

THE IMPORTANCE OF CROSS-DENOMINATIONAL MINISTRY BY ALETHEIA MINISTRY IN FORMING THE UNITY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST BASED ON EPHESIANS 3:6–7

Angely Nuh Tantero¹, Andrias Kemal²

¹ STT Anugrah Indonesia² STT Anugrah Indonesia

Corresponding Author: angelyfood@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the meaning of the fear of the Lord as the foundation of all wisdom, based on Proverbs 9:10–11, and its implications for the lives of believers. The study employs a qualitative method utilizing a theological approach and textual exposition. Research materials consist of the biblical text, commentaries, and relevant theological literature, examined through a review of the literature. The novelty of this discussion lies in the emphasis that the fear of the Lord cannot be understood merely as a sense of fear, but rather as an attitude of reverence, awe, and submission—and as living in a right relationship with God—thereby serving as the basis for cultivating wisdom in daily life. The findings indicate that Proverbs 9:10 positions the fear of the Lord as *re'shit*—the foundation or initial principle of wisdom—while knowledge of the Holy One provides true understanding. Wisdom originating from God relates not only to knowledge but also to the ability to make decisions and live in accordance with His will. Proverbs 9:11 demonstrates that a life built upon the fear of the Lord yields blessings and a meaningful direction. Consequently, the fear of the Lord must be manifested in family life, work, education, and church ministry. The study concludes that the fear of the Lord constitutes the primary foundation for a wise life and serves as a guide for believers in living a life that is pleasing to God.

Keywords: fear of the Lord; wisdom; Proverbs 9:10–11; yir'ah; theological reflection

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to analyze the meaning of the fear of the Lord as the foundation of all wisdom based on Proverbs 9:10–11, to explain the relationship between the fear of the Lord, the knowledge of God, and wisdom, and to describe its implications for the lives of believers in the family, education, work, and church ministry. This study is important because it provides a more precise understanding of the fear of the Lord in Christian life. A proper understanding can help believers see that the fear of the Lord is not a fear that drives human beings away from God, but reverence for and recognition of His holiness that produces obedience, hope, and responsible living. Within the theological framework used by the sources, human beings, limited by sin, need restoration, and Christ is understood as the “wisdom from God” who brings renewal to the human relationship with God.

The novelty of this study lies in its emphasis that the fear of the Lord must be understood as a theological foundation that directs the entire use of human knowledge, abilities, and judgment. Based on the synthesis of Proverbs 9:10–11, wisdom is not measured primarily by the amount of information or the level of intellectual ability, but by the ability to use knowledge in accordance with God's will. This framework is then applied to family life, education, work, and church ministry, so that the discussion does not stop at conceptual understanding but demonstrates the form of a wise life. However, based on the available materials, the

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discussion remains dispersed among explanations of the meaning of the fear of the Lord, the concept of wisdom, the context of Proverbs, and reflections on Christian life. A synthesis specifically centered on Proverbs 9:10–11 as a unified argument has not yet been evident—one that explains the fear of the Lord as the foundation that gives moral and spiritual direction to wisdom and its application in daily life. This gap provides the space for the present study. Thus, the study not only repeats the definition of the fear of the Lord, but connects the meanings of *yirah* and *re'shit* with *chokhmah*, *da'at*, understanding, and practical implications.

Regarding the studies and literature that form the basis of the discussion, Matthew Henry emphasizes the relationship between the fear of the Lord and a wise life. J. I. Packer, through *Knowing God*, places the knowledge of God as an important part of the life of faith, while R. C. Sproul, through *The Holiness of God*, emphasizes the holiness of God and the proper human response to that holiness. The Chapter 1 and PowerPoint materials also develop the relationship among *yirah*, *re'shit*, *chokhmah*, *da'at*, understanding, the holiness of God, human life, and the work of Christ as the wisdom of God. Textually, Proverbs 9:10–11 is the principal basis of this study. Verse 10 states that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and that knowledge of the Holy One is understanding, while verse 11 connects that wisdom with a blessed and meaningful life. In the source materials, *re'shit* is understood not merely as a chronological beginning, but as a foundation or primary principle. *Chokhmah* is likewise understood not merely as intellectual knowledge, but as the ability to live rightly before God. *Da'at* points to intimate and relational knowledge, while *qēdoshim* refers to the Holy One.

