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Prov. 1:6 “the words of the wise ***and their riddles***”

Ps 25:14 “***The secret of the LORD*** is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant.”

I Cor 1:18 “For the word of the cross is ***foolishness to those who are perishing***, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

6

Prov. 1:7 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge...” (also 9:10 & 15:33)

Fear of the LORD = *an attitude* of reverence, awe, and carefulness toward God and submission to Him ***that result in obedience to God*** and hatred of evil.

Ps 111:10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all ***those who do His commandments***; His praise endures forever.”

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Prov. 1:7 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge...” (also 9:10 & 15:33)

Eccl 12:13-14 “The conclusion, when all has been heard, is ***fear God and keep His commandments***, because this applies to every person. ***For God will bring every act to judgment***, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.”

8

Charles Bridges (1846):

The fear of the Lord “is ***that affectionate reverence*** by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father’s law. His wrath is so bitter, and His love is so sweet; that hence springs ***an earnest desire to please Him, and...a holy watchfulness and fear that he might not sin against Him.***”

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Prov 3:5-6 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."
Prov 3:7 "***Do not be wise in your own eyes....***"

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Prov 12:15 "The way of ***a fool is right in his own eyes***, but a wise man listens to counsel."

Prov 14:12 "There is a way which ***seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.***"

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Prov 9:9 "Give instruction to a wise man and he will ***be still wiser***, Teach a righteous man and he will ***increase his learning.***"

9:10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom..."

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"For I am confident of this very thing, that ***He who began a good work in you will perfect it*** until the day of Christ Jesus."
Philippians 1:6

13

“Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do... **I press on toward the goal** for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Phil 3:12-14

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What was Paul's goal?

“...whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ....I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord....***that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings***” Phil 3:7-10

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How do we continue to grow?

- I Pet 2:2 = by cultivating a desire for the word the way a baby desires milk.
- II Tim 3:15-17 = by continuing in the scriptures and building on what you have learned with new learning.

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Prov 2:1-4 notice the commands:

“... ***receive*** my words...***treasure*** my commandments ***make*** your ear ***attentive*** ... ***incline*** your heart ... ***cry*** for discernment ... ***lift*** your voice for understanding ... ***seek*** her as silver...***search*** for her as hidden treasures; ***Then you will discern the fear of the LORD and discover the knowledge of God.***”

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Prov. 2:10 “For wisdom will ***enter your heart....***”

Prov. 2:7 the LORD...“***stores up sound wisdom***
for the upright....”

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Two responses to the Word (James 1:21-25):

1. Close my ears, justify myself; remain unchanged = self-deceived! (James 1:22b-24)
2. Receive the word, hear, and respond by making necessary changes. (James 1:21-22, 25)

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The blessings of spiritual maturity:

“So you will walk in the way of good men and keep to the paths of the righteous. For the upright will live in the land and the blameless will remain in it.” Prov 2:20-21

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6 Essentials for Christian Maturity:

1. Keep strong and straight. Heb 12:12-13
2. Pursue harmony and holiness. Heb 12:14
3. Grow in grace, not bitterness. Heb 12:15
4. Reject immorality and Godlessness. Heb 12:15-17
5. Listen to God. Heb 12:25-26
6. Worship God with awe. Heb 12:28-29

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“Despondency is one of the great avenues of attack from the Evil One. Our discouragement is his delight, and he can use it to great effect, even for those involved in ministry....this is a call to step forward in the ‘strength that God supplies’ (I Pet 4:11)....Those who seek to follow Christ must be prepared to declare, ***‘I absolutely refuse to gratify the devil by staying downhearted.’*** He would love nothing more than to see our arms enfeebled, our knees buckling, and our paths veering off the course of obedience.”

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A checklist: how is your path to spiritual maturity?

1. How well do I accept correction or instruction?
Prov 10:17; 13:1
2. Am I willing to have my opinions changed? Prov 9:9; 12:15; Phil 3:15
3. How susceptible am I to false doctrine or teaching?
Prov 13:6,14; 14:15; Eph 4:13-15
4. How have I progressed in my knowledge and understanding of God’s Word? Am I applying it to my life? Heb 5:12-14; Prov 30:5-6; Ps 19:7

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A checklist: how is your path to spiritual maturity?

5. How much of my life is tied to the world’s value system?
Rom 12:1-2
6. Do I recognize sinful things and avoid that which would be detrimental to my spiritual growth? Prov 8:13; 22:3
7. Do I face trials patiently, allowing God to work?
James 1:2-5; Prov 14:26
8. Am I quick to give my opinion, or do I take time to think things through? Prov 12:23

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A checklist: how is your path to spiritual maturity?

9. Can I control my tongue even when I’m angry?
Prov 10:19; James 3:2
10. Am I careful about what I allow into my home and life that might influence me? Ps 101:2-7
11. Are my prayers being answered? Am I seeing God work? I Jn 3:21-22
12. Am I able to persevere in the work God has for me to do? Heb 12:12-13

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