

The Collegiate Letter

November 2006

How can I ever be smart enough to get all of this material down pat?

Be sure that several million students across the nation are wondering how to become smart enough to ace the exams and pass the course. The answer would include diligent study, careful attention, finishing the job and other valuable suggestions. These are all precisely true, but there is something behind them all. That something behind, that inner principle, is well worth noting if we would discover what knowledge really is.

When we think of wisdom, what is the not-always-obvious principle that we should keep in mind? We have the answer from one of the brightest kings who ever lived. His name was Solomon and he was once king of Israel. Being very smart, he brought Israel to the apex of its splendor and power. What was his principle? He stated it rather candidly in the first chapter of that Old Testament book of Proverbs. Solomon said,

*“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge:
but fools despise wisdom and instruction.
My son, hear the instruction of your father,
and forsake not the law of your mother:
For they shall be an ornament of grace unto your head,
and chains [of gold] about your neck” (Proverbs 1:7-9).*

Think of it, the pursuit of wisdom, in which you are now involved, can produce favor, riches, achievement, among many other possible benefits. Solomon would certainly insist, therefore, that there are no shortcuts, no easy pathways. Rather one must pay careful attention to *“the beginning of knowledge.”* What is that beginning of knowledge? According to Solomon, it is *“the fear of the Lord.”*

Solomon was very serious about this. We know this because he had already said, *“To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; To give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels” (Prov. 1:2-5).* From that point on in his book of Proverbs, Solomon refers to wisdom and knowledge many times. It is as if he would like to warn and instruct a generation of oncoming youth so as to save them from falling into one of the thousand pitfalls that otherwise await us in life.

The promise of Solomon is that sinners will attempt to entice us. He is reminding every one of us while we are young that we live in an evil world. The environment in which we live has been tainted by “sin.” Sin is in the air we breathe, it is in the food we eat. It is in every conversation between people. It puts its perverse warp on every statement that pretends to be true and subverts at least slightly every “fact” that is taught and each lesson that we learn. It is like rust on iron, like a sour note in a song, like the smiling face on a hideous gargoyle. It is in everything that is earthly, no matter how pure and sweet that thing may appear.

Sin is a commodity that is actively, personally promoted by people who are called “sinners.” The old adage is true that says, “Misery loves company.” Just so do sinners like to turn other people into even greater sinners if they can. Don’t let this happen to you! “Just say no!” Say “yes!” to God and “no!” to the devil.

“But how will I know what is the right thing and what is the wrong thing?” someone will say. In all probability, that person is already practicing dangerous self-deceit. This because virtually every one of us knows already what is right and what is wrong. How is this? This is because we have been endowed with a sometimes pesky little entity within us called, “conscience.” Conscience is like a little man deep within our minds who says, “This is what to do” and then gives us three cheers if we do it. When we disobey this little guy, he feels bad and makes sure that we feel bad as well. If your conscience feels bad, you feel bad too. Don’t resist the voice of conscience to the extent where he turns out the lights and says, “I don’t know if I can help you anymore.”

God gives us specific instructions about right and wrong in the Bible. Ninety percent of all of the moral acts in which we may involve ourselves are mentioned specifically in the Bible. In the Bible we are told whether our acts are good or evil. The other 10% are covered by implication in the Word of God. Concerning them, God expects us to be thoughtful, sensible, and moral. To ignore this necessity is to begin to live like an idiot. Moral idiots do not last too long in a real world. So, let’s learn early on the great lessons. The world is evil and will attempt to entice us. We are not supposed to consent to that enticement. Practically every problem in life would be avoided if we would follow that simple maxim. The sure way to be sorry for many years is to forget when we are young that the basis of life is moral. When in doubt — don’t!

We must renew our faith and convictions every day because so many others are attempting to force us to believe otherwise. The idea that the basis of life is moral is pooh-poohed by many and laughed at by even more. This is especially true in the world of academia where professors, textbooks and many a conversation attempt to subvert us. There are a lot of **false views** about life which include . . .

1. The basis of life is economic. In this view, the person who is most successful and “with it” is the one who has money, preferably in great amounts. This, however, is not true. Howard Hughes believed this and looked what happened to him. Jesus said, “*A man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.*”

2. The basis of life is pleasure. To fools who believe this, pain is evil and pleasure is righteous. Pleasure is always good. These people are called Hedonists. They lie to themselves every day. What is legitimate pleasure? It is not in indulgence! It is in duty fulfilled, responsibilities met, tasks well performed. A person who lives for passing physical pleasure as the great object of life is, in fact, dead to real things already.

3. The basis of life is fame. Yes, there are millions in today's world who labor diligently that their name might be known. To win in politics, to be a Hollywood star, to be a famous someone appears to be one of the great motivations of our time. Such individuals will do anything to gain prestige, acceptance, favor with the crowds. A roar of applause for these people is really the essence of life.

Ah, how true, the basis of life is moral, but it goes a bit more deep than this. Reality must be built on a spiritual base. It must be built on faith in Jesus Christ and, therefore, the possession of a new heart and a new life. No one has begun to understand life and reality who has not heard Jesus say, "*Without Me you can do nothing.*" The converse is tremendously true that with Him nothing is impossible. And we can be "with Him" for He came to be "with us."

This is a very good time to remind ourselves also that there are still young minds and hearts by the millions who have not heard this wonderful message called the Gospel. No one has yet told them that Jesus Christ brings new life when truly we trust in Him. I hope, therefore, that you already have a circle of friends who know that you are a Christian and who have had the opportunity to hear the message of salvation because of your testimony. I promise you that, if you are willing, God will give you many wonderful doors of opportunity to make a spiritual impact upon someone else.

P.S. Write or call for your free booklet "**The Exciting Plan of God For Your Life.**"