

Wisdom Starts Here
Proverbs 1:7, 9:10
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Key Points:

1. What is wisdom?

- a. *“Wisdom is the art of living skillfully in whatever actual conditions we find ourselves.”—Eugene Peterson...“Wisdom is the right use of knowledge.”—Charles Spurgeon...“[Wisdom] is practical know-how in the hard realities of living with others before God in the world He has created.”—John Kitchen*
- b. Proverbs teaches us wisdom by piling up the synonyms about how we learn wisdom:
 - i. Instruction: can also be translated “discipline”; the idea is education through correction, receiving instruction about what we got wrong.
 - ii. Discernment: the ability to look at two things and see what God sees; to tell the difference between what is good and what is evil.
 - iii. Understanding: implies not only discernment, but the ability to understand why one option is God’s preference.
 - iv. Prudence: a Spirit-born cleverness that understands the trend of events, inherent dangers and avoids the pitfalls of life.
 - v. Knowledge: more than possessing information, it is a knowing that is deeply personal and experiential.
 - vi. Discretion: avoiding harm brought on by foolishly proceeding with ill-advised plans.
- c. There are different types of wisdom. You can be wise in the following areas but miss the one thing that is essential to true wisdom – the fear of the Lord.
 - i. Trade or Craft wisdom – a master craftsman who is skilled at making or fixing things with his/her hands.
 - ii. Observational wisdom – someone who is intellectually astute at observing how the world works.
 - iii. Common sense wisdom – someone who applies knowledge about human nature in a common sense way that allows a person to travel through life with a minimum of obstacles.

2. What is “the fear of the LORD?”

- a. *“Reverence mingled with honor and fear.” — John Calvin...“That affectionate reverence, by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father’s law.” —Charles Bridges... “Right recognition of God.” —Sinclair Ferguson*
- b. The fear of the LORD is a knowledge and respect of who God is in His infinite and holy being and then living appropriately before Him.

3. How are the two related?

- a. The fear of the LORD is the essential element of wisdom. Everything rests on this foundation. As Derek Kidner writes, it is the “*the first and controlling principle*” of wisdom.
- b. The wisdom that comes when we fear the LORD is a wisdom that rightly sees the world in light of a right recognition of God. It is wisdom that sees that God and his concerns and his words are of utmost importance.
- c. This wisdom is one that only God can give because it requires new spiritual life and vision.

Fellowship Starters:

1. Before this message, how would have understood “the fear of the LORD”? What did you learn that was new or helpful to you? How could this insight potentially impact your life?
2. If the fear of the Lord is a “right recognition of God”, how can you grow in knowing God’s character and His ways?
3. What fears in your life compete with one essential fear, the fear of the Lord (e.g. fear of spouse, kids or friends; fear of failure; fear of being unhappy or unfulfilled; fear of growing old, etc.)?
4. In what one area of your life can you grow in cultivating the fear of the Lord (e.g. consistently reading an obeying God’s, bringing the Lord into every aspect of your life, etc)?
5. Take time as a care group to pray, repenting as necessary, asking the Lord to help you cultivate and grow in the fear of the Lord.