

Fear Of The Lord - The Beginning Of Wisdom

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[0 : 00] Chapter 2, my son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding, yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

For the Lord gives wisdom from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding. And so on. Whenever we're going somewhere, particularly somewhere new, somewhere where we haven't been before, and again, if you're driving today, we're very fortunate with all that we have, whether it's in Google Maps or SatNav or TomTom or whatever.

But back in the day before that, if you were going anywhere, you obviously, well, it would be madness otherwise, you studied a road map. And you would look and you'd say, oh, well, this is the way, particularly if you, if you, I'm saying this about, if you've never been before, is I know that roads are signposted and such like, but we still need to have an idea to plan our journey and to know where we're going to go or how we're going to get where we're going to go.

And it's equally true in life because all of us are journeying through life. And it's absolute folly, really, for any person to go through life without looking at the map, the guide book that God has given to us.

God in his love and in his grace and his mercy has given us a book, this book, the Bible, to show us the way to go, to show us how to get. And it's the most extraordinary thing where so many people say, don't want to know, not interested, close that book, get rid of that book.

[1 : 57] Because really without this book, we don't know where to go. We're lost. And so many people are lost and they don't know that they're lost. And that's tragic. But this is the wonderful thing about the Bible.

God has given us this great book. Now, the study of the book, of course, is absolutely essential. And the Lord tells us that if we build our lives upon his word, then our way will be prospered and we will have good success.

Remember when Israel went across the Jordan. And the Lord said to Joshua, if you take my word and you lay it up in your heart, if you study it, if you meditate upon it, if this word is your guide, then you will make your way prosperous and you will have good success.

That was God's word for Israel. And you know, God doesn't change. And he's saying the same thing to us as well. If you want to go through life and you want to know the blessing of God, if you want to know the right way to go, study my word, meditate upon it, that the truth will become part and partial of your life.

Now, the book of Proverbs is a book that's full of precepts and commands. It's full of lots of little instructions, lots of little sayings.

[3 : 33] But at the very heart of it is the importance of applying our hearts towards wisdom, of finding wisdom. And, of course, we cannot find wisdom apart from God because God and wisdom are inseparably bound.

And I would say that this verse here, verse 7, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge or the beginning of wisdom is really the key verse to that whole book.

And, in fact, it's one of the key verses in the whole Bible, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge or of wisdom. Now, you'll often find that these words, knowledge and wisdom, are swapped around a lot.

And, again, these two words are inseparably bound because knowledge is coming to understand something and wisdom is applying that knowledge in life.

So that it's when you come to understand or when you come to lay hold upon what God is saying, that's knowledge. But wisdom is applying that knowledge in everyday situations, in all the different situations you meet and confront.

[4 : 51] And that's why knowledge and wisdom are always put back and forth and back and forth because they're the one. So remember that knowledge is understanding what the Word is saying and wisdom is applying that Word for our lives.

And so wisdom is something that we are called upon to pursue in our life. Now, in chapter 1, wisdom appears as a voice crying in the marketplace or a voice crying out.

It's a loud voice calling to all. But when we come to chapter 2, wisdom becomes more elusive so that you're going to have to search for it. It's not something that's just out there.

It's more elusive. You have to dig deep to find it. And, again, that is what God wants us to do in His Word. When we become Christians, it's not like everything is handed to us on a plate straight away and say, right, that's you.

You're the complete article. You know everything now that you need to know. That's you ready for heaven. There's work to be done. And there's so much to discover.

[6 : 03] And God wants us, above anything else, to come to know Him more and more and more. Today, that's what God wants of you. And He says, maybe He's saying to me or He's saying to you, I see you and you're all caught up about this and that and the next thing.

And you're pursuing this and you're pursuing that. What about pursuing me? What about coming to know me more and more? And, you know, sometimes when you're praying about something and you go to the Word after you're praying and you're saying to the Lord, Lord, please show me. Lord, what? Very often you will find that the Lord is speaking to you about His wisdom. And you will find that He's saying to you, what you need is wisdom. And again, the Bible tells us not to be wise in our own eyes.

And that is so true because so often we are. We make our decisions very often prayerlessly. And maybe after we make our decisions, we'll say to the Lord, Oh Lord, will you bless this?

