

THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

YEAR: KNEEL / FOCUS: LIVING IN WISDOM / SERIES: PROVERBS

BIG TRUTH: THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

Proverbs 1:29-31; 3:7; 8:12-14; 10:27; 19:23; 23:17-18; 24:21-22; 28:14; Ecclesiastes 8:12

BIBLE VERSE: PROVERBS 9:10

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight."

BIG IDEAS

- Wisdom is more than knowledge and experience.
- Wisdom begins with seeing God with awe, wonder, and reverence.
- Wisdom begins as God becomes the center and pursuit of our lives.

BIBLE PASSAGE: PROVERBS 1:1-7; PSALM 111:10; ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14

KNEEL: LIVING IN WISDOM

The Kneel Year is an exploration of what it means to worship God with our all (Luke 10:26-28) and to use our influence to lead others to do the same. We know that as we pursue a life of worship, we will pursue a life of both wisdom and mission. Throughout this year we will study and pursue the wisdom of God through the book of Proverbs and the mission of God through the book of Acts, and we will learn how both of these things must inform and shape our influence as Jesus followers!

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know...

- What wisdom is.
- Why wisdom is worthy to be pursued.
- How to grow in wisdom.



Every student should feel...

- Love for God who gives all wisdom.
- Satisfied and secure in the wisdom of God.
- Responsible to use their influence to live for Jesus alone.



Every student should strive to...

- Read through the book of Proverbs one time each month.
- Memorize the Bible verse each week.
- Repent of the ways they have not pursued God and His wisdom.



Every student should want...

- To fear the Lord and keep His commandments.
- To live their lives in pursuit of true wisdom.
- To guard their heart from all impurity.

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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BIBLE VERSE: PROVERBS 9:10

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight."

To fear the Lord is to have a reverent awe of Him.

"The fear of the Lord..."

- When we fear the Lord, we have a reverent awe of Him. To be in awe of something or someone is to have a wonder and respect for that person or thing. This emotion also should involve a healthy dose of fearing Him as we fear our earthly parents.
- The Lord is the God of the universe and the Creator of all things. He is the Holy God and the only One to be worshiped and praised. He controls all things and deserves our respect. His holiness is the reason we should have a fear of Him. No one is like Him.

Awe of the Lord leads to humility and submission.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..."

- When we have a right fear of the Lord, we are humbled. In order to have a right fear of the Lord, we have to understand His holiness and His mightiness. When we grasp this, we are humbled because we understand our finiteness and how unholy we are.
- This realization of ourselves leads us to submit to Him because we understand that this is the only way and the right way. He is the Lord God and our only response to a holy God is submission. A fear of Him leads us to give our lives to Him and to humble ourselves before Him as His servants and children.

Humility and submission lead to wisdom.

"...and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight."

- When we humble ourselves and submit to the Lord, we gain a knowledge of the Lord. When we gain a knowledge of the Lord, we grow in wisdom. Wisdom is from the Lord and only found in knowing Him. He is the source of true wisdom and unless we seek to grow in our knowledge of Him, we cannot grow in wisdom.
- When we grow in our understanding and knowledge of Him, we will grow in wisdom. Humility and submission place us in a position to learn who God is and who we are. By learning these things, we grow spiritually. As we grow spiritually, we grow in the wisdom of the Lord.

THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

BIG IDEA #1: WISDOM IS MORE THAN KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE.¹

[THIS]

Many pursue wisdom in this life, but they do so through worldly and secular means. If we define wisdom in secular terms, it would be found in the heart of mankind and determined by our ever-changing culture. True wisdom is found by knowing God, and we can only know God by first understanding Him. The world defines wisdom as knowledge and life experience, but a life lived full of experiences and a mind full of knowledge doesn't result in true wisdom. This type of wisdom may seem good at the time, but it is not eternal, nor is it really true wisdom. Our entire lives can be lived in a pursuit of this type of wisdom, and we will have wasted our lives. The only true wisdom is found in a knowledge and fear of God. Proverbs 1:1-7 teaches us that true wisdom is found only when we are reconciled to God and can grow in our understanding and knowledge of Him.

