

God's Attitude Toward Us

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, I hope you remember Proverbs 14, 2. We looked at that last luncheon. We're not going to look at it again, but I wanted you to remember.
- It said, He whose walk is upright fears the Lord, but he whose ways are devious despises him. So fear or despising.
- Those are attitude words. Those are heart-feeling words. Those are heart-posture words for the Lord. And we're either respecting him or fearing him, despising him.
- We're always having some sort of attitude towards the Lord, and we live out of that attitude. Today, what I want to see, though, is that that is not just one way.
- It's not just about my attitude toward the Lord, but God is always reacting and having a heart attitude toward me.
- [1 : 0 7] He's feeling a way toward me and what I'm doing. Now, if you could turn in your Bibles to Proverbs 15.
- We're going to be looking at two Proverbs. They're back-to-back, 15, verse 8 and 9. And it talks about, these two Proverbs, talk about the Lord's attitude towards people, towards us.
- And just as much as fear and despising have attitudinal aspects, there are heart feelings towards God, our heart's posture towards God.
- These two Proverbs show us God having an attitude toward us. Some scholars have read the book of Proverbs, and they've thought that Proverbs is giving us an insight into the world.
- It's showing us how the world works. But they said, you know, it's not really what it looks like to have a personal relationship with God.
- [2 : 1 8] So they say, you know, there's other Old Testament books, the central thing of Genesis and Exodus and all the books of Moses and the Old Covenant is this relationship with God.
- And it's this personal covenant relationship that God has with Israel. But the book of Proverbs is different. It's not just about God's relationship with Israel.
- It's universal. It's not about God so much or relating to God so much. It's more about knowing the natural order. And what they would say is, you know, you can pretty much be wise in the ways the Proverbs is talking about without even knowing about God or caring about God.
- They said, you know, the Egyptians had wisdom. Job and his three friends were not Israelites. They were from east, from the east. They were originally probably from somewhere in Edom.
- You know, there's other people that knew things. Knew things about wisdom. Well, is that true? You know, it's good that you care about God, but you don't have to know him.

[3 : 33] You don't have to be connected to him. It doesn't matter your heart posture towards him. As long as you're really smart and you see how the world works, then you'll get along just fine. Is that true? Well, I hope you can see from these two Proverbs, and I hope you can see from 14.2 that we looked at last month, that we are always dealing personally with God.

We're always either fearing him or despising him. And what I'm saying today is that's not just a one-way thing. God is always having a relationship with us.

So, 15, verse 8 and 9. I hope you can see what I'm talking about in these back-to-back Proverbs. The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.

The Lord detests the way of the wicked, but he loves those who pursue righteousness. Now, two times you see the central character in these two Proverbs is the Lord.

It's capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D. That's Yahweh, the covenant God of Israel. It's the God who saves Israel. The Lord who heard Israel crying in Egypt, wailing in their misery, and he had pity on them.

[4 : 50] He heard their sad cries, and he's moved to pity, and he sets out to save his people, to redeem them. And he does that by destroying their enemies.

This is the God who said to Israel, oh, that they would listen to me. The Lord didn't just want, he wanted their hearts. He wanted them to listen to him and think about what he said and believe him and obey him.

Proverbs is not just about some impersonal order of just nature, capital N. It's just, you know, the way things are. I've said this again and again in the study of Proverbs.

Wisdom is understanding the fabric of reality and living in harmony with it. But Proverbs' first and most important point is that there is someone at the center of reality.

There is someone at the center of the fabric of reality. He is the ultimate reality because reality exists because he made it to exist.

[6 : 02] Reality is consistent and dependable. So the sun keeps on rising and setting, and what comes up must go down, and all of those sorts of natural things.

It happens because God is sovereign and he upholds it. It's not one way one time and another way the next day. It's that way because he doesn't change.

His purposes don't change. He's not fickle. Reality is the way it is because the Lord is the way it is. And that's why Proverbs is able to say on the whole, if you're wise, you'll be blessed.

If you're foolish, you're going to be cursed. It's going to go well for you if you're wise. It's not going to go well for you if you're foolish because our all-wise God in his wisdom made the world to work exactly this way.

So at the center of reality, right at the center of everything, is the Lord who cares about his people. More than that, who cares about people, who's interested in what they do.