The main phenomenon under consideration is the tendency to understand the phrase “fear of the Lord” as ordinary fear of threat or punishment. In contrast, the source materials explain the Hebrew term *yirah* (יִרָא) as awe, reverence, and trembling before God that moves human beings to draw near to Him and obey His will. Thus, the fear of the Lord is an attitude of the heart and a character of life that grows through knowledge of God, not a momentary emotion that paralyzes. This understanding is important because it determines how a person understands wisdom, makes decisions, and lives daily life. Within the academic context of biblical theology and Christian theology, this issue can be situated in the study of Old Testament wisdom literature, particularly the Book of Proverbs. Proverbs is traditionally associated with Solomon, although the source materials also acknowledge a later editorial process. In its social context, Proverbs functioned as instruction for the people of Israel, including younger generations learning to make decisions. In an environment influenced by various cultures and beliefs, Proverbs 9:10 affirms that true wisdom is oriented toward the Lord and is not merely the result of accumulating worldly knowledge.

The development of knowledge and technology provides convenience for human life and expands access to information. Yet the abundance of knowledge does not automatically produce a right and wise life. A person may possess intelligence, education, or great ability and still make wrong decisions when knowledge is not accompanied by a moral foundation and a right relationship with God. Therefore, the central issue of this study is not merely how human beings obtain knowledge, but how knowledge is directed so that it produces a life that is right before God.

The development of knowledge and technology provides many conveniences for human life. However, broad knowledge does not always produce a right and wise life. A person may possess much knowledge and still make wrong decisions when that knowledge is not accompanied by a moral foundation and a right relationship with God. For this reason, the Book of Proverbs gives considerable attention to the relationship between knowing the Lord and living wisely. Proverbs 9:10–11 forms the principal basis of this discussion: “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the LORD, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through me

your days will be many, and years will be added to your life.” This passage shows that, from a biblical perspective, wisdom is related not only to intelligence but to the ability to live rightly before God. In the source material, the Hebrew term *yirah* (יִרָא) is understood as awe, reverence, and trembling before God, not a paralyzing fear. The fear of the Lord is an attitude of the heart that acknowledges God as almighty, most holy, all-knowing, and perfectly righteous, thereby moving human beings to obey His will.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review in this study is organized thematically to build a conceptual foundation regarding the relationship between the fear of the Lord and wisdom. The literature used comes from the Bible and the theological sources contained in Chapter 1 and the PowerPoint materials, especially Matthew Henry, J. I. Packer, and R. C. Sproul. These three sources are not merely presented as separate opinions, but are synthesized to explain three principal themes: the fear of the Lord, the knowledge of God, and wisdom as a way of life.

1. The Fear of the Lord as a Relational Attitude

The first theme is the fear of the Lord. In the source materials, the term *yirah* is understood not as paralyzing fear, but as awe, reverence, and trembling before God. This attitude arises from knowledge of the Most Holy God and moves human beings to obey His will. Thus, the fear of the Lord is understood as a character of life that grows through an increasingly deep relationship with God.

2. Wisdom as the Foundation of Right Living

The second theme is wisdom. Chokhmah in the source materials is not limited to intellectual knowledge, but refers to the ability to live rightly before God. Wisdom therefore relates to the ability to distinguish right from wrong and to use knowledge responsibly. Matthew Henry is used to strengthen the relationship between the fear of the Lord and a wise life, so that wisdom is understood as something visible in life, not merely in the ability to think.

3. Knowledge of God and His Holiness

The third theme is the knowledge of God. Proverbs 9:10 connects the fear of the Lord with knowing the Holy One. The term *da'at* emphasizes intimate and relational knowledge, while *qēdoshim* refers to the Holy One. J. I. Packer's thought concerning the importance of knowing God and R. C. Sproul's thought concerning the holiness of God support the understanding that wisdom cannot be separated from the human relationship with God.

4. Theological Synthesis: The Fear of the Lord as the Foundation of Wisdom

These themes demonstrate an interconnected relationship: knowledge of the Most Holy God forms the attitude of fearing the Lord, and this attitude becomes the basis for wisdom manifested in life. This is consistent with Proverbs 9:10, which places the fear of the Lord as *re'shit*, namely the foundation or primary principle of wisdom. Within the Christian theological framework used in the research sources, this relationship is also directed toward Christ as the “wisdom from God” and as the way of restoring the human relationship with God.

