

# **The FEAR of the LORD**

# **The KEY to Everything**

**By**

**Mark A McGee**

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# Key 1

When someone says that something is the “key” to everything, it usually is not. We tend to think too much about what we think. However ... I do want to share something with you that I truly believe “is” the KEY to everything.

Two of the most successful men who ever ruled a nation were a father and son. Both of them had the KEY to everything.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.” Psalm 111:10

We’ll go into more depth about what was behind that amazing claim in the next part of our study, but I want to introduce you to what King David believed was the KEY to everything – the FEAR of the Lord. David feared God from an early age and it gave him great wisdom that prepared the way for him to become a wise and powerful king.

“So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul’s servants ... And David behaved wisely in all his ways,

and the LORD was with him ... Then the princes of the Philistines went out to war. And so it was, whenever they went out, that David behaved more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed.” 1 Samuel 18:5, 14, 30

King David’s son, Solomon, also wanted to be a wise king and asked God to give him an understanding heart to judge the people of Israel, to discern between good and evil.

“At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, ‘Ask! What shall I give you?’ And Solomon said: ‘You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?’ The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. Then God said to him: ‘Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your

enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you.” 1 Kings 3:1-12

Discerning between good and evil is what everything is about in our life. Go back to the beginning. What did God say to Adam in the Garden? *“but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”* (Genesis 2:17) What did Adam do? *“She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.”* (Genesis 3:6) What happened? *“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked.”* (Genesis 3:7) What did God do and why? Then the LORD God said, *“Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”— therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.”* (Genesis 3:22-23)

Wisdom is discerning between good and evil and choosing to do good rather than evil. The KEY that opens the door to that wisdom is “the fear of the Lord.” Was Solomon a wise king? *“And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.”* (1 Kings 3:28) Solomon was a wise king, at least during the early years of his reign. Here are some of his thoughts about what he knew about fearing God.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Proverbs 1:7

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” Proverbs 9:10

“The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility.” Proverbs 15:33

As wise as David and Solomon were during their generations, they were not first. Here are the wise words of Job about the KEY to wisdom.

“And to man He said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, And to depart from evil is understanding.’” Job 28:28

As wise as Job was, and as David and Solomon were, there is another Who was and is so much wiser. His Name is Jesus.

“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight *is* in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall

strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist. ” Isaiah 11:1-5

Notice that Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, “delighted” in the FEAR of the Lord. Do you find that interesting? The Spirit of the Lord that rested on Jesus 2,000 years ago and will rest on Him again when He returns to earth is called three things in Isaiah 11:

1. Spirit of wisdom and understanding
2. Spirit of counsel and might
3. Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord

The FEAR of the Lord is the KEY to everything.

## Key 2

“Praise the LORD! I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart, In the assembly of the upright and *in* the congregation. The works of the LORD *are* great, Studied by all who have pleasure in them. His work *is* honorable and glorious, And His righteousness endures forever. He has made His wonderful works to be remembered; The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion. He has given food to those who fear Him; He will ever be mindful of His covenant. He has declared to His people the power of His works, In giving them the heritage of the nations. The works of His hands *are* verity and justice; All His precepts *are* sure. They stand fast forever and ever, *And are* done in truth and uprightness. He has sent redemption to His people; He has commanded His covenant forever: Holy and awesome *is* His name. The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments*. His praise endures forever.” Psalm 111:1-10

The psalmist had good reasons to say that the FEAR of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. He begins by writing about the “works” of the LORD – “Studied by all who have pleasure in them. His work *is* honorable and glorious.” What are the “works” of the LORD that would be studied? CREATION!

“Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, Who cover *Yourself* with light as *with* a garment, Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.” Psalm 104:1-2

Psalm 104 is a praise to the LORD for Creation. It is detailed in praise for specific aspects of the LORD’s “work” in creating the earth, sea, and sky and everything in it. That leads the Psalmist to write – “O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions.” (Psalm 104:24) God “made them all” in **Wisdom**.

Millions of people around the world are studying the “works” of the LORD right now – scientists, professors, students, people of all types – interested in learning more about how this world works. Students of science who fear the LORD have a deep appreciation for what He created. Those who do not fear the LORD see many of the same things as those who do, but they cannot appreciate what they see, hear, touch, and smell. Their ability to understand is greatly hindered by their unbelief.

