

DATE: MAY 1, 2011

TITLE: "BEGIN TODAY"

TEXT: PROVERBS 1:1-7

SERIES: "GET SMART" – Wisdom for living from the book of Proverbs #1

INTRODUCTION:

(*Point to clock) The clock of life moves quickly.

The limited hours of our lives are ticking away.

The hands of the clock of our lives cannot be stopped by human hands.

Time moves on even if we stand still.

You can begin today to live wiser than you did yesterday.

You can begin today to *Get Smart* and wise up about life.

It has been said, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life."

LIVE WISELY today, because today is the first day of the rest of your life.

*****PROP:** A big clock on platform – A Velcro sign I can attach to the center that says "**BEGIN TODAY**"

*Make clock so I can move hands every quarter of an hour as I preach each point.

*The clock will just be visible through the sermon at the end Put on words:
BEGIN TODAY

I. (v.1) BEGIN TODAY WITH PRINCIPLES OF GODLY WISDOM

"The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:" (Proverbs 1:1)

1. The first six verses containing the title and purpose are actually one sentence in the Hebrew language.
2. The Hebrew word for "Proverb" literally means "simile."
3. If you remember your definition of this word "simile," it is when two things or persons are compared to one another, whether in similarity or in contrast.
4. A proverb may then be described as an object lesson based on or using some comparison or analogy.
5. These proverbs were written as principles, not promises.
6. These proverbs are to be absorbed and lived out in our daily lives.
7. The proverb is written to be remembered, not to say all there is to say on a given topic.
8. An effective proverb is brief (suitable for memorizing), intelligible (communicates something worthwhile), descriptive (colorful and concrete), and popular (shared repeatedly and deserving of public embrace).
9. There are all kinds of proverbs.

ILLUSTRATION: (Still picture of this from the scene if possible) If you remember the movie *Forrest Gump*, the "gumpisms" in that movie were proverbs. The saying, "Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get" is a proverb.**

10. Every society has its own set of proverbs that represent the collective wisdom of that society.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Pictures with some of these) Let me give you some other examples that come from our culture.

- "A penny saved is a penny earned."
- "If you're going to give advice to others, be sure you follow it yourself."
- "If you never try to do anything, you'll never get anything done."
- "Easy come, easy go."
- "Live one day at a time."
- "A stitch in time saves nine."
- "All that glitters is not gold."
- "Beauty is only skin deep."
- "Rome wasn't built in a day."
- "You can't teach an old dog new tricks."
- "Practice what you preach."
- "Nothing ventured, nothing gained."

11. Some of the proverbs we have heard through the years are hard to reconcile with each others.

ILLUSTRATION: For example, "Look before you leap" is hard to reconcile with "He who hesitates is lost." Or, "Many hands make light work" runs contrary to this one, "Too many cooks spoil the broth."

12. The proverbs recorded in the book of Proverbs span the whole horizon of practical, everyday interest, dealing with the whole range of life.

13. The wise man is taught to be honest, industrious, self-reliant, a good neighbor, an ideal citizen, a model husband and father, and much more.

14. Above all else, the wise man is to walk uprightly before the Lord.

15. These proverbs were connected with Solomon, though the book of Proverbs itself names other persons as authors of some.

I Kings 4:32 records, "He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five."

16. For most in the church and many outside of the church, when we hear the name, Solomon, we connect it with wisdom.

I Kings 4:29 says, "God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore."

(I Kings 4:29)

17. You might call this book "words of wisdom," for truly, that is what we see flowing from these pages.

18. In fact, the words "wisdom" and "wise" are found some 125 times in this book.

19. When we speak of Hebrew wisdom, or the wisdom literature, we are using the term "wisdom" in a technical sense for a cultural and religious phenomenon in the life of ancient Israel.

20. The wisdom tradition is much more than proverbial sayings among the common people.

21. Wisdom in Israel was a way of thinking and speaking, to provide guidance for living by promoting rules of moral order, insight offering perceptiveness and answers to the problems of life, to explore the meaning of life through reflection, speculation, and debate.

