

## THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction (PROVERBS 1:7).*

**I**f we would be wise, we would fear the Lord and welcome wisdom and instruction first, before all else. The truth is many have forsaken the fear of God and replaced a holy God with a genial, grandfatherly God who winks at our sin. Fearing God has become simply awe of God. While awe of God is part of fearing him, there is also the genuine fear of displeasing our Father. This fear keeps us from sin and keeps us hungering for holiness. It keeps us from pride and self-satisfaction.

Yes, God's love is real, but his love never invalidates his holy nature. If we are to be his sons and daughters, we must start at the beginning of knowledge: fearing the Lord.

*Lord, teach me to fear you. Show me the way to wisdom and instruction. May the fear of you keep me safe from making wrong choices. May I not be a fool by living according to faulty earthly wisdom.*

**Today's Takeaway:** Fearing God comes first. All else of importance follows.

## CONSENT THOU NOT!

*My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not... My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path*  
(PROVERBS 1:10, 15).

**T**emptation comes in many ways. Sometimes through the people we know. Sometimes when we walk on the path with sinners who entice us to join them in disobeying God.

When enticed, it's through invitations that appeal to our flesh. When we act on these temptations, we fall. But as we rise from our stumble, do we learn anything? When sinners next entice us, do we fall again...or do we refrain our foot from their path? The answer to that question can determine the course of our lives. The mindset of the godly is to steer clear of the sinners' path. It leads to unhappiness in this life and a forfeit of the life to come.

Be sure to know who your true friends are—the ones who entice you to holiness. For our false “friends,” consent thou not.

*Father, there are two roads before me: the road of righteousness and the path of sinners. Help me always discern the difference. Keep my feet on the path that leads to life.*

**Today's Takeaway:** Choose the path of the righteous; avoid the avenue of sinners.

## HEEDING THE CRY OF WISDOM

*Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you (PROVERBS 1:20-23).*

**W**isdom, contrary to the perception of many, isn't hard to find. If we listen, we can hear her voice in the streets.

However, another voice cries out, vying for our attention. This voice is not in the streets but in our inner person, the language of fools, which spurns the wisdom of God.

The voice of wisdom carries a great reward. The inner fleshly voice's reward is slavery to our addictions and the destiny of fools. We choose which voice we listen to. And it isn't always the loudest voice.

*God, open my sometimes stubborn ears to hear the cry of wisdom.  
Close my ears to the wisdom of fools.*

**Today's Takeaway:** The voice of wisdom is calling out; I must listen for it. To do so, I must shut out the other worldly voice clamoring for my attention.

## THE FATE OF THOSE WHO HATE KNOWLEDGE

*For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices (PROVERBS 1:29-31).*

Solomon warns us against turning away from godly knowledge and not choosing the fear of the Lord as our guide in life. To refuse God's counsel, to despise the reproof of the Lord will result in eating the fruit of our own way. We shall become sick with the filling of our own devices.

The opposite is true too. When we choose to fear the Lord, we will be filled with the fruit of God's blessing. There is no question as to which choice we must make daily.

*Father, I have often tasted the bitter fruit of choosing to go my own way. I repent from all my past foolishness and commit to living according to your perfect counsel. Help me sow seeds that will bring forth an abundant crop of blessings.*

**Today's Takeaway:** I will live so as to enjoy the fruit of God's blessing.

## HARKEN UNTO ME!

*Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil* (PROVERBS 1:33).

**M**any today are consumed with fear. They even conjure up scenarios that will never happen and become fearful of the “what-ifs” of life. But there is a better way. When we harken unto God, we shall dwell safely and enjoy the quietness that comes from fearing no evil.

Every Christian is equipped with all that’s necessary to overcome the evil that pursues them. We need only to harken to God through his Word.

To harken simply means to listen and obey. God’s calming voice knows no fear of evil. So will we if we harken and avail ourselves of God’s protective armor (see Ephesians 6:10-18). How is this done? As with all else in the Christian life, it is accomplished by faith.

