

The Conclusion of the Matter

Wisdom Starts and Ends with the Fear of the Lord

Crossroad – August 29, 2010

Proverbs 2:1-5 (NIV)

- 1 My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,**
- 2 turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding,**
- 3 and if you call out for insight
and cry aloud for understanding,**
- 4 and if you look for it as for silver
and search for it as for hidden treasure,**
- 5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.**

1) Wisdom begins and ends in Fear of the Lord

- Spent summer in books of wisdom
- Remember how Proverbs began:
- Proverbs 1:1-7 (NIV)
 - 1 The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:**
 - 2 for attaining wisdom and discipline;**
for understanding words of insight;
 - 3 for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life,**
doing what is right and just and fair;
 - 4 for giving prudence to the simple,**
knowledge and discretion to the young-
 - 5 let the wise listen and add to their learning,**
and let the discerning get guidance-
 - 6 for understanding proverbs and parables,**
the sayings and riddles of the wise.
 - 7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and discipline.**

- And Proverbs ends with the description of a noble woman, concluding with:
- Proverbs 31:28-31 (NIV)
 - 28 Her children arise and call her blessed;**
her husband also, and he praises her:
 - 29 "Many women do noble things,**
but you surpass them all."
 - 30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;**
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.
 - 31 Give her the reward she has earned,**
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.
- Psalms echoes that theme, two of many places are:
- Psalm 111:10 (NIV)
 - 10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;**
all who follow his precepts have good understanding.
To him belongs eternal praise.
- Psalm 19:7-11 (NIV)
 - 7 The law of the LORD is perfect,**
reviving the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
 - 8 The precepts of the LORD are right,**
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.
 - 9 The fear of the LORD is pure,**
enduring forever.
The ordinances of the LORD are sure
and altogether righteous.
 - 10 They are more precious than gold,**
than much pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the comb.
 - 11 By them is your servant warned;**
in keeping them there is great reward.

- Ecclesiastes begins with:
- **Ecclesiastes 1:12-14** (NIV)
I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. I devoted myself to study and to explore by wisdom all that is done under heaven. What a heavy burden God has laid on men! I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.
- Yet after exploring all of life, the teacher concludes:
- **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** (NIV)
*13 Now all has been heard;
here is the conclusion of the matter:
**Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the whole duty of man.**
14 For God will bring every deed into judgment,
including every hidden thing,
whether it is good or evil.*
- Even Job echos this theme, beginning with:
- **Job 1:1** (NIV)
¹ *In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. **This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.***
- Job, in the midst of suffering, notes:
- **Job 28:20-28** (NIV)
*20 "Where then does wisdom come from?
Where does understanding dwell?
21 It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing,
concealed even from the birds of the air.
22 Destruction and Death say,
'Only a rumor of it has reached our ears.'
23 God understands the way to it
and he alone knows where it dwells,
24 for he views the ends of the earth
and sees everything under the heavens.
25 When he established the force of the wind
and measured out the waters,
26 when he made a decree for the rain
and a path for the thunderstorm,*

*27 then he looked at wisdom and appraised it;
he confirmed it and tested it.*

*28 And he said to man,
'**The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom,
and to shun evil is understanding.**' "*

- And in the end, Job meets God and falls before Him:

- **Job 42:1-6** (NIV)
*1 Then Job replied to the LORD :
2 "I know that you can do all things;
no plan of yours can be thwarted.
3 You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without
knowledge?'
Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me to know.
4 "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.'
5 **My ears had heard of you
but now my eyes have seen you.**
6 **Therefore I despise myself
and repent in dust and ashes.**"*

- The only wisdom book that does not speak directly of the "Fear of the Lord" is Song of Songs, which instead focuses on the magnificent beauty of the Lord.

2) What does it mean to “Fear the Lord”

- Has something to do with Wisdom and Folly
- **Proverbs 9:10** (NIV)
*10 "The fear of the LORD is the **beginning of wisdom**, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*
- It involves discipline ... which some despise
- **Proverbs 1: 7** (NIV)
*7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, **but fools despise wisdom and discipline.***
- Needs to be sought after
- **Proverbs 2:1-5** (NIV)
*1 My son, if you **accept** my words and **store up** my commands within you,
2 **turning** your ear to wisdom and **applying** your heart to understanding,
3 and if you **call out** for insight and **cry aloud** for understanding,
4 and if you **look for** it as for silver and **search for** it as for hidden treasure,
5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.*
- Has to do with knowing, understanding God’s Word
- **Proverbs 2:5** (NIV)
*5 then you will **understand the fear of the LORD** and **find the knowledge of God.***
- Lead to / Requires Humility
- **Proverbs 15:33** (NIV)
*3 The fear of the LORD teaches a man wisdom, and **humility comes before honor.***
- Not just knowing, but obeying God’s Word
- **Proverbs 14:2** (NIV)
*2 He whose **walk is upright** fears the LORD, but he whose ways are devious despises him.*

- Includes hating evil
- **Proverbs 8:13** (NIV)
13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.
- Elsewhere in Scripture, 2 forms of the word Fear
 - Abject Terror, Dread of unrepentant sinner
- **Isaiah 8:12-15** (NIV)
*12 "Do not call conspiracy everything that these people call conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it.
13 **The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread,**
14 and he will be a sanctuary; but for both houses of Israel he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare.
15 Many of them will stumble; they will fall and be broken, they will be snared and captured."*
- Reverence and Awe leading to humility, repentance, obedience and worship
- **Psalms 40:1-3** (NIV)
*1 I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry.
2 He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.
3 He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. **Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD.***

- **Deuteronomy 10:12-13, 20-21**(NIV)
And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

Fear the LORD your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name. He is your praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes.

