

**No Fear, No Understanding**  
**Proverbs 1:1-7**

Since it is Mother's Day, we felt it would be appropriate here to change the tone a little bit. As we've been making progress in Mark, this would be a good opportunity for us to talk about a topic that we don't address often from the pulpit, but the topic of parenting as we will see in our text today, in Proverbs 1. While we have other resources as maybe you already might know, but if you go onto our website, you have what our Sunday school classes have done, even maybe growth groups have gone through, and different studies on this topic of parenting that are very filled out, giving you almost a systematic disclosure of everything the Scriptures have to say about it. This morning, we'll just stay in one portion of God's Word. So, we'll just be in Proverbs 1:1-7, and I just invite you to turn there as we look at what that has to say about not just the topic of wisdom, but even more specifically, parenting.

So, as we're making our way there, I just want to ask you, see if you can draw your mind to, what are some of the different mottos for parenting that you've been exposed to? You're probably all at least able to think of your own parenting, your own parents who brought you up, and if you had to condense their model - maybe they said it, maybe they didn't, but if you had to kind of put into a phrase, what would it be? Or, maybe for yourself, you have something different in how you've raised your kids. Or, you've seen and learned more even as you've seen your kids raise their kids as you stand in the grandparent level. And you've seen all these mottos and all these approaches to parenting. What are some of those approaches you might be thinking in your mind? I think we could list them off, and we'd have quite a spectrum here of everything ranging from the very, very strict on the one end, to very loose on the other. For instance, probably on the strict end, there's those mottos of "my house, my rules," and just kind of that ends it; that's parenting. "When you turn eighteen you're on your own; until then, do what I say under my roof." Alright? That's a very stringent kind of model as you could expect. Maybe some of you experienced something like this. Perhaps there was a very hands on approach, figuratively and literally speaking. Some of you might be on the other end of the spectrum as far as what you've experienced or what you've witnessed as a "live and let live," maybe not said, but it's functioned that way. "Do whatever you want."

“Boys will be boys.” “Girls just wanna have fun.” What’re you going to do? Alright? This is kind of other approach to it, very, very hands off, both figuratively and literally probably as well.

When you think of these parenting slogans or mottos that people live by this morning, I just want to take this time to look in this portion of proverbs, the very beginning of the book, a book on wisdom, and see if we can’t pull out and see here what God’s motto would be. What would God’s very motto, if He could tell us His motto, His advice even, His take on parenting, how could we summarize it, condense it? And I think that’s what we’ll find this morning in Proverbs 1:1-7. So, let’s read our text for this morning and read all seven verses together, starting in verse 1; “The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth—Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” This is our text for this morning, and we’ll just spend a little bit of time here. As many of you have probably read at least portions of the book of Proverbs, if not the entire thing, it reads very easy. It’s an enjoyable and pleasant read, and it’s also profound in what it brings. But we’ll just be focusing on our first seven verses this morning. So, as we go through it, I’ll be pulling out, and we’ll be seeing, how there is just wisdom here offered to everyone and anyone. You do not have to be a parent to glean from what is in the text as all of Scripture continues to unfold for us, but we will also see its practical application in this realm of parenting.

So, let’s begin by looking at our first four verses here and see more specifically the goals of parenting, these different goals that unfold as far as why the book is written and why we have the book of Proverbs - the goals of this book for every believer and even more specifically, as we will see, the goals as they relate to parenting. But before we get into the goals, verse 1 gives us the background. Alright? This is where we see the background here; “The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel...” We see this kind of topic, the title of the book, Proverbs. A proverb is to be like is what it is. It’s like a simile or where you have this comparison using the words like or as. Proverbs is basically a book of comparisons between the common

concrete things that you and I witness and see in life and nature, and it's a comparison between those things and the very profound truths of life. How to take what is profound in thinking and in living and to illustrate it if you will, compare it, give it some type of comparison, that's what this book is full of, object lessons left and right in the book of Proverbs that are provided for learning. We see the author too; "The proverbs of Solomon..." Solomon is our author. He's the one who composed most of the proverbs although not all of them but the majority of them, and we also can understand why. If you just consider Old Testament history, if you consider the little knowledge we do have from Scripture about Solomon, he's very qualified, very qualified to be in this position to offer such wisdom and advice to not only the people of his time but even to us thousands of years later.

