



# WISDOM THAT WORKS

A Study in Proverbs

Feb 15 - Aug 15

# Wisdom That Works

Proverbs 1:1-7

“Let us beware of that unscriptural,  
unphilosophical sentimentalism  
which affirms that the heart may  
be all right when the head is all  
wrong.”

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

“Young gentlemen whose whiskers have not yet developed are authoritatively deciding that nothing can be decided, and dogmatically denouncing all dogmas. We meet them every day, and we notice that in proportion to their ignorance is their confidence in sneering at every holy thing.”

(Charles H. Spurgeon, Sermons on Proverbs)

Proverb: A short sentence of  
long experience.

“A proverb is the wit of one, and  
the wisdom of many.”

Lord John Russell (1850)

## Common Proverbs of Today

- Imperative (negative) - Don't beat a dead horse.
- Imperative (positive) - Look before you leap.
- Parallel phrases - Garbage in, garbage out.
- Rhetorical question - Is the Pope Catholic?
- Declarative sentence - Birds of a feather flock together.

- Synonymous Parallelism – 9:10
  - The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,  
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
- Antithetical Parallelism – 1:7
  - The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.
- Comparative Parallelism – 15:17
  - Better is a dish of vegetables where love is; Than a fattened ox served with hatred.

1 The proverbs of Solomon the son  
of David, king of Israel:

2 To know wisdom and instruction,  
To discern the sayings of  
understanding,

3 To receive instruction in wise  
behavior,  
Righteousness, justice and equity;

4 To give prudence to the naive,  
To the youth knowledge and  
discretion,

5 A wise man will hear and  
increase in learning,  
And a man of understanding will  
acquire wise counsel,

6 To understand a proverb and a  
figure,  
The words of the wise and their  
riddles.

7 The fear of the LORD is the  
beginning of knowledge;  
Fools despise wisdom and  
instruction.

The term יָרָא (yara') is the common word for fear in the OT and has a basic three-fold range of meanings:

- (1) “dread; terror” (Deut 1:29; Jonah 1:10),
- (2) “to stand in awe” (1 Kings 3:28),
- (3) “to revere; to respect” (Lev 19:3).
- With the Lord as the object, it captures the polar opposites of shrinking back in fear and drawing close in awe and adoration.

## Fear of the LORD

- Virtue
  - This is as pure as God Himself
  - Fear produces Awe
  - Training of the soul begins with the mind fixed on God
  - This fear will reveal God and renovate man
- Value

# Fear of the LORD

- Virtue
- Value
  - Beginning Point
  - Moral knowledge
  - Experiential NOT merely acknowledgement
  - Adam 'knew' Eve

“What the alphabet is to reading,  
notes to reading music, and  
numerals to mathematics, the fear  
of the LORD is to attaining the  
revealed knowledge of this book.”

James L. Crenshaw

7 The fear of the LORD is the  
beginning of knowledge;  
Fools despise wisdom and  
instruction.

# Folly of the Fool

- **Despise**
  - means to treat things of value with contempt, as if they were worthless
  - The classic example is Esau who despised his birthright and sold it for lentil stew (Gen 25:34)
  - Hold in lowest regard – contrasting to ‘fear’ or reverence!
- **Disregard**

## Folly of the Fool

- Despise
- Disregard
  - Later Arabic – ‘thick’
  - Not mentally deficient, morally rebellious
  - Intentional turning away –
  - Not neglected by God, us neglecting God!

“Having heard everything, I have reached this conclusion: Fear God and keep his commandments, because this is the whole duty of man.” Eccl 12:13

Wisdom is not an assembly of  
facts: the calendar page of  
March is NOT spring!

Man in reverential silence is not  
at the end of the journey –  
rather he is at the beginning!

## The Beginning of Wisdom

- Beginning does not just mean first – primary!
- Revealing God
  - How will I see God this week?
  - How will I show God this week?
- Renovating Man
  - How will I seek God’s wisdom?
  - How will I apply this wisdom?

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unphilosophical sentimentalism  
which affirms that the heart may  
be all right when the head is all  
wrong.”

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” 2 Cor 7:1



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