

## **The Irrelevant Yet Vital Subject**

*Proverbs 1 v 1-7:*

*The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young - let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance - for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.*

**There are four things that Proverbs teach us that we must have:**

- **Knowledge**
- **Understanding**
- **Wisdom**
- **Discipline**

To help understand how we attain these four key points, we must first look at the following scripture:

*Proverbs 1 v 8-9*

*Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.*

When I read this I thought of a father teaching a son. As a father you not only bring instructions to your children, but also an understanding of why you are giving the instruction.

Think of a classroom, you have the teacher and the students. All of the students have pens and paper to take notes and all are learning from the same text. This is no different from church. We have the pastor (teacher), the congregation (students), pen and paper for notes and we all learn from the same text (the bible).

Each class has its own characters and the bible speaks of some of these.

*Proverbs 1 v 22*

*How long will you simple ones love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?*

The bible highlights 3 characters here:

- Simple ones, they are lazy and are always too distracted to listen to anything you have to teach

- Mockers, they are rebels who are against God and try their best to disrupt the teachings
- Fools, these are smart people who have simply a conscious choice to ignore what you say, as they think they know better, or that what you say is irrelevant to their lives.

When these attitudes are in any of us while we are in the classroom, then the bible shows us that there will be consequences.

*Proverbs 1 v 27-33*

*When calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you. Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.*

It is only when the examinations of our lives happen that we realise that what the teacher was saying all along was right and would have given us all we needed to be prepared for whatever we faced. Alas, it is too late and you cannot cram a year of study into days or weeks. If we allow ourselves to be like this, then we will fail our examinations and will end up having to start all over again (like taking re-sits).

However, there is another type of student and this is what the bible says about them.

*Proverbs 2 v 1-11*

*My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you.*

God clearly rewards a man who fears Him and also understands that listening to the father's teachings is the only way to be prepared for whatever life throws at you. This student will know that knowledge comes from God and so does understanding. When this happens and there is a heart that seeks it more and more, wisdom will come into our lives and will keep us from walking into things unprepared.

How do we keep the commands in our hearts? By DISCIPLINE. A good student knows how to discipline themselves to study what they have learned. They will take time to further their knowledge (the word) and will cry to God for understanding.

*By doing this Proverbs 3 v 1-6 says*

*My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

God knows we live in the real world, so that is why by following his commands and teachings we will not only have favour with him, but with man, also, in our daily lives.

When the examination of our lives come to us, it will be clear whether we have been good students who have kept these commands and teachings in our hearts by being disciplined to learn them. If we have, then Proverbs 2 and 3 will be our reward, but if we do not then Proverbs 1 will be our discipline.