

Proverbs 22-09-14b

We are in Proverbs chapter 2, we have looked at the first five verses, culminating in understanding the fear of the Lord and finding the knowledge of God. And this of course is ultimately the goal, to not just try to fear the Lord, not just the abject worry about judgment or discipline or punishment of some sort, but to understand the fear of the Lord. This is our goal and it's a great achievement when we begin to fulfill this desire.

So, the fear of the Lord, we have already been told, is the beginning of wisdom. We've already seen that the means by which it is obtained, but what does it mean to understand the fear of the Lord? Well, this is our word, ta-bin. This is the third time now that we have this same word.

The discernment and understanding of verse 3 are sourced in this word, bin, and to understand, and you have that entire complex of discerning what an option is, prioritizing the best option, as Paul says in Romans 12, to understand the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, to be able to sort things by what is good, better, or best. That's what is in view here, to understand the fear of the Lord, not just to have an attitude of respect or awe or even appreciation, but to understand with a view toward application. It makes a difference in the way we live.

To achieve that, these preceding verses have to have taken place, the content of those processes and expressions above. Understand the fear of the Lord and the knowledge of God find. Remember how the object came first in our preceding verses? Here it's the second phrase that has the object preceding.

Then you will understand ta-bin, the fear of the Lord, and the knowledge of God, the da'at of Elohim, and this is knowledge in the sense of skill and knowledge in the sense of truth. When you have skill, you know the right way and the true way to accomplish a goal, to fulfill a task, to achieve an objective, right? And that's what this knowledge is, da'at is knowledge that makes a difference in terms of outcome. You will knowledge of God find, and this word for find really means to attain to, it's used in the sense of something that is actually found, it is translated something in the passive that befalls you, in other words, you will experience it.

It will be a part of your circumstantial experiential life. It doesn't just mean Eureka, I have found it. All of us from California are well familiar with, I don't know, Balboa, I say well familiar, I can barely remember it.

I just remember Eureka, it's on the state flag, and the guy was hunting and hunting and then he finally found the Pacific or California or LA or something. And he said Eureka, and it's I have found it. But this means to to catch, to experience, to come into possession of, it is translated to possess, to take or to overtake.

It's a lot more than just find. You have it in a way that is sufficient. It happens to you, it befalls you, it becomes a part of your experience.

That's the result, the fruit of this series of activities detailed in these first four verses. You will experience the knowledge of God. You will have it become an incorporated, intrinsic part of life.

Isn't this what we want? Isn't that why God saved us? Modern evangelical Christianity in this country particularly seems to treat salvation as get somebody to make this decision so they don't go to hell. This is salvation in its ultimate sense. It's an Old Testament expression, but it is just as true in the church age to experience the fullness of God's blessing, to fulfill his plan and purpose, to be woven into the fabric of what he is accomplishing now and what he is going to accomplish in the future.

There is no more explicit expression of how to have that happen than Proverbs 2, 1 through 5. It doesn't get any clearer than this. You can revisit, you can explore each of these nouns and each of these verbs for yourself. All you need is a Strong's Concordance.

You can go to biblehub.com, pull up Proverbs 2, verse 1 and click Hebrew. And when you see it on the screen, there will be the English translation in the Hebrew word order. There will be the lexical Hebrew to the left.

Click it and it will give you every place that word is used in the Old Testament. I encourage you to do this. When you see the way these words are used, when you see what scripture has to say conceptually about these nouns and these verbs, it will put fire in your boiler.

It will motivate. It will encourage. I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness will happen in your soul with review of this critically important passage.

That's why the book of Proverbs leads with it. You have the introduction in chapter 1, the value, why it's important. Here's how to do it.

There's no beating around the bush. This is not put at the end of the book of Proverbs. It's right at the beginning.

My son, this is how you get it done. Find the knowledge of God. Why is that the case? Verse six, it is not man.

It is not scholarship. It is not pastors and teachers. It isn't elaborate preparation.

It isn't cogent illustration. It isn't compelling presentation that makes this happen. God gives it.

This is the simple Hebrew verb for giving, natan. We get the name Nathan and so on from this. Natan, to give.

It is used over and over again in scripture. It's one of the most common action verbs. It occurs 2011 times in the Old Testament.

Here, it's not the act of what is given so much as or the action of giving. It is what is given. What does the Lord give? He gives chokmah, wisdom.