[THEREFORE]

Give an example of how does the world's definition of wisdom change as the culture changes? What is the danger in this?

Ephesians 4:14-15 warns of the danger of following the world's wisdom because it is empty of true wisdom and knowledge. 1 Corinthians 3:19 shows us that the world has no wisdom to offer us. The danger in following the way of the world is that we are led astray.

[THIS]

True wisdom that is from above is more than a mind full of knowledge and a life full of experiences. It is a heart that is in awe of the one true Lord. It is a growing understanding of His supreme holiness and our great need for His grace and mercy. This type of wisdom doesn't depend upon a lifetime of experience or require tons of worldly knowledge. A person can obtain wisdom from above by humbling himself or herself before the Lord and seeking to know Him. It is the pursuit of Him that results in true wisdom. This type of wisdom is grounded in who God is and in His perfect holiness and righteousness. It does not depend upon anything other than His complete knowledge and understanding that is perfect in every way. When a person acquires this type of wisdom, they are receiving more than head knowledge and fun experiences.

[THEREFORE]

Read Proverbs 3:7. How does the world's idea of wisdom promote the idea that we can achieve wisdom apart from God?

In Proverbs 3:7 we see that we should not think of ourselves as wise; instead, we should seek God and pursue His wisdom. The world promotes the idea that wisdom is an individual thing, and we can each achieve it by our own abilities and in our own power.

What is the mistake in thinking that wisdom is gained through our experiences?

Proverbs 28:14 teaches us that when we fear the Lord, we are blessed. Proverbs 1:7 tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. This means that anyone at any point in their spiritual walk can gain wisdom when they have a right view and understanding of God. If we believe the lie that it requires great head knowledge of earthly things and lots of life experience, we will miss out on true wisdom because it is God who gives true wisdom. When we benefit from the wisdom of others, that wisdom is coming from the Lord. When we give wisdom, that wisdom is coming from the Lord.

1. Proverbs 1:7: Fearing God is where we find wisdom. It is here that we are humbled before Him and can learn who He is and how to obey Him.

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BIG IDEA #2: WISDOM BEGINS WITH SEEING GOD WITH AWE, WONDER, AND REVERENCE.²

[THIS]

God is a holy and righteous God. He is holy and worthy of all of our worship and praise. There is no one worthier. Proverbs 1:1-7 teaches us that wisdom is found in understanding this truth about God. This is the beginning of wisdom. What this means is that if one wants to be wise, he or she must begin from a place of knowing and seeing God for who He is. If we do not first understand that God is the most holy and supreme being, then we will never grow in wisdom. This is true because wisdom comes from Him, and if we are to learn from Him, we must know and acknowledge that He is higher and greater than any other being. This is seeing God with awe. When we see Him in His splendor and majesty, it will produce an awe in us that leads us to humble ourselves before Him and seek to know Him more. Knowing Him more leads to growing in wisdom.

[THEREFORE]

Why does God's holiness produce awe and wonder? How have you experienced this type of awe and wonder towards God?

There is nothing on earth like experiencing God's holiness. It produces praise in those who see Him in His splendor and majesty. Psalm 96:9, Exodus 15:11, and Revelation 4:8 show us the reaction that God's holiness produces in people. He is unique in His holiness, and this leads to an awe and wonder from mankind.

[THIS]

Seeing God in His splendor and majesty produce praise because we understand that He is perfectly holy and chooses to love us. This knowledge also produces a reverence in us towards Him because there is none like Him. When we understand who He is and that He is before all others and everything originates in Him, we revere Him and maintain a reverent posture toward Him. This is when we can gain wisdom because we have a right attitude and heart posture toward Him. We should hold Him in high esteem because He is the God of the universe and the Creator of everything. Not only that, He is the Savior of the world. Psalm 111:10 helps us see that in order to gain Godly wisdom, we must first see God with a reverent attitude. We must approach Him in awe and wonder because there is none like Him.

