

Proverbs Week #138 (13:9-10)

"The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out. Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice." (Proverbs 13:9–10)

We have studied the theme of light and darkness earlier in the book of Proverbs. That study focused on the difference between the path of light and the way of darkness.

"But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day. The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble." (Proverbs 4:18–19 ESV)

If these lessons are to build skills in our lives (make us wiser), how do we hear them and allow them to change the ways we think and live. First, I think we need to recognize that God is the one who is trying to teach us. It isn't always easy to hear God. Too often our hearts and minds are filled with noise that distracts us from taking to heart the things God is trying to communicate. In the parable of the sower these distractions were called weeds and they choked out the good fruit that the word of God might otherwise have produced. The second thing is related to the first; God desires to lead us. Our Messiah said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:11b) God does not teach us just to make us smarter or more intelligent, He desires to guide us and shepherd us in this life. We were never created to live in isolation from our Creator.

Too often we think we have everything figured out. When we become wise in our own eyes (Prov 26:12) we lose something very important. We lose our confidence with God. James teaches us that God resists the proud. Our verses today contrast those who are willing to listen to counsel or seek advice with those who are not willing. Those who refuse experience strife (sometimes causing it) in their relationships. Humility is needed both in those who have advice to give and with those who need the advice.

Let me end this lesson with three things that we can do that will help to keep us humble and walking in the paths of light.

1. **Thank God:** We should continue to praise and thank our God. We can praise Him by how we think and what we say. We can praise Him by singing songs to Him.

"Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!" (Psalms 97:11–12 ESV)

2. **Remember Him:** In all our ways we should think of the God who is our Creator and remember what He has promised. In other words, we should cultivate a life of faithfulness.

"Do not fret because of evildoers, be not envious toward wrongdoers. For they will wither quickly like the grass and fade like the green herb. Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday." (Psalms 37:1–6 NAS95)

3. **Submit to Him:** Our submission should be first and foremost to God. If you are in a bad place in your life, stop fighting Him and His desire for you. He is a loving Shepherd who seeks the good of all His sheep. If you need to repent (take off the goat suit -- the deeds that are not what God wants) and clothe yourself with the Messiah.

"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. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you." (James 4:7–10 NAS95)