When you look at this in the Amplified Bible, it talks about godly skill and wisdom. I really like how the Amplified presents this. And that's another thing, by the way, if you haven't used the Bible Hub website, they'll offer you all other kinds of Bible resource pages.

I have some of the best Bible software on the planet, but I do at least half of my studying right off the Web page on Bible Hub. It is so convenient. It is easy.

A child of five can accomplish it. And you remember the guy's famous retort, fetch me a child of five. I need help.

But honestly, I love it. I recommend it. You can't go wrong using it.

There are copious numbers of commentaries. There are Bible helps. There are concordances.

There are lexicons. You can get any Bible version known to man. If you want to see what the JPS says or what the Net Bible says and what any other all you got to do with a single click, it'll switch from the King James to the New King James, the NASB to the NIV.

Every meaningful Bible version on the planet, including the Amplified, is there. Give it a try sometime. If you only have 10 or 15 minutes, you're waiting for something, you're stalled and have a few minutes.

Pull up Proverbs chapter two, verse one on Bible Hub and just start exploring. It will warm your heart and restore your soul. So the Lord gives wisdom, Chokmah.

On your Bible Hub, you go to Strong's, it's a number 2451. And you find out that the first use of it is in Exodus chapter 28. And guess what that is? Those who are gifted artisans and are going to construct the tabernacle, God tells Moses, I have filled with the spirit of Chokmah.

I've given them a spirit of practical wisdom and skill. They are going to be able to do something extraordinary that has never been done before because God is going to give a spirit of wisdom. How would you like to be as well equipped as Bezalel and Aholiab and the others to whom God poured out Chokmah, the spirit of wisdom to accomplish the extraordinary, ordinary people living extraordinary lives.

The Lord gives Chokmah. He will pour out the spirit of wisdom. He gives it.

The next use is in Exodus 31, verse three, and I have called by name Bezalel, son of Uri, the son of Hur of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the spirit of God with skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of craftsmanship. And looking at the words that are translated there, one of them is the main one is Chokmah. That's what we are looking at in our passage, Proverbs chapter two, verse six.

The Lord gives Chokmah from his mouth come knowledge, da'at, that we just looked at, and understanding, tavon, understanding. It is the outworking. It is the result.

It is the evidence and experience, the doing of the word that is emphasized here. You see been over and over and over again. It's interesting that when it says from his mouth come knowledge and understanding in the Septuagint, these words look similar and they translate from his face.

I think the Masoretic text is probably good because you're talking about verbal expression here. Jesus said, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Face isn't quite a bit different, but no one has seen God's face at any time.

Moses was not allowed to see his face. He saw the retreating glory, but from his mouth, this is the expression. This is his word.

My son, if you will receive my words, which are transmitted word of God and commands are the transmitted commands of God, faithfully communicated by the father in this case. It says God stores up for the upright, sound wisdom, he stores up. This is the same word we had in verse one.

Saffon, Saffan, store up, treasure, treat as valuable. God treasures up for the upright, sound wisdom. Who are the upright? These, this Yashar, Y-A-S-H-A-R means to be fit, to be plum and square, level, properly situated.

It's, it's right. Our word for true, we use it, you know, when you go to Lowe's and buy lumber, if you're getting two by fours, anybody who knows what they're doing, what do you do? You get that board, you put one end of it on the deck, you put the other next to your face and you site down the board to see if it is true or if it is warped in one direction or another. Is it true? Is it straight? That's what Yashar means and thus the translation upright.

It doesn't mean I'm upright and conscious. It means upright in the sense of conforming to an ideal standard. You conform, you are plum, you are level, you are square, true, straight.

Reminds us of the one who lays a straight course of bricks in the word of truth. You go to

the word that expresses truth and you keep it true. You don't start with good, solid truth in the word of God and then warp it, twist it, distort it, change it, make it say something it was not intended to say.

Upright. God treasures for the upright what? It says sound wisdom. You might think this would be chokmah, but this is insight.

This is wisdom in the sense of insight. It's the word tushiyah and so many of these things end in an AH because they are feminine, they are concepts, they are abstracts. He stores up tushiyah in Job.

This is translated as success. He stores up wisdom that results in success. All of these words keep driving toward the finish line.

You finish well, you accomplish the goal. What does Paul say? I have fought the good fight. I have run the race.

