

>>What do we as believers of God think about God is the most important thing about us.

- How do I love my spouse and children? How do I love and serve Christ's church? Who is my hope in? How do I view those inside the church and outside the church? How do I see God?
Information about God isn't comprehension about God!

- I want to understand who God is. How should I approach Him?

>>Proverbs 1:1-6 uses a number of words that describe Solomon's desire to know God: wisdom, instruction, understanding, words of understanding, instruction, wisdom, justice, judgement, equity, discretion, hearing, learning, man of understanding, acquire wise counsel, understand a proverb, enigma, words of the wise, and riddles of the wise.

>>The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

>>What is this fear? Proverbs is a deductive book. As you read about what wisdom is you find the results of wisdom. If the outcomes **aren't** beneficial or good, likely you aren't acting or responding with wisdom.

- V7, Fools despise wisdom and instruction – restated, if one doesn't fear, they have no wisdom.

>>Ecclesiastes starts in Chapter 1:1-2, that without fear of the Lord, all is vanity and meaningless. Ecclesiastes contrasts Proverbs by being an inductive book about fearing the Lord. As you consider your labor, your food, your family, the times and seasons, wealth, pleasure, good things and bad, you realize that without the fear of God, everything is meaningless.

>>Examples from Ecclesiastes lead us to realize Chapter 12:13: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgement, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil."

>>What is the fear of God?

- What fear of God isn't: Exodus 20:18-21. V20, Moses says, "Do not **fear**," God has come to test you, and that His **fear** may be before you, so you do not sin." Israel was terrified of God. The fear desired by God was a fear that led to holiness, obedience and love of God, Ex. 19:4-6.
- We must fear God. Matt. 10:26-28, God does control our eternal destiny. He is the judge. But in V29-31, Jesus speaks of God's compassion and concern for even the sparrows that fall to the ground and the number of hairs on your head, God cares for us (V31, fear: not in terror).
- Solomon points to the fear of God. Eccl. 3:1-8, there is a time for everything. What profit is there from our labor, V9-10?
 - V11, everything is beautiful (appropriate) in its time. God has done it all and placed eternity into our hearts. No one can reason what God has done, but things happen when He determines it so. Man can wonder & question what God will do in the future.
 - V12-13, man should rejoice, do good, and enjoy their labor. God controls everything.
 - V14, What God does shall be forever, what God does, man should fear.
 - Romans 1:18-32, man can suppress the truth of God, but are without excuse on the day of judgement. God's wisdom and sovereignty is displayed and evident to all. **He is holy.**
 - Isaiah recognized how holy God is. Is.6:1-5, Isaiah is a man of unclean lips. Man needs a mediator with God.
 - Fear and humility bring about understanding. Job learned to fear God and his need for a mediator and a Redeemer, Job 1:20-22, 9:32-35, 19:25-27.

Further Discussion and Application

Paul tells Titus that grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, Titus 2:11-15. What does a sober life look like? What is a righteous life? What is a godly life? How do we manage our homes, love our families, serve the church, love other believers? What is the motivation for living a life focused on our eventual face to face meeting with Christ?

God's wisdom is unassailable. Men believe they are wise, but their actual state is one of darkness and futility, Eph. 4:17-24, 1 Cor. 2:6-16, Romans 1:18-32. All who choose not to acknowledge God face certain judgement (Rev. 20:11-15). Referencing Romans 1:28-32, Paul tells us in chapter 2:4-11, that wrath is being stored up for them on the day of judgement. It describes those who have suppressed the truth (Rom. 1:18). They are without excuse (Rom. 1:20). What is missing is the Gospel. What do you believe about your state apart from God? Read Romans 3, what is the heart of those who are separated from God?

Proverbs 1:3, says that the fear of the Lord is the basis for understanding justice, judgement, and equity. Why do scoffers judge God as unfair? Why do unbelievers stand in judgement of God and speak blasphemy that He is to blame for evil and for pain in the world? What is the nature of man? Why do we need a Savior? God has given us the end of the story from the beginning in His word. God tells us what we must do to be saved. How is the story of God's redemption of man missed when men scoff at God? How can we present the Gospel more accurately and passionately to others? Why are tempted? Why do we sin?

A fool has said in their heart there is no God, Psalm 14:1. What are the actions of those who say such things? Can man understand God or what He is doing? Does anyone do good? In verse 6 and 7 there is a verse of hope, a hope that Israel would be saved. How can prayer be a powerful tool to bring the Gospel to lost souls? How will compassion and love for God stir us to pursue the lost? How do we answer this question: Does the Lord save?