Rather, we should be going to the Lord first and foremost and say, Lord, will you guide me in the way to go? Will you show me the right way to go? And that we build our lives on His Word.

[7 : 24] Now, as I said earlier on, we cannot really hope to have God's wisdom apart from Jesus Christ because Jesus is wisdom personified. He is the person of wisdom.

And so in order for us to understand or to lay hold upon God's wisdom, we first of all need to have the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Because Jesus isn't just the way, the truth, and the life. He is also the one who is all wise. Now, that's one of the wonderful things about the Bible is that God has revealed to us all that we need to know about the kind of God He is and about what is necessary for us in the way of salvation.

We can learn a lot about God just by studying nature and a lot of people do because the Bible tells us that it speaks, the creation speaks to us about His eternity, about His wisdom, about His power. Because when you look at this world and you say to yourself, what a mind planned this world. What a mind went into the majesty and glory of the greatness of it, but also everything, all the little minute things, just even the study of the human body.

[8 : 52] It's awesome. And you say to yourself, what a mind put this together. I'm not an engineer or a mechanic in any shape or form, but you know, sometimes when you go into some of the, I remember when, way back in the days in Arnish, when the rig was here, I was working there, sometimes out in the rig there, you'd go into a room that's kind of a control room and there was just this mass of dials and plugs and things and you'd see, you'd almost, your mind would begin to whirl and say, what a mind was able to work all this out and put all these things together.

And that's only just a tiny sight of, that's just a little glimpse into the greatness of the human mind. But God has made us, with the most marvelous aspect of his whole creation.

And so, we're brought to think about his wisdom, but also the power to bring into being what he has planned. And the fact that he's eternal, he's always been there.

However, the study of creation, while it reveals these things to us about God, it doesn't tell us about his mercy and his forgiveness and his love.

And his grace and so many other things about him. And so that is why we have God's word. And God has revealed so much about him, all his glorious attributes, so much about him in the word.

[10 : 31] And it's important for us to have our understanding of who God is built upon the word. Some people say, you know, you say to them, do you believe in God? Oh yeah, I believe in God.

But if you ask them, if you ask them a little further, who, what, how, can you tell me a wee bit about the God you believe in? And sometimes it's just a figment of their own imagination.

It's kind of a, just ideas they have. Because they've never, they haven't based their idea of God upon the word. and very often they will take God down to their own level.

And that is a great sin because that is one of the sins that God condemned amongst his people. You read about it in Psalm 50, Psalm 50, and one of the, the things that the Lord had against his people was they say, you think that I'm just like you.

And that I, I just turn a blind eye to this and to that. that my thinking is the same as your thinking.

And that my ways are the same as you. No, they're not. And we've also got to remember that God is so different, so other, so altogether glorious and majestic, way above who we are.

[11 : 49] And so it is vital that our understanding of who God is, that is key to our life. Because this world becomes meaningless apart from God.

And that's why so many people today are in despair. Because they've removed God out of the picture. You take God out of this picture and this world is nothing. What's the point? That's why so many people are saying, what's the point?

You get up, you live, you die. But when God is at the center of it, it has meaning to it. Packer, in his, in his wonderful book, Knowing God, and it's one of the, I don't know, it's been written many years ago, but it's one of the great, I believe, one of the great classics.

This is what he says. We are cruel to ourselves if we try and live in this world without knowing about the God whose world it is and runs it.

The world becomes a strange, mad, painful place. and life in it is disappointing and unpleasant for those who do not know about God.

[13 : 02] Disregard the study of God and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life, blindfold as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you.

This is the way to waste your life and lose your soul. Isn't that amazing? Disregarding the study of God and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life, blindfold as it were, with no sense of direction and no understanding of what surrounds you.

This is the way to waste your life and lose your soul. And that is why the pursuit of God, the importance of coming to know God is absolutely key to your life because apart from God, life is meaningless.

And so this is the great pursuit of life. Now, there are many pursuits in life. Some pursuits in life end up in complete disappointment. Many people have set their lives and they're pursuing certain things and when they find it they say, oh, this is not what I thought it was.

Other people never find what they're looking for. But you know, if you set your heart and your mind to come to know God in and through Jesus Christ, you will find him.

[14 : 32] The Lord gives his word to that. The Lord never says, spend your life searching for me and you'll never find me. He never, ever says that.