If you are a little rusty on your Old Testament history and wondering what was so great about Solomon, here's 1 Kings 4:29-30. This is what it says, "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt." Right. A man that was renowned for this character quality, renowned for wisdom not just in the nation of Israel but throughout the earth. Right? This is how he is known to be the wise sage that he is of all the land. A little bit later on in the same passage (verse 34) we read, "And people of all nations came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom." So, Solomon's so wise, so much so that people were willing to leave, pack up, travel very far, just to hear him, and as we see in other places too, they come and they're willing to pay him. That's what they do. They come not just to hear him speak, but they'll give money to hear him speak. This man is flowing with wisdom. He really is, almost, basically, the model for the university system; this idea where we pay all kinds of dollars (right?) and go in debt for our children, ourselves, to learn. Alright? We pay to learn, and this was established all the way back with Solomon. This is how qualified he is to be this author, to be the one imparting wisdom from God now unto us.

Verse 2 is where we start to see the goals that flow from this book, the intention, the purpose of why it's written and even for what we see in parenting and what we're looking at today. Beginning in verse 2, the very beginning of verse 2, the first half of it, we see this goal of wise living - wise living, a goal here in this book. The verse reads, "To know wisdom and

instruction...” ... “To know wisdom and instruction...” And you might think I don’t see the word “living” in there. I don’t see the word acting or doing, necessarily. But what we do have is the verb “to know;” “To know wisdom and instruction...” And this word means to gain knowledge of or to become wise in, but the thing about this word is it’s important to understand that as you see it used all throughout Scripture, you start to learn more and more that this is not just a fact and information kind of knowledge. This isn’t a trivia kind of knowledge. This isn’t the point of proverbs, to fill someone’s head with more facts. Right? The intentionality here is that there would be, yes, the intellectual side, that component there, but with the intentionality of practicing with the aim towards actually doing something. It’s the intellectual that leads to the practical is the idea behind it. It’s an experiential knowledge if you will, and so, what kind of practical knowledge are we talking about that shows itself? Knowledge of “...wisdom and instruction...” ... “...wisdom and instruction...,” wisdom a very prominent term in the book of Proverbs and in wisdom literature throughout the Old Testament. It is also pretty broadly used. It can be used not just for people that are smart and like to discuss philosophy of some sort, it could be just used of people that have a great skill. Throughout the Old Testament, you see people that have certain trades. They’re craftsmen of some sort. They’re weavers, administrators. They’re even sailors on the seas. These people that are skilled in their craft, in their art, whatever it is they do, they have wisdom. They have a skill in this, and so when we see it in Proverbs, we don’t see it in a particular arena, of some type of physical aspect or trade that’s going on, but what we really see is a skill in life, a moral skill, an ability to carry out life in this skilled fashion, the whole of it, the totality of life; it’s skillful living.

Wisdom is knowledge applied as many have said, and this instruction, the training that goes with it, the training that comes along side of it because it is not something you gain overnight. It’s something you practice, something you work at, something you not only continue to hear, but implement into your life. So, throughout Proverbs, you think about this intention, and this is one of the main aspects of this book, to give knowledge for the purpose of action, to impart this wisdom that it might be applied in a skillful manner in life. And this is the goal of, hopefully, the wise person seeking this enhanced wisdom in their own life, but not just that, what parent doesn’t what this for their child? In a similar manner, every parent is desiring for their child to grow up and be skilled in life not just to have a particular trade that they’re

good at, not to be just known for a particular field, but to carry this skill of knowing God's Word and applying it appropriately in life. To have this moral skill, to have the ability to apply knowledge which is wisdom. So, this is the first goal here of the book, and a first obvious goal of parenting that is almost unspoken. I probably don't have to convince any parents out there that they want their child to be skilled in life in this way.

