

Good morning, everyone! My name is Nina Mareko-Berdon. Today, I'll be talking about Proverbs 3:5-6 and Proverbs 9:10. I would like to read these scriptures one more time:

Proverbs 3:5-6. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit him, and he will make your paths straight" (NIV).

Proverbs 9:10. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding" (NIV).

In less than a week or so, many other students across the nation and I will be graduating from high school. With that being said, one thing that's for certain is that we all have the pre-graduation jitters, as you may say. Not specifically at the idea that it's graduation, but the fear of the unknown after graduation and the change to come because there are no more 9-3 school days and 4-7 practices. Although some of us may have our whole plan mapped out and noted, there's still that uncertainty and pressure; and undoubtedly, we're going to experience obstacles and make mistakes which is all a part of life.

But what remains the same and unwavering is God's love and righteousness even through the times when we feel like being reliant on only our understanding. With that being said, this ties me to the scriptures I chose for today. Trust in the Lord is the epitome of it all, whether in times of fear or when we feel like we have it all. Because having it all comes with the fear of losing it all. Fear.

Throughout today one word that has been brought up multiple times is fear. And like said in Proverbs 9:10, "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." But, why exactly does the fear of the Lord serve as the foundation of wisdom? The term fear comes with the idea of terror and fright. But the word fear has many meanings, from fear as in terror, as I said earlier, to fear as in the sense of awe and respect.

Now, as graduation nears, I fear many things such as finals, college essays, test scores, and so on. And one thing that I've picked up on is when we fear something, it never really goes away, which is why the idea of fear is so instilled into me. Because whether what I fear is a good fear or a bad fear, it is always present. The

fear in the Lord comes from God's eternal presence in us. With that, we can build knowledge and wisdom.

Touching base on fear of the Lord, now what exact type of fear is it? Do we fear God because God is the holy one and we are not? Or do we fear because we are in awe? It does not matter, I think. But through fear comes all these questions that we seek out answers to, which leads us to wisdom and knowledge. Through trial and error, through trust and truth, and for everything we do, always spread God's word, love, and kindness.

As I close up my childhood years in these few months to come, I reflect on the times when I could've trusted in the Lord and should've feared God more. But, with reflection comes learning and taking accountability. And my point in sharing this message today is that we all make mistakes and stumble. But always fear and trust in the Lord, and God will be there to hold us up when we fail. Now, as many of us begin our new journey and experience new change, my word to us all is: Remember to always trust in the Lord, live in the present, and fear no one but our God. Amen.