

Life God's Way – Prov. 1:5 & 7; 3:5-12

As we begin a series of lessons from Proverbs, I wanted to begin with a basic understanding of how we need to look at proverbs. It is a book filled with wisdom and precepts that will make your life much easier and far more blessed if you do what it says. It won't always be the easy road, but definitely the best road.

Chapter 1 begins by telling us who is wise and how to get understanding and wisdom.

1. The wise man will hear – vs. 1:5 It is hard to become wise when you either talk too much or do not listen to wise counsel. How many times we are given an opportunity to sit in the presences of a wise person but are too busy telling them what you want them to know, instead of listening to what they have to say. You will never acquire wisdom talking. It can only be learned by listening.
2. The wise man will increase in learning – vs. 1:5 So often even when we do listen to wisdom we do not follow through. Here Solomon is telling us that the follow through is vitally important to getting the full effect of wisdom. To increase in learning is to put into practice the precepts of the wisdom we have learned and seek more learning. Don't stop learning just because you heard some wise sayings once. Keep pursuing wisdom.
3. A man of understanding will acquire wise counsel. – vs. 1:5 Solomon knew the value of wise counsel. He tells us several times in this book to seek wise counsel. To ignore it is just plain stupid. If you want to gain an understanding of the wisdom and knowledge you have, you must get wise counsel.
4. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge – vs. 1:7 How do we start the whole process of wisdom and understanding? The fear of the Lord. To reverence Him and seek Him and put Him first in our lives is the beginning of knowledge.

Now that we have established what wisdom, knowledge and understanding are, we can look at the rest of the book through the lenses of those glasses. Let's look at Chapter 3:5-12

1. Trust in the Lord with all your heart – vs. 5 How many times have we heard to just "Trust in the Lord". We sang it as kids, "Trust and obey, for there is no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey", we hear it and read it and say it so often that sometimes we miss or forget the powerful meaning of that little phrase. Trust and obey. What does it take to trust in the Lord? Is it hard, easy, or does it just come naturally like breathing. Well I submit that it is all of the above. At first it is hard. When we are baby Christians we have to break bad habits and we forget to trust in God and obey Him. After a while we become more like Christ and it seems a little easier to trust and obey. But we will often fall back into our old ways. We will struggle to always trust and obey. Then we go through this period of trusting but not obeying. It is easy to trust

that God will take care of you but not do the obeying part. The trouble is, that doesn't work too well. God will not honor trust without obedience. Then finally we get to the point in our spiritual walk we learn to "trust and obey" and it is just like breathing.

2. Do not lean on your own understanding – vs. 5 How often do we think we know it all? How often do we think that we have arrived at the pinnacle of knowledge? How often do we act like "you can't tell me anything"? We often tell people, you have nothing to say that I want to hear? God has all knowledge and He will only share with us what we are willing to acknowledge comes from Him. "If anyone lacks knowledge, let him ask."
3. In all you ways acknowledge Him – vs. 6 We must learn to act in a way that tells others that God is in everything. We must live in such a way that others see Christ and the Love of God in all we do. It is a life style. A determination that we are going to be followers of Christ and that those who see us will know that just by our life.
4. Do not be wise in your own eyes – vs. 7 It is difficult not to want to be known as smart. That is not what Solomon is talking about here. He is speaking about depending on your own finite and limited understand of life and its complexities to determine right from wrong. God has given us all we need to succeed if we will pay attention to His words. But society wants us to believe that we can be little gods in our own right and therefore we would not need a big God. Being wise in our own eyes is to take the same road as Satan when he told God that he was just as good a God. A dangerous place to be. It is what Adam and Eve were tempted with in the garden.
5. Fear the Lord and turn away from evil – vs. 8 If we are to learn anything, understand anything, know anything of value, it must begin with a fear for the Lord. Not to be afraid, but to have such reverence and respect, and awe of His awesome power and love, that we just can't help obeying Him. When we fear Him we not only know but understand His view on right and wrong. It is easier to avoid the evil in this world when we fear the Lord.
6. Honor the Lord from your wealth – vs. 9 This simply means to tithe. But what are we to tithe? Is it only money? I believe that it is not just money, but our time, our energy, our talents, just about all the resources we have at our disposal, including us. If you don't have a bunch of money to give God, give what you do have.
7. Do not reject the discipline of the Lord – vs. 10 This is the hardest one for all of us. None of us likes to be disciplined. Me especially. But I know that without discipline, I would ne learn. None of us would. No matter what we may say or think, we all need discipline. The Bible says that if we are left to your own understanding and actions without guidance, we will only sin more and more. We are incapable of doing good and right on our own. It is the old philosophical debate; "is man naturally good or evil"? The Bible says that we are all sinners and unrighteous, and therefore evil because of sin.