He says, seek and you will find. Search for me and you will find me. And so, while we might often think that the searching of God is a theological concept, we've always got to remember that it is completely practical in its outworking because it will affect our life.

It will change our life. It will direct our life. That's the wonder of it. And so, we see here that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, beginning of wisdom.

the fear of the Lord. Now, we know that fear means different things. Fear, as we know, sometimes can mean dread or terror.

And there's no doubt that those who die without the Lord Jesus Christ, they will experience what that fear, that dread of the Lord really is.

[15 : 41] But people will say, oh, you can't talk about God and terror in the one breath. Because surely, surely there's no terror attached to God. Well, the Apostle Paul, in his pushing for us to evangelize people, remember what he says, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.

The Apostle knew what that was, the terror of the Lord. It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, the Bible tells us. and so, attached to the whole area of evangelism, there has to be an aspect of what that is, to flee from the wrath to come.

And again, maybe through conviction of sin, we have a little understanding of what that terror is, or that where we're not right with God.

Can you put your mind back, if you're a Christian, and you don't always have to put your mind back, sometimes we can still know the pain of it, but you put your mind back to those days before you came to faith, and you had this sense of when you were being convicted by the Lord, when God was working in you, you had this awful sense of being lost, and you say, there was a sense of that sense of terror, it was awful.

The wonderful thing is that in Christ, that's gone, there's no peace. But the fear that is spoken of here is more a sense of reverence and awe that you would have in the presence of greatness, of royalty.

[17 : 21] And so this is a sense of submission, and of love, a sense of awe, and a sense of obedience. All these things are tied into the sense of fear.

Do you have the fear of God? It's the fear of man. You know, sometimes we're more afraid. We have the fear of man, the fear of the human, of other people, more than the fear of God.

Well, Jesus warns us against that. He said, don't fear man. Oh, yes, they can kill you. But after they kill you, they can't do anything to you. Fear God, because God has a power not only to kill you, but to cast you into hell as well.

Fear him. That's what Jesus says. And so there's this whole sense of the importance of fearing God. And walking in the fear of God is essential to the building up of the church.

Because back in Acts chapter, in the very early days, it tells us this. So the church, throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, had peace, and was built up, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, had multiplied.

[18 : 33] Notice that. Walking in the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. As the believers walk with the Lord, in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, the Lord is at work.

That's the kind of place that he wants to work in, where he wants to, where he'll build up. And so there's a real lesson for us there. So the great undertaking for us in this world, is to seek for this wisdom.

And now in verse, see in verse 4, it says, if you seek it like silver, that's in chapter 2, and search for it as hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord.

See, God's word is like a field, where there's buried treasure. Now, supposing you're living next door to a field, and somebody tells you, you know what?

See, that field is absolutely full of buried silver and buried treasure. What would you say? Would you say, oh, that's interesting.

[19 : 45] I'll think about it. Maybe one day I'll get a spade and go over and have a dig, but I can't be bothered just now. I'll leave it be. No, I don't think you'd be just getting a spade, you'd be hiring a JCB.

You're going, you know, I'm going to find that. It would become something, it would become a priority, an urgency, because you're saying to you, whoa, there's full of silver and buried treasure in there, I'm going to dig deep.

The Lord is saying the same thing. Here in my word, he said, it is full of riches, riches, all the wisdom that you need for your life, it's there.

Search, dig deep. That's really what the Lord is saying to us, search for it. And he says this knowledge and this wisdom is to be found, but we must search for it. And he tells us in verse five, that you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God, because for the Lord gives wisdom from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding.

So the Lord is saying to us, it's from my mouth, in other words, it's through my word, this is where you will find it. And it's a little wonder that our nation today is being strangled.

[20 : 59] You know, when you look around, we just seem to be going, we seem to be going round and round in circles. But you see, it hasn't happened completely, but by and large, the Bible's closed.

People aren't interested in God. This wisdom that God is saying is key to life can only be found in him. And people say, we don't want God, we don't need God.

God is outdated. It's relevant to today. Bible, get rid of the Bible. Well, get rid of the Bible, you get rid of life. Get rid of the Bible, you get rid of the pathway to prosperity and peace.

