

## Proverbs Week #84 (9:10-12)

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*“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by me your days will be multiplied, and years of life will be added to you. If you are wise, you are wise for yourself, and if you scoff, you alone will bear it.” Proverbs 9:10-12*

Biblical wisdom needs to be understood in its correct context. We might want to ask, “What are the boundaries of any given proverb?” A statement such as “If you are wise, you are wise for yourself...” needs to be understood and one needs to discern the limits of the proverb. It might be helpful to think of it this way, “Do proverbs promise too much?” Proverbs need to be understood before they can be applied.

In today’s verses, we revisit a theme that started our study. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.” The parallel thought in this opening verse tells us the “true knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” It is not surprising when Yeshua was tempted that Satan sought to corrupt the Messiah’s understanding of God. Satan tempted Yeshua and Yeshua responded by reaffirming God’s Word, not putting God to the test, and worshiping God alone. All of our understanding in the book of Proverbs and study of its wisdom must be submitted to the whole of God’s revelation. It will require devotion and effort as well as trusting in God to provide.

**Learn:** We learn in these verses that wisdom benefits us individually. All of us must live out our relationship with our Maker on a one-to-one basis. While God commands us many things that require relationships to fulfill, we each must still account for our own lives before God. Wisdom teaches us that things that are good for us are good for us. It further teaches that things that are bad for us are bad for us. Now that may seem obvious, but why is it that we do not always know how to tell the difference?

**Discern:** As we learn from Wisdom our ability to fully know what God desires will increase. In Psalm 32:9 we learn “do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding.” We are to trust that God will be faithful in teaching and directing us. Our “job” is to be good students. As we learn, we are to have a healthy view of what is good and bad in life. If we can learn to discern this kind of wisdom and with God’s help stay committed to choosing the right things, we will find that it will benefit us. I believe that is what this proverb is trying to tell us. Wisdom, when embraced, rewards us.

**Receive:** Likewise, if you refuse to receive this instruction, take it to heart, and make it a part of your life you can expect to bear the consequences. What exactly is a “scoffer?” If you met one, would you know that he or she was one? As I mentioned last week, it is often easier to see the wrong in people around you than to see the wrong in your own life. To receive Wisdom is to receive her instruction in your own life. Wisdom tells us that by Her one can expect a longer life. If you will accept Her teaching, the quality and quantity of your days will be increased. This statement should be understood proverbially and not as a promise. Does that make sense?

**Impart:** We have seen many examples in our lessons so far of a father teaching a son. If you will allow, I would like to speak from my heart for a moment. I am a grandfather. When I consider my children and grandchildren, I hope and plan for a life ruled by wisdom. As I look out at all the families and individuals that have gathered in this little room, I want us to know God for whom He truly is. The scripture we read every week and study together is a treasure and we should never take for granted the freedom we have to assemble for prayer, worship, and study. Far from scoffing, we want to acknowledge our faithful God and continue to seek to find His wisdom. We impart this best to our friends and family when each of us trusts in God and seeks to do those things that are pleasing in His eyes.

The wisdom from today’s verses teaches us that each of us must fear God. We must trust in His provisions and be thankful to Him. It is not enough for our friends to be wise. It is not enough just to be part of a community that is wise. Each of us must be humble before God and take part in His work of salvation in our individual lives.

Next week we will consider folly’s invitation and prepare further for the lessons that chapter ten and beyond will present to us. Are you preparing a place for the treasures that are yet to be discovered?