[THEREFORE]

Read Proverbs 24:21-22. What does an irreverent attitude look like? How might an irreverent attitude toward God hinder you from gaining true wisdom?

When we do not approach the Lord with a reverent attitude, we place ourselves at odds with Him. We live foolish lives because we cannot gain Godly wisdom when we are not approaching God with the right heart posture. In order to grow in wisdom, we must have a right fear of the Lord.

What does it look like for you to approach God in awe and wonder? How does this produce wisdom in your life?

Psalm 68:35, 33:8, and Hebrews 12:28 show us how to offer God praise when we hold Him in awe and wonder. When we approach Him this way, we are humble before Him and marvel at His majesty. This produces wisdom because it leads us to grow in our knowledge of Him and to seek Him in His Word, which is how we grow in our knowledge of who He is.

2. Psalm 111:10: Those who desire to gain wisdom will see God with reverent awe and wonder.

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BIG IDEA #3: WISDOM BEGINS AS GOD BECOMES THE CENTER AND PURSUIT OF OUR LIVES.³

[THIS]

In Proverbs 1:1-7, we see a picture of a person who is in pursuit of God. Throughout the book of Proverbs, wisdom is personified and seen as something to be pursued and attained. Because wisdom is personified, we can gather that to pursue wisdom is to pursue God because God is wisdom. In order to fully pursue God, He must be the center of our lives. He can't be someone we make time for or an afterthought. He must be the reason for our existence. In truth, His glory is the reason for our existence; therefore, He should be the center of our lives. When someone is the center of our lives, all that we do is about that person. The way we live, the way we spend our time and money, and how we perceive the world is centered around that person. Making God the center of our lives is not an easy thing because we are sinful and are born loving ourselves above all others. We naturally place ourselves at the center of our lives. When we experience saving faith, we must battle our old sin nature and place God at the center of our lives. When we do this, we are pursuing God and beginning to grow in our knowledge and understanding.

[THEREFORE]

How do your personal dreams and goals distract you from placing God at the center of your life?

Proverbs 1:29-31 warns of a life that doesn't center around a pursuit of God. When our personal dreams and goals keep us from making God the center of our lives, we are distracted from obeying His commands and we do not grow in wisdom.

[THIS]

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 teaches us that our purpose is to bring God glory. We bring God glory by pursuing Him and obeying His commands. We can pursue Him by pursuing His Word. When we grow in our understanding of His Word, we grow in our knowledge of Him. As we grow in our understanding and knowledge of Him, we are growing in wisdom because He is wisdom. Our understanding will lead to a life that seeks and desires to obey Him because our love for Him will deepen. The more we grow spiritually, the more we cast off the worldly things in our lives and put on Christlikeness. As we do this, we are growing more and more spiritually mature. As we grow spiritually mature, we are growing in Godly wisdom. First, we must begin this with a pursuit of God Himself because He is wisdom.

[THEREFORE]

Why does a pursuit of God result in a person gaining Godly wisdom? Is this a personal pursuit your life exhibits?

Because wisdom is personified in Scripture and tied to the believer's pursuit of God, a pursuit of God results in a believer gaining Godly wisdom. Psalm 119:2, 10, James 4:8, and Isaiah 55:6 teach us that those who seek God find Him. Our lives will reveal if we are pursuing Him or not because He makes Himself known to those who pursue Him.

What lies distract you from making God the center of your life?

Often, the idea of making God the center of our lives feels like too big of a sacrifice because we believe the lie that we will never be happy. Mark 8:35 tells us that if we truly want to live, we must give up our lives to follow Christ and when we do this, we will gain everything.

3. James 5:19-20: We are connected to other believers. God calls us to pursue others and to pray that God would call them from their sin to Himself.