

TAKE TIME OUT - Pastoral Retreat

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Monthly Message – September 2021

Reverend Janice A. Morgan MA. BSc.

Proverbs 1:1-7 *Wise instruction*

¹The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: ²For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight, ³for gaining instruction on wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity; ⁴to teach shrewdness to the simple, knowledge and prudence to the young – ⁵let the wise also hear and gain in learning, and the discerning acquire skill, ⁶to understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles. ⁷The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

What is a proverb? Scriptural proverbs are didactic poetical sayings of a moral nature; worldly proverbs are short pithy sayings that are in general use. King Solomon makes it clear from the very beginning that his book of proverbs is for teaching people about wisdom and instruction. Wisdom is more than knowledge, which can be memorised without understanding. Those who do well in exams are not necessarily wise, it depends on how they apply the knowledge they have gained. We are all blessed with gifts and talents in varying degrees and with practice can become very clever at something, but this does not constitute wisdom. Solomon asked God for wisdom, not to be superior or clever, but in order to apply the knowledge he had gained through the Word of God in governing His people in righteousness. To gain wisdom we must first learn how to be instructed. Some countries apply educational policy that begins academic teaching from the earliest possible age. Other countries use the early years to concentrate on teaching children the skills of how to learn. They are first taught the morals and courtesy of social interaction through helpful and kind behaviour toward each other. Through this they learn how to be still and listen to instruction. Once a child has developed the skills of learning, understanding of words, meaning and insight can begin to flow. This may put them academically behind other countries to start with; however, by the age of ten, studies indicate they are far more advanced in every way. The same principle needs to be applied when reading the Word of God. There are no short cuts to understanding, first we must learn how to listen to instruction before meaning and insight can flow from Scripture.

How well have we learned to be still before the Lord? Do we truly listen to the instruction contained in the Words of God? Are we gaining insight into the will, purpose and Kingdom of God?

We have an advantage over Solomon in Jesus, who demonstrated how to apply the instruction of God to our daily lives. We know that from an early age Jesus spent time in the temple debating Scripture. So, He must have spent time reading and listening to the teachers at home. We also know that prayer was His priority as Jesus continually removed Himself from the clamour of the world to be still before His Father and prayerfully gain divine instruction. What Jesus said and did was a demonstration of 'wise dealing' in 'righteousness' to serve 'justice' with 'equity'. Our Lord met people where they were, without judgement, giving milk to those searching and meat to those who are able to chew and He

did this without fear or favour. He consulted God and followed the instruction of His Word in all things through prayerful discernment. Those who learn of the Lord and follow His example will do all that Jesus did and more, as He promised ([John 14:12](#)). Those who do not take the time to read, mark and inwardly digest the Word of God, use prayer as a shopping list, *and* ignore the Lord's example of divine instruction, are described as fools by Solomon! *What is the beginning of knowledge? Who can we identify with understanding of the Lord's Wisdom? Can we discern those among us who despise wisdom and reject instruction?*

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of gaining knowledge. Those who believe are called to seek Truth, serve justice, and restore righteousness by imparting the wisdom of God. Let us be faithful in exercising our spiritual calling of faith with 'shrewdness', 'prudence', and above all discernment of God's Wisdom. **Amen!**

Yours in Christ Jesus, Janice.

Poem: Legacy of Witness ©Janice Morgan-2018-October

When Satan aspires to strike God's own down
The fear of God will become our glory crown
When evil through others threatens to destroy
Behaviour that is blameless should be our ploy
When plots and schemes are laid at our feet
The faith of the upright, evil will never defeat
When the devil seduces with false testimony
Turn away from all evil and encourage harmony
We are the witnesses of Jesus' life
Commissioned to heal the world's hateful strife
When we speak Truth doing only what's good
We prove foundations on which Jesus stood
The Word of His Father is what He did
Words and actions from His gaze are not hid
Our legacy of witness is to be
The image of Jesus for all to see

September Calendar:

Tuesday 7th	Rosh Hashanah
Thursday 16th	Yom Kippur
Tuesday 21st	Succot
Tuesday 28th	Shemini Atzeret
Wednesday 29th	Simchat Torah