22. This optimistic and hope-filled book is full of practical truths for living.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture of Jungles of Eastern Sri Lanka) Mart De Haan writes, “In the jungles of eastern Sri Lanka, 15 soldiers of a government commando unit were saved by two dogs adopted as mascots. According to a news report, the soldiers were completing a 10-mile hike when their dogs sensed danger. Running ahead toward a water hole where the unit planned to rest, the dogs suddenly began barking and circling the area. The troops searched carefully and found 12 buried grenades attached to a taut wire trigger.

It’s intriguing to think about those two jungle mascots whose senses were tuned to the smell of danger. The soldiers escaped serious injury and even death because they listened to those barking dogs.

It’s disturbing to realize, however, that sometimes we are apt to give less credibility and attention to more faithful protectors. How many times have we resented a father’s warnings or a mother’s advice? How often have we grown tired of pastoral pleadings or a fellow believer’s caution?

Yet, how wise and loving is our God! He sends His messengers to whisper, to plead, and sometimes to howl about hidden dangers, which can do grave harm to our physical and spiritual lives. Let’s be wise and listen to the warnings.” --Mart De Haan

**** Move hands to quarter after. The clock of life moves quickly. BEGIN TODAY WITH PRINCIPLES OF GODLY WISDOM**

II. (v.2) BEGIN TODAY WITH THE PROFITS OF GODLY WISDOM

“for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight;”
(Proverbs 1:2)

1. The purpose of the book of Proverbs is found in chapter 1:2-6.
2. In these verses, we find some of the benefits attained from godly wisdom.
3. The Hebrew word translated “attaining” carries the sense of a personal encounter and fellowship with God that goes beyond merely intellectual curiosity.
4. To “attain” was not just getting the facts but an act of commitment and experience.
5. To “attain” meant not just having knowledge in the head but to have it also in the heart.
6. It is not wisdom in the head but the heart.
7. To “attain” meant the wise man had come to know personally the all-wise God Himself.
8. The Hebrew word translated “wisdom” used here and in Proverbs usually refers to some kind of skill or ability.
9. It signifies skillful living and consists of the ability to make wise choices and live successfully according to the moral standards of the covenant community.
10. The Hebrew word for wisdom is distinguished from knowledge, because a person can have a mind full of facts, yet lack authentic wisdom.

11. It is more than just knowledge, for knowledge in and of itself can be a very damaging thing.

ILLUSTRATION: In July of 2006, a world-famous geneticist (William French Anderson) was convicted of child molestation charges. In a press conference, his attorney said, "Nothing about having a 176 I.Q. means you have good judgment." ("The Buzz," World (7-29-06), p. 12)

12. Wisdom is often seen as the result of intelligence, education, old age, or experience, in other words, the school of Hard knocks.

13. Biblically, Proverbs understands wisdom as something greater, including but surpassing each of those.

14. Just having a lot of information can lead you to be very arrogant and very proud and very difficult, leaving you puffed up.

15. The apostle Paul said, "**Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.**" (**1 Corinthians 8:1b**)

16. Knowledge is a starting place, for knowledge can give you principles, but wisdom is practice.

17. In the teaching of the wise men of Israel, wisdom represents not so much knowledge as the ability to use knowledge effectively.

ILLUSTRATION: *"Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living; the other helps you make a life." (Sandra Carey)

18. God wants to change the culture within us which will help us deal with the culture around us.

19. The Bible gives us a culture of wisdom that is counter-culture to the culture of the world.

20. Wisdom of the world says, "If it feels good do it," but godly wisdom says, "Do what is right."

21. Wisdom of the world says, "Look out for number one," and godly wisdom says, "God is number one."

22. The book of James, one of the wisdom books in the New Testament, tells us. "Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." James 1:22)

23. James talks about different kinds of wisdom and how we know we have wisdom.

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom." (James 3:13)

24. First thing that wisdom brings is a lot of humility

"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere." (James 3:17)

25. Those who have wisdom have the ability to face life honestly and to live it so that God's purposes are fulfilled in their lives.