*Lord, I am sometimes fearful—and needlessly so, as you promise that I will dwell safely as I listen and obey. Keep me quiet from the fear of real or imagined evil. Draw me toward only what is good. Draw me to yourself.*

**Today’s Takeaway:** I will harken to God and dwell safely, untouched by evil.

## A DAILY TREASURE HUNT

*My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God (PROVERBS 2:1-5).*

**W**e all want a good life. Here in the book of Proverbs, we learn the recipe for a good life—a life based not on the knowledge we receive from academia or the knowledge from social media or Hollywood. The source of our knowledge and our understanding of the fear of the Lord comes from receiving God’s words and hiding his commandments in our hearts. This is done by seeking as for silver and searching as for hidden treasure. Each day, then, should find us on a divine treasure hunt.

*God, there are many temptations to seek this world’s riches by pursuing earthly knowledge and worldly wisdom. I pray that today and always I might see clearly the difference and choose your way—the way of happiness.*

**Today’s Takeaway:** God’s treasure, though hidden, is always available to those who seek it.

## THE LORD GIVES WISDOM, KNOWLEDGE, AND UNDERSTANDING

*The LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly (PROVERBS 2:6-7).*

**W**e're told that God gives wisdom in both the Old Testament (here in the book of Proverbs) and in the New Testament (James 1:5). We must ask, and we must seek, but we need not try to earn it—for God's wisdom cannot be earned.

When we seek God's wisdom, he is pleased to impart not just wisdom but also knowledge and understanding. We must be pleased when we receive his wisdom, knowledge, and understanding—even when it doesn't comport with the world's philosophy.

A decision based on the wisdom of God's Word and on prayer will be the right decision.

*Father, thank you for freely giving knowledge and understanding. From your mouth comes wisdom. Incline my ears to hear.*

**Today's Takeaway:** God's wisdom is available to me today. I can know what to do in every circumstance. I can avoid many troubles by receiving God's wisdom.

## GOD, THE PRESERVER OF MY WAY

*He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints (PROVERBS 2:8).*

**T**o be a “saint” is to be one who is “called out.” All who belong to God, who have named Christ as Savior, are saints. And what does God do for his saints? Among many things is that God preserves the way of his saints. In short, his eyes are always upon his sons and daughters. He watches over them with the care of a devoted father. His thoughts are on us 24/7. He has planned our way; we must simply walk in it. What a privilege and stress-reducer!

Others may go their own way and reap the consequences of an unpreserved life, but the children of God rest easy in the knowledge that their every footstep is guided by the Lord. And every footstep brings us closer to our divine destiny.

*God, you are my Father, and I look to you to preserve my way.  
Guard me from seen and unseen distractions on my path.*

**Today’s Takeaway:** God is my Father and the preserver of my way. I need not fear.

## KEPT BY UNDERSTANDING

*When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee (PROVERBS 2:10-11).*

**W**hen we are the recipient of God's wisdom and when His knowledge is pleasant and never tiring, we shall be kept through wise discretion and a deep understanding of God's purpose for us. Without understanding, we are like a rudderless ship, cast about by unfriendly seas. It is through discretion and understanding that the rough seas are calmed.

Solomon says that wisdom must enter our hearts—it is not something we're born with. Many people either never seek wisdom or do not let it enter their hearts—even though an open heart is required for wisdom. A heart closed to wisdom results in many failures and ultimate loss.

Is your heart open for God's wisdom to enter in?

*God, may your wisdom enter my heart and guide me. May discretion preserve me. May understanding keep me. Steer me through rough waters when storms arise.*

**Today's Takeaway:** A heart full of divine wisdom is prepared for me by my heavenly Father, but my heart must be open to receive God's wisdom.

## THE PATHS OF DEATH AND LIFE

*To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life (PROVERBS 2:16-19).*

**I**n a book like Proverbs, containing practical advice on how to live, it is no surprise that warnings about sexual immorality would be found. Especially in our day and age, when temptations to lust and sexual activity outside of marriage are rampant. Solomon's warning is straightforward: The house of the sexually immoral leads to death.

Combating temptation is mandatory. No one must assume they're invincible or incapable of being wooed by the flattering tongue of the sexual tempter. Know well your triggers for sexual immorality and avoid them. Find life, not death.

