

Proverbs 9:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

Analysis

This verse repeats the fundamental principle from 1:7: 'The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.' The repetition bookends the opening instructional section (chapters 1-9), reinforcing its foundational importance. 'The knowledge of the holy is understanding' parallels the first phrase: knowing God (the Holy One) constitutes true understanding. This verse establishes that genuine wisdom and understanding are impossible apart from relationship with God. All knowledge pursued independently from the fear of Yahweh becomes futile. This principle undergirds Christian education and epistemology.

Historical Context

The structural placement of this verse at the end of Proverbs 1-9 creates an inclusio (literary bookend) with 1:7, framing the entire instructional section with this foundational truth. Ancient Hebrew pedagogy relied on repetition and memorization, making such structural markers pedagogically significant for transmission across generations.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does this verse challenge educational philosophies that claim neutrality or independence from religious faith?
2. In what specific areas of study or work do you need to more intentionally integrate the fear of the LORD as your starting point?

Interlinear Text

תְּחִלָּת	חֵק כְּמָה	יִרְאַת	יְהוָה	וְדַעַת	קִדְשׁ יִם
is the beginning	of wisdom	The fear	of the LORD	and the knowledge	of the holy
H8462	H2451	H3374	H3068	H1847	H6918
בִּינָה:					
is understanding					
H998					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 111:10 (References Lord): The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.

Job 28:28 (References Lord): And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Proverbs 1:7 (References Lord): The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 (Parallel theme): Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Proverbs 2:5 (References Lord): Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

John 17:3 (Parallel theme): And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

1 John 5:20 (Parallel theme): And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

1 Chronicles 28:9 (References Lord): And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

Proverbs 30:3 (Holy): I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.

Matthew 11:27 (Parallel theme): All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.