- **Psalm 147:11**(NIV)
11 the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.
 - Note from last week – saw “Love Others” part of Proverbs, here in Duet, and in the proverbs on Fearing the Lord we see clearly the “Love God” side of the commandments.

3) What are the results of Fearing / failing to Fear the Lord?

- Riches, honor, life
- **Proverbs 22:4** (NIV)
4 Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life.
- Strong confidence, refuge, fountain of life
- **Proverbs 14:26-27** (NIV)
*26 He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge.
27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.*

- Protection of evil, sleep secure
- **Proverbs 19:23**(NIV)
23 The fear of the LORD leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.
- Keeping from Evil
- **Proverbs 16:6** (NIV)
6 Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil.
- Not wise in own eyes - Healing and refreshment
- **Proverbs 3:7,8** (NIV)
*7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.
8 This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.*
- Fear of man is snare, Fear of Lord is safety
- **Proverbs 29:25** (NIV)
25 Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.
- Oswald Chambers, "The remarkable thing about fearing God is that, when you fear God, you fear nothing else; whereas, if you do not fear God, you fear everything else."
- Long life versus life shortened
- **Proverbs 10:27** (NIV)
27 The fear of the LORD adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.
- Harden heart – fall into calamity
- **Proverbs 28:14** (NIV)
14 Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.

- Not envy sinners ... a future and hope for you
- **Proverbs 23:17-18** (NIV)
 - 17 Do not let your heart envy sinners,
but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD.*
 - 18 There is surely a future hope for you,
and your hope will not be cut off.*
- If reject fear of the Lord – God not hear you!
- **Proverbs 1:28-29** (NIV)
 - 28 "Then they will call to me but I will not answer;
they will look for me but will not find me.*
 - 29 Since they hated knowledge
and did not choose to fear the LORD,*
- God sees, remembers, promises to deliver
- **Malachi 3:16-18** (NIV)
 - 16 Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and
the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was
written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD
and honored his name.*
 - 17 "They will be mine," says the LORD Almighty, "in the day when
I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in
compassion a man spares his son who serves him. 18 And you will
again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked,
between those who serve God and those who do not.*

4) What would it look like practically to Fear the Lord

- **Psalm 34: 1-22** (NIV)
 - 1 I will extol the LORD at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.*
 - 2 My soul will boast in the LORD;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.*
 - 3 Glorify the LORD with me;
let us exalt his name together.*
 - 4 I sought the LORD, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.*
 - 5 Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.*
 - 6 This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.*
 - 7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,
and he delivers them.*
 - 8 Taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.*
 - 9 Fear the LORD, you his saints,
for those who fear him lack nothing.*
 - 10 The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.*
 - 11 Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.*
 - 12 Whoever of you loves life
and desires to see many good days,*
 - 13 keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from speaking lies.*
 - 14 Turn from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.*
 - 15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous
and his ears are attentive to their cry;*
 - 16 the face of the LORD is against those who do evil,
to cut off the memory of them from the earth.*

17 The **righteous cry out**, and the **LORD hears them**;
he **delivers them** from all their troubles.

18 The **LORD is close to the brokenhearted**
and **saves** those who are crushed in spirit.

19 A **righteous man** may have **many troubles**,
but the **LORD delivers** him from them all;

20 **he protects** all his bones,
not one of them will be broken.

21 **Evil will slay the wicked**;
the foes of the righteous will be condemned.

22 **The LORD redeems his servants**;
no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.

- **Revelation 15:1-4** (NIV)

I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God's wrath is completed. And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb:

**"Great and marvelous are your deeds,
Lord God Almighty.**

**Just and true are your ways,
King of the ages.**

**Who will not fear you, O Lord,
and bring glory to your name?**

For you alone are holy.

**All nations will come
and worship before you,**

for your righteous acts have been revealed."

- **Revelation 20:11-15** (NIV)

*Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. **Earth and sky fled from his presence**, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and **books were opened**. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The **dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books**. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. **If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.***

- **One day we will all bow down before God** and be judged – at that time all **men everywhere will fear the Lord!**
- **The question is will we fear the Lord and bow down now**, today, repenting of our sin and accepting the atonement offered through Jesus Christ – or will we harden our heart, refuse to bow now, and be broken and cast out then?
- **For those that fear the Lord now he has promised wisdom** – the wisdom that comes from knowing Him and from obeying His Word
- **And He has promised eternal life to come**

- Revelation continues:

- **Revelation 21:1-4** (NIV)

*Then I saw **a new heaven and a new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "**Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.**"*