I have finished my course and there is laid up for me a crown as a result. I didn't just start well. I didn't just have a good middle.

I finished. I finished well. Sprinted across the tape, saved something for the final stretch.

Finishing well. This is in Strong's Concordance, the gloss is sound and efficient wisdom, abiding success, lasting success, not a flash in the pan. We have things that produce a momentary effect, but it does not last.

Remember they had people that were in a coma and they were able to give them a treatment and they came out of their coma and it was a miracle. But it did not last. This is success that has eternal value, that is going to reflect not only in this life, but in the life to come.

What a thing for God to store up for the upright. And then it concludes with, He is a shield to those who walk uprightly. Walk is always a process of travel.

It is something that takes place over time, right? He is a shield to those who walk uprightly. This is a different root from the upright that we saw above. It means true and straight.

This is the word tom, T-O-M. And it is from tamam. And this means to be complete.

Integrity, we talk about the integrity of the hull of a submarine or a ship or an airplane. Does it have integrity? Meaning, is it complete? And so the integrity of heart is what is in view. You find this in Genesis 20, verse 6. God said to Abimelech, after he finds out that Abraham's, quote unquote, sister is actually his wife and he almost added her to his harem.

But God speaks to Abimelech and Abimelech says, Abraham said, she's my sister. She herself said, he is my brother. I have done this in the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands.

God said to Abimelech in the dream, yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience. And so I have kept you from sinning against me. I know that you had integrity of heart.

You were not attempting some form of evil. Integrity, integrity of heart. That is what is implied here.

Genesis 25 and 26. I did this in good conscience, clear conscience. I did what I thought was right.

I inquired of Abraham. I inquired of Sarah before I took any action. What I was told, that's what I acted on.

I also had a question earlier in the week about, you know, what if you take to heart a teaching or an expression in a book or by a pastor or whatever, and you act on that in good faith, and it turns out later to be erroneous or incorrect. God judges us on what we do in the integrity of our heart. If we honestly believe that this is the word of God, my favorite example of this is Seventh Day Adventists.

They genuinely believe that Saturday is a day of worship. I don't think there's going to be any penalty for going to church on Saturday at the judgment seat of Christ. If that is what you are taught and that is what you believe in good faith and you want to honor God by observing that particular day and you do it in good conscience, that's tome.

That is integrity and uprightness of heart. God will honor that even if technically it wasn't the right answer. It is clear to me from Scripture that the judgment seat before which we will stand is not a theology test.

It isn't, did you correctly parse everything that is in the word of God? Did you find a teacher that got everything exactly right? Were you seeking God and did you observe and walk in a way that you believed and that you was what he wanted? You did it in integrity of heart. That's the test. There are many people that have wrong understandings, but because they observe them out of love for God and out of a desire to be pleasing in his sight, they will get more credit than people that have correct doctrine and don't follow it.

That's why Paul says, let each one be fully convinced in his own mind if he's going to observe a day, eat or not eat a food. What you are convinced of in your mind and you seek to honor God in so doing, that motive is what counts. That's what is spoken of here.

He is a shield to those who walk in integrity of heart, who walk in an effort to observe the convictions that they believe are from God. Even if it's wrong, the reward from God will

transcend anything that God has said that somebody got wrong. God's ability to bless is far greater than our ability to mess up in a nutshell.

And he isn't so interested in, do we have a right understanding as how do we walk? And the word here is halak, H-A-L-A-K, to walk. How do you walk? There's even a part of the Jewish tradition that is called the halakah, and this is the practical application. How should we then live? How do we walk? God is a shield to those who walk uprightly.

That brings us to verse eight. He, God, guards the paths of justice. There's a lot that's going to be said about paths in the upcoming context, and it really begins here.

God guards the paths of justice. And this is not so much posting sentries or protecting with fence or whatever. This is to keep.

This is to observe and watch over. So your first use of this in the Old Testament is Exodus 34, verse seven. And anytime you think Exodus 34, you should remember that this is where God expresses the character and proclaims it when Moses makes the second set of tablets of stone.

In verse four of Exodus 34, Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first. He rose early in the morning, took the two stone tablets in his hand. He went up Mount Sinai as the Lord had commanded him.