26. Wisdom is not theoretical but practical.

27. A wise person does not just say wise words; he or she is skillful at living life to its fullest.

28. The pursuit of wisdom is one of the most important things in life we can do.

“Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Esteem her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you.” (Proverbs 4:5-8)

29. We pursue wisdom by asking God for wisdom.

“For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.” (Proverbs 2:6)

30. Admit your need of wisdom, or lack of wisdom, and ask God for wisdom.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.” James 1:5

31. Today, you and I will need wisdom.

32. The wisdom of the world offers little, but God’s wisdom offers much.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF WISDOM

○ Wisdom will save you from self-destructive behavior.

“Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse...” (Proverbs 2:12)

“Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble;” (Proverbs 3:23)

○ Wisdom will keep you healthy and prolong your life.

“Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones” (Proverbs 3:7-8)

“Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace.” (Proverbs 3:17)

○ Wisdom is strongly connected to prosperity.

“for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.”

(Proverbs 3:2)

○ Wisdom will bring rewards.

“If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you;” (Proverbs 9:12a)

33. Discipline is a word found more often in Proverbs than elsewhere in the Old Testament.

34. Discipline can refer to the physical correction a parent gives a wayward child or to wise counsel and direction

35. By God's grace, the book of Proverbs gives skill and discipline in holy living and enables each of us to have God's insight on how to live lives that will glorify Him; how to build up others; and how to be at peace with ourselves, and how distinguish permanent values from immediate gratifications.

36. The practical result of applying wisdom is a disciplined and prudent life.

(Proverbs 1:3) “for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair;”

37. Prudence is good conduct, for a prudent life will be demonstrated by doing what is right and just and fair.

38. Though aimed at the young and inexperienced, it has something in it for everybody and for all stages of life.

(Proverbs 1:4) “for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young – ”

39. All are invited to become wise.

40. Wisdom is for everyone.

ILLUSTRATION: There's a story about a proud young man who came to Socrates asking for knowledge. He walked up to the muscular philosopher and said, "O great Socrates, I come to you for knowledge." Socrates recognized a pompous numbskull when he saw one. He led the young man through the streets, to the sea, and chest deep into water. Then he asked, "What do you want?"

"Knowledge, O wise Socrates," said the young man with a smile.

Socrates put his strong hands on the man's shoulders and pushed him under. Thirty seconds later, Socrates let him up. "What do you want?" he asked again.

"Wisdom," the young man sputtered, "O great and wise Socrates."

Socrates crunched him under again. Thirty seconds passed, thirty-five. Forty. Socrates let him up. The man was gasping. "What do you want, young man?"

Between heavy, heaving breaths, the fellow wheezed, "Knowledge, O wise and wonderful..."

Socrates jammed him under again. Forty seconds passed. Fifty. "What do you want?"

"Air!" the young man screeched. "I need air!"

"When you want knowledge as you have just wanted air, then you will have knowledge."

41. There are many benefits from godly wisdom.

42. Godly wisdom is available from God for those who want it.

*Move clock hands to half past the hour. The clock of life moves quickly. **BEGIN TODAY WITH THE PROFITS OF GODLY WISDOM**

III. (vs. 5-6) BEGIN TODAY BY PERCEPTIVE LISTENING AND LEARNING

"...let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance – for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise." (Proverbs 1:5-6)

1. Are you a good listener?
2. A listening and learning heart is the sign of wisdom.
3. Even the wise can be wiser.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture with this) *Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you would have preferred to talk." Doug Larson.

4. A true listener learns from their listening so that it adds to their learning.

ILLUSTRATION: I remember talking to a staff person some years ago. They had a problem and they came to see me. I said to this person, "I talked to you about this a few days ago but you didn't listen." Their response was, "I listened. I just didn't do anything about what you said."

5. To hear is never only the passive reception of a message.
6. It includes relaying the message to the hands and feet with a resultant action.
7. The wise listener is never content to just store up truth in the mind.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture with this **) “A wise man learns from the mistakes of others. Nobody lives long enough to make them all himself.”

