**Learn the Fear of The Lord (Proverbs 1:7-9)**

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and it starts from the family. Greetings to you my dear brothers and sisters in Christ on this joyful day, as our children and young people join us in the education of the Lord by coming to Sunday School. Today’s topic is taken from the book of Proverbs, and this collection of spiritual sayings is originally aimed at the young man who has many important decisions in front of him in his spiritual walk. Primarily, Proverbs warns the young man from certain dangers, such as laziness, immorality, and or spiritual laxness. Today we’re going to be speaking about a solution for these. As a matter of fact, the fear of God is the greatest answer to these three dangers. Our goal is to instill the habit of daily self-examination, so that we are protected against falling into these three traps. Just as the Apostle Paul had said, today we present these few verses with the same purpose. He said in 2 Corinthians 13:5, “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you fail to meet the test! Once again, I believe the Scripture is trying to say that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and it starts from the family. (Let us speak, then, about the fear of the Lord…)

The fear of the Lord grows in us when there is spiritual instruction in the family. In the centuries during which the Bible was being written, the family unit had a much greater role in the education and upbringing of a child. Often those who went to formal schools were the wealthy only, and others, if they were to receive guidance and instruction, would receive it from parents and what the latter had in turn learned from *their* parents. Today’s verses, however, can be unclear to us if we do not clarify the meaning of a few of the terms used in the verses in question. The word “wisdom” (in the Armenian translation), for example, can also be translated “knowledge” – in other words, knowledge begins with the fear of God. That fear can both be a terror coming from God’s prerogative to punish sin, and also a deep respect for His position and Identity. It is not by accident that the fear of God is the beginning of the knowledge of God (both in knowing Him and knowing what He knows). It is also not an accident that the fear of the Lord is connected to the advice of parents. In Hebrew, the words *Musar* and *Torah* are the words often translated advice and teaching, or wisdom-filled instruction and discipline-oriented training. In other words, for a young man, the fear of God which leads to the knowledge or wisdom of God, is contingent upon the given instructions and advice by the parents. Conversely, it is the fool or unwise that grow up in this world without accepting or listening to family spiritual instruction.

The following was written in a magazine of secondary education once: “*Control of discipline is like controlling a fire. If you catch it early, it is easy to handle.”* There was once an eight-year-old who described his mother’s punishment procedure: *“After the storm comes a palm!”*

Today, our kids are in Sunday School. The most important school that they attend, however, is our home. How many of us, for example, teach them about Salvation, the will of God, or a life worthy of a follower of Jesus. Do they know right from wrong? Do they know the Savior who died for their sins and rose from the dead? Do they sense or hear the Holy Spirit as they go through life? Do they know how to live with God’s wisdom? What kind of wisdom are the new generation of kids learning today? Is the Bible being read in the home? Are they aware of the dangers of spiritual apathy and laziness? Do they know that if they do not fear God, that they walk in the path that leads to hell and become co-workers with Satan? Yes, these may appear to be strict words to some, but not so to others who have already nipped it in the bud and are instructing and guiding the generations younger than them in the fear of the Lord. Today we are to examine ourselves: what kind of educators/teachers have we been to our own kids?

On the other hand, if we are young, are we actively bearing the fear, love, and respect of God wherever we go? Which voice is the most important one in our lives – is it God’s wisdom, or the wisdom of the surrounding culture? Do we follow what others do, or what is instructed in the Bible? Who are our teachers, and what foundations does our wisdom have? Once again, we want to reiterate: the fear of the Lord grows in us when there is spiritual instruction in the family. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and it starts from the family.