

Proverbs Week #147 (14:2)

*The one who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD, but the one who is perverted in his ways despises him.
(Proverbs 14.2 NET)*

To fear the LORD or not to fear the LORD, that is the question. In reality, our verse today tells us that one who lives a life of uprightness fears the LORD but one who is crooked in their way despises Him. As we have observed before, the wisdom found in the book of Proverbs usually only gives us two choices. What type of person are you? Before you answer, let's first consider what it means to despise someone and how God thinks about this.

In order to better understand what it means to despise, I want to look at three different parts of the life of King David. The same Hebrew word (בִּזָּה) is used in all three of these passages and will give us a good picture of what it means to despise. First, we will look at the story of David and Goliath. Next, we will see what God says about David taking the wife of Uriah as his own. Finally, we will look at a few verses in Psalm 51 to see how a humble and repentant King David cried out to God.

*David took his staff in his hand, picked out five smooth stones from the stream, placed them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag, took his sling in hand, and approached the Philistine. The Philistine kept coming closer to David, with his shield bearer walking in front of him. When the Philistine looked carefully at David, he **despised him**, for he was only a ruddy and handsome boy. The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you are coming after me with sticks?" Then the Philistine cursed David by his gods. The Philistine said to David, "Come here to me, so I can give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the wild animals of the field!" But David replied to the Philistine, "You are coming against me with sword and spear and javelin. But I am coming against you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel's armies, whom you have defied! (1 Samuel 17.38–45 NET)*

In this first story, Goliath despises David. Goliath is a giant and the champion of the Philistines. He looks at David and sees some puny, insignificant boy. In effect he is saying, "You've got to be kidding me! Is this the best you can do? This little man is nothing! I will crush him like a bug." The first idea we learn then is that to despise something is to say to it, "Get away from me."

*Nathan said to David...thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. Why have **you despised the word of the LORD**, to do what is evil in his sight? ...Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because **you have despised me** and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' (2 Samuel 12.7–10 ESV)*

In this second part of David's life, David despises the word of the LORD and the LORD. Although David was given many great things from God and God would have given him even more, David ignored God's word (you shall not murder and you shall not commit adultery) and chose his own way. When we push God away we usually replace Him with something else.

*Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, **you will not despise**. (Psalms 51.14–17 ESV)*

The final part of our lesson comes when we understand what it means to be forgiven. When we realize that we have despised God and pushed Him away we need to repent. We need to change our way of relating to God. David prayed to God asking Him to restore him from the guilt of the great sin he had committed. He humbled himself and asked God to deliver him and to open his mouth so that he could praise Him. Those who have learned what it means to fear the LORD also know what it means to be forgiven and come to know that God does not despise their prayers, worship, and way of life.