your wealth and from the first of all your produce; <sup>10</sup>so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine. <sup>11</sup>My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord or loathe His reproof, <sup>12</sup>For whom the Lord loves He reproves, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights. <sup>13</sup>How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding. <sup>14</sup>For her profit is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold. <sup>15</sup>She is more precious than jewels; and nothing you desire compares with her. <sup>16</sup>Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honour. <sup>17</sup>Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace. <sup>18</sup>She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who hold her fast. <sup>19</sup>The Lord by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding He established the heavens. <sup>20</sup>By His knowledge the deeps were broken up and the skies drip with dew. <sup>21</sup>My son, let them not vanish from your sight; Keep sound wisdom and discretion, <sup>22</sup>so they will be life to your soul and adornment to your neck. <sup>23</sup>Then you will walk in your way securely and your foot will not stumble. <sup>24</sup>When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. <sup>25</sup>Do not be afraid of sudden fear nor of the onslaught of the wicked when it comes; <sup>26</sup>for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught."*

For us to learn and live in the fear of the Lord, our walk and devotion to the Lord is to grow stronger day by day and be a continual relationship, not a sporadic one. It will help if we remember the sequences:

RELATIONSHIP – REVELATION – RESPONSIBILITY

INTAKE – OUTPUT – INFLUENCE

BUILD CHARACTER – ALIGN CONDUCT – MAXIMISE INFLUENCE

We do this by **actively** and **continually learning and walking** in the **fear of the Lord**.

As we do this Christ's **character** will be developed in us, and as we in obedience, with the help of the Holy Spirit, align our **conduct** with His revealed character, we will have the power to **maximise our influence** in our world and be used of the Father to be effective harvesters in these end times.

May His will be done. May we choose to learn and live in the fear of the Lord.