

# LIVING WISELY

PROVERBS 1-9

## The Fear of the Lord

Proverbs 1:1-7

### God desires that we have his wisdom (1-4).

- *God desires that we understand his instruction and know his wisdom (2).*
- *God desires that we learn to act wisely, righteously, justly, and with equity (3).*
- *God desires that we grow in spiritual maturity through godly knowledge (4).*

In 1 Kings 3:1-15, Solomon asked the Lord for wisdom, and the Lord gave him wisdom like none who came before him or after him. The book of Proverbs begins with Solomon identifying himself and providing a clear purpose for the book. These writings are more than Solomon's words; they are the very words of the Living God, who inspired each word that Solomon wrote. They reveal the height of Solomon's godly wisdom, and the opening verses remind us that God desires that we have his wisdom! If we are supposed to imitate God in our lives, reflecting the glory of the Lord who created us, we need his wisdom for our lives. Thankfully, God desires that we have the very thing we need: Instruction and understanding in his truth that leads to wisdom in our lives. As such, Proverbs was given to us for some simple but profound reasons. First, God didn't leave us unable to know and understand. He's given us his instruction and revealed his wisdom. The Lord desires that we understand his instruction and know his wisdom. Second, God didn't leave us guessing about what godly living should look like. By grace, he gives us the capacity to learn and in grace he reveals to us who he is and what he's done in his wisdom, righteousness, justice, and equity. The Lord desires that we learn to act wisely, righteously, justly, and with equity. Third, God didn't leave us to be doomed to simple, worldly thinking and childish understanding. God gave us his Word, and God works in the hearts and minds of his people to grow them in his truth. God desires that we grow in spiritual maturity through godly knowledge. What a blessing to have a book that's purpose is to grow God's people in spiritual maturity to look and to live more like him!

1. Use the BlueLetterBible app to do word studies on the key words in verses 2-4, and then answer the following questions.
  - a. In verse 2, what is the first purpose in Solomon's desire to share godly wisdom? What does it mean to "know" and to "understand" something? Why is this important when it comes to God's Word? Do you have a testimony of coming to know/understand God's Word in a way that truly changed your understanding of something in life? Share, and discuss.
  - b. In verse 3, what is the second purpose in Solomon's desire to share godly wisdom? What does it mean to "receive instruction?" What's required for receiving instruction? In a broad sense, what does the instruction focus on? Is it practical? Is it theological? What is significant about these four things that are identified?
  - c. In verse 4, what is the third purpose in Solomon's desire to share godly wisdom? Who are the "simple?" What are the "youth?" What is given to these, and why is that lacking or needed? How has God given you these things as he's growing you in spiritual maturity?
2. In a general sense, how do verses 1-4 remind you and encourage you that God desires that you have his wisdom in your life? How are you pursuing God's desire for wisdom?



**God reminds us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (5-7).**

- *The wise who listen to the Lord will increase in learning and wisdom (5-6).*
- *The fool hates the instruction and wisdom of the Lord (7b).*

Verses 5 and 6 are a call to the wise. To all who want to live for the Lord and live in the wisdom of the Lord, the call is to “hear!” Listen to and hear the words of wisdom from the Lord, which call for those who hear to increase in learning and wisdom. The purpose of the Lord’s call is to increase the Lord’s people in their knowledge of God and in their understanding of his Word. Through that learning and understanding, the very guidance and direction of the Lord is given to his people for daily decisions and every work and word. The wise who listen to the Lord will increase in learning and wisdom, and this is God’s desire in the lives of his people. On the opposite end of the wise are the fools. Fools are identified by one simple, shared characteristic: They “despise wisdom and instruction.” Unlike the wise, the foolish lack God’s wisdom because they reject God’s instruction. They would rather stay in the dark, comfortable in their sin and idolatry, than to turn to the light, repenting of their sin and worshiping the Lord alone. These two groups – the wise and the foolish - are the two main groups there are in the world. This only thing separates them: The fear of the Lord! This is why the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. It’s impossible to hear, to be instructed, to understand, and to apply the Word of God with a heart of pride and arrogance before the Lord. A proper posture before the King is required, and the only right posture before the King of kings is one that is humbled and submitted in reverent awe and fear and worship before the Lord! God is so gracious to give us this wisdom that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

1. Use the BlueLetterBible app to do word studies on the key words in verses 5-7, and then answer the following questions.
  - a. In verses 5-6, what does Solomon invite the wise to do? What must you do to increase in learning? Why do the wise need guidance?
  - b. In verse 7b, what does Solomon say about the foolish? Why is wisdom and instruction connected? Why does the fool hate these things?
2. What is the “fear of the Lord?” Take time to use the BlueLetterBible app to look up cross-references related to the “fear of the Lord.” How is this phrase used in Scripture, and what things – or responses – are associated with a godly fear of the Lord in these related verses?
3. Do you have the “fear of the Lord” that’s essential to knowing God’s wisdom? This is where wise living starts. Share the gospel in your group, and offer the opportunity for anyone to repent and believe in Jesus!