*God, help me recognize and avoid my triggers for lust and sexual immorality—not just the horror of acting out sexually, but even the lustful thoughts that are unworthy of a child of God.*

**Today's Takeaway:** Though temptations abound, sexual sin—the way of death—is avoidable.

## THE LAND PREPARED FOR ME

*The upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it (PROVERBS 2:21).*

**F**or every believer, there is a promised land of safety and security. This land is reserved for those who would be reckoned as perfect for their trust in Christ's sacrifice for their sins.

The fate of the wicked is that they shall be uprooted, taken out of the land—and that to their own destruction.

God's will for us is to dwell in the promised land and remain in it. No wandering allowed. The door is still open for those who will deny themselves and live an upright life by placing their faith in Christ. That is the good news we proclaim to the lost and hurting.

*God, thank you for the land you have prepared for me. I want to be a permanent dweller in this land of safety and security—not just a visitor.*

**Today's Takeaway:** Because I am reckoned as upright by my faith in Christ, the land God has prepared for me is mine for the taking by faith. I will dwell in God's provision both now and in eternity.

## THE FATE OF THE WICKED

*But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it (PROVERBS 2:22).*

**T**he children of God who are righteous by faith in Christ have a divine inheritance. But the wicked, those who are cut off from their creator by their own choice, have no inheritance. Like Esau of old, they have forfeited their inheritance for another inheritance—not a bowl of gruel, but the loss of eternal life with Christ. Their tragedy is profound. So too is the inheritance of the righteous. We have riches to discover throughout our lives. The Christian life never grows old.

*God, the fate of the wicked—those lost for want of saving righteousness—is eternal separation from you. What a tragic loss! Father, give me a heart for the lost. Give me opportunities and then the right words to persuade others to abandon their wickedness and instead enjoy a blessed life here and eternal life with you.*

**Today's Takeaway:** The wicked shall have no place to dwell. God will uproot transgressors. But the righteous shall be housed with God.

## FOR LENGTH OF DAYS

*My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee* (PROVERBS 3:1-2).

**I**f we want to live to old age, we must prepare in our youth. If our youth has passed, it's not too late to sow the seeds for ripe final years. We must take care of our bodies and keep our brains active. But above and beyond that, we must live solidly for the Lord. His commandments must be in our hearts, and his law must be remembered. The older we get, the closer our glorious future in eternity is. That truth enables us to endure whatever hardship we face. God's peace is our stabilizer through every adversity. Sickness, the loss of a loved one, financial failure, national calamities—God is still there and always will be. We must not forfeit our peace as our years narrow. God is there.

*Lord, I desire more years on this earth. I remember your law. My heart keeps your commandments. Most of all, I pray that my remaining years will be fruitful for your kingdom.*

**Today's Takeaway:** I will remember God's law and live out his promises.

## FINDING FAVOR WITH GOD

*Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man (PROVERBS 3:3-4).*

**T**wo “musts” for finding favor with God and with man are the pursuit of and the keeping of mercy and truth. They are so important, and Solomon encourages us to keep them so close to us that it is as if they are bound to our necks and written on our hearts.

Each of us must likewise inscribe mercy and truth on our hearts and thus enjoy the favor of God and receive good understanding in the sight of God and man. To ignore mercy when we have the opportunity to show it or to choose falsehood over truth are acts in denial of God’s will. And if we will not show mercy, neither shall we receive it.

*Father, I desire favor from you. I want to live a life pleasing to you. I pray for your assistance in making mercy and truth a part of my life, writing them on the tables of my heart.*

**Today’s Takeaway:** So important are mercy and truth that God admonishes me to never forsake them by making them part of my very being.

## LEAN NOT!

*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding* (PROVERBS 3:5).

**O**h, how easy it is to lean on our own understanding! We do so by walking by sight, not by faith, by thinking things through without the counsel of God through his Word. But if we simply trust our Lord and submit to his understanding, acknowledging his leading, we will find our path directed by the One who knows our way far better than we do. Who would ever challenge the wisdom of God versus our own human wisdom? Only a fool would do so. Many are those who have learned through bitter experience that leaning (depending) on their own understanding was self-defeating.

The trust God requires is with all our hearts. There is no promise provided for partial trusting.

