

The Book Of Proverbs



Sermon Outlines

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To God Be The Glory!

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The Book Of Proverbs

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The Prologue To Proverbs

Proverbs 1:1-6

INTRODUCTION

1. There is a great need for wisdom in our society today...
 - a. Lack of wisdom is destroying the lives of many young people, and making fools out of some who are older
 - b. Marriages are destroyed, friendships lost, souls doomed for lack of wisdom
2. The walk of the Christian is to be with **wisdom** as we go through life... - **Ep 5:15-17**
 - a. Because time is fleeting, and the days are evil, we must make the best use of our time
 - b. Too many today are wasting both their time and their lives by failing to exercise wisdom in their daily lives
3. The Word of God equips man unto every good work... - **2 Ti 3:16-17**
 - a. It is only natural to assume that it provides us with sound advice concerning daily living
 - b. Indeed it does, especially in **The Book of Proverbs** found in the Old Testament
4. The book begins by identifying Solomon, son of David, king of Israel, as the author...
 - a. Who was granted wisdom by God - **2 Chr 1:7-12**
 - b. Who became famous for his wisdom, and wrote over 3000 proverbs - **1 Kin 4:29-34**
5. The book also contains proverbs and wisdom from other sources...
 - a. The words of **Agur** the son of Jakeh to Ithiel and Ucal - **Pro 30:1-33**
 - b. The words of **King Lemuel**, taught him by his mother - **Pro 31:1-31**

[In this lesson, let's introduce ourselves to the book by considering the prologue, in which we find...]

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

A. STATED IN THE FIRST SIX VERSES...

1. "To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding"
2. "To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity"
3. To give to the...
 - a. **Simple** (naive) - "prudence"
 - b. **Young man** - "knowledge and discretion"
 - c. **Wise man** - "increased learning"
 - d. **Man of understanding** - "wise counsel"

B. THE BOOK IS DESIGNED...

1. To make a person wise!
2. To learn how to:
 - a. Act wisely and righteously
 - b. Treat others with fairness
3. To give...
 - a. The **ignorant**, common sense

- b. The **young**, sound advice
- c. The **wise**, even more wisdom

[At this point, it might be appropriate to ask: “What exactly is wisdom, and why is it so valuable...?”]

II. THE DEFINITION AND VALUE OF WISDOM

A. DEFINING WISDOM...

1. “Wisdom...may be defined as a realistic approach to the problems of life...” - **20th Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge**
2. **Homer Hailey** offered this definition of wisdom: “Wisdom is insight into the underlying causes and significance or consequence of things, which insight enables one to apply to the best end the knowledge which he has.”
3. To illustrate:
 - a. You are yelled at by your boss, wife, or brother in Christ...
 - 1) You could react in different ways
 - a) Strike back physically, or verbally
 - b) Do nothing
 - c) React with a soft, kind reply - cf. **Pro 15:1**
 - 2) Wisdom is that insight which helps you to decide what is the best thing to do
 - b. Someone makes sexual advances towards you...
 - 1) Again, you could react in several different ways
 - 2) But wisdom will enable you to react in the proper way

B. VALUATING WISDOM...

1. The first nine chapters of Proverbs are discourses extolling the value of wisdom
2. The virtue of wisdom is seen in the prosperous life it can produce - **Pro 3:13-18**
3. Its value is also found in guarding us against many pitfalls - **Pro 3:21-26**
4. Some “pitfalls” frequently warned against in **The Book Of Proverbs** :
 - a. Evil companionship - **Pro 1:10-19**
 - b. The immoral woman - **Pro 5:1-14**
 - c. Laziness - **Pro 6:6-11**

[Certainly we should be able to see that **wisdom** is of great value. But let’s go one step further and notice in particular the value of the book of **Proverbs** in regards to having wisdom...]

III. THE VALUE OF THE BOOK

A. WISDOM COMES FROM TWO SOURCES...

1. **Trial and error (personal experience)**
 - a. One’s own experiences can certainly be a source of wisdom
 - b. But there are disadvantages to gaining wisdom this way:
 - 1) Much of one’s lifetime can be wasted learning through trial and error
 - 2) One must live with the consequences of their errors
 - c. Sadly, this is the only way some gain wisdom, and that only if they survive their errors!
2. **Counsel from others (proven experience)**
 - a. This is possible if one is willing to heed the advice of others
 - b. There are clear advantages to gaining wisdom this way:
 - 1) You avoid wasting years through trial and error, thus living life to its fullest measure!