[7 : 13] It matters to him. And what Proverbs is saying is you cannot be wise and miss him. You cannot be wise and be unconcerned about what he's feeling or thinking or acting towards you.

For from him and through him and to him are all things. He's at the center. We are always having personal relationship and dealings with him.

Whether we realize it or not. And so wisdom sees and knows and understands God who is in relationship with me.

That's what it means to understand the fabric of reality and then live in harmony with it. It's to see and know God and live in harmony with him. More than that, wisdom sees Jesus Christ, who's the image of the invisible God.

And does he have anything to do with reality? Well, he's the firstborn over all creation. That means he's the heir of all things. He, for by him all things were created. Things in heaven and on earth, all things were created by him and for him.

[8 : 26] And the point I was trying to make last month is you're doing something with God. And the point I'm going to try to make with Proverbs 15, 8 and 9 is the Lord is always doing something towards you.

It's reciprocal. It goes back and forth. You cannot live your life wisely without understanding that this is who our God is. This is how he's relating to me. And now I want to live in harmony with that.

So Proverbs 15. We've looked at 15, 8 and 9. The Lord detests. The word means abhors. It's the strongest sort of negative feeling.

It's just he's disgusted. He's appalled. It's abhorrent the sacrifice of the wicked. So the sacrifice is good. The fact that it's coming from the wicked says God hates it.

So clearly Proverbs 15, 8 and 9 are saying the Lord has feelings. He cares about what our heart is towards him. He's looking at my heart. He's looking at your heart.

[9 : 37] He's looking at more than your heart. So he's not just looking at my religious activities. You notice 15, 8. We're talking about religious things. Things that God commanded.

God commanded sacrifice and prayers. So here the wicked are. They're sacrificing. They go to the temple. They sacrifice their animal. It doesn't say there's any problem with it. It doesn't say this is not Malachi where they're offering the worthless animals.

No, they go to the temple. They sacrifice their animal. They're praying. But the Lord isn't just seeing what they did in the temple that morning or that evening.

The Lord doesn't just look at what we are doing here in the congregation and just our songs and are we listening well. He's looking for more than that.

You notice this in 15, 8. The Lord is looking at the whole rest of their lives. And he cares. He's not ambivalent at all towards what they're doing.

[10 : 38] He detests the sacrifice of the wicked. But the prayer of the upright, oh, it brings him pleasure. As strongly negative as detest and abhorrent is.

So this word, we need to fill it up with God isn't mildly pleased with the prayers of the upright. It brings him great pleasure. He's having a, he's reacting.

He has an attitude towards us. And so he's been caring and seeing what we did with the rest of our lives. He detests the sacrifice of the wicked. It's an abomination to him.

It's offensive to him. Amos 5. Amos is a wonderful book. Israel thought, hey, we're, we're doing all the right things.

We're doing all the right sacrifices. Amos begins with God judging all the nations around. And after he goes through six or seven nations, he lands right on Israel.

[11 : 43] Israel thought they were dodging the Lord's judgment and condemnation. But the worst judgment and condemnation came to Israel because they were God's people. They knew his word.

And then they weren't living to for it. So here in Amos, they're, they're sacrificing. And, and God uses the same language. The Lord here says, I hate, I despise your religious feasts.

I cannot stand your assemblies. Do you understand? God is not ambivalent to people, to what you are doing. Whether it's good or bad.

Even though you bring to me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs. I will not listen to the music of your harps.

But let justice roll on like a river of righteousness, like a never failing stream. He didn't want their sacrifices. He wanted them to live righteously and justly.

[12 : 45] What, what exactly is he talking about earlier in the same chapter? Why is God so filled with hatred at these sacrifices? He says, you oppress the righteous. Not even being righteous yourself.

You see someone righteous and you oppress them. You take bribes and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts. You trample on the poor and force them to give you grain. And so they don't care about the poor the rest of the week.

They only care about themselves. He says, you do everything to make your life better. You plant lush vineyards and then drink the wine. You, you build the stone houses and you live in them. But you know, it's like, let the poor eat cake.

Who cares about them? And then the Lord says, you come to sacrifice. And I hate it. God cares.

God feels. God reacts. He isn't ambivalent to me in my life or to you in your life. But the prayer of the upright pleases him.

