

If You Cry After Knowledge

Proverbs 2:3, 4, 5.

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³ *Yes, if you cry out for discernment,
And lift up your voice for understanding,*

⁴ *If you seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hidden treasures;*

⁵ *Then you will understand the fear of the Lord,
And find the knowledge of God.*

Solomon speaks often concerning the matters of discernment and understanding and the like ideas. He lays great emphasis of the importance of seeking them and emphasizing the acquiring of these qualities as a part of our lives and what they will bring to us as children of God.

In verse 3 and 4 here he uses some rather strong language to urge us to do whatever we can to make them ours and build them into our normal and regular character of life. Interestingly, he starts verse 3 with the word “yes”. Verses 1 & 2. In those two verses he (Solomon), when beginning to speak of the overarching Value of Wisdom, had encouraged his “Son(s) to:

- receive my words,
- treasure my commands within you,
- incline your ear to wisdom,
- and to apply your heart to understanding;

In verses 3-5 he then goes on to further develop the idea. He begins this second section with what we could call a “continuation” word - ‘Yes’. The Hebrew word used here is a conjunction that is fairly frequently used in the OT. It is basically the equivalent of our English word “Because” and the like and shows the “why” for whatever the previous context indicated. Here, Solomon had told his readers to receive, treasure, etc.(as we pointed out just a bit ago). We could actually read it as “And this is because...” and then go on to the follow items. We should see, also, that the word carries with some sense of emphasis as well. It could be set by itself with an exclamation point and lead with positive emotion (in this context) to the next section.

Verses 3-4 are actually adding to what went before, then verse 5 sums the who beginning of the chapter up for us, telling us what Solomon has been leading us to. Verse 5 gives us the conclusion that he wishes us to draw.

In verse 3, after the emphatic conjunction, we see that Solomon uses a particle to suggest a condition that he wants us to build into what he is saying. “if” is another conjunction and is viewed by many as a conditional use of the conjunctive particle. Because of the full sense of what he is saying we ought to understand that he is also implying a positive or necessary idea to the following

text. Yes, there is condition, but there is, as we have said, (and need to take into mind) a sort of urging to the readers (Solomon's children and other believers he was speaking to as a Prophet of God) in a real and energetic urging to take note of what is being said here as to its' importance essential nature.

³ Yes, **if you cry out** for discernment,
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⁴ If you seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hidden treasures;

⁵ Then you will understand the fear of the LORD,
And find the knowledge of God. (Proverbs 2:3-5)

We've seen the word "cry out" before in Proverbs, and we will see it later as well. It is "tiqra", pronounced "teek raw" and is used some 735x. In the KJV it is translated as "call" 528x, "cried" 98x, "read" 38x, "proclaim" 36x, "named" 7x, and variously 17x, it also appears other times (as guests, invited, gave, renowned, even bidden or preach a few times each. As we can see it is a word that has the general meaning of to call, call out, perhaps recite, read, cry out, or even to proclaim depending on the context in which it is used. We remember that there is sense of urgency here and so we can see why it is given as "cry out" in demonstration of urgency or importance. Solomon goes on to tell us that there is an object in view for this crying out. He names understanding, wisdom, knowledge, or even the idea of perceiving the meaning of what is communicated. There is a sort of urging present and an importance lent to what Solomon is saying. It is as if the matters that Solomon lays out here are essential to godly and most desirable living.

Discernment is a common word in the OT. The word speaks of understanding, seeing and the grasping of meaning and/or sense of the matter seen. Solomon is talking about paying attention to a matter and then examining or seeing what its' sense is because of your pondering of what is said. Many things are readily understood as to their meaning very quickly. But other things need us to think them through, to ponder them as to just how they relate to us, to our lives and how they will affect us in the longer term.

It is this that King Solomon is urging us for which to "cry out". We need to see the desperate need to seek a deeper understanding and to cry out for this, seeking and pondering that which is told to us and which presents itself to us as we live and walk in the world. The two phrases tell us to cry out for it and to do all that is within our grasp to try and see to it that it come to us!!

Interpretation.—To lift up the voice for Understanding is to call her to thee, invite her, not only to heed her when she calls thee. The search must be as diligent as the tireless search of the miner after the hid treasures of metals, etc., concealed in the earth, following up the vein discovered. Such real efforts will

be rewarded by that knowledge of God, His nature, His ways, His revelations, which is of all treasures the most valuable.

Illustrations.—Our Lord’s parable of the man who, finding a treasure hid in a field, went and sold all that he had and bought that field, illustrates the earnestness of purpose here recommended. Examples of it we meet with in the story of the Ethiopian (Acts 8:27, etc.), and of the Bereans (Acts 17:11, etc.), who, seeking diligently for the truth, found it and made it their own.

Application.—How much of life is spent in the search after things which are of comparatively small value and very perishable! But the knowledge of God, the understanding of true religion,—these are treasures worth seeking for, they are satisfying and eternal. I may not hope to acquire them, however, without painstaking and self-sacrifice. But is not this true of any human service or any worldly emolument? How much more, then, is it reasonable in regard to “theology,” or the science of God, and to the possession of God Himself! Of that treasure-house God keepeth the key in His own hand! For this He will be inquired of, wouldst thou have Him open it unto thee. “Surely there is a vein for the silver” (Job 28:1). Yet what miner would be satisfied not to pursue it below the surface? Wouldst thou get the best treasures? Go down on thy knees, and dig for them. Pursue the vein, bring all skill and appliances to bear upon thy undertaking. Only by earnest prayer, only by patient meditation, only by diligent study, and not without self-sacrifice, is divine knowledge to be won. The heart, too, must be purified, examined by the candle of an enlightened conscience, and swept with the besom of reform. The life of Christian obedience is a life of continual progress in spiritual understanding. To follow on to know the Lord is the way to know Him now. To know Him now by faith prepares the way for revelations which shall never cease.

O God, incline my heart to seek after, that I may find, Thee!
