**Faith and Wisdom**

These are the proverbs of Solomon, David's son, king of Israel. Their purpose is to teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand the insights of the wise. Proverbs 1:1-2 NLT.

Wisdom, something we all want (and if we are honest) something we all think we possess! The good news is, if we are humble and teachable, we can be taught wisdom. However, if we look carefully at this verse it declares the purpose is to teach people wisdom along with the challenging word "discipline". Do you consider yourself a wise person? How about a person with discipline? They both come together. We may receive information or revelation about what we should do, but it is discipline that helps us carry that through. It appears we can't have one without the other.

We find it stated again in verse 4. Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is right, just and fair. So if we seek wisdom we will learn how to not only be disciplined but also learn to do things the right way, the just way and the fair way. Often we think wisdom is useful in difficult decision making, but apparently there is much more to it than that. Young children often complain that life isn't fair to them. Maybe they can't see the bigger picture, but only look at life as it relates to them and their needs? Oops, it isn't only children that face that dilemma is it?

These proverbs will give insight to the simple, knowledge and discernment to the young. Proverbs 1: 4. As parents, grandparents and teachers we need to share these proverbs with the young ones in our lives. I have two grandchildren heading off to college this year, plus another one who is enrolling in a program called Running Start. Each of these young people have been home schooled. Their parents have done their best to prepare them for life. It is a joy, as their grandmother, to hear wisdom coming from them. It wasn't by accident, but by deliberate exposure to God's Word and ways. Aaron, my oldest grandson, is heading to his junior year at Pacific Lutheran University. He plans to be an elementary teacher. I already know he will need to draw not only on God's wisdom, but learn about applying that wisdom with discipline.

One day, as I was reading Proverbs 1:8-9: My child listen when your father corrects you. Don't neglect your mother's instruction. What you learn from them will crown you with grace and be a chain of honor around your neck, I realized that helping our children gain wisdom actually gives them an advantage. They will have accessories that will help them stand out. A crown of grace and a chain of honor around their neck are quite the gift. As they learn to fear the Lord and walk in His ways, Proverbs 1: 5 will come to them. Let those with understanding receive guidance.

Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser. Proverbs 1:5. Learning to apply this wisdom is more than just reading them. It takes deliberate focus and decision making to listen to them and then apply them. The challenges of life seem to becoming harder and harder, but if we are established in God's wisdom and character the path gets clearer and more obvious. If you are like me, there is "listening" and then there is "listening". When we appreciate and respect the speaker, we pay much more attention to what they are saying and become even wiser

None of us want to appear foolish, much less be called a fool. Proverbs 1:7 is the bedrock of walking with the Lord. Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. I have grown in discipline in some very practical ways, however, in others, it is still a struggle. Exercise and diet are two of the areas where I have wisdom to do the right thing, but not always the discipline to do it. So am I wise? God is helping me in these areas, and I am grateful. I encourage you to take a look at the book of Proverbs with listening ears. Look for those areas where you can apply the wisdom that is so abundantly there.

Father, thank you for helping us grow in the area of wisdom and discipline. It is the living out of your wisdom and discipline that helps us becomes more useful to You and Your Kingdom. Teach me to really listen to Your Words and apply them. In Jesus' Name, amen.