

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

# 199

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with fearing God. Solomon said: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7). As you know, children do not automatically fear the Lord, they have to be taught to do so. In fact, a newborn baby has only two fears (1) the fear of loud noises (2) the fear of falling. In the course of the average life we learn 5,000 other fears. Such fears are essential to our survival. Baby's are not afraid of spiders or snakes, hot stoves or speeding cars, germs or disease. We have to teach them to be afraid for without such knowledge they could not survive. Solomon taught his son the fear God and we should do the same. This is the "beginning" of knowledge.

Here is the way Paul described those who do not fear God: "**There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one. Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes.**" (Rom 3:10-18)

Sinners resent God for the same reason a robber resents a police officer. They don't want anyone to hold them responsible for breaking the law. The Psalmist said that the "fool" says in his heart there is no God (Ps. 14:1). There are at least 8 different Hebrew words translated as "fool" in the Bible. This particular word is "nabal" which refers to someone who is "shamelessly immoral". It's not hard to connect the dots. A robber does not rob someone if he thinks the police are watching. So when a person is shamelessly immoral he is saying in his heart that no one is watching. If the immoral person thought God was watching he might not be immoral. Atheist Thomas Nagel said it like this: "*I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I am right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that.*"

The American Kennel club reported May 19, 2015 that the average annual cost of caring for a dog is \$3,085. There is nothing wrong with this for the Bible teaches that a righteous man cares for the needs of his animal (Prov. 12:10). There is something wrong, however, with treating children like a dog. Our children not only need physical care, they also need spiritual care. A child is a three fold being with a "spirit", "soul" and "body" (1 Thess. 5:23) If we do not teach our children to fear God we are treating them like a dog.

John Adams served as President of the United States from 1797 – 1801. As President he wrote to the Massachusetts Militia on Oct. 11, 1798 - "*Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other*". This truth ought to be obvious. If a man does not fear God placing his hand on the Bible and swearing to tell the truth means

nothing. That's why when Liberal, Missouri was populated by unbelievers it was said that for \$10 you could hire someone to swear to anything.

Christopher Hitchens was a militant atheist who wrote the book the best selling book "God is not Great". He was said to have hated Mother Teresa, yet felt that organized religion was the main source of hatred in the world. He had a troubled childhood. His mother died in Athens in 1973 in a suicide pact with her lover Timothy Brian, who was a defrocked clergyman. She apparently had two abortions but for some reason spared Christopher. Wikipedia describes him as bisexual during his youth with a life long addiction to alcohol. Hitchens died of cancer Dec. 15, 2011 at the age of 62. In the last days of his life he admitted that his heavy smoking and drinking contributed to his poor health but still didn't regret it. He told Charlie Rose that it was impossible for him to imagine having life without going to those parties, without having those late nights, without that second bottle. As the twice married father of three he wrote: "My life is my writing . . . my children come later". Wise King Solomon said that to fear God and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man (Eccl. 12:13). Apparently Christopher Hitchens died without doing his duty.

Please note that the fear of the Lord is the "beginning" of knowledge. The wisdom we get from God enables us to avoid the snares of the devil and the self destructive actions of the ungodly. The thief on the cross waited until the last minute to come to his senses. He chided his unbelieving friend and said: "Don't you fear God?" Then he turned to Jesus and said: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Lk. 23:39 – 43). Before thinking "better late than never" consider that this man wouldn't have been a criminal on a cross if he had only feared God in the days of his youth (Eccl. 12:1).

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce