

The Fear Of The Lord Is The Beginning Of Wisdom

Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

What does it mean to “fear the Lord” and why is this fear the beginning of wisdom? What is “wisdom”? Who IS “the Holy One” and why is knowledge of Him “understanding”? Proverbs 9:10 raises these questions which are crucial to our growth as Christians.

Fear of the Lord

First, “fear of the Lord”. Why should we fear the Lord? Isn’t God love? Several points to ponder here:

- **God is the Creator. He is the Creator of ALL things. As such, He owes no one anything, all things are done according to His will, and nothing happens outside of his will. [Daniel 4:34-35]**
- **God is the Almighty and all power is His. He is in control of every aspect of all things, from the foundations of the earth to the weather, to the time that animals give birth, to the boundaries and habitations of man. The last 4 chapters in the book of Job show God’s power clearly [Job 38-41] and Acts 17:24-25 show that God is in control of man’s circumstances.**
- **God needs nothing. Because He is the Creator of all things, He owes nothing to anything. Again, Acts 17:24-25 shows this. God most certainly does not need a sinful, rebellious man. Man is God’s creation and as such, God can do with us however he pleases. We just saw this in Daniel 4 and we can see it again in Romans 9:15**
- **Man is created for God’s glory. Isaiah 43:7: “Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made”, clearly shows this.**
- **God may demand much of us. The greater the gift, the greater the demand [Luke 12: 43-48] and, as an example, [Hebrews 11:34-39]**

Since God is FAR above us and FAR greater than us, is our Creator who created us to do His will, and He can do with us as He will, including destroying us in a consuming fire, we should be fearful. We MUST recognize who He is and who we are NOT. We have absolutely no hope apart from God’s mercy upon us and fortunately, God is exceedingly and abundantly merciful. But, we should never take that mercy for granted. Never.

Wisdom

What, then is “wisdom”? To see wisdom, we need to look at Proverbs 3, 4, and 8. There is no clear definition in the Bible, but rather a series of examples. Wisdom is this, wisdom is that wisdom was here with the Lord... etc. From Webster’s 1828 dictionary:

WISDOM, n. s as z. [G. See Wise.]

- **The right use or exercise of knowledge; the choice of laudable ends,**

and of the best means to accomplish them.

5. In Scripture theology, wisdom is true religion; godliness; piety; the knowledge and fear of God, and sincere and uniform obedience to his commands.

Before our fear of the Lord and our correct assessment of ourselves, all our "wisdom" is actually "folly". Unless it is based on an understanding of God, "wisdom" can only act about a man. If the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, then it follows that before the fear of the Lord, there is no wisdom. And, indeed, Psalm 14:1 has this to say "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God". The logical flip of this statement is "The man who says in his heart "There is no God" is a fool". What kind of wisdom does a fool have? NONE!! That's why they are fools! Now some fools have a fear of "a god" or they might worship "gods", and that leads us straight to the second part of this Proverb: "The knowledge of the Holy One is understanding".

The Knowledge of the Holy One

You should immediately see that this is singular: the knowledge of THE Holy ONE. There is only 1 God and only He is Holy. Who is "God"? This is not a trivial question. Jesus said in Matthew 22:37 that the Greatest Commandment is to "Love the Lord God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind". If this is the Greatest Commandment, then what is the Greatest Transgression? To NOT do this. Thus, it is a HUGE transgression to not love the Lord God with all your mind. It is a HUGE transgression to NOT seek Him and to NOT study Him and to NOT try to come to a knowledge of Him. Who is God?

- **God is the first and chief being. Isaiah 44:6**
- **God is the Creator of all things: Genesis 1:1**
- **God needs nothing and therefore owes nothing to anyone: Acts 17:24-25 He is thus, Supreme. There is none greater and none higher.**
- **God is holy. We just saw that, but also Leviticus 19:2**
- **God is the Judge. And since He is holy and perfect, it follows that His justice is perfect. We have many, many examples of this from Genesis to Revelation.**
- **God is sovereign. Again, Daniel 4.**
- **God is eternal. Deuteronomy 33:27.**
- **God is Love (1 John 4:8) but God is also a consuming fire Hebrews 12:29**

We can understand God better if we understand man better. In contrast to the above, man is NONE of these things!

- **Man is not the chief and first being because God is!**
- **Man created nothing because God created all.**
- **Man needs everything, including his very breath.**
- **Man is not holy. He is sinful, born and conceived in iniquity.**
- **Man is not just and is not the final Judge. He is ruled by his passions and lusts.**

- **Man is not sovereign. He is helpless and is a slave to sin (Romans 5:6).**
- **Man is not eternal. He is mortal and his days are like grass (Psalm 103:15). He knows not his own time (Ecclesiastes 9:12), he is like a fish in a snare.**
- **Man does not naturally love his neighbor and he is consumed by the fire.**

From these things, we can begin to build a knowledge of God and from this knowledge comes understanding. We understand who God is and we understand who we are. We should understand the vast chasm that lies between God and us. We should understand that we are helpless to bridge this chasm and that unless it is bridged, we will remain separated from God for eternity. We should understand that we need God for everything and unless this separation is closed, we will be nothing. Thru a knowledge of God, we can understand His great mercy in calling us from darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). And from this, we can finally begin to get a small weak grasp on the full extent of our salvation....if, indeed, we are saved. If we are not saved, we should understand the burning need to, as Peter says in Acts 2:40 "Be saved from this perverse generation". This is understanding, and it comes only thru fear of the Lord and an understanding of the Holy One.