But not just that, we continue to see the second goal here in the second half of the verse, in verse 2, and this is where we see wise understanding. So, already, wise living and how one carries themselves. They're skilled in taking the knowledge, applying it into life in a wise and skillful fashion but now wise understanding, the second half of the verse reads "...to understand words of insight..." ... "...to understand words of insight..." This is an interesting phrase if you were to kind of take it literally from the Hebrew text and what it would say; it would read "to understand words of understanding" or to "discern words of discernment." You go, aw, that's kind of repetitive. And that's the point; it's emphasis to get emphasis across. There was this repetition that the writers would often use, and so this idea of "understanding words of understanding," the ability to discern, to understand all the wise sayings that would continue to come on the pages that follow, to have the ability to think, simply put. Again, this is a mark, a trait of a wise person. They are not someone that just simply sits there and swallows information and then spits it back out, but they're someone that can interact with information. They can interact with concepts and actually process. There's discernment. There's mulling it over. There's this process of actually thinking through what is being engaged with to the point where now this is a person of understanding that can say they understand the concept, and they either reject it or they accept it, wise understanding. This is what the wise person will do, and in the same way, isn't this what parents want? Don't they often say just think, just use your head, use your brain. Alright? Parents want this for their children too, not just an ability to be skillful in life and living and acting, but also in the ability to think so that as a child goes and interacts with other concepts, with foreign ideas, there's an ability to discern, to think, to mull it over, to be a wise person of understanding - another goal of parenting here that's coming from our text.

Two more goals that come out are in verses 3-4. In verse 3, we see the goal of wise relating - wise relating. So, we've interacted with this concept of living skillfully, thinking with understanding; and now, it goes horizontal to

how one interacts with other people, to how someone might socialize, you might say. Verse 3 reads, "...to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity..." In our verse, it says, "...wise dealing..." or some might say wise behavior, for the person to read this book, to understand, be able to come to a place where they receive more instruction on how to interact, how to socialize, how to engage with others, and it gives us the specifics of that. How? How should one engage with others? "...in righteousness, justice, and equity..." This is the idea. This is the goal. Every parent wants their child to not only have this ability to think and live on their own and be able to function, but also to operate with others, to work with others, to have friends, to socialize, and to be able to do that correctly, to do that in a way that actually upholds God and His Law and His character. So, what might that look like? It's the three words that we have here, for a child to interact with others; "...in righteousness..." knowing what is right and what is wrong, and "...justice..." being able to be fair, in "...equity..." To be able to have these aspects describing how a child relates with others, how a child will grow up, and continue to maintain these very traits of fairness and integrity that must happen.

So, it's not just this goal of skillful living, wise and great understanding, but also relating to others, and finally in verse 4, we see that it's a hopeful goal of maturing, wise maturing, this goal that it would not stay as it is, but it would advance in verse 4; "...to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth—" You see, the first line there, "...to give prudence to the simple..." And that focus there on the word "simple" - this is the simpleton, the one who is naïve, the one who is open minded, and so open minded that it is actually to their harm. They're not convicted about anything. In fact, they're easily misled into this thought or that thought. They'll believe anything and everything that you throw at them. They're the simpletons, and it's not a good thing. It's not an innocent, simple person; it's a foolish, simple person that is constantly being thrown back and forth by whatever comes their way. And so, there's a goal in this book that, through the contemplation of Scripture and actual application of it, there would be an ability to no longer be this simpleton but to have prudence, to have wisdom.

And as the second half goes on to say, "knowledge and discretion to the youth—" Notice that you have this parallel between the simpleton and the youth. This is what the youth are, and they will continue to be this way if not engaged, but this is the desire of every parent - to see their child grow, to

grow up to mature, and while they will in a no certain manner because of just physical aspects and how children do grow, there's also the obvious that you want to see your child grow and mature in terms of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, life as a whole. This is a desire of the book of Proverbs, for every one of us that approaches it, that we too might actually mature, but how much more so even for parents and their children, that their children will not stay where they are, but they would actually mature and grow out of this naïve way of thinking, out of this simple-minded thinking, but to actually become a person that has conviction of some sort, which is rare in a time where it's almost openly celebrated that tolerance and open-mindedness and open discussion and open engagement - that's the true moral value of our time - that's what is put on a pedestal - that's what scholars continue to uphold as the great thing - to continue to engage in this very open-minded dialogue when, in reality, Scripture basically tells us the opposite; Scripture says, actually, the wise person is one who knows what they believe, and they stick to it. They have prudence. They have understanding. They have conviction. They're no longer immature like a youth who has no clue what to think about these things, but they have thought through them. They've grown up, and they have conviction. All these goals that we see here are put forth for the book of Proverbs, but even more so, are applied even for parents, how parents might instruct their children, to see them be skillful in living, to be able to think and reason and understand and discern, to relate with others well - and then to grow up, to mature.