8. We are not called to just store up the good information and truth, but we must practice it.

ILLUSTRATION: (Picture with this**) As someone once said, “If you think you know everything, you have a lot to learn.”**

9. We are to be continual learners.

ILLUSTRATION: David Roper tells this story. “I’ll never forget Jake. His legs seemed too thin and spindly to hold him against the current of the river. His patched and discolored waders looked older than he was. His fishing vest was tattered and held together with safety pins; his ancient hat was battered and sweat-stained; his antiquated fly rod was scarred and taped. I watched as he worked his way upstream to a patch of quiet water and began to cast. Then I took notice! He was fishing the same water I had fished earlier in the day and catching trout where I had caught none. Here was a man who could teach me a thing or two. All I had to do was ask.”

10. Willingness to learn is a mark of those who are truly wise.

11. We gain insight when we listen to those who have gone before and who know more than we do.

12. We miss out when pride gets in the way, for pride stops learning.

13. We’re able to learn from God’s word and from others when we humble ourselves and acknowledge how little we know.

ILLUSTRATION:

**There’s so much wisdom to be learned,
So many ways for me to grow,
Lord, I would listen like a child,
And learn what You would have me know. —K. De Haan**

14. To listen and to learn is to get guidance through others.

15. A teachable spirit results in learning and guidance.

16. Discerning people can obtain guidance from the proverbs so that they might continue in the right ways.

17. As verse 6 implies, “A proverb has to get under our skin so we can apply it.”

18. The Hebrew word translated ‘guidance’ refers to the ability to successfully navigate life, prompting one translation: “Learn the ropes.”

19. Steering a right course through life.

20. Some of his words mark dangers: “Don’t turn this way!” Some of them point to the safe path: “This is the way!”

21. Whatever he found in life, he set down here for the benefit of those who would come after.

22. When we surrender to the Holy Spirit, He is then able to teach and guide us.

“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”(Galatians 5:16)

“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:25)

23. Listening and learning can result in living life wisely.

ILLUSTRATION: In the 1990's, Jerry & Monique Sternin, staff members of *Save the Children*, responded to a request from the Vietnamese government to help fight malnutrition in the country's villages. Nearly half the country's children were malnourished. The Sternins had six months to produce results. They didn't have time to implement an outside solution. The answer to the problem had to lie within the villages themselves. Drawing from research done by Marian Zeitlin at Tufts University, the Sternins applied the theory of "positive deviants" to their Vietnamese setting. In each of the four villages where they began working, they found parents whose children were well nourished and thriving but who had access to the same resources as those parents whose children were malnourished. If it could be discovered what the parents of the thriving children did that "deviated" (hence the term *deviants*) from the others, then those practices could be instilled and passed on to the others in the village. *Positive deviants* are those in every community who, using the identical resources, have discovered how to get better results than those around them.

The Sternins discovered that the "deviant" parents were straining tiny shrimp and crabs from the rice paddies and collecting sweet-potato greens to add to their staple diet of rice. These protein and vitamin-rich foods, added to the carbohydrates in rice, allowed the children to thrive.

Armed with these findings, the Sternins went from four villages to sixteen villages and eventually reached 2.2 million Vietnamese people in 265 villages. The program has since been implemented by Save the Children in over twenty countries and has resulted in thousands of saved lives.

24. God give us discerning hearts so we can receive the guidance we see.

25. Do you have a teachable heart and spirit?

* Move hands of clock to $\frac{3}{4}$ past hour. The clock of life moves quickly. **BEGIN TODAY BY PERCEPTIVE LISTENING AND LEARNING**

IV. (v.7) BEGIN TODAY BY PUTTING GOD IN THE CENTER OF YOUR LIFE **"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline." (Proverbs 1:7)**

1. The theme or motto of the book of Proverbs is expressed in a classic statement that is echoed often.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." (Proverbs 9:10)

"The fear of the Lord teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor." (Proverbs 15:33)

2. The phrase, "the fear of the Lord," occurs more times in Proverbs than anywhere else in the Old Testament.

3. Its placement at the beginning of the book (1:7), at the conclusion of Part One (9:10), and at the very end of the book, testifies to the centrality of the idea of the fear of the Lord in the book as a whole.

