

Review **"The Fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death."** Proverbs 14:27 (NIV).

Last time we discussed the importance of training our children:

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Ephes. 6:4 (NIV).

Training and instruction of the Lord involves several areas. Holy Fear of the Lord is a major part of that instruction. Most of the time this Holy Fear comes over a period of years, especially in the Christian home.¹ Children are taught by their God-fearing parents the reality of a holy God and the reality of their personal relationship with Him by not only their words but their lifestyle. When children transgress the law of the home as set down by the parents they should know that they have also transgressed the law of God. Children should be taught at an early age the importance of exercising 1 John 1:9 **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** This carthasis is important for the relationship between the parent and the child and his concept of his relationship with the Lord. The child needs to know that his actions affect his relationship with his parents. He needs to understand that although his parents love him unconditionally. He is, in part, responsible for the personal relationship with his parents. We need to teach our children the important principle that the offending child not only wrongs the parent or a brother or sister but that he has wronged the Lord. When David responded to Nathan's rebuke for his sin of murder and adultery his response was that he had sinned against a holy God.² Children need to be held accountable to a holy God. I sometimes wonder if grown men and women would have much less of a problem with accountability to their Lord if they had been trained as children that the Lord holds them accountable to their sins just as their parents hold them accountable for their disobedience.³ *End review.*

Jesus Christ, our Wisdom.

The major theme of Proverbs is the vast superiority of the wisdom of God. The secondary theme, however is just as important, perhaps more so is that the wisdom of God comes from a proper relationship with God. In fact, the personification of wisdom as either a man's mother, or spouse is thinly veiled - actually an Old Testament representation of Jesus Christ, himself. The relationship between Jesus Christ and the

¹ However, the Isaiah or Saul of Tarsus event can be a necessary means of the Lord confronting a man with his need for a personal relationship with the Lord. God knows exactly how to confront us in our sin.

² 2 Sam 12:7, 13; Psalm 51:4.

³ 1 Peter 1:17-19. If we call upon God as our Father for our needs, we should also know that he holds us accountable for our actions.

wisdom of God is so mutually inclusive that John, in his gospel, was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write; **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning."** John 1:1

This relationship is so intimate between the words of Christ (Wisdom in Proverbs) and the person himself that reading various portions of Proverbs forces the believer to realize that only an intimate relationship with the Logos can fulfil the call of "Wisdom" in Proverbs.

The Call of Christ, Our Wisdom.

1 Cor 1:24 **But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.** ³⁰
But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

The problem with wisdom that does not come from an intimate relationship with Christ and his word is that man becomes arrogant, "puffed up" thinking that he possesses a superior advantage with those around him.

1 Cor 8:1b **"...We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.** ² **The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know.**
³ **But the man who loves God is known by God.**

The problem is that man tends to think that what he knows already is in complete agreement with what pleases God. ***This problem can even extend into Christian thinking.*** All it takes for a believer to fall into the problem of found in verse 2 of this text is for him to walk out of fellowship with the Lord and human viewpoint takes over his thinking.

The call here is for man to get and stay in right relationship with Jehovah! There is no guarantee that a believer automatically thinks like God (has the mind of Christ⁴) - ***it is a divinely enabled mental process - not a process of a finely tuned moral mind.***

Human Viewpoint vs Divine Viewpoint.

Isaiah 55:6 **Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:** ⁷ **Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.** ⁸ **For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.**
⁹ **For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.**

⁴ 1 Cor 2:16b

Isa 55:6-9

The problem with the sinner and many nominal believers is that they think they can put the Lord in a compartment or a closet. That is, they can pray, go to church meetings, etc *at their convenience*. It's easy to adapt this attitude in such a prosperous economic situation such as our country, because there are frequently no "warning" signals that the Lord is displeased with us. **It's important to understand the call of wisdom (the Lord Jesus Christ) is now.**⁵

The word of God teaches in this text that man's thinking is so opposite, so wicked that there is no way he can think the way God thinks - even as a morally good man. **We need to seek him *and* his viewpoint.**

Human Viewpoint Characterized - Prov 7:6-27

Prov 7:24 **Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say.** ²⁵ **Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths.** ²⁶ **Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng.** ²⁷ **Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.**

Solomon had a thousand wives and mistresses. One lesson he learned however late in life was that wrong relationship with the Lord and following after the gods of his wives was a tragic error (make that sin). Throughout Proverbs Solomon makes a comparison between God's wisdom, characterized by a faithful spouse and human and satanic viewpoint characterized by the promiscuous woman. Here's Wisdom; (Prov 2:12) **"Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse,** ¹³ **who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways,"** and here's the promiscuous woman - human / satanic viewpoint; (Prov 2:16) **"It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words,** ¹⁷ **who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God."**

The issue of human viewpoint versus divine viewpoint (Wisdom) is clear -

Prov 9:10 **"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.** ¹¹ **For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life.** ¹² **If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer."** ¹³ **The woman Folly is loud; she is undisciplined and without knowledge.**

¹⁴ **She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city,**

¹⁵ **calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their**

⁵ Hebrews 3:15 As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." (NIV)

way.¹⁶ **"Let all who are simple come in here!" she says to those who lack judgment.**¹⁷ **"Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!"**¹⁸ **But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave.**

Jesus Christ, Our Wisdom - Prov 8:22-36

The crux of Wisdom is Jesus Christ. In this marvelous passage the pre-existent Christ is speaking to all men. This passage is not teaching that Christ had a beginning - it is however, showing how important it is to have a right relationship with him. It speaks of his incarnation (vs 23-25). Verse 30, 31 is the "John 3:16" of the Old Testament. Finally, Jesus strips the word picture aside to reveal himself in a remarkable invitation to all men - Prov 8:35 **For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the LORD.**³⁶ **But whoever fails to find me harms himself; all who hate me love death."**⁶

Look up the words of Jesus himself in the following passages; John 5:24, 39, 40; 6:68; 20:31. In the book of Proverbs, Wisdom gives life, in every area of our lives. Jesus applies this life-giving capacity to himself. Mere accumulation of "wisdom" does not give eternal life or prosperous life in any form. Knowing Jesus Christ in a personal relationship, however does.

1 COR 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

⁶ John 5:24, 39, 40; 14:6