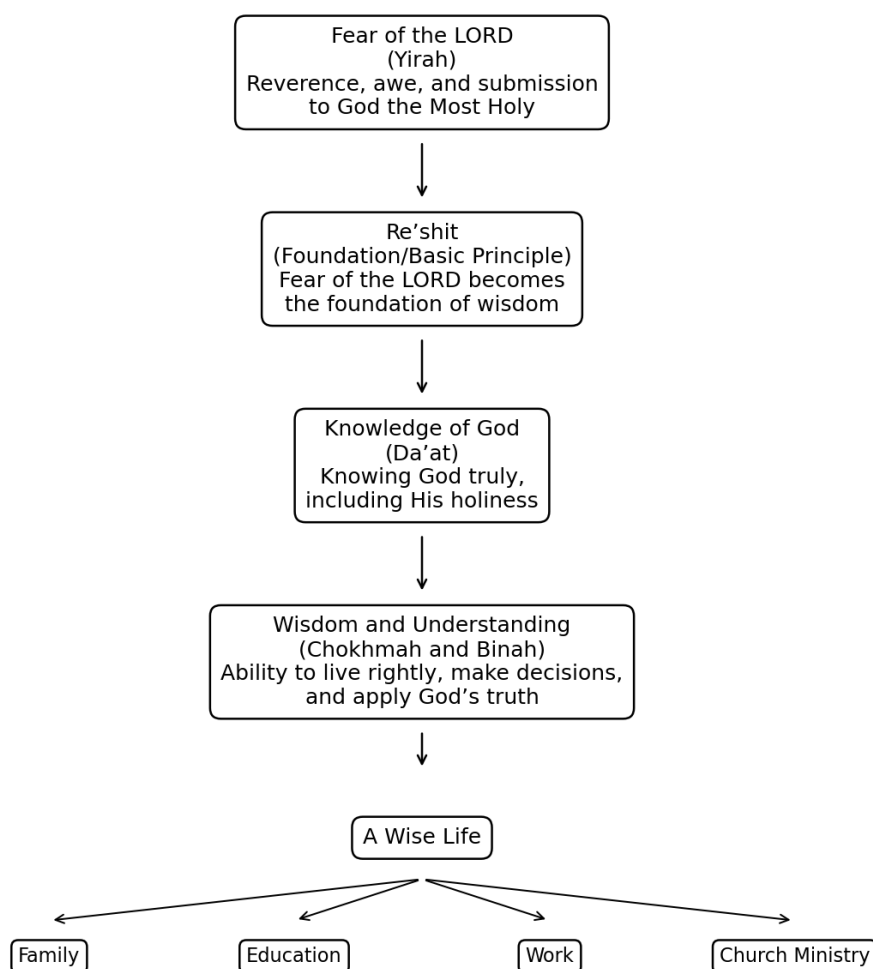
RESEARCH METHOD

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This study uses qualitative research with a theological approach and textual exposition. This approach was selected because the study focuses on understanding the theological meaning of Proverbs 9:10–11, particularly the fear of the Lord as the foundation of all wisdom, rather than on quantitative measurement. The primary data source is the biblical text, especially Proverbs 9:10–11. Secondary sources consist of commentaries and relevant theological literature used in Chapter 1 and the PowerPoint materials, namely Matthew Henry's Commentary, Knowing God by J. I. Packer, and The Holiness of God by R. C. Sproul. Data were collected through library research by reading, identifying, and grouping information related to the research theme. The analysis proceeded through several stages: reading and understanding the context of Proverbs 9:10–11; identifying key concepts such as *yirah*, *re'shit*, *chokhmah*, *da'at*, and *qēdoshim*; comparing and synthesizing theological understandings from the sources; interpreting the relationship between the fear of the Lord, knowledge of God, and wisdom; and drawing theological implications for believers' lives. The analysis uses deductive reasoning, moving from theological principles found in the text toward their application in family life, education, work, and church ministry.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: The Fear of the Lord as the Foundation of All Wisdom



The figure shows that the fear of the Lord is the primary foundation for the formation of wisdom. The fear of the Lord leads human beings to know God rightly, thereby producing wisdom and understanding that are manifested in daily life.

Table 1. Thematic Analysis of the Fear of the Lord and Wisdom

Aspect	Findings/Category	Analysis	Implication
Fear of the Lord	Yirah as reverence for God	The fear of the Lord is an attitude that encourages obedience	Believers live in reverence and obedience to God
Foundation of wisdom	Re'shit as foundation	Relationship with God becomes the basis of a wise life	Knowledge is directed by God's will
Knowledge of God	Da'at and Qedoshim	Knowledge of God forms understanding	Knowledge of God is manifested in life
Wisdom	Chokhmah	Wisdom is the ability to live rightly	Wisdom is applied in daily life

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Fear of the Lord as the Foundation of Wisdom

The principal finding of this study shows that the fear of the Lord is the primary foundation of wisdom, not merely one element added after a person has acquired knowledge. Proverbs 9:10 places the fear of the Lord as re'shit, that is, the beginning and at the same time the basic principle of wisdom. In this position, the fear of the Lord determines where wisdom begins and toward what it is directed. The formation of wisdom therefore does not begin with the human capacity to know as much as possible, but with a right attitude before God. Knowledge acquires its proper value when it is used within a relationship of submission to God and directed toward a life that accords with His will (Bible, 2026).