And the Lord descended in a cloud, stood with him there and proclaimed his name Yahweh. Then Yahweh passed in front of Moses and called out, the Lord, the Lord God is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in loving devotion and faithfulness, maintaining loving devotion to a thousand generations. The word maintaining there is our word, keeping, observing, watching over, loving devotion.

This is going to be loyal love, chesed, my no means clearing the guilty and so on. So this is our word, not tsar, to watch, to keep, to observe, to maintain observation on. This is even translated besiege in a few places when an enemy would besiege a city.

Well, they're keeping watch. They're not letting it out of their sight. So he will not let out of his sight the paths of justice.

So those who are walking the paths of justice, those who are themselves observing and keeping justice, pursuing justice, endeavoring to be just, you're going to be under the watchful eye of God, the paths of justice, and he preserves the way of his precious ones, his saints. Saints, this word saints, this is the Qasid and Qasid comes from chesed and it means those who practice grace, who are recipients of grace and who reflect that grace. A servant who has forgiven much, loves much, and he's willing to forgive other servants who might owe him.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. God in grace

forgives us. God in grace delivers us.

God in grace tolerates us. And we should have that same attitude toward others. So the Qasid, saint here doesn't mean sanctified or set apart so much as it means those who are objects of grace and therefore reflect grace.

Qasid, loyal love. We have received it from God. We reflect it toward one another in appropriate ways and toward those who have placed themselves in a position as we have to receive grace.

And what does he do? He preserves the way. This is Derek. This just means the road or the highway.

If Jesus had been speaking Hebrew in John 14, 6, he would have said, I am the Derek. And God preserves that way. And this is Shamar.

This means to be responsible for a thing, to take care of it. First used in Genesis 2, 15, God placed man in the garden of Eden to cultivate it and Shamar it, keep it, maintain it, ensure that nothing bad happens to it. It's used again in Genesis 3, 24, when God posts the whorling sword cherub at the gate of Eden after the man and woman have been driven out.

There is that sword, which that Kerev, which turns every direction to Shamar the way to the tree of life, to guard it, to ensure that no one violates God's command. So he guards the paths, he observes the paths of justice, and he tends and watches over for good the way of his Kassid, his objects of grace, his reflectors of grace. Then you will understand.

And this is something we'll have to save for next time. You will understand righteousness and justice, equity, and every good path. We have a pretty good concept, even from the English translations here of what this means.

How important is it for us to be steeped in the word of God, to treasure it the way Rahab protected the spies, to treasure it the way Moses' mother kept him, cared for him, treasured him, and refused to do something harmful to him, entrusted him to God by putting him in the basket? How important is it? Without this attitude, we are hopeless, helpless, and useless. Even if saved, we are lost. Even if our name is in the book of life, we are not among the living.

We are not going to be fruitful. We will not produce the fruit of the spirit. We will not be in line for God's blessing.

We will be in line for the opposite. Even God's chastening will do us no good if we do not have this heart that asks and seeks and knocks. So clearly expressed here.

How could anyone possibly miss when the Lord Jesus came? Anyone who had this heart,

when they heard the Lord Jesus teach, they instantly recognized him and followed him. Those who didn't have this heart, the incarnate Lord Jesus standing right in front of them, and they couldn't see him. They, seeing they saw and did not perceive, hearing they heard and did not understand, because there's something wrong with the heart.

This is the heart we want to cultivate. This is the lifestyle that we have to prioritize as a first eternal importance. It matters now.

It will always matter. Developing this heart. This is what we take with us when we leave this life and go into the next.

Cannot emphasize too strongly if there were no other passage of scripture to reflect on than this. This would do it. This will get us there.

Central, vital, of first importance. Well, we'll pick up our study here in Proverbs chapter two, beginning at verse nine next time, but we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for safeguarding to us your commands, your words, your plans and purposes, the outworking of those in the lives of people in both Old Testament days and new, most clearly seen in the life and words of the Lord Jesus himself, who is the word incarnate.

We pray that as we reflect and as we meditate on what we have seen in this passage, that your Holy Spirit will minister to our hearts, impress it on our souls, help us to see clearly the opportunity that we have to invest in this truth, to treasure it, to make it a part of our thinking, to see the outworking, the result and the evidence of it in our daily lives, knowing that as we do so, we will represent the Lord Jesus Christ for he surely did this in his first advent and being our example and being the Savior that has given us a path to follow. But we pray that we can do so and do so well. We ask it in Jesus name.

Amen.