

**Briefing Document: "Are You Taking God Seriously?"**  
**Wednesday-June 24, 2026**

Executive Summary

This document explores the foundational principles of wisdom as presented in the book of Proverbs, specifically focusing on Proverbs 1:7. The central theme is that "the fear of the Lord" is the essential starting point for all true knowledge. This "fear" is defined not as terror, but as a deep reverence and respect for God's majesty. The document distinguishes between the wise, who build their lives on God's design and accept correction, and the "fool," who rejects guidance in favor of self-authority. To live a life aligned with wisdom, one must give God priority, treat correction as a valuable gift, and choose trust over personal control.

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The Nature of Wisdom Literature

Proverbs is classified as wisdom literature. Its primary purpose is not to tell a story or offer specific promises, but to teach the basic principles of how life works within the world God created. It serves as a guide for aligning one's life with the design of the Creator.

Defining the "Fear of the Lord"

The phrase "fear of the Lord" is central to the book of Proverbs, appearing 18 times. Understanding this concept is vital to understanding wisdom itself.

- **Reverence Over Terror:** This fear is not characterized by panic or being "scared" of God. Instead, it refers to awe, deep respect, and reverence for God's majesty as the Creator of the universe.
- **Perspective:** It involves a settled awareness that God is God and humans are not. It requires recognizing His identity and our own place in relation to Him.
- **A Controlling Principle:** In the original Hebrew context, the word for "beginning" in Proverbs 1:7 refers to priority and foundation. The fear of the Lord is not a first step that one moves past; it is the ground upon which all wisdom stands.

The Contrast Between Wisdom and Folly

Solomon uses Proverbs 1:7 to establish a clear distinction between two ways of living.

The Path of Knowledge

Wisdom is the act of choosing God's perspective over personal impulses and His design over personal desires. When God is at the center, knowledge is grounded and anchored. Without this foundation, knowledge becomes disconnected and loses its primary purpose. This foundation shapes several areas of life:

- Decision-making processes.

- The treatment of other people.
- The management of financial resources.
- Responses to temptation.
- The definition of success.

### The Path of the Fool

The document defines a "fool" not by a lack of intelligence or capability, but by their choices.

- **Rejection of Authority:** A fool is someone who insists on being their own authority.
- **Refusal of Guidance:** They actively despise instruction and refuse to accept correction.
- **Consequences:** While many choose this path of self-reliance, it is a choice that often leads to regret.

### Practical Steps for Taking God Seriously

To live according to the principle that “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction*” (Proverbs 1:7), the source context suggests three primary actions:

#### 1. Prioritize God’s Word

Individuals are encouraged to let God have the first place and the final word in their lives. This involves a commitment to His authority above all other influences.

- **Supporting Scripture:** *Proverbs 3:5-8; Psalm 37:5; Psalm 55:16-17, 22; James 4:7; Matthew 6:33-34; Matthew 11:28-30; Isaiah 30:21; Isaiah 41:10; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:7; Hebrews 12:1-2; Romans 12:2; Psalm 46:10.*

#### 2. Embrace Correction

A key mark of wisdom is the ability to receive feedback. Correction should be viewed as a gift that aids growth rather than a personal insult.

- **Supporting Scripture:** *Proverbs 12:1; Proverbs 15:31-32; Proverbs 3:11-12; Proverbs 10:17; Psalm 141:3-5; Psalm 94:12; James 5:16; Hebrews 12:5-6, 11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17.*

#### 3. Surrender Control

Wisdom requires choosing trust in God over the desire for personal control. This involves surrendering one's instincts to God's superior wisdom.

- **Supporting Scripture:** *Proverbs 3:5-8; Psalm 25:1-7; Psalm 37:5; Psalm 46:10; Psalm 56:3-4; James 1:5; James 5:16; Matthew 6:33-34; Matthew 11:28-*

*30; Isaiah 26:3-4; Isaiah 55:8-9; Philippians 4:6-9; 1 Peter 5:7; Romans 8:28; Romans 15:13; Jeremiah 29:11; Joshua 1:9; John 14:27.*

### Conclusion

Taking God seriously means making Him the foundation of life. This is evidenced by whether an individual allows God to have the first word, accepts correction with gratitude, and chooses to trust God's design over their own need for control. Wisdom begins and remains rooted in a proper reverence for the Lord.