

DISCIPLINES FOR WISDOM

“He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction, gains understanding.” —PROVERBS 15:32

To experience God’s wisdom there needs to be a right disposition of the heart, but we also need to be disciplined in our pursuit of it. The book of Proverbs speaks of two kinds of disciplines in this regard; one is internal, which is self-discipline, and the other external, coming from the outside.

In our pursuit of wisdom, there are many verses in Proverbs that pertain to self-discipline. “Though it costs all you have, get understanding” (4:7). “Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise” (19:20). “Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge” (23:12). These verses speak of a mind that is applied, a life that is structured and of a disciplined, searching heart.

True wisdom is seeing life from God’s perspective, and that means we need to know something of the mind of God. Proverbs 2:6 tells us, “The Lord gives wisdom and from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.” It’s as we read the Bible and understand it that the revelation of the word of God lets us know the heart and mind of God. When we know something of the heart and mind of God, we know something of the wisdom of God. It’s a self-discipline of searching, turning our ear to wisdom and our hearts to understanding.

The discipline that comes from outside may not be easy, but it shapes our characters and brings the desired effects God has purposed for our lives. Proverbs 29:15 says, “The rod of correction imparts wisdom.” The

discipline of God is more than chastisement, which is a reactive discipline to something we've done wrong. God's discipline is pre-emptive in that it prevents us from getting off track, but it is also corrective in that it is often in the detours we take away from God that hard lessons are learned. But God doesn't waste our wrong choices. He uses them as a means of imparting wisdom that gets us back on track. Proverbs 3:11 says, "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and don't resent His rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those He loves, as a father the son he delights in."

We can't undo the past, but we can look back in hindsight and not only see, but appreciate God's wisdom in His discipline of us. In the present, we can allow God to produce His wisdom in us by exercising the disciplines of prayerfully applying our hearts to His word and our ears to knowledge, so that we may become channels for God's love and wisdom becoming a blessing to others.

PRAYER: Dear heavenly Father, keep me disciplined in applying your word to my life, and thereby imparting your wisdom to live according to your will. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: What experiences have I had that I now know was the hand of God disciplining me?