

Proverbs Week #115 (12:1)

“The one who loves discipline loves knowledge, but the one who hates reproof is stupid.” Proverbs 12:1

The last word of our verse is generally a word that I consider a “bad” word. When my girls were young this was a word we did not use in our home. While it can be a hurtful word, it can also be a very useful word used to declare what something is. In this case the proverb uses this word to describe “one who hates reproof.” The Hebrew translated “stupid” is the word בָּעֵר (ba-ar) which is derived from בְּעִיר, (b’ir) the word for “beast, cattle.” This verse is not picking on cows. It’s not saying that cows are dumb. It is making a comparison between mankind and the animals. God fashioned man in His own image. Our creator made us different than the animals. When we hate reproof we, in effect, nullify the difference that God has created and act as senseless, unintelligent animals.

To Learn Wisdom and Instruction: Mankind, in a state of sinfulness, rejects what God desires and resists Him in thought and deed. God’s grace transforms us both instantly and over time.

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age” Titus 2:11-12

God desires to teach us and as our Father and Shepherd He is intimately aware of what we need. He may not always give us what we want but He will always give us what is good for us.

To Receive Moral Instruction: Our Shepherd not only desires us to receive His instructions but He Himself is our example. Yeshua is God in the flesh and at the same time He was fully man. He learned and grew. In one sense, He did something that no one else could have done. At the same time, His obedience is to be the source of salvation for all who hear Him. Are you listening? Remember the English word obey and hear are the same in Hebrew. We are to be a people who hear effectively just as Yeshua did.

“Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him...” Hebrews 5:8,9

What type of people must we be to receive what God desires to give? In regard to wisdom and true faith we must be a people who are humble before God. Our attitude makes a difference to God.

“But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.” Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” James 4:6-8

To Impart Shrewdness or Moral Skills: What kind of people must we be to be used of God to impart these truths to others? I would suggest at least two maxims we must live by: 1) We have to “get the log out” and 2) To correct others we must be gentle and consider our own service to God.

“Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? “Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? “You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.” Matt 7:3–5

“Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the Torah of the Messiah.” Gal 6:1–2

To Discern Wise Counsel: How do we know the difference between attitudes of pride or humility? What tools has God given for us to use to examine our own lives? From this one verse in Proverbs, we will know what kind of people we are by how we react to correction. We might complain, “I don’t accept correction because everyone who tries to correct me has problems of their own.” Does that sound like a good reason to you? Be careful when you think this way. If it feels bad when we are corrected we will want to reduce the bad feelings. Be careful how you choose to “fix” those bad feelings. Grow and mature in how you respond to correction. Love discipline. Is that a hard statement to accept?