These are different goals that I think every parent would affirm very quickly, but it doesn't just stop there. We change the perspective a little bit in verses 5-6, and this is where we see the growth in parenting. So often, it's assumed that in parenting all the focus needs to be on the child - on the child, but this is an opportunity for the Scripture to speak to the parent. Verse 5; "Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance..." Now we are addressing a completely different crowd. We were just talking about the youth and the simpleton in verse 4, but now we've switched, and we're talking to the wise, to those that feel themselves to be mature, to those that claim they are wise, to those that actually think they're a person of understanding. What about for them? What about for the parent that thinks they are wise, for the parent that thinks they are a parent of understanding? Everyone needs to increase and grow in wisdom; that's the point. There's no exemptions here. There's no way that someone can

approach the Word of God or the book of Proverbs or the topic of parenting and think, kind of plateaued; I'm here. I'm waiting for my kids to get there. That's not how it works. Scripture is clear; "Let the wise hear and increase [increase] in learning..." Don't stop. Don't be complacent. Don't sit and think you're fine.

All mature believers need to continue to mature, continue to grow, and boy do we have a way to go because we have an example of Jesus Christ. Our command here in our verse is not just to "...hear..." in a sense of, yeah, be surrounded with Biblical teaching or read it a lot yourself, but it goes further than hearing - it goes to obeying - it goes to actual implementation. We have this command even in New Testament Scripture for us from Peter when he explicitly says, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2 Peter 3:18) This is the requirement for parents. On the parents' end, they don't stop. They don't parent in such a way as to think, yeah, I've been in their shoes. I'm going to rely on my experience because I have a lot of it. I've walked all these paths before them. I've seen the bad, and I've seen the good, and I'll be able to help them out. I'll rely on my experience. That is a way to parent, but it's not what God calls you to. God calls you to step out of that and say it's not enough. I need to continue to increase. I need to grow in my knowledge. I need to enhance my understanding. I need to obtain more guidance as I attempt to parent my child.

So, how? How grow? Get more facts, knowledge and information into your brain? Live more life? Have more experience? It's a simple concept; it comes back to the Word of God as we see in verse 6; "...to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles." For the book of Proverbs, the wise person increases in wisdom by reading the Proverbs and being more exposed to them and therefore learning and growing more. For the parents, the parent increases and grows in their understanding and learning by interacting with the Scriptures, the Word of God. You don't need more experience yourself to be able to give guidance to your children. You need more of what God has said. His truth, His Word, that is the key, and that is how you can increase in learning; that is how you can increase in understanding and be able to parent in a more sufficient fashion. This is no surprise to us. This is what we constantly teach here at Valley Bible Church. It's the Word of God; you need nothing else. So many other people want to offer different resources and different ideas and tactics, when we know the

Word of God is sufficient, so continue to saturate yourself in the Word of God, and do not settle for some plateau and complacent level of wisdom in your own life.

So, we see the bar is set high for the parents. Parents are responsible to try and help their children to grow in these areas, in wisdom, in life, in understanding, and relating, and the ability to actually learn more, and then the parents themselves need to be growing in their own wisdom, in their own understanding, in their own learning. But how is all that possible? In verse 7 is where we find the motto. If you recall as we were speaking earlier, what different mottos are there that exist for parenting and how people conduct themselves and how they decide to do parenting in whatever fashion they decide. Well, we have God's motto here in verse 7; "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction." This is where we find the groundwork - the groundwork for parenting. This is it. This is where it all begins. It has to; you can't go anywhere else. You can't go to experience. You can't go to these other opportunities you've had or what you think and the opinions that you've come up with. You come back to this. Where does knowledge all begin that you want to pass onto your child? "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction." This is where it all starts. This is a question of epistemology. How do we know what we know? How can we know? God tells us the starting point for any knowledge of any sort is the fear of the Lord; this is what it comes down to. Just as you can't have an alphabet without the letters that make it up, and you can't have the practice of mathematics without the establishment of numbers, so too, you can't have knowledge without "The fear of the Lord..." This is where it starts.

