

THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Proverbs 1:1-7 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings. **The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.**

1 Kings 3:10-13 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

1 Kings 10:7-8 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.

SOLOMON STARTED WELL BUT ENDED BADLY – BECAUSE HE DID NOT LIVE OUT WITH HIS HEART WHAT HE KNEW WITH HIS HEAD!

1 Kings 11:4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

THE WISEST MAN IN THE WORLD BECAME THE BIGGEST FOOL!

Ecclesiastes 1:2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God, and keep his commandments:** for this is the whole duty of man.

Study Proverbs in categories, or it feels like random fortune cookies! ☺

Proverbs is **PRACTICAL** more than **THEOLOGICAL**.

Proverbs contains **PROBABILITIES** more than **PROMISES**.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 13:11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.

Proverbs contains **PRINCIPLES** more than **METHODS**.

Many people want methods – “just tell me what to do” – but the Bible gives us principles for which there may be **MANY** methods.

Proverbs 27:8 As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

- ONE PRINCIPLE = MANY METHODS
- PRINCIPLES IN CLOSED HAND, METHODS IN OPEN HAND
- FAITHFUL TO THE PRINCIPLE, FLEXIBLE WITH THE METHODS

So what we need is not just **INTELLIGENCE** – we need **WISDOM**. Intelligence can know many methods, but wisdom knows the principle! The fear (reverence) of the Lord is the beginning (foundation) of wisdom.

It is normal to want to be accepted and approved, but whose approval are you seeking? Our approval needs focus on different people/groups as we grow through life's phases; sometimes it flips and parents want their children's approval! This need runs in the background (like a noise you don't notice). When you make decisions that compromise who you are or what you believe for the sake of approval it is wrong. Being scared of people's rejection is a trap because it is exhausting and because you never really get what you need. **Needing someone's approval is like handing over the keys to the control of your life over to them.**

Proverbs 29:25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

The second half of that verse is the antidote to the first half - the approval of people is controlling, but the approval of God is freeing. It is God who controls the outcomes of your life, not those you seek approval from.

Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

Who have you subconsciously given control of your life to that you would never consciously give control to?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

In what areas of your life has God grown you in wisdom?
How did He do that?

In what areas of your life do you still need to grow in
wisdom? How could you get help?

Where is the fear of man evident in your life? What can you
do to replace that with the fear of the Lord?