

"There Is No Fear Of God Before Their Eyes"

by Bill Crews

In Romans 1:18-32 Paul, in describing the sinful state of the Gentiles and their need of God's righteousness (which was revealed in the gospel, God's power unto salvation, vv. 16-17), attributes their moral corruption to their chosen ignorance of God. Through the universe that surrounded them they could clearly see the everlasting power and divinity of the Creator. Thus, they were "without excuse" (vs. 20). "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (vv. 22-23). "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever" (vs. 25).

Three times we are told that "God gave them up." (1) Verse 24: "Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves." (2) Verse 26: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions" (then he goes on to describe their sexual deviations and perversions). (3) Verse 28: "God gave them up unto a reprobate mind to do those things which are not fitting."

It is extremely important for every accountable person to acknowledge God and to give Him His rightful place. The whole (duty) of man is to fear God and to keep His commandments (Eccl. 12:13). In every nation the one who fears God and works His righteousness is acceptable to God (Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 10:3). What is "the fear of God"? It is reverence for God, awe of God, respect for God. It is that which would cause one to shrink back from doing anything that would displease or dishonor God. It is that, coupled with faith and love, which would impel one to obey and honor God.

Consider the fruits, the benefits of the fear of God:

1. It is the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1:7, 29).
2. It is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10; Ps. 111:10).
3. It is the instruction of wisdom (Prov. 15:33).
4. It leads man to depart from evil (Prov. 16:6; 3:5-7; Job 28:28).
5. It affords protection and gives strong confidence; if we fear God, we do not have a fear of men or circumstances (Prov. 14:26; Ps. 33:18).
6. It is a fountain of life or a life-giving fountain (Prov. 14:27).
7. It tends to life (Prov. 19:23)
8. It leads one to obey God's will (Eccl. 12:13).
9. It leads one to worship and serve God (Deut. 6:13; Matt. 4:10).
10. It leads one to give glory to God (Rev. 14:7).

Furthermore, for those who fear God: God's goodness is laid up for them (Ps. 31: 19); they shall not want (Ps. 34:9); God's salvation is nigh them (Ps. 85:9); God's lovingkindness or mercy is great toward them, and He has pity upon them (Ps. 103:11, 13); God takes pleasure in them (Ps. 147:11); and they are happy (Prov. 28:14).

But when men do not fear God:

1. Restraint is taken away, and the door is opened to all kinds of injustice and moral corruption (Rom. 1:18-32).
2. They commit transgressions against God; they live in rebellion to God (Ps. 36:1; 34:11-16).
3. They sink into cesspools of sin (Rom. 3:9-18).
4. They cause others to be wary of them, to not trust them, to fear for their lives among them (Gen. 20:11 and the context).

"A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master: if then I am a father, where is my honor? and if I am a master, where is my fear?" (Mal. 1:6). Do you give honor to Him whose child you profess to be? Do you show reverence for Him whose servant you declare you are?

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