- 2) You experience life unburdened with the consequences of earlier mistakes
- c. Certainly this method of gaining wisdom is far superior!

B. THIS MAKES THE BOOK OF PROVERBS VALUABLE...

1. Instead of wasting our short time here on earth trying to discover wisdom through the process of trial and error, we can go straight to **The Book Of Proverbs**
2. There we can find wisdom that is:
 - a. Divinely inspired by God!
 - b. Proven true by generations of righteous people who lived out their lives by it
 - c. Expressed concisely in ways easy to remember (**Proverb: “a short sentence based on long experience”** - Cervantes in Don Quixote)
3. Yes, the value of **The Book Of Proverbs** is that it provides the wisdom of God Himself!
 - a. This is not to say that it takes little effort to glean from this wisdom - cf. **Pro 2:1-6**
 - b. But for those who will look to God through His Word and prayer, the promise of God is that wisdom will be granted them - cf. **Ja 1:5-8**
 - c. And this is a far better way to find wisdom than the way most people do it!

CONCLUSION

1. I hope this introductory lesson has made you want to study **The Book Of Proverbs** in order to glean its treasury of wisdom
2. In succeeding lessons, we will examine **The Book Of Proverbs** more closely by...
 - a. Making our way through the discourses on wisdom in the first nine chapters
 - b. Considering the wisdom it offers pertaining to various themes (family, work, God, etc.)

Our next study will focus on the **theme** of the book of Proverbs...

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.” - Pro 1:7

Of course, no discussion concerning wisdom can be complete without mentioning Jesus Christ...

“in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (Co 2:3)

Without Jesus Christ in our lives, there is no way to be truly wise. Have you come to Christ through obedience to His gospel..?

The Theme Of Proverbs

Proverbs 1:7

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous study we considered the **purpose** of the book of Proverbs...
 - a. To know wisdom, perceive words of understanding - **Pro 1:2**
 - b. To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity - **Pro 1:3**
 - c. To give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion - **Pro 1:4**
 - d. To increase learning for a wise man, to give counsel to a man of understanding - **Pro 1:5**
 - e. To understand proverbs and enigmas, the words of the wise and their riddles - **Pro 1:6**
2. In this study, we shall focus our attention on the **theme** of the book...
 - a. Found in **verse 7** (read)
 - b. Stated in the form of antithetical parallelism
 - c. In which the repeated terms of a poetic couplet are opposite in meaning
 - d. Typical of thought rhyme (as opposed to word rhyme) found in Hebrew poetry

[We first note that it is “the fear of the LORD” which is...]

I. THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE

A. THE FEAR OF THE LORD EXPLAINED...

1. The term **yara'** (**fear**) is the common word for fear in the OT and has a basic three-fold range of meanings - as per the **NET Bible**
 - a. Dread, terror - **Deu 1:29; Jon 1:10**
 - b. To stand in awe (in reference to a king) - **1 Kin 3:28**
 - c. To revere, to respect (in regards to parents) - **Lev 19:3**
 2. Notice when God descended upon Sinai amid geophysical convulsions - cf. **Exo 20:18-20**
 - a. Moses encouraged the Israelites to not be afraid of God arbitrarily striking them dead for no reason (“Do not **fear!**”)
 - b. He informed them that the Lord revealed Himself in such a terrifying manner to scare them from sinning (“God has come to test you, and that His **fear** may be before you, so that you may not sin.”)
 3. Thus there is also a place for such fear of the Lord in the life of a Christian
 - a. We should fear God, not man - **Mt 10:28**
 - b. The early church walked in the fear of the Lord - **Ac 9:31**
 - c. We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling - **Ph 2:12**
 - d. We should be fearful of apostasy, serving God with godly fear - **He 10:26-31; 12:28-29**
- **The fear of the LORD is expressed in reverential submission to his will - NET Bible**

B. THE FEAR OF THE LORD ESTEEMED...

1. From the book of Proverbs we learn concerning the fear of the Lord:
 - a. It is the beginning of knowledge - **Pro 1:7**
 - b. It will cause one to hate evil - **Pro 8:13**
 - c. It will prolong life - **Pro 10:27**
 - d. It provides strong confidence and is a fountain of life - **Pro 14:26-27**