That's what God said to Israel. Follow my word, and I will make you prosperous, and I will give you good success. The reverse is equally true. If you close the book and turn away from it, then yes, you might have a success and all that for a while.

You just look at biblical history at the number of times that Israel turned their back on God. Yes, they were fine for a while. They were prosperous for a while. Things sometimes were rosier than ever, but inevitably, disaster came.

[22 : 13] It's always away. And you can look at people whose lives have been built up and are prospering. always look at the end of a life. Don't look at a life halfway through. It's how it is at the end.

And if we build it on anything other than the Lord, it's going to end up in disaster. And so, let us pray that we will always have the freedom to worship.

Let us pray that the word of God will always be key to our land. Pray that the word of God will not be eradicated and removed from our schools and places of public places.

Because it's key to life. People who are secularists will say it's fine, you can have your worship, you can just keep it to your shelf. We don't want any of this Christianity in the public place.

We don't want this God brought into the public place. God has to be brought into the public place.

It's his place. And not only do we do a great disservice to the Lord, we do also a great disservice to ourselves.

[23 : 23] And so, we are to seek this wisdom. And we're told that we are to treasure it up. In other words, that we are to not only listen to it, because that's what it tells us here.

It tells us all these things about making your ear attentive to wisdom. In other words, when you come under the word, whether it's in church or at home, listen to it. But don't only listen, be attentive, lay it up, get it right into your heart, into your life, so that it becomes part of your life.

Inclining the heart, willing to understand what it is saying. So we come to conclude, let us remember the man who wrote the Proverbs. This was Solomon. And do you remember when the Lord came to Solomon, Solomon was having this dream.

The Lord came and he said to Solomon, ask what you want. If the Lord came to you and said, ask me for whatever you want, how would you answer it? Well, remember how Solomon asked me.

He says, you know, you remember he was taking over after his father David, this great man. He felt just the way Joshua did taking over from Moses. Oh, he says, Lord, I'm but a child.

[24 : 38] I don't know how to go out and I don't know how to go in. I need wisdom. I need you to help me because I don't know how to govern right. The Lord gave him unprecedented wisdom.

But he also gave him what he didn't ask for. And it's absolutely essential that that's what we do as well. this will conclude. If you read in James chapter 3, it tells us the great difference between the wisdom of this world and the wisdom that is from above.

And remember it's the wisdom that is from above that we need. In James chapter 3, this we finish. Who is wise in understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.

But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above.

Notice what it is saying. Bitter jealousy and selfish ambition. You look at a political world today.

[25 : 59] Is that not kind of where it is? Bitter jealousy and selfish ambition. This is not the wisdom that comes from above. It is earthly. It is unspiritual.

It is demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

See the result. A harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. What a different world we could be living in if we were seeking the wisdom that is from above.

It is key to your life, key to my life, it is key to this nation's life. May we then seek this wisdom. Let us pray. Lord our God, we pray to bless us and we pray that we may indeed know you, that we might know you as the living and true God, the all-wise, the all-powerful God.

May your wisdom be part and partial of our life, to direct us, as your word says, be not wise in your own eyes, but to trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding.

[27 : 23] In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths. Take each one of us to our homes and safety and we pray to bless a cup of tea, coffee in the hall after.

Forgive us our sin. In Jesus' name we ask all. Amen. Let us conclude singing in Psalm 111. This is from the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 111, page 391.

Psalm 111. And from verse 6 to the end, the tune is Amazing Grace. He did the power of his works unto his people show, when he the heathen's heritage upon them did bestow.

His handy works are truth and right, all his commands are sure, and done in truth and uprightness they evermore endure. He sent redemption to his folk, his covenant foray.

He did command, holy his name, and reverent is always. Wisdom's beginning is God's fear, good understanding they have all that his commands fulfill, his praise endures foray.

[28 : 35] Verses 6 to the end, the tune is Amazing Grace, he did the power of his works. He did the power of his works, unto his people's show, when he the heathen's heritage upon them did bestow, his hand hand his hand he works are truth and right, all his commands are sure, and john in truth is

Cho Amen And redemption to his folk, his covenant for he did command only his name.

And reverend is always wisdom's beginning is God's fear.

Good understanding there of all that is, all man's fulfill his praise and use for aid.

Amen.