

Get Smarter - Study 2

The Beginning of Wisdom

First things First

The problem with Proverbs is that on their own, they can't actually make a person wise. After all, even a parrot can be trained to recite a proverb. There's more to wisdom than simply mouthing clever statements. So where does real wisdom begin? What's its foundation? What's it built on? Proverbs – along with the rest of the Bible – is absolutely clear about this.

a) Read Proverbs 1:7. What do you think it means to have a 'fear of the Lord'?

b) According to Proverbs 2:5, what kind of knowledge is it that we need most?

c) Proverbs 9:10 makes the same point very clearly. It's really the 'theme verse' of the book, so write it out in full:

d) In what ways (if any) is a 'fear of the Lord' different to 'being scared of the Lord.'

e) What is there about God to be fearful of?

f) How does Proverbs describe those who refuse to 'fear God'? See the following verses: (*It might be efficient to answer question 'g' at the same time!)

- * 1:7
- * 1:29
- * 3:7
- * 10:27
- * 14:2
- * 14:16

g) What sort of behaviour and attitudes will flow from "fearing God"?

- * 3:7
- * 8:13
- * 14:2
- * 15:33

The Same Old Story

The call to 'fear God' is nothing new for the Israelites. In fact, the story of the Old Testament has been absolutely loaded with the same idea to this point.

h) Take a look back at the commands God gives in Leviticus 19:14 and 25:17. (This is part of the Law God gave to Israel through Moses.) What sort of immediate outcomes should there be from 'fearing God'?

i) According to Deuteronomy 6:24, what will the ongoing result be of 'fearing the Lord'?

j) Many years later, the Israelites are appointing a King in 1 Samuel 12:13-15. What will the outcome be for Israel if they stop 'fearing the Lord'?

k) According to Psalm 111:10, what practical connection is there between the fear of God, and the way a person lives?

Think it over:

Are you uncomfortable with the idea that we're meant to "fear God"? Why, or why not?

Like it or not, there's no doubt about the fact that the 'fear of God' is the foundation for right living in God's world. If you aren't prepared to reverently stand in awe of the one who designed the world we're living in, and if that doesn't shape the way you're living, then everything will eventually crack and come down. No matter how smart you are, no matter how impressive your expertise... if there's no 'fear of the Lord,' then ultimately there's no real wisdom!

Great Promises

For the people of Israel, living under the protection of God's promises in the 'promised land,' their whole destiny depended on living in the 'fear of the Lord'. More than that, the people of Israel longed for the day when all the nations would bow down in fear of the Lord, under the rule of Israel's "Messiah" – a King who would himself "delight in the fear of the Lord." (See Isaiah 11:1-3)

l) Read Luke 12:4-7. Why does Jesus say that God should be feared?

m) Can you explain the interplay between 'fearing' and 'not fearing' in those verses?

n) Read Acts 9:31. How is the first Christian church described?

Can you explain the interplay between 'fearing' and 'not fearing' offered by this verse?

Think it over...

o) Think back to the way Israelites were called to shape the way they treated one another by their over-riding 'fear of God.' What will the life of someone who lives in the same kind of 'fear' of Jesus Christ look like to an observer?

p) What are some of the ways you're tempted to fear things and people other than Jesus Christ?

Pray

Ask God to fill you with such reverent fear of Him and His Son that it will lead you to truly wise living.

For the coming week...

Remember...



This Saturday,
2:30-4pm at MPC.

Read...

Proverbs 10-16