- e. It prompts one to depart from evil - **Pro 16:6**
 - f. It leads to a satisfying life, and spares one from much evil - **Pro 19:23**
 - g. It is the way to riches, honor, and life! - **Pro 22:4**
 - 2. Thus without the fear of the Lord:
 - a. We deprive ourselves of the treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge
 - b. We will flirt with evil and be corrupted by it
 - c. Our lives are likely to be shortened by our refusal to heed God's word (e.g., suffering sexually transmitted diseases if we do not heed His Word on sexual relationships)
 - d. We will not come to know the love of God that gives us assurance and confidence of our salvation
 - e. When fallen into sin, we will not be motivated to repent and turn to God!
 - f. We will not be motivated to truly "work out our own salvation"
- **The fear of the Lord should be a highly regarded and sought after trait to develop!**

[The fear of the Lord serves as the beginning or principal part of becoming truly wise. Now let's notice the second half of **verse 7** which reveals...]

II. THE WAY OF FOLLY

A. THE FOOLISH DESPISE WISDOM...

- 1. The Hebrew word '**evil (fool)**' refers to a person characterized by moral folly - **NET Bible**
 - 2. It is an adjective meaning foolish in the sense of one who hates wisdom and walks in folly, despising wisdom and morality - **TCWD**
 - 3. This foolish disdain for wisdom expressed elsewhere in Proverbs - **Pro 1:22; 17:16; 18:2**
- **For one to despise the wisdom of God (such as found in this book) is truly foolish!**

B. THE FOOLISH DISREGARD INSTRUCTION...

- 1. Not interested in wisdom, they are unwilling to heed the counsel of others
 - 2. As expressed by the voice of wisdom herself - cf. **Pro 1:25,30**
 - 3. Lack of such counsel leads to defeat and failure - **Pro 11:14; 15:22**
 - 4. The fool listens only to his own heart - **Pro 12:15**
 - 5. But wisdom and delight can be attained through the counsel of others - **Pro 19:20; 27:9**
- **In the book of Proverbs, the fool is characterized mostly by his or her unwillingness to listen to the advice of others (God, parents, friends, etc.)**

CONCLUSION

- 1. Here then is the underlying theme throughout the book of Proverbs...
 - a. Develop the fear of the Lord if you desire to become truly wise
 - b. Discount the warnings and counsel of others, and you will be a fool!
- 2. As Christians, let us be truly wise by developing the fear of the Lord...
 - a. For His knowledge has given us great and precious promises - cf. **2 Pe 1:2-4**
 - b. It behooves us to perfect holiness in the fear of God - cf. **2 Co 7:1**

Shall we be wise, or shall we be fools...?

Listen To Your Parents

Proverbs 1:8-9

INTRODUCTION

1. We saw that the beginning (principal part) of knowledge is **to fear the Lord ... - Pro 1:7**
 - a. You will more likely heed His counsel
 - b. Unlike fools who despise wisdom and instruction
2. In addition to the Lord, we should **listen to our parents... - Pro 1:8-9**
 - a. Counsel that follows right after an admonition to fear (yara') the Lord
 - b. In fact, the same word (yara') is used elsewhere in regards to parents - **Lev 19:3**

[The admonition to listen to one's parents is repeated throughout the book (**Pro 4:1; 6:20; 23:22**). Consider some reasons why it is wise to heed our parents...]

I. THE WISDOM OF LISTENING TO YOUR PARENTS

A. THEIR KNOWLEDGE...

1. Your parents know you better than anyone
 - a. They fed you, clothed you, changed your diapers
 - b. They saw you grow, how you responded to crisis, know your personality
 2. Parents have the potential to provide better advice than anyone else
 - a. Unlike teachers, counselors, who see you only for a few minutes or hours
 - b. Unlike friends who may be motivated to tell you what they want you to hear
- **No one has a better opportunity to know what you need than your parents!**

B. THEIR EXPERIENCE...

1. They have been where you are
 2. They are now where you are headed (if you should live as long)
 3. They are like sergeants leading their squads
 - a. Sergeants are older, more experienced, more likely battle-hardy
 - b. They have survived what new recruits have yet to experience
 - c. It would be folly for a private to not listen to his sergeant
- **Children with parents are blessed to have advice from those who traveled the same road, only much farther**

C. THEIR WISDOM...

1. Their own experience provides one source of wisdom
2. Their wisdom often includes that of their parents (your grandparents)
 - a. Most people eventually appreciate their parents' advice - e.g., **Pro 4:1-4**
 - 1) "The greatest teacher I ever had was my mother." - **George Washington**
 - 2) "All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother." - **Abraham Lincoln**
 - b. Especially when their own kids come along
 - c. So parents often have the accumulated wisdom of several generations
3. Their wisdom may also include the wisdom of God!
 - a. Especially if one is blessed to have Christian parents

- b. Who have studied that inspired wisdom passed down for many generations
- **Children with Christian parents are blessed with wisdom from many sources!**

[The wisdom of listening to your parents should be a no-brainer. Only the foolish and immature despise the advice and counsel of their parents (**Pro 15:5**). But there is not only the wisdom, there is also...]