The meaning of re'shit is important for understanding the relationship between the fear of the Lord and wisdom. If re'shit is understood only as a temporal sequence, the fear of the Lord could appear to be merely a first stage that may later be left behind once a person has obtained wisdom. In the framework of this study, however, re'shit points to the foundation or principle that continually sustains a wise life. The fear of the Lord is therefore necessary not only at the beginning of learning but remains the attitude that gives direction when a person uses knowledge, makes decisions, and carries out responsibilities. Thus, the broader a person's knowledge becomes, the more important the moral and spiritual foundation that directs the use of that knowledge becomes.

The Meaning of Yirah in the Formation of Wisdom

The term yirah helps clarify what is meant by the fear of the Lord. Yirah is not understood as ordinary fear that causes a person to flee from God or to live only because of fear of punishment. Yirah refers to awe, reverence, trembling, and profound respect for God. This attitude arises when human beings recognize who God is and recognize His holiness. The fear of the Lord is therefore relational in nature: human beings do not merely know that God is powerful, but respond appropriately to Him through reverence and obedience (Henry, n.d.; Sproul, 1985). Analytically, this understanding shows that the fear of the Lord shapes how a person uses freedom. A person who possesses knowledge alone may use that ability according to personal interests, whereas

a person who lives in the fear of the Lord places knowledge and ability under God's will. Here *yirah* is directly related to wisdom. The fear of the Lord directs human beings to consider not only what can be done, but also what is right to do.

Wisdom therefore has a moral dimension: a wise decision is not merely a profitable or effective decision, but one that can be held accountable before God. *Yirah* also cannot be separated from the growth of character. The fear of the Lord is not a momentary emotion that arises only in particular circumstances, but an attitude of the heart continually formed through knowledge of God. Its results are visible in a life increasingly characterized by obedience, humility, responsibility, and reverence for God. In this context, wisdom does not stop at the ability to understand something, but is seen in transformed patterns of thought and action. This explains why Proverbs connects the fear of the Lord with a wise life.

Knowledge of the Holy One and Its Relationship to Wisdom

Proverbs 9:10 speaks not only about the fear of the Lord but also states that knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. The relationship between these two parts shows that the fear of the Lord and the knowledge of God do not stand independently. The fear of the Lord moves human beings to respond rightly to God, while knowledge of God provides the basis for true understanding. In the research materials, *da'at* refers to relational knowledge, while *qēdoshim* refers to the Holy One. Thus, the intended understanding is not merely knowing facts about God, but knowing God in such a way that this knowledge influences life (Packer, 1973; Sproul, 1985). This relationship is important because it shows that the source of wisdom is not merely the human thinking process. Human knowledge is limited and may be used wrongly when it lacks proper direction. Knowledge of God gives orientation to that knowledge. When a person knows God as the Holy One, that person learns to place himself or herself rightly before God. From this comes humility, because human beings recognize that they are not the highest source of truth. Knowledge of God therefore becomes an inseparable part of the formation of wisdom: human beings learn not only what is right, but how to live rightly before God.

The concept of *chokmah* then shows the practical form of such knowledge. Wisdom does not stop with understanding stored in the mind, but is manifested in the ability to live rightly. Knowledge of God must produce decisions and actions that correspond to the truth that has been known. In other words, there is a relationship among knowledge, understanding, and action: knowing God forms understanding; understanding directs judgment; and right judgment is manifested in a wise life. This pattern reinforces the understanding that Proverbs 9:10 views wisdom as a way of life, not merely as intellectual ability.

God as the Source of Wisdom and Human Limitation

The analysis also shows a fundamental distinction between God-centered wisdom and human-centered knowledge. Within the theological framework of the research sources, God is placed as the source of wisdom, while human beings are limited and exist in a condition of sin. Such limitation means that human beings cannot make their own ability the final measure of truth. The fear of the Lord is therefore important because it places human beings in the proper position as creatures who receive and use wisdom from God. The implication is that the greater human knowledge and ability become, the more humility is required. Education, intelligence, experience, and professional ability are valuable, but none automatically produces wisdom. Knowledge may be used for good or for wrongful interests. The fear of the Lord functions as the foundation that directs the use of such knowledge.

