

Wisdom: Seeking and Finding
Proverbs 2:1-11
June 21, 2015

Introduction

How, as a Christian, do we get wisdom, the skill of godly living?

Before I answer this question, let me phrase another question: how do we get bread?¹ Some may say that we should just pray bread and trust that God will provide us with the bread. We glorify God the most when we trust Him completely to provide us with bread when we do nothing on our own efforts to earn bread. God is most glorified when He puts bread into our mouth from heaven. Proof?

Matthew 6:11 *Give us this day our daily bread.*

After all, Jesus tells us to pray this way. Many of us will not accept this kind of teaching. Some others will teach what Paul says in

2 Thessalonians 3:10 *For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.*

Some will say that praying is laziness, and we dishonor God. We must work to eat and not pray. Uncomfortable theology? Not quite right?

Both extremes are wrong. The first example is that we are lazy and treating God as a genie, and the second example is just as bad when we live life in arrogant independence of God.

How do we get bread? We must pray for our bread and then we must use our strengths and opportunities God provides and work for our bread. To answer our earlier question: How does a Christian get wisdom? As we have learned about bread, God does not put wisdom into our heads without us seeking Him and working it out ourselves. Here Solomon tells us how to get wisdom...if we listen.

I. The Commitment (1-4)

- For the young Christians (immature)
 - Solomon gives us 3 conditions
 - If—condition
 - 3 conditions that we must do in order to receive wisdom
 - If = decision we must make²
- Condition 1: Foundation

*1 My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,*

*2 turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding,*

- What we are to do

¹ Dan Phillips, *God's Wisdom in Proverbs* (The Woodlands: Kress, 2011), 107-108.

² Duane A. Garrett, *The New American Commentary*, vol. 14, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1993), 74.

- Accept his words
 - Idea of a student continually learning but never graduate
 - His words—God's words
- Store up his commands
 - Idea of hiding (actually translated this way in other places)

Exodus 2:2 *So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months.*

Psalms 119:11 *I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.*

- Hiding = place kept safe and not be lost
- His commands, under His authority
- Turn ears to wisdom
 - Pay close attention
 - Does not mean the fuzzy feelings one claim to get
- Apply heart to understanding
 - Working out God's word into our brain so that we can understand it
- Overall sense: I believe in God's word and I'm obeying it right now
- Condition 2: Prayer

3 *and if you call out for insight
and cry aloud for understanding,*

- Strong, urgent verbs (Not Grey Poupon requests)
 - Think Jacob

Genesis 32:24-26 *So Jacob was left alone, and a Man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the Man saw that He could not overpower him, He touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the Man. 26 Then the Man said, "Let Me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let You go unless You bless me."*

- Specific prayer requests
 - Discernment
 - Understanding
 - Both are grounded into the word of God
- Important
 - God does not speak to us in small voices in our or through feelings
 - God speaks to us through His word
- Condition 3: Study

4 *and if you look for it as for silver
and search for it as for hidden treasure,*

- Picture of a miner
 - Working and exhausting himself to gain something valuable
 - Hard and dirty work
- Gaining wisdom is dirty work
- Words Solomon uses are not spiritual but physical

- Problem: Too many in church seek sound bites and quick resolution without work

II. The Prize (5-8)

- If we as young Christians (and stagnant Christians) do what Solomon instructs us
 - Then, we have the prize!
- We will find what He gives us
- What will we find?

5 *then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.*

- Fear of YHWH
 - **Prov 1:7** says that this is the beginning
 - Yes, and it is also lifelong
 - Remember: fear of YHWH = faith in God
- Knowledge of God
 - Based on facts—based on good theology
 - It is also based on encountering God Himself
 - Those who deny the Bible, do not know God

1 John 1:1-3 *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The Life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.*

- Personal relationship with Christ can be proclaimed
 - This proclamation leads others to the Father and His Son, Lord Jesus Christ
- Finding wisdom

6 *For the LORD gives wisdom, and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

- From God Himself
- He is the source of our wisdom
- His revealed word is the only source of wisdom
- God does not bypass His written word to give us wisdom
- God's protection
 - God's store

7 *He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; (NKJV)
He is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,*

- God's shield

8 *for He guards the course of the just and protects the way of His faithful ones.*

III. The Transformation (9-11)

- The mature believer
 - When we study hard and pray
 - When we allow God to work in us
 - We will grow and mature to become like Him
 - Growth in believers is never a solo activity
- God imparts His protection in believers

9 Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path.

- Know and recognize what is good and evil
- Living day by day safely
- Ownership of wisdom

10 For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.

- You will own it and love it!
- You will increasingly glorify God and increasingly do what He wants
- You will increasingly enjoy His word—want to know more
- Protection from wisdom

11 Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you.

- You will do what is right more and more
- You will be able to do more things that is pleasing to God

Coram Deo

Too often people come to church to get 5 minute sound bites and good advice in how to live a good and happy life. This is a far cry from what Solomon is teaching his son. He tells us that if we want to grow closer to the Lord, we must take the tough task in studying His words and prayerfully cry out to God for wisdom. Obtaining wisdom and living in Fear of Yahweh is more than just Sundays and Wednesdays and 5 minute devotionals every day. Mature believers spend hours in the Word, learning everyday His truth to apply to their hearts. Solomon speaks the authority of God, hear him.