4. Proverbs uses “the fear of the Lord” to indicate the highest kind of relationship of a man with his God, expressed in his commitment to the will and purpose of God for him.
5. Every wise saying we find in Proverbs goes back to the foundational principle of “the fear of the Lord.”
6. Generally, the Hebrew word ‘fear’ can have one of three meanings; It can mean terror, it can mean respect, or it can mean worship.
7. In Proverbs, fear of the Lord is a posture of reverent worship of God.
8. To fear God is to sense His awesomeness.
9. It is a fear that produces a submissive attitude toward God.
10. To fear God is not about being afraid of Him but refers to standing in awe of Him because the meaning of everything and the destiny of every person are determined by what God is and does.
11. To fear God is to make Him the center of our lives.
12. To fear God means that everything else in our lives is secondary and submissive to God.

ILLUSTRATION: Thomas Watson, a pastor who lived back in the 1600’s, understood it well when he said * “A good Christian useth the world for his necessity, but his main work is to draw near to God.” (THOMAS WATSON, c.1620-1686)**

13. In our increasingly dangerous world, there are many things that can bring fear. Ominous terrorist threats, frightening crime rates, increasing natural disasters, sobering energy crises, and the list goes on.
14. When we truly fear God, it puts all the other fears of life in perspective.

ILLUSTRATION:* “The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God, you fear nothing else; whereas, if you do not fear God, you fear everything else.” Oswald Chambers**

15. Those who fear God need not fear the world.

“He who fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.” (Proverbs 14:26-27)

“Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.” Proverbs 29:25)

16. He becomes our refuge from the fears of this world and in Him we find peace.
17. We are to fear the God of God’s making not the God of our own making.

ILLUSTRATION: **“The turning point in our lives is when we stop seeking the God we want and start seeking the God who is.” (Patrick Morley)

18. The scripture says, “Fear of the Lord” which is the Hebrew word “Yahweh.”
19. Yahweh was God’s personal name to Israel in the Old Testament, His special covenant name.
20. Put the word "fear" together with the personal name of God, and what you have is a statement that the first principle of wisdom is to be a worshipper of the true God who lives in awe of God.
21. The phrase "fear of Yahweh" means more than simply acknowledging God in our lives.

ILLUSTRATION: As one person said, “It is not like the cowboy who tips his hat to the creator but then lives an independent life.”

22. “Fear of Yahweh” refers to a special kind of relationship.

23. To live wisely, we first need to establish an authentic relationship with God.

24. This relationship is best described as a covenant relationship, a relationship of mutual trust and commitment.

25. When Jesus Christ came into the world, He opened the doors to all to know God through what He called a new covenant.

26. We come to know God in the way described by this phrase when we trust in Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection, believing that He ushers us into a personal relationship with God.

ILLUSTRATION: ** Researcher George Barna said, “Americans know all about Jesus but surprisingly few know him.”

27. To fear God is to know God in a personal and life-transforming way through faith in Jesus Christ.

28. Wise living according to scripture starts with a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

29. The fear of God affects life itself!

“The fear of the Lord leads to life:...” (Proverbs 19:23a)

30. To fear of God moves people to seek instruction and wisdom.

31. If the purpose of this book is to make us wise, then the goal of this book is to bring us into a deeper relationship with the Lord, to fear the Lord and to hate evil.

32. This relationship impacts how we live.

“Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil.” (Proverbs 16:6)

33. When we acknowledge that greatness and trust in Him, we no longer want to sin against Him, for we want to please Him by the way we live.

“Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.” (I Thessalonians 4:1)

34. To fear God is to want to please Him more and more by the life live.

35. Smart or wise living is a life of practical holiness that flows out of our relationship with God.

ILLUSTRATION: Author Peter Tsouras said, “How easy it is to be wise when wisdom is saying what others want.”

36. Wisdom is doing what God wants.

37. A life lived in the fear of the Lord will tell on you, for it will be evident in the way you live.

38. By the same token, a life lived outside the reverence of the Lord is easy to pick out as well.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Appropriate picture of Gothic look) In 2002, the state of Missouri awarded a grant to their police department's Youth Outreach Unit. The purpose of the \$273,000 grant was to battle Goth culture. Although Goth and Gothic are terms with historical significance, beginning in the late 1970’s, the word Goth began to refer to devotees of a certain type of music.

