

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS
for the Week of March 12, 2017

<p>BEAUTIFUL ORTHODOXY: <i>The Fear of the Lord</i> Proverbs 9:1-18</p>

1. Think about some of the wise people who have had the biggest influence on your life. What is it about them that makes you consider them truly “wise,” not just knowledgeable or intelligent? Share some stories or examples with your group.

2. Proverbs 1-9 actually serves as a long introduction to the book which formally begins with Chapter 10. The introduction ends in Chapter 9 with an invitation to two banquets – one hosted by “Wisdom,” and the other by “Folly” (Waywardness or Foolishness). The entire chapter is intentionally designed as a call to decision. Which teacher will you choose in life: “*Wisdom*” or “*Folly*”? And what kind of person will you become as a result? Compare and contrast some key similarities and differences between the two hosts and their banquets below:

WISDOM (9:1-12)

FOLLY (9:13-18)

3. The banquet described in this chapter has some interesting parallels to the banquet Jesus describes in one of his parables (see: **Luke 14:15-24**). What is Jesus trying to teach us here about Godly Wisdom in this Gospel passage? What does this mean to you?

4. In Wisdom’s view, people show their true character by their response to correction. According to **Proverbs 9:7-9**, do you tend to be a “mocker” or a wise person? How easy is it for someone to correct you? Why is that? What would make it easier for you to hear the input your critics have to offer?

5. Notice: “The fear of the Lord” is intentionally placed at the very center of these reflections (**9:10**). Why is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom? This is a theme we see repeated often throughout the Scriptures (see: **Prov. 1:7, 28-29; 2:5; 8:12-13; Psalm 111:10; Gen. 22:12, etc.**). What exactly is the fear of the Lord? How does this phrase make you feel? Why is that?

6. What do we learn from each of the passages below about “the fear of the Lord”?

Isaiah 6:1-5

Habakkuk 3:16

Mark 4:35-41

Mark 5:1-17

7. **1 John 4:18** says: “Perfect love drives out fear.” Does this contradict or override the call for God’s people to fear the Lord? Why or why not? What’s the difference between the two?

8. Eugene Peterson writes: “Fear-of-the-Lord is the best term we have to point to this way of life we cultivate as Christians . . . A world has been opened up to us by revelation in which we find ourselves walking on holy ground and living in sacred time . . . The moment we find ourselves unexpectedly in the presence of the sacred, our first impulse is to stop in silence. We do nothing. We say nothing. We fear to trespass inadvertently; we are afraid of saying something inappropriate. Plunged into mystery we become still, we fall silent, all our senses alert. This is the fear-of-the-Lord . . . Fear-of-the-Lord prevents us from thinking we know it all and therefore from closing our minds or perceptions off from what is new. Fear-of-the-Lord prevents us from acting presumptuously and therefore destroying or violating some aspect of beauty or truth or goodness that we didn’t recognize or didn’t understand.” (*Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*)

How do you respond to this? Have modern Christians lost their fear of the Lord? If so, why? Why does this even matter? What difference does it make today?