So, you think, well, why "The fear of the Lord..."? Why can't it just be kind of knowledge of the Lord? Why can't it just be the Lord? Why does it have to be "The fear of the Lord..."? Can't it be enough to maybe just acknowledge God in a general sense, to have some awareness of God? But you and I quickly know that just because someone might grant that God exists, just because someone might believe that God exists, it doesn't mean they have the true key to knowledge. It doesn't mean that they truly know. It's as if someone might acknowledge that there are police officers but they continue to live in lawlessness - they continue to rob and to engage in felonies and traffic violations, but once that person becomes aware of jail and consequences, they wake up and now they have this knowledge, and this

knowledge is they're fearful of cops. They're fearful of the law in some sense or another, and so many of us still do shrink in our seats when we see a cop as we're driving; there's this healthy fear there. It's as if someone acknowledges, yeah, you know, I think Newton was a kind of a smart guy, and there is the law of gravity. I get that. But they still attempt to defy it by jumping from rooftop to rooftop, and it's not until they experience extreme pain and consequences of falling that this fear of gravity informs how they now live with caution.

Just to know God, just to have some awareness or concept of a God, this isn't enough; that's not knowledge - that's not true knowledge because the God you know isn't the true God. If you had true knowledge of the true God, you would be trembling; that's the difference. You'd be fearful. Acknowledging God without fearful submission is not true knowledge. In fact, to live such a life, to live in such a way that there is a god, but you're not really concerned about him, and you have no fearful submission to him, there's some serious consequences to it. Just like ignoring cops and ignoring gravity has serious consequences, ignoring the truth of who God is has serious consequences. Such a life equals unbelief, and there's God's judgment to face in eternity. In fact, if you want to boil it down, failing to fear God is the most foolish decision any person could ever make. It's the most foolish thing you could do to only think there is a god but not to fear Him. It's absolute folly.

The second half of our verse describes this as "...despise[ing] wisdom and instruction." There is wisdom, but you just despise it. It's the most foolish thing you could do. Failing to teach the fear of God is the most foolish parenting style there is. Failing to implement the fear of the Lord in children is folly just as well. Think about, I mean, such parenting technique as this, it's disguised; this idea of not telling your children about "The fear of the Lord..." or not instructing or not making this a point. Sometimes it's disguised as being open and tolerant to children, letting them figure out for themselves, letting them find their own way, talk about it only if they bring it up. This type of approach - it's disguised as a very kind and nice way to parent. But in reality, it's a technique of despising God's wisdom and instruction. In fact, such parenting attempts to ignore God's wrath all out or pretend that it won't be that bad in the end. You see, silence on the issue is pretending that God has no wrath stored up for mankind and pretending like it's not that bad is an absolute misunderstanding of who God is. In reality,

failing to teach “The fear of the Lord...” to children leads them into the most fearful position possible where they will then have to stand before God and give an account for their life to Him, the Judge of the whole universe.

So, it’s folly to ignore this. It’s folly to not be fearful of the Lord. But how then can this principle work positively for believers? How can “The fear of the Lord...” be implemented for parents? This principle simply put, it deals with the prominent issue of eternity, and parents cannot shy away from this. Parents cannot ignore these questions or these discussions; rather, they should see them as a fastball right down the middle, perfect for swinging and hitting a home run. Embrace the discussion of eternity, encourage the discussion of eternal matters; this is where it has to begin because, naturally, the youth will gravitate towards fearing that which they see. And we have Jesus’ words to challenge that; “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28) This is vital. The follower of Christ builds his life around this eternal reality, that what you see and what you feel and what you experience and the desire to please those around you and to live for them is only the here and now, but there is someone greater, God Himself who can actually do harm to your soul. You must give an account to Him.

