



CREW LEADER GUIDE: THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM - PROVERBS PART 1

Message Summary:

Drawing from Proverbs, this sermon establishes that true wisdom cannot be accumulated without first being rooted in a proper fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is not a terror-driven avoidance of God but rather a reverent awe that draws believers closer to him and produces genuine humility. The sermon contrasts this godly reverence with self-righteousness, warning that pride and arrogance are the greatest obstacles to wisdom. The message emphasizes that God is not primarily concerned with behavior modification, but with the transformation of the heart. Every aspect of life, relationships, finances, marriage, and purpose, must be built upon the cornerstone of Jesus Christ rather than upon human effort or the approval of others.

Key Points:

- The fear of the Lord is the foundational principle upon which all wisdom is built
- The fear of the Lord is not a frightened avoidance of God but a reverent awe that draws believers toward him and produces authentic humility
- Self-righteousness stands in direct opposition to the fear of the Lord, producing spiritual blindness and an inability to recognize one's own sin
- God is not interested in mere behavior modification but in the purification and transformation of the human heart
- Pride and arrogance are the greatest obstacles to receiving and walking in wisdom
- Wisdom is not reserved for a spiritual elite but is freely given by God to all who ask in faith
- Salvation is by grace through faith alone and cannot be earned through good works or religious performance
- Trusting God with all of one's heart requires submitting personal understanding to God's direction even when it is difficult
- The motivations behind one's actions in church, giving, serving, and worship matter deeply to God and reflect the true condition of the heart

Key Scripture:

- Proverbs 1:1-8, which introduces the purpose of Proverbs as giving wisdom, instruction, and understanding rooted in the fear of the Lord
- Proverbs 1:7, which declares that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge
- Proverbs 3:5, which calls believers to trust in the Lord with all their heart and not lean on their own understanding
- Proverbs 2:1-6, which urges the pursuit of wisdom as one would search for hidden treasure
- Proverbs 14, which describes the fear of the Lord as a fountain of life
- Proverbs 20, which compares the purposes of a person's heart to deep waters
- Matthew 7, in which Jesus describes the wise man who builds his house on the rock and the foolish man who builds on sand



EIGHTEEN DAY DEVOTIONAL

PROVERBS

XVIII

Discussion and Reflection

1. The sermon describes the fear of the Lord not as terror but as reverence — how does your current understanding of God's character shape the way you approach him in your daily life?
2. Solomon writes that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, meaning it is the foundation upon which everything else is built — what areas of your life might you be building on a foundation other than a genuine reverence for God?
3. James 1:5 promises that God gives wisdom generously to all who ask without finding fault — what does it reveal about your trust in God if you consistently seek wisdom from other sources before turning to him?
4. The sermon challenges listeners to examine what reservoir they draw from each day, whether insecurity, pride, or a desire to prove others wrong, and what it would look like to draw instead from a daily acknowledgment of God's love and faithfulness?
5. Jesus rebuked the religious leaders for doing righteous acts to be seen by others, warning that self-righteousness produces spiritual blindness. In what honest ways might self-righteousness be present in your own spiritual life without you recognizing it?
6. Proverbs 3:5 calls us to trust God with all of our heart and not lean on our own understanding. Can you identify a specific situation in your life right now where you are resisting submission to God's way in favor of your own reasoning?
7. Abraham waited decades for the fulfillment of God's promises without losing faith. What does your response to unanswered prayer or delayed promises reveal about the depth of your trust in God?
8. The sermon presents wisdom as something to be pursued with the same urgency and passion as searching for hidden treasure. What practical changes would your daily life look like if you genuinely pursued wisdom from God's word with that level of intentionality?

Practical Challenge:

Here are a few ways to help activate key next steps this week:

- **Examine your foundation.** Take 15 minutes this week to sit quietly and ask God to reveal one area of your life that may be built on self-reliance rather than trust in him. Write down what surfaces and bring it to him in prayer.
- **Pursue wisdom intentionally.** Download the 18-day devotional connected to this sermon series through the church app or the Bible app. Work through it alongside your group members this week and come back ready to share what stood out to you.
- **Ask the harder question.** Ps. Jesse asked, "Why are you in church?" Extend that question into other areas of your spiritual life this week. Ask yourself why you give, why you serve, why you read Scripture. Let the Holy Spirit use those questions to surface your true motivations.
- **Pray for wisdom specifically.** Based on James 1:5, bring one specific situation to God this week and ask him directly for wisdom. Come back to your group and share how that prayer shaped your perspective or your decisions.
- **Practice humility in a hard relationship.** Identify one relationship where it has been easier to focus on the other person's faults than your own.