[13 : 48] Brings him pleasure. It's almost too much to believe. But this is what the Bible teaches. This is what we need to know if we're going to be wise.

That. I can bring pleasure to the heart of God. It says he. He. He loves those. Who pursues righteousness.

He detests the way of the wicked, but he loves those who pursue righteousness. He isn't shrugging his shoulders when you come to pray. He isn't just whatever they're doing, what they're supposed to.

And so that's whatever. Whatever. He. He. Is pleased. So there you are pursuing righteousness.

Are you pursuing righteousness? Is that something that's in front of you? And you're running hard after it. And so you're thoughtfully living an upright life.

[14 : 54] You're thinking, how can I please the Lord? Or you're thinking about your sin and you're confessing it and repenting of it. And you're fighting against it. And you're praying, Lord, let no sin rule over me.

Please give me freedom from this sin. Then Proverbs says, you need to know this. You need to know this. If this is your life, that you wake up and you're pursuing righteousness.

You're pursuing justice. You're pursuing generosity. You need to know, Proverbs says, God loves you. He's pleased with you.

And we can't suck all the feeling out of that word, please. He sees it and he burns with pleasure. It's personal to him. And he takes personal joy.

You know, when one sinner repents, there's joy in heaven. I'm in the midst of the angels. And I believe that's talking about God's own joy at seeing someone repent.

[15 : 54] And the very same kind of joy when he sees you. When he sees you pursuing righteousness. As a parent, don't you love to see your children being wise and pursuing righteousness?

It brings you pleasure. Well, it does the same for our God. When he hears you. Praying for the needy. For the hurting.

When he sees you living in harmony with your brothers and sisters. There he pours out his blessing. He's pleased. So what do you need to know to live a wise life?

That you can please him. That's not a pipe dream. That's not impossible. That's not out of the question. You can please him. And it says here, those who love righteousness and who are the prayers of the upright, they do.

They do. You can please him and you do. Just, you know, I've looked through Bree's, Curtay's, GoFundMe thing.

[17 : 07] And there's a lot of anonymous givers. And I just know that a lot of those are you. I don't know that, know that, but I know that.

And the Lord knows it for sure. And he saw it. And what Jesus says, what is given in secret, the Father will reward you. He's pleased with that. You've been praying for these sick people.

The prayer of the upright pleases him. I don't, the Bible never wants us to think that our prayers and our sacrifices just sort of land like a thud.

Like a ton of bricks on the door of heaven. And God doesn't care. It's like, this is what you're supposed to do. No, it brings him pleasure. He delights in the prayers of your people, of his people.

And so, what do you need to know to live a wise life? Again, you need to know that you can please him. God sees you imitating his wisdom, and he loves it.

[18 : 07] He sees you imitating his wisdom, and he loves it. Just as a father delights to see his child imitating his wisdom. So, to see my children making wise decisions.

To see my children working hard and using their money well. And that pleases me. There are few things better than that feeling of seeing your children and saying, look at what they're doing.

Well, I'm made in the image of God. You're made in the image of God. We feel that way because he feels that way. So, what is the very first proverb in 10.1?

It's a wise son brings joy to his father. And that's, of course, talking about human relationships. But I cannot help but thinking, that's talking about my relationship with God.

A wise son brings joy to his father. Another proverb says, be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart. Well, you say, but I failed.

[19 : 11] Or, I'm not wise. I'm such a sinner, and I've done so many foolish things. And it seems like I'll never learn. I know there are Christians, and there are Christians that sometimes we can just so beat ourselves up, we don't believe this message.

And you say, how can God ever be pleased with me? Thankfully, Proverbs 15, 8, and 9 point us to someone else too.

The fact that the Lord loves those who pursue righteousness and the prayers of the upright and their sacrifices please him, you know, that's why you're justified.

That's why you're saved. That's why you're right with God. And all your sins are fully forgiven. Because Jesus Christ is the ultimate wise man who pursued righteousness with whom God was well pleased.

And he made that pleasure known. He made it known verbally and vocally. He made it known most of all in the resurrection. Perfection. So, the Lord Jesus was the ultimate son who pursued righteousness and brought joy to his father.

[20 : 31] His sacrifice wasn't an abomination. It was the exact opposite. It was so perfect. It came from such a perfect man. The God man.