From this perspective, the principal issue is not whether human beings possess knowledge, but whether that knowledge is used in obedience to God. Biblical wisdom therefore has ethical and spiritual dimensions that cannot be separated from its intellectual dimension. From a Christian perspective, the source material connects the human need for wisdom with the work of Christ as the wisdom from God, based on 1 Corinthians 1:30. This relationship shows that the discussion of the fear of the Lord does not stop with human efforts to become wiser. There is a need for restoration of the human relationship with God. True wisdom thus directs human beings to live in a restored relationship with God and to use their lives according to His purposes. This expands the discussion from the concept of wisdom to a life of faith centered on God.

The Meaning of Proverbs 9:10–11 for the Lives of Believers

Proverbs 9:10 provides the foundation, while verse 11 presents the consequence of a life built upon that foundation. Verse 11 states that through wisdom one's days will be multiplied and years will be added to one's life. In this study, this statement is not understood as an absolute guarantee that every person who fears the Lord will necessarily experience a physically long life. Rather, the verse is understood as a picture of a life that has direction, meaning, and blessing when lived in the way of wisdom (Bible, 2026).

The relationship between verses 10 and 11 shows that wisdom has consequences for the quality of life. If the fear of the Lord is the foundation, human decisions and actions are directed by right principles. Such a life becomes more purposeful because a person does not act merely on momentary desires, environmental pressure, or personal advantage. The person learns to consider God's will in every responsibility. The blessing spoken of in verse 11 may therefore be understood within the framework of a life shaped by wisdom: a life with direction, responsibility, and meaning before God.

Proverbs 9:10–11 also shows personal responsibility in receiving wisdom. It is not enough merely to hear or know the truth; a person must respond through life. The fear of the Lord must therefore be visible in concrete decisions. It can be manifested through honesty at work, responsibility in carrying out duties, humility in education, faithfulness in the family, and obedience in serving God. Such application is not an addition separated from the meaning of the text, but a consequence of understanding that wisdom in Proverbs is practical.

Theological and Practical Implications for the Lives of Believers

The findings show that the fear of the Lord needs to be applied in every area of life, not only in religious activities. In the family, the fear of the Lord shapes how family members treat one another with respect, responsibility, and love. Parents and children need not only knowledge of good values but also a spiritual foundation that helps them live out those values consistently. The family thus becomes the first sphere in which wisdom is manifested in words, attitudes, decisions, and daily responsibilities. In education, the findings remind us that academic success is not identical with wisdom. A person may possess high achievement and intellectual ability and still need a moral foundation for using knowledge rightly. The fear of the Lord helps place knowledge within a framework of responsibility. Wise education therefore aims not only to produce people who know and master things, but also persons able to use knowledge honestly, responsibly, and in accordance with God's will.

In work, the fear of the Lord gives direction to the use of ability and authority. Work is not viewed merely as a means of obtaining benefits for oneself, but as a sphere for demonstrating right character. Honesty, responsibility, discipline, and justice become concrete forms of wisdom. A person who understands the fear of the Lord does not separate faith from work, because the same principles that shape spiritual life also direct

decision-making and the treatment of others. In church ministry, wisdom is necessary so that theological knowledge, leadership ability, and various gifts do not become sources of pride. The fear of the Lord helps church ministers recognize that ministry is not a space for self-exaltation, but an opportunity to carry out responsibility before God.

Wisdom in ministry is therefore manifested through humility, obedience, love, and the use of abilities to build up the life of the congregation. The application of the fear of the Lord in family, education, work, and ministry shows that Proverbs 9:10–11 has comprehensive relevance for believers' lives. Overall, the analysis reveals a coherent sequence: *yirah* becomes the basic attitude toward God; *re'shit* affirms its position as the foundation; *da'at* directs human beings toward knowledge of the Holy One; and *chokhmah* becomes the form of life produced by that foundation. The novelty of this study therefore lies in synthesizing these concepts to show that the fear of the Lord is not merely an abstract spiritual theme, but a principle that directs the use of knowledge and all human action. True wisdom is ultimately seen when a person is able to live out knowledge in obedience to God.

CONCLUSION

Proverbs 9:10–11 affirms that the fear of the Lord is the foundation of all wisdom. The fear of the Lord is not merely fear, but an attitude of reverence, awe, submission, and right knowledge of God. Knowledge of the Holy One becomes the basis for understanding and shapes the way human beings live.

Wisdom rooted in the fear of the Lord is practical. Wisdom influences how human beings make decisions, build relationships, carry out work, pursue education, and serve God. Therefore, a wise life is measured not only by the amount of knowledge one possesses, but by how that knowledge forms character and actions in accordance with God's will.

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