II. THE BEAUTY OF LISTENING TO YOUR PARENTS

A. THEIR WISDOM IS LIKE GRACEFUL JEWELRY...

- 1. “a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck” - ESV
- 2. “a graceful wreath to your head and ornaments about your neck” - NASB
- **Like accessories worn to make one more attractive, beautiful, or handsome**

B. CHILDREN MADE ATTRACTIVE BY THEIR PARENTS’ WISDOM...

- 1. “That is, filial respect and obedience will be as ornamental to thee as crowns, diadems, and golden chains and pearls are to others.” - **Adam Clarke**
- 2. “The instructions and laws of parents being attended unto and obeyed by children, render them more lovely and amiable than any beautiful ornament whatever that can be put upon their heads;” - **John Gill**
- **Children who revere their parents by heeding their counsel are made more attractive and appealing to others by such counsel**

C. COMPARE THE UGLINESS OF PARENTAL DISRESPECT...

- 1. As expressed by King Agur, many children do not honor their parents - **Pro 30:1,11**
- 2. Proverbs warn of the tragic end of those who dishonor parents - **Pro 30:17; 20:20**
- 3. Perhaps influenced by the decrees found in the Law of Moses - **Deu 27:16**
 - a. The penalty for cursing parents was death - **Lev 20:9**
 - b. The penalty for a rebellious son was likewise - **Deu 21:18-21**
- **Children who did not honor their parents were harshly judged by God in OT times**

CONCLUSION

- 1. Fortunately, we live under the law of Christ...
 - a. A time of grace, longsuffering, and mercy
 - b. But a time where despising God’s mercy will eventually be called into account - **Ro 2:4-6**
- 2. The law of Christ still expects children to respect their parents...
 - a. To obey and honor them - **Ep 6:1-2**
 - b. Even as Jesus honored His earthly parents - **Lk 2:51-52**

Note that as Jesus increased in wisdom, so He did in favor with God and man. His own example illustrates the truth of our lesson, and that written later in Proverbs:

“My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands; for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you. Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man.” - Pro 3:1-4

May the wisdom of your own parents grace your neck, having been written on your heart ...!

Beware Of Evil Companions

Proverbs 1:10-19

INTRODUCTION

1. In our study of Proverbs thus far, we have seen that wisdom requires...
 - a. Fearing the Lord, so that we heed His Word - **Pro 1:7**
 - b. Respecting our parents, so that we listen to their advice - **Pro 1:8-9**
2. What about our friends...?
 - a. Our peers with whom we spend so much time?
 - b. Might they not be a source of good counsel, i.e., wisdom?

[Indeed they can (cf. **Pro 27:9**). But the wrong kind of friends must be avoided. This is illustrated in our text for this study (**Pro 1:10-19**) which contains...]

I. FATHERLY WARNING CONCERNING EVIL COMPANIONS

A. DO NOT CONSENT TO THEIR COUNSEL...

1. A father's advice: "If sinners entice you, do not consent" - **Pro 1:10**
 2. Especially when they seek to entice you to do evil - **Pro 1:11-12**
 3. When they tempt you with promises of easy gain - **Pro 1:13-14**
- **The example is enticement to murder and robbery**

B. DO NOT WALK WITH THEM...

1. Keep away from such "friends" who are quick to do evil - **Pro 1:15-16**
 2. Their efforts are ultimately in vain - **Pro 1:17**
 3. Eventually they will pay with their own lives - **Pro 1:18-19**
- **Such is the way of greed; it destroys those who possess it**

[While the **example** in our text pertains to murder and robbery, the **principle** holds to true to all kinds of sinful conduct. So let's expand on the lesson to be learned here...]

II. THE DANGER OF EVIL COMPANIONS

A. THEY PERSUADE THROUGH ENTICEMENT...

1. Like the serpent tempted Eve