

Psalm 111 is classified as an Individual Hymn of Thanksgiving, a psalm type in which the singer gives thanks for God's goodness in delivering him/her from various life-threatening situations such as illness, oppression, or enemy attack.

Psalm 111 is an acrostic psalm. Each verse is arranged according to the Hebrew alphabet. Except for the opening line of "Praise the Lord" (Hallelujah), each of the 22 lines of Psalm 111 begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

"The great art used in the composure of this and some other psalms serves both to set forth their excellence and for the help of memory." (John Trapp)

Many commentators note the connection between Psalms 111 and 112. James Montgomery Boice observed, "The two psalms are an obviously matched pair. The first is an acrostic poem about God; the second is an acrostic poem about the godly man."

יִרְאֵתִי חֲכָמָה. יִרְאֵת יְהוָה -- שְׂכָל טוֹב. לְכָל-עֲשִׂיהֶם; תְּהִלָּתוֹ. עֲמֻדָּת לְעֶד.	10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do thereafter; {N} His praise endureth for ever. {P}
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ESV

NKJV

¹⁰ ^eThe fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have ^fa good understanding.
His ^gpraise endures forever!

¹⁰ ^kThe fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments*.
His praise endures forever.

- a. **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom:** Recognizing the greatness of God's works, one should appropriately **fear** Him. God should be regarded with respect, reverence, and awe. This proper attitude of the creature toward the Creator is **the beginning of wisdom**. Wisdom cannot advance further until this starting point is established.
- b. **A good understanding have all those who do His commandments:** Taking into account the greatness of God's works, one should obey God — that is, **do His commandments**. A life of obedience reveals that one has a **good understanding** of the greatness of God's works.
- c. **His praise endures forever:** Taking into account the greatness of God's works, one should **praise** Him and never stop praising Him. The angels surrounding God's throne see His greatness and the greatness of His works, and they never stop praising Him (Revelation 4:8).

The word "fear" (yara') appears in the Hebrew Bible as a synonym for "love" (Deuteronomy 10:12); "cling to" (Deuteronomy 10:20); and "serve" (Deuteronomy 6:13; Joshua 24:14). At its root, the word denotes obedience to the divine will. The Hebrew word for "fear" is powerful in meaning, but it has more to do with feelings of awesomeness. It is more about being in the presence of the holy other with cautious reverence than it is about the sweaty-palmed, shaking, gasping for breath kind of fear we often experience. When we enter into a relationship with the God of the Bible, it is a high calling. It is a dangerous, a reverent, a fearful relationship.