What does it mean to “fear” the Lord? Does God want us to be “afraid” of Him? What kind of relationship does God want us to have with Him? The Hebrew language has many words that are translated by the English words “fear” and “afraid.” The first time we see one of the words in the Bible is Genesis 3:10 when Adam spoke to God after disobeying Him. God asked Adam, “Where are you?” Adam replied, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was

naked; and I hid myself.” The Hebrew word for “afraid” here is *yare*, which can have the meaning of “fear, terrified, intimidated, dreaded, apprehensive, stand in awe of, revere, respect.” It’s obvious from the context of what happened that Adam was terrified by what he had done. He knew the penalty for his disobedience and was very afraid. That’s why he hid himself from God.

We see the word *yare* used again in Deuteronomy 10:12. This is one of the most important statements in the Mosaic Law.

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, *and* to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good? Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, *also* the earth with all that *is* in it.”

Deuteronomy 10:12-14

Fearing the Lord was a “requirement” for the people of Israel; and not just to fear Him, but to also walk in all His ways, love Him, and serve Him with all their heart and soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes were commanded for their good. Moses reminded Israel that a good reason to fear God was that everything in Heaven and on earth belong to Him.

The Hebrew word for “fear” in Psalm 111:10 is *yir’ah* and comes from *yare*. It means “to fear from an apprehension of danger and a sense of our own weakness joined with trembling.” It is a real fear that leads to reverence and awe and worship. That kind of fear is the beginning of “wisdom.”

# Key 3

Look at Psalm 111:1-9:

“Praise the Lord! I will praise the Lord with *my* whole heart, In the assembly of the upright and *in* the congregation. The works of the Lord *are* great, Studied by all who have pleasure in them. His work *is* honorable and glorious, And His righteousness endures forever. He has made His wonderful works to be remembered; The Lord *is* gracious and full of compassion. He has given food to those who fear Him; He will ever be mindful of His covenant. He has declared to His people the power of His works, In giving them the heritage of the nations. The works of His hands *are* verity and justice; All His precepts *are* sure. They stand fast forever and ever, *And are* done in truth and uprightness. He has sent redemption to His people; He has commanded His covenant forever: Holy and awesome *is* His name.”

These are things God wants us to know about Himself leading up to verse 10 which says that the “fear” of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. How do they affect your understanding about “fearing” Him?

1. The works of the Lord are great.
2. The works of the Lord are studied by all who have pleasure in them.
3. God's work is honorable and glorious.
4. The Lord's righteousness endures forever.
5. God has made His wonderful works to be remembered.
6. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.
7. The Lord has given food to those who fear Him.
8. The works of God's Hands are verity and justice.
9. All of God's precepts are sure.
10. The Lord's precepts stand fast forever and ever.
11. The Lord's precepts are done in truth and uprightness.
12. God has sent redemption to His people.
13. The Lord has commanded His covenant forever.
14. The Name of the Lord is Holy and Awesome.

**Meditate on each of these points.**

- What does it mean to you that the Lord's works are great? Think about how many people around the world today are studying God's works – scientists, professors, scholars, teachers, students, parents, children – billions of people studying the works of the Lord every day. They may not believe in God, but they are still studying His works. And, God has made His wonderful works to be remembered for all time!
- Consider the fact that the Lord's work is honorable and glorious. What does that mean – honorable and glorious? The work of His Hands are verity and justice. What does that mean? How does that impact your life? What about the fact that His righteousness endures forever? Not for just a day or a week or a year or even a lifetime – but forever!
- The Lord's precepts are sure and stand fast forever. They are done in truth and uprightness. What does that mean to you?
- God has sent redemption to His people and Has commanded His covenant (agreement) forever. What does that mean to you?
- What an amazing list of God's Character and Attributes! Do you know anyone like Him? There is no one like our God. When we carefully consider God, we will fear Him. His Name is Holy and

Awesome.

- Based on what you've just read, why do you think the "fear" of the Lord is the "beginning of wisdom"? What kind of wisdom can we expect to receive?
- What does the fear of the Lord have to do with a good understanding of His commandments? Is obedience to God's commands important to understanding Him?
- What does "His praise" enduring forever have to do with the fear of the Lord? How does "fear" and "praise" work together in our relationship with God?
- What are some examples of ways you fear the Lord? How has that affected your life?

Here's another important insight about **fearing the Lord**.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction." Proverbs 1:7

Fearing God is the beginning of "wisdom" and "knowledge." That is true. All wisdom and knowledge belong to God. Fearing Him opens the proper relationship to reveal that wisdom and knowledge. It makes sense that someone who would not fear God is a fool – despising wisdom and instruction. Look at the context of Proverbs

1:1-6 and you'll see why.

“The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, To perceive the words of understanding, To receive the instruction of wisdom, Justice, judgment, and equity; To give prudence to the simple, To the young man knowledge and discretion—A wise *man* will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, To understand a proverb and an enigma, The words of the wise and their riddles.”

