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People definitely value education. Time and time again we’ve been told that education is the way to get ahead. Learning things is the way you improve your life. Our nation demands that children go to grade school and high school. Parents urge their children to go to tech school or college. Employers encourage their workers to pursue continuing education. Keep on learning, keep on growing in your acquisition of knowledge. You could say that our nation is continually getting smarter and smarter.

But are we getting wiser? Knowledge is knowing stuff. Wisdom is knowing when and how to apply knowledge. In chapter 8 and 9 of Proverbs, wisdom is pictured as a woman. She wants to give her blessings and understanding to everyone. She continues to invite and to teach what wisdom is all about. God makes it very clear that wisdom is one of the best things anyone can have.

In today’s lesson we have a picture of “**A WISE MAN.**” A wise man is someone who is humble, who seeks the Lord and knows what life is all about. Come with me today and let God instruct us on wisdom.

### ***Part One: Is humble***

Not everyone is wise. I think we can all agree with that. The writer in today’s text holds up a simple picture. There’s a mocker and a wise man. Now, a mocker isn’t someone who just makes fun of you once in a while. A mocker is someone who is arrogant, who claims to know everything, who doesn’t think he needs to learn anything. In our context, a mocker is an unbeliever. He feels he doesn’t need to listen to the Lord. He’s the boss of his life. If you tell him he’s sinning, he’ll retaliate. As verse 8 says “***Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you.***” His hatred of God’s law will transfer to you. A mocker is definitely arrogant, full of sinful pride.

Now, compare that with a wise man. A wise man is humble, willing to listen and learn. A wise man is someone who knows he doesn’t know everything. A wise man is someone who is willing to be corrected. He appreciates being warned, doesn’t he? A wise man is someone who is willing to grow in his wisdom and in his learning. “***Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.***” And in this context, this wise man is a believer. See the pairing of wise with righteous? When it comes to matters of faith, of living our lives for the Lord, a wise person knows that they don’t know it all. A wise person is humble.

We all know people who think that they learned all they needed to know in catechism class. “Yeah, I’ve got the basics. Jesus is my Savior. I’m going to heaven when I die because of what He did. I don’t need to know anything else.” Such people bounce through life, crashing from disappointment to trouble to disaster. Why? Because they didn’t want to learn. They were arrogant mockers, unwilling to listen to the Lord and grow in wisdom.

Do you want to be wise? Do you want to understand how God is ruling this world? Do you want to integrate your faith into your life? How does this sound? You can be a settled, content Christian, serenely sailing through life. How? By being humble, realizing you don’t know everything and being willing to be taught by God.

Now, that’s the beginning, humility. But that humility opens the door to the most important part of wisdom.

### ***Part Two: Seeks the Lord***

“***The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.***” This passage is the centerpiece of the book of Proverbs. It’s where everything begins and ends. The fear of the Lord.

Now, fearing God is not just being afraid of Him. Oh, it’s much, much more than that. Certainly, being afraid is part of it. We fear His anger over sin. We fear His ability to destroy sin in hell. We fear His holiness and justice when it comes to the sins of this world. But fearing the Lord also encompasses His loving power. Fearing the Lord means regarding Him with awe, amazement and praise. Fearing the Lord

means recognizing He is so much more than we are. He has so much more love, so much more kindness, so much more forgiveness and mercy and grace than we can ever imagine. Fearing the Lord means respecting, cherishing and valuing Him and His Word. Perhaps one word that can sum up the fear of the Lord is “treasuring” or valuing above all things.

The wise person, a believer, sees the power of God not as a threat, but as a comfort. A wise person, a believer, knows that God will use His power for your benefit. It is God’s will that we end up in paradise, and everything that He does or allows to happen is for our good. And we treasure that, don’t we?

What we treasure, we spend time on. If we treasure our family, we’ll carve out time for vacations. We’ll go to their sporting events. We’ll talk with them at the kitchen table and give them hugs. We’ll put down our book or mute the TV when they ask us questions. We’ll go on dates with our spouse and ask them how their day went. Why? Because we’re interested in them. We treasure them. What we treasure, we spend time on.

If we treasure the Lord, it will show in our lives. We’ll spend time seeking answers to our questions. Questions like this: “What is He thinking? What pleases Him? What does He want us to do with the time He has given us? How can we integrate our faith in our lives if we don’t know what’s on His mind?”

A wise person, a believing Christian, seeks the Lord in life. The more we learn about God, the more the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see how it all fits together. The more we learn about God, the more comfort and peace we experience. ***“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”*** The more we learn about God, the more we know what life is all about.

### ***Part Three: Knows what life is all about***

It’s not about money. It’s not about living your best life. It’s not about building up your retirement fund so you can travel the world. Life isn’t about personal enjoyment. It’s not about dying with the most toys, or leaving a legacy so that people will praise you when you’re gone. It’s all about the Lord.

And when we have that kind of wisdom, knowing what to do and when to do it, then life starts to make sense. It becomes easier, in a spiritual way. Here’s what I mean. You’ve been diagnosed with a disease. Or, your neighbor is gossiping about you or you’ve lost your job. These things happen, not because God is punishing you, but because sin is in the world. He’s allowing these things to happen so you can trust Him more.

Or, we look at the events of our world. Nations are sniping at each other. Politicians are attacking and lying about their opponents constantly. Some companies are gouging their customers. People are trying to take advantage of the system. Rather than moan and complain, the wise man, the believer, understands that God is allowing these things to happen as a warning to unbelievers and to us that the Last Day is coming.

The truths of God, which the wise persons seeks with all their heart, guides the believer’s life. We understand that God is in control. We understand that God has a plan for this world. That’s wisdom, isn’t it? We don’t have the answers to all the problems of this world, but God does. We trust Him. Such wisdom will reward us here and hereafter.

When we focus on God and His Word, understanding He is in control, our blood pressure will go down because we know all things are in His hands. We’ll worry less about our futures, about the success of our plans. He’ll do what is best for our lives. We can trust Him. We’ll spend less time trying to figure out what to do with our time and treasures, because He’s given us a blueprint to follow in life. It’s right there in His Word. That’s the knowledge that God wants us to have.

But knowledge isn’t enough. We need wisdom. How to use and when to use the knowledge that God has given to us. As we study the Word of God, may the Holy Spirit craft us all into wise people, people who are humble, who seek the Lord and who know what life is all about.

AMEN