That it washed away our sin. It was effective to save a multitude without number. And their sins, no matter how vile and terrible they were, the sacrifice was able to wash them all away.

It was such a perfect sacrifice. It was attended with such submissive prayer. He said, nevertheless, let not my will be done, but your will be done.

And it was better than all of the sacrifices that were ever made. And God was pleased. God was pleased with his wise son who pursued salvation and did it so perfectly.

And so, we don't rest on our own righteousness and wisdom. Not ultimately. We rest ultimately on Christ. And so, I'm very imperfect. And I'm sure you could say amen to that.

[21 : 35] I'm very imperfect. You're very imperfect. I wander. You wander. We wander away in our pursuit of righteousness. And we lag. And we get tired. Or we get distracted. But never Jesus.

Not Jesus. Every day. He was up early. Praying prayers that pleased his father. Every day he was pursuing righteousness.

And God watched his whole life. And he saw his loving sacrifice. And he was so pleased that he forgave all of Christ's people of all their sins.

And he so moved with joy that he raised his son from the dead. To live with him forever. And I'm robed in that righteousness.

That righteousness that Christ pursued. He gained. And he achieved. And he gave it to us. And he's my wisdom. And his spirit is in us. And his spirit is in you.

[22 : 32] And that's why you can be like him. That's why you can live. Proverbs 15, 8, and 9. And please your father. And that's why you can pursue him.

And when you pursue righteousness. And when you pursue righteousness. He looks upon that. It looks upon you with a burning heart of. Oh, that is so good. I love them.

They delight me. It's because of Jesus. And because of Jesus. Proverbs 8, 9 is good news for you. Now, it's not only what someone did for you.

It is also now what you can do for God. Because his spirit lives in us. And so, this is what it means to live wisely. It's to realize I'm living my whole life before God.

I'm always having an attitude towards him. But it's not a one-way phone. It's going both ways. Now, the devil wants to say God doesn't care. You hear that lie all the time.

[23 : 31] Well, if there is a God. He wouldn't care about you. He wouldn't care about this world. And if he does care. He can't be pleased.

But that's not what wisdom says. That's not how wisdom thinks. That's not how Proverbs is teaching us. And training us to think. That's not seeing the Lord for who he is. That's not understanding reality for what it is.

Wisdom is seeing that this is the kind of God. That can be pleased. He is pleased. And then living in harmony with him. It's respecting him.

It's not despising him. And then. It's living. It's living for him. Jesus grew in stature.

And in wisdom. And in favor. With God and man. You see it there? As Jesus lived his whole life. It's like God's esteem for his son just grew.

[24 : 31] And his favor grew upon him. And. That's true of Jesus. Jesus. And so we want to trust him. And that's.

True of Jesus. And so we want to imitate him. So. Trust him. And then go. Do the same. Go do the same. And do the same. With the same kind of hope.

And understanding. That Jesus did it with. It wasn't for nothing. The father gave. Jesus his well done. Good and faithful servant. And he smiled upon him.

And he is doing the same. For his people. Even today. Let's pray. Our heavenly father. We do thank you. For the gospel.

And it is only through. Jesus Christ. That we are able to. Do anything. That pleases. You. Thank you that. Our. Good works.

[25 : 25] Even though they can be full of sin. And weakness. That Jesus comes. And takes all of that away. And then presents them to you. As perfect. And you are pleased.

And you see. Our. Our hearts. Intentions. And you see the things. That we wish we could do. If we only had the strength. To do it. And the opportunity.

To do it. And you are pleased. With those things. Even. Thank you that you are. This God of love. For us. Forgive us.

For thinking. Harshly. Of you. For thinking. And despising you. And thinking that. You were like us. Careless. And unconcerned.

But I. I do pray. I pray for all of us. I. I pray. That. As we live our life. We would be constantly. Remembering. And thinking of this. That.

[26 : 25] You do care. You are noticing. You are noticing. And. You do have an attitude. Toward us. So help us to embrace that. And live like it's true.

Help us to live for your pleasure. And. Give us strength to do that. Give us a mind. Mind. That is submitted to you.

And eager. And willing. And ready. To please you in all things. And may we enjoy the blessing. Of your smile upon us. I pray this in Jesus name.

Amen.