Everything a human being needs to know to be successful in life is mentioned in these verses.

1. Instruction of wisdom
2. Instruction of justice
3. Instruction of judgment
4. Instruction of equity
5. Words of understanding
6. Prudence to the simple
7. Knowledge and discretion to the young man
8. Increase learning
9. Attain wise counsel

10. Understand a proverb
11. Understand an enigma
12. Understand the words of the wise and their riddles

**Meditate on each of these points.**

1. How have you experienced these things in your life through the wisdom and knowledge that comes from God?
2. How can the “fear” of the Lord help us grow in wisdom and knowledge every day of our lives? How will you use what you’ve learned from Psalm 111 and Proverbs 7 in your life this week?
3. How can we help other people learn the “fear” of the Lord and grow in wisdom and knowledge in their lives? Who needs your help most?

Be sure to pray for those people this week.

# Key 4

When did people become so afraid of things? It started soon after “the beginning.”

“Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid.’ Genesis 3:9-10

Adam heard the voice of God and was “afraid.” The Hebrew word is *yare* and means “an intense fear, dread, frightened, terrified.” Adam knew he had disappointed His Creator and was terrified when God called for him. Why was Adam afraid? He knew God would do what He promised – “you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:17)

Adam became aware of what it means to FEAR the Lord because he did not FEAR the Lord. Adam should have feared God when He said – “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.” (Genesis 2:16-17) If Adam had feared God enough to obey Him, he would not have had to “fear” God because he disobeyed Him.

We have the same choice today. We can FEAR the Lord or we can FEAR the Lord. We can FEAR the Lord and be wise or FEAR the

Lord because we are foolish. Our choice.

What does King Solomon say will happen to a person who fears God?

“The fear of the Lord *leads* to life, And *he who has it* will abide in satisfaction; He will not be visited with evil.” Proverbs 19:23

Even as not fearing God led to death for Adam, the FEAR of the Lord “leads to life,” and a very good life it is. The person who fears God “will abide in satisfaction” and will “not be visited with evil.” This is a BIG difference between those who FEAR God and those who do not. The Hebrew words for “abide in satisfaction” mean a person will “lodge, stay all night, continue in a settled state.” Here are other translations of Proverbs 19:23 that shed light on the meaning:

“The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.” KJV

“The fear of the LORD leads to life; then one rests content, untouched by trouble.” NIV

“ The fear of Jehovah tendeth to life; And he that hath it shall abide satisfied; He shall not be visited with evil.” ASV

“The fear of the LORD *leads* to life, So that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil.” NASB

“The fear of the Lord leads to life, and whoever has it

rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.” ESV

“The fear of the LORD leads to life; one will sleep at night without danger.” HCSB

People who FEAR the Lord can sleep without fear at night. They’re not looking over their shoulders all day worrying about what may happen to them next. They will not be “visited with evil.” The Hebrew words mean “to fall upon, to attack, with adversity, affliction, calamity, disaster, distress.” That’s quite a promise. Does it mean believers won’t have trouble in this world? No, we will have trouble, but trouble will not devastate those who FEAR the Lord. Even in the middle of great trouble, the Lord is kind to His people and gives them sweet sleep.

“My son, let them not depart from your eyes—Keep sound wisdom and discretion; So they will be life to your soul And grace to your neck. Then you will walk safely in your way, And your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror, Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; For the Lord will be your confidence, And will keep your foot from being caught.” Proverbs 3:21-26

The FEAR of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and God says wisdom and discretion will be “life to your soul and grace to your neck.” People who FEAR God will walk safely in their way, their foot will not stumble, they will not be afraid when they lie down, their sleep

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will be sweet, they will not be afraid of sudden terror, nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes. Why is that? **The Lord is our confidence**; He keeps our foot from being caught. What a joy it is to be a child of God, to FEAR Him, and know the great peace that comes with that FEAR.

# Key 5

Revelation is among the most neglected Books of the Bible. I say that not because people do not study or teach it, but because of how they study and teach it. The Revelation of Jesus Christ is an amazing prophetic guide into the future of the heavens and the earth. It is also a powerful revelation of Who Jesus Christ is and what He demands from His Church **now**.

“I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,’ and, ‘What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.’ Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands *One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many

waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.’ Revelation 1:9-18

The Apostle John had been banished to the small island of Patmos because of his preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The year was about 95 AD; more than 60 years after Jesus died on the Cross, rose from the grave, and ascended to His Throne in Heaven. A lot had happened during those years, including the deaths of all of the Lord’s Apostles, except for John.