The music has punk-rock origins, and fans developed a gothic look. That look includes dressing in black, wearing white face makeup, painting fingernails and lips black, and a fascination with death and the supernatural. Funded by the state grant, the Youth Outreach Unit attempted to tackle the problem of "saving" young people from that subculture. The initial cost of setting up the program was \$141,000. In the course of their efforts, the unit made a discovery that necessitated returning the remainder of the grant to the state. A total of \$132,000 was given back after the Youth Outreach Unit was unable to find any Missouri youth who were influenced by Goth culture.

39. Does the world find it easy to find people who are influenced by God?

40. Does the life you live reveal that you have an intimate relationship with God?

41. To fear God is to live a life that truly reveals that we are influenced by God and not the culture of the world.

42. The term for "beginning," as used here, includes such meanings as 'starting point' and 'chief part.'

43. The path of wisdom begins when we give God the place He deserves in our lives.

44. In this verse, the words "knowledge," "wisdom" and "discipline" are all being used as synonyms, to describe the same thing.

45. In contrast with the wise is the fool.

ILLUSTRATION: *(Pictures with these) We have all done foolish things. Can you think of something you have done recently that perhaps would seem foolish?**

- **Washed car in heavy rain**
- **Left something hanging off the car.**
- **I have driven off with things on top of the car.**
- **Tried to make something fit that did not.**
- **Hung on to things that were not sturdy.**
- **Put things in the wrong way.**

46. Using some proverbs

- **A fool is not just someone who is a couple bricks short of a load, or one whose elevator does not go to the top floor.**
- **A fool is not somebody who is a few fries short of a Happy Meal**
- **He's not even the guy who has two signs on both ears saying, "Space for Rent."**

47. Here, a fool is one who despises wisdom and discipline, treating these virtues as worthless and contemptible.

48. Fools are people who do not take God seriously.

49. Fools are those who reject the divine directives for life and walk in the way of ungodliness.

50. In Proverbs, the fool is the one who doesn't follow God's ways.

51. The contrast between the wise and the fool is primarily in conduct.

52. Fools spill over into their wicked behavior.

"Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright." (Proverbs 14:9)

53. In the New Testament, the foolish man is the one who does not build his life on the teachings of Christ.

54. In the New Testament, the contrast is between the believer and the unbeliever, the saved and the lost, those in the light and those who walk in darkness.

55. The life of the fool is in great contrast to the one who fears the Lord.

56. The one who fears the Lord puts God in the center of their lives.

57. Fearing the Lord impacts how you live.

58. It is to live a life where God is the center of our lives and our world.

ILLUSTRATION: In the 1970's, there was a famous musical called *Godspell* that had a hit song titled "Day By Day" The chorus of that hit song was actually based on a prayer written in the 13th century by Richard of Chichester.

"Thank be to Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ for all the benefits Thou hast given me, for all the pains and insults Thou hast borne for me. O most merciful Redeemer, friend and brother, may I know Thee more clearly, Love Thee more dearly, follow Thee more nearly, day by day."

59. To live wisely is to put God in the center of our lives.

60. It is making everything else fit around God, not making God fit around everything else.

****Move hands of clock back to 12. The clock of life moves quickly. BEGIN TODAY BY PUTTING GOD IN THE CENTER OF YOUR LIFE.**

CONCLUSION: Use Prop: TIME GOES QUICKLY: BEGIN TODAY

You can begin today to live wiser than you did yesterday.

You can begin today to Get Smart and wise up about life.

It has been said, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life."

LIVE WISELY today, because today is the first day of the rest of your life.

Surrender your life to the Lord.

Make God the center of your life

I. BEGIN TODAY WITH PRINCIPLES OF GODLY WISDOM

II. v.2. BEGIN TODAY WITH THE PROFITS OF GODLY WISDOM

III. (v.5-6) BEGIN TODAY BY PERCEPTIVE LISTENING AND LEARNING

IV. (v.7.) BEGIN TODAY BY PUTTING GOD IN THE CENTER OF YOUR LIFE

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