

What Do You Want to Be When You Grow Up?

Introduction: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" We've heard it asked a hundred times. "A football player." "A doctor." "A teacher." "An astronaut." "A mom." The typical answer to this question revolves around careers and roles. That totally makes sense, but the book of Proverbs suggests that there is another aspect of growing up to which we must pay attention and that is the attaining of wisdom. Without wisdom we never really grow up. We might become older, but without wisdom we never truly grow up. The book of Proverbs, which we will be studying the next several weeks, is meant to help people "grow up" as it imparts wisdom. As we study Proverbs over the next few weeks may it stimulate your growth as you grow in wisdom.

Opening Discussion: When you were a young child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Read Proverbs 1:1-7

1. What do these verses say about the purpose of Proverbs?
2. How do the Proverbs help people grow up in the Lord?
3. What are the two types of people (v. 7)?

Steve said:

Those who fear the Lord are teachable, eager to learn how to live their lives. As we'll see later in the chapter, we aren't helpless when it comes to fearing the Lord; by the grace of God, fearing the Lord is something we can choose to do. My question for you at this point is, "How would you evaluate your fear of the Lord?" This is the stance of looking into the face of God and [saying], "I need and want You to teach me how to live my life. Even if it means huge changes, I want to be wise in every area of my life." The alternative would be to say, "God, I sort of want to live my life the way you want, but there are areas of my life that You can't touch." How would you evaluate your fear of the Lord?

4. How would you evaluate your fear of the Lord?
5. Are there areas of your life that you don't want the Lord to touch?

Read Proverbs 1:8-19

6. What dangers lie ahead for those who are seeking to grow up?
7. What instructions does the father give his son to help him avoid such dangers?

Read Proverbs 1:20-33

8. What warnings does Lady Wisdom (wisdom personified as a woman) give?
9. What is the promise Lady Wisdom gives to those who listen to her (v. 33)?

Steve said:

Verse 29 is critical for us to understand: they did not choose the fear of the Lord. By the grace of God, we can choose the fear of the Lord. We can adopt a stance before God in which we say, "God, I want to align my life with Yours." Even if you don't *feel* like doing so, you can choose the fear of the Lord. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, this is already your deepest desire. You are a new creature in Christ. You know that you are most fully alive when you align your life with God's. Choosing the fear of the Lord is simply choosing to live out your identity and your calling in Christ.

10. Do you agree that you can choose the fear of the Lord? Why or why not?
11. What does it mean to choose the fear of the Lord?
12. What counsel would you give to a fellow believer who says that intellectually they agree that they should choose the fear of the Lord, but that on a feelings level they are not sure they want to?