

Proverbs: Wise Man vs. Fool #1

The area of Self-Control

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INTRODUCTION:

Throughout the Scriptures, self-control/discipline is a mark of spiritual maturity. In Galatians 5:22-23, one of the fruits of the Spirit is “self-control.” This is contrasted with a previous list in Galatians 5 which describes the “fruit of the flesh.” The list includes sexual immorality, jealousy, fits of rage, envy, orgies, drunkenness, etc---all manifestations of a lack of self-control.

The Hebrew word for “discipline” in Proverbs 1:2 is transliterated as *musar*. It’s meaning includes the concepts of instruction, correction and rebuke. Remember in our previous lessons that we laid out two important foundational propositions:

- A. The acquisition of knowledge precedes wisdom.
- B. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

With the above two propositions in mind, it is important to note that a key to understanding the Hebrew word *musar* is found in **Deuteronomy 11:2-4:**

2 Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline (musar) of the LORD your God: his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm;

3 the signs he performed and the things he did in the heart of Egypt, both to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his whole country;

4 what he did to the Egyptian army, to its horses and chariots, how he overwhelmed them with the waters of the Red Sea as they were pursuing you, and how the LORD brought lasting ruin on them.

Note the thrust of these verses. The basis of *musar* is the fear of the Lord. Remember His discipline. Remember His mighty acts. *Musar* primarily points to a God-centered way of life. Proverbs 1:7 couples it with the fear of Yaweh.¹

D. *Musar*, is said to be priceless in Proverbs.

Prov. 8:10---*Choose my instruction (musar) instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold,*

E. While the fool despises *musar*.

Prov. 15:5,32---**5** *A fool spurns his father’s discipline*

¹ Harris, Archer, Waltke, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Chicago, Moody Press, 1980, Vol. I, pgs. 386-87.

*(musar), but whoever heeds correction
shows prudence.*

32 *He who ignores discipline (musar)
despises himself, but whoever heeds
correction gains understanding.*

Proverbs and other wisdom literature speak of discipline with emphasis on instruction. Again, all of this is focused on a reverential seeking of the knowledge of God as its foundation.