Jesus Christ appeared to John on the Lord’s Day and spoke to him. John described the Lord’s Voice as “loud” and “as of a trumpet.” The first thing Jesus said to John was, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” reminiscent of what He had said to the Prophet Isaiah centuries before.

“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I *am* the First and I *am* the Last; Besides Me *there is* no God.’” Isaiah 44:6

“Listen to Me, O Jacob, And Israel, My called: I *am* He, I *am* the First, I *am* also the Last.” Isaiah 48:12

When John saw Jesus he fell at His feet as dead, but Jesus laid His right hand on him and said, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.” Again, a reminder of the great promise God made to Isaiah and Israel many years earlier in the same context as being the First and Last.

“Do not fear, nor be afraid; Have I not told you from that time, and declared *it*? You *are* My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed *there is* no other Rock; I know not *one*.” Isaiah 44:8

Jesus told John to write in a Book what he saw in the vision the Lord was going to give him and then send that Book to the seven churches in Asia: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Patmos was a small island, just a short distance from those seven churches. John was well known to the churches in those cities. The pastors, deacons and members of each church would have been able to verify that indeed it was from the Apostle.

The image most Christians have presented of Jesus Christ during the past 2,000 years has been of a loving Savior, wearing a flowing robe and looking meek and mild. The image John saw on that Lord’s Day on Patmos was of a powerful Warrior King – “*One* like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun

shining in its strength.” John described Jesus many times in the Revelation and each time he presented a Mighty God Who conquers and judges the world and the heavens.

“Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and *One* sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and *there* was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.” Revelation 4:2-3

“And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” Revelation 5:6

“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty

God. And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.” Revelation 19:11-16

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:11-15

Jesus revealed Himself to John as the Almighty God, One to be feared and obeyed. Remember that this is, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants.” (Revelation 1:1) This is how Jesus wanted His Church to think of Him every day of their lives – not just once in awhile when a pastor or traveling evangelist or prophecy teacher held special meetings about the Book of Revelation. Jesus revealed Himself to John the Apostle and told him to write everything he saw and send it to the churches. Why? So that His servants, His children, would know He was coming soon and FEAR Him.

“Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed *is* he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book ... And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last ... I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star ... Surely I am coming quickly.” Revelation 22:7, 12-13, 16, 20

# Key 6

**Fear is real.** It started with Adam being afraid of God in the Garden and every human being has had to deal with it since that time. You and I are afraid of something. It might be the dark or tight spaces. It might be taking a test or speaking in front of a group. We might be afraid of going to the hospital or dealing with violence. Everybody's afraid of something.

The Apostle Paul was a realist. He was also an idealist. The two can be joined together in rational and reasonable thinking, even though many philosophers would say the two are contrasts and opposed to each other. Paul looked at life and saw the suffering and troubles of the human condition. He also looked at life and saw the great glory and victory that await God's people. Understanding both the reality of life and the ideal of hope in Christ brings us to an understanding of how to live the GraceLife. Here's how Paul explained it.

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious

liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance. Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.” Romans 8:18-30

Think about that for a few minutes. The sufferings that you and I are dealing with in our lifetime “are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” How do you compare “sufferings” of less than 120 years to the “glory” we will experience with God

through eternity? It's impossible to compare the finite to the infinite because we cannot measure the infinite. Eternity is forever – everlasting. We have no way to understand that other than to imagine time continuing without end, but even that does not help us understand the true nature of “eternity.” Eternity is not just time without end. Eternity is a place and experience beyond our comprehension.

Paul also wrote to the Corinthians about the suffering of this life compared to the eternal glory before us.

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward *man* is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which *are* not seen are eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

King Solomon wrote that God “has put eternity in their hearts,” speaking about the sons of men. Then, Solomon looked at eternity from the outside to give us a brief glimpse of what will be and how it should lead men to fear God.

“I know that whatever God does, It shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, And nothing taken from it. God does *it*, that men should fear before Him. That which is has already been, And

what is to be has already been; And God requires an account of what is past.” Ecclesiastes 3:14-15

Jesus taught often about eternal life and what it means for those who believe in Him.

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father’s hand.” John 10:27-29

Paul wrote the Ephesians about how the purpose of the mystery God had given him to preach to the Gentiles was part of an “eternal purpose.”

“For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles— if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. To me, who

am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.” Ephesians 3:1-13.

That brings us to the question of what do we do about fear. The fear we face during our lifetime, even if short in comparison to eternity, is still hard. So, what do we do? What do we say?

“What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? *It is* God who justifies. Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake

we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:31-39

What we say is, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” What we do is FEAR the Lord and trust Him – in everything.

King Solomon summarized this truth beautifully at the end of Ecclesiastes -

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

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