

## PROVERBS

### Ascending to the Heights with the Fear of God

Imagine yourself as a mountain climber standing at the foot of Mt. Everest, the tallest mountain on earth. Everest towers above the country of Nepal at 29,035 feet, earning it the Nepalese name Sagarmatha, which means “goddess of the sky”. In Tibet it is called Chomolungma, or “mother goddess of the universe”. Thousands have begun the incredible trek to the top of Everest, but not all of these have reached the summit or survived; in fact, over the past fifty years this mountain has claimed more than one hundred lives. The mountain’s peak does not pass the frigid high of -15°F and can reach the shocking low of -100°F. Hypothermia, decreasing levels of oxygen, avalanches, equipment failure, and many more potential dangers await you if you would tackle its icy slopes.

You would be a fool if, having this knowledge of Everest, you began your ascent with flippant disregard for its power. Would you want ignorance or arrogance to keep you from the beauty of Everest’s peak? Anything and everything you know about this mountain is worthless without respectful awe and appropriate fear.

In the same way, would you want ignorance or arrogance to keep you from the limitless joy of knowing and serving your Creator? God is real and is as presently involved in your life as when

He formed the first man from the dust. And He is as personally interested in your life as when He knit you together in your mother’s womb (Gen 2:7; Ps. 139:13).

He is light; His holy essence shines with a glory so intense that no man can see His face and live (1 John 1:5 Ex. 33:20). He spoke into being all that is, from the tallest mountain to the smallest atom. Your knowledge of God should cause you to fear Him; that is, to regard Him with an overwhelming sense of reverence and awe that compels you to obedience. Proverbs 1:7 says, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge...”* Anything and everything you know must begin with knowledge and fear of the Lord, or else it is worthless!

Living a single day of your life outside of the fear of the Lord is as crazy as tackling Everest barefoot with your shirt tied around your head. Proverbs 1:7 calls such a person a “fool” who “despises wisdom and instruction.” The fool lives like a mountain climber who would rather climb according to his own whims rather than with accurate knowledge and appropriate fear. Solomon writes to his son (and to you) in order to warn against building a life of worthless knowledge and unwise living that neglects a proper knowledge and fear of our great God!



## LOOK CLOSELY

*observation*

### Proverbs 1:7

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

- Before you decide what this passage means, look closely at what it says.
- Mark the phrase “The fear of the LORD.”
- Mark the word that describes the relationship of the “fear of the LORD” and “knowledge.”
- Mark the word that describes the action of “fools.”
- Mark the two things that fools despise.

#### Identification Key

Develop your own key for identifying the various words and phrases in the text provided. Use different colored pencils, circles, boxes, underlining, etc., but be consistent from week-to-week.



## THINK CAREFULLY

*interpretation*

**“The fear of the LORD...”** The Bible uses several different Hebrew words that are translated *fear*. Most of these words convey the idea of an emotional feeling of dread or terror. However, the word for *fear* when joined with the name of the LORD, always denotes a humble and submissive response of reverence, awe, and obedience to the LORD.

The fear of the LORD can be understood as “living with the realization that everything I think, say and do is seen and evaluated by a holy, just and almighty God.”

**“...beginning...”** If knowledge were pictured as a pyramid then the fear of the LORD would be the foundation layer.

**“...fools...”** are pictured in Proverbs as displaying an ignorant stubbornness. A fool is someone who rejects God and His ways.

“...**despise**...” Fools view the pursuit of wisdom as a worthless waste of time. Their attitude toward it is one of contempt (Proverbs 23:9).

What is the result of fearing the LORD in these verses?

- Psalm 5:7
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Psalm 115:11
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Deuteronomy 5:29
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Psalm 2:11

How does the fear of the LORD affect our view of sin?

- Proverbs 8:13
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2 Corinthians 7:1

What are the blessings associated with fearing the LORD?

- Proverbs 14:26
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Proverbs 19:23
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Proverbs 22:4

What do the following verses teach about the fool?

- Proverbs 18:2
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Proverbs 18:6

- Proverbs 26:11

- Proverbs 28:26

- Proverbs 10:23

Read 2 Corinthians 5:9-11.

- What desire did the fear of the Lord produce in Paul (v 9)?

- What future event motivated Paul's fear of the Lord (v 10)?



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## RESPOND WISELY

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*application*

List some things in your life about which you are afraid (example: heights, the dark, being alone, etc.).

In what ways are these fears different from or similar to the fear of the Lord?

How would living with the awareness that God sees and evaluates everything I think, say, and do affect my life in the following areas?

How I spend my time:

What I view on the internet or television:

How I talk to and about others:

Read Proverbs 2:1-2. List the actions that these verses encourage you take which will lead you to understand the fear of the LORD.

What are some reasons why a fool might be compelled to reject God's wisdom?

Proverbs 14:16

Proverbs 28:26

Proverbs 12:15

In what ways are the love for the Lord and the fear of the LORD similar?

Discuss as a family what the fear of the LORD might look like in specific life situations.

**For Parents:**

Discuss how you can help your children develop a healthy fear of the Lord.

What changes must occur in your own lives in order to be a better example to your children in this area?