*Lord, leaning on my own understanding is easy, but it opens the door for trouble. I offer you my heart, Father, not just a portion. I surrender my own faulty understanding and instead trust in your guidance.*

**Today's Takeaway:** Do not trust or lean on myself. Lean instead on God.

## OUR GOD-DIRECTED PATH

*In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths*  
(PROVERBS 3:6).

**T**here is safety in the Lord. As we acknowledge him, we find security in every area of life. But the promise is to those who will in *all* their ways acknowledge him. We must allow him to guide us, which often causes us to diverge from our own path. Left to our own devices, our path is a sure dead end. His path is paved with blessings and leads to eternal life. There has never been a committed Christian who regretted acknowledging God in all his or her ways—and there never will be.

*Father, today I acknowledge you in all my ways. I trust your path as it's revealed to me one step at a time. Direct my path, Lord. Bring me to the places you have ordered for me. When I start to choose the wrong path, bring about circumstances or a leading from your Word that keeps me on the right path.*

**Today's Takeaway:** God will direct my path as I acknowledge him in all my ways. I set aside my own will to do God's will, in God's way.

## RENOUNCE OUR OWN WISDOM

*Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones* (PROVERBS 3:7-8).

**M**ost of us often consider ourselves wise. We wonder about the lack of wisdom we perceive in others. But we must ask ourselves if in so doing, we, too, are neglecting God's wisdom. If we fear God and depart from evil, we will find fullness of life, even extending to the health of our bodies.

Departing from evil may mean letting go of triggers that may seem harmless but can turn deadly. Leave no room in your life for any perceived evil. If left undealt with, it can spread like a cancer. And early detection of evil, like early detection of cancer, can be a lifesaver.

*Lord, I renounce my human wisdom and look to your Word to supply the daily wisdom I need. I depart from known evil in my life. Reveal to me any unknown evil I still harbor.*

**Today's Takeaway:** I will fear the Lord and depart from evil and thus find health in my body and soul.

## HE IS WORTHY OF THE FIRSTFRUITS

*Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine (PROVERBS 3:9-10).*

**W**oe to those who give to God from the leftovers of life. God lays claim to all we possess and asks us to affirm his ownership by giving him the first and the best of our gain. If we do, we will lack no good thing. God remembers his firstfruits givers and brings blessings to them. If we want to reap a harvest, we must be sowers and givers. Givers not just of money, as many people think. We must also be firstfruits givers of time, talents, energies, and all that God has given us. We must give back. But truth be told, we can never out-give or over-give to God.

*Father, you are the giver of all I have. Every gain has your fingerprints on it. Help me always not just to acknowledge your generosity but to honor you with the firstfruits of my gain.*

**Today's Takeaway:** God first. Always. In every respect, he has the firstfruits of my life.

## THE PLEASANT WAYS OF WISDOM

*[Wisdom's] ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her. The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew (PROVERBS 3:17-20).*

**L**est we think the ways of wisdom are hard to fathom and counter to common sense, God tells us that Lady Wisdom's ways are peaceful and pleasant. Even more, she is life to those who choose to follow her. If we would "lay hold" on her, we shall find the happiness that eludes many, since they search for her in the wrong places. True wisdom is found only in God.

As the great Scottish preacher John Knox observed, "Where [wisdom] guides, journeying is pleasant, where she points the way, all is peace."

*Father, happiness is not a goal but a by-product of laying hold of wisdom. So I set striving for happiness aside and today lay hold of wisdom.*

**Today's Takeaway:** Wisdom is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her.

## THE LORD, MY CONFIDENCE

*Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken* (PROVERBS 3:25-26).

**W**hen hard times arrive—either personally or nationally—we tend to succumb to sudden fear. We ask, “What shall we do? What will become of us? Will God help us?”

The answer is, of course, yes. God not only helps; he also becomes our confidence. But we must reject fear—whether sudden or prolonged. God alone is our confidence. He foresees every calamity with our name on it and has a divine resolution for all our troubles. If we need proof, we need only consider the final chapter of Job: “So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning” (Job 42:12).

*God, when trouble is upon me, I often default to fear. But with you as my confidence—and knowing the outcome of my situation is under your control—teach me to default to courage.*

**Today’s Takeaway:** Nothing can happen today or tomorrow that will prevent God from being my confidence.