A faithful parent builds their parenting around the eternal not the earthly quality of their child’s life. So, what will parents prioritize with their children? Will they clear the way for their child to have all the time in the world to devote to sports? Will they obsess over schooling and what are the best options possible to give their child the best education possible? Will they surround their child with other families and relationships that are going to make for, surely, a great social life for their child? Or, are they going to keep their child in and build up and make the tightest of bonds possible in the family and emphasize the family over all things? All these are approaches that parents take, emphasizing them to the position of prominent priority, but a parent that truly understands the fear of the Lord, and the good that it does bring for their child, will speak of God’s character. This parent will be eager to tell their children about the good God that created all things, the good God who is actually holy and perfect at the same time. He is a loving God, yes, but He also is a just judge, and He judges all who live on this earth. This parent will continue to speak of man’s character and the trouble that man is in - the fact that man has sinfully rebelled against this good God since day 1 - that man has turned his back on God, wants nothing

to do with Him. “There is none righteous, not even one...” (Matthew 3:10) That man deserves this punishment of God’s wrath because he did not honor God with the life he was given.

But it doesn’t stop there. It continues as the parent teaches their children of the perfect substitute and Savior Jesus Christ, the one who stepped in for mankind, became a man Himself and took the punishment that man deserved, to offer that to your children, that He is the Savior through sacrifice. And this parent will speak of faith, urging, pleading with their children to repent and turn from sin, to trust in God alone, trust no longer in themselves, trust not in what they see in people around them but to submit to Christ, submit to Christ now, fear God by turning to Him. This is true knowledge. It’s when parents actually have the boldness to not let themselves be the main authority in their children’s life, but to point to an even greater authority. When their children can see that they can live and they need to live and they ought to live no longer for mom and dad, but for all mighty God and His Son Jesus Christ. You see the fear of the Lord is like a lens, and so as parents you have the ability to look at everything through this lens. You look at everything in life, sports, schooling, whatever it is, relationships, and you have this lens on, this ability to see the fear of the Lord through it all. And so, whatever question it is, whatever topic it is that comes up, your first question, your first concern every time is what does God think about that? What does God think about school? What does God have to say about this particular situation? Why? Because you fear the Lord, and you want to do what He says; that is the beginning of all true knowledge. So, parents have this world view and what they need to do is pass this on to their children. They need to take this lens and show how it works, take the child and say look through this. See how you ask this question every time a situation arises? God, what do You want me to do? What’ve You told me to do in Your Word? How can I proceed and give honor to You? This is the lens that the parents need to pass on, this lens of fearing the Lord, because apart from that you’re not passing on any true knowledge.

So, rather than seeing all of life as a list of priorities, you see everything coming into the center, like spokes on a wheel that come into the center of God, and fearing Him above all, whether it’s through school, family or sports, whatever it might be. As we see here in our text, parents have many goals when it comes to raising their children - try to raise them to be wise in

their living, in their thinking and understanding, discernment, and their relationships in dealing with one another and even in their own maturity and growth. And not just that, parents have their own responsibility to grow themselves, to mature themselves, to not plateau, to not give up, but to increase in learning and understanding in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It's a daunting task, the task of parenting. It is no light matter, and to only up the ante, we have the understanding of the culture we live in. We live right now, in 2017, in America, and, yes, the education system is messed up - morality has all but vanished with sexuality and gender confusion - culture remains tense as racial tension continues to erupt and increase - entertainment continues to parade the wrong values left and right across every screen we have - and political instability is basically seen in every news headline that is read. This is the world. Not only the goals of the parent and what the parent should be doing themselves, but now placed in a society such as this. It's fearful.

It's a scary thought to raise children in such a climate as this, but there must be a greater fear that we have; it's the fear of the Lord. We don't fear for our own lives. We don't fear for the physical lives of our children. We don't fear for the superficial aspects and items of life. We fear the Lord because that's where true knowledge begins. Anything else is a concern with what is folly and despising the wisdom of God. We have a greater fear that rules out any other pressing fear that we might feel in this process of parenting. We must give an account to Him for our parenting. We must stand before the Lord, and hopefully, we don't hear you forgot the basics. You need to go back to the beginning of knowledge. You forgot about Me. Instead, may we faithfully parent our children, and may we hear "Well done, good and faithful [parent]." (Matthew 25:21) "...in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation..." (Philippians 2:15), you feared Me above all. May that be our desire and our goal so that we can be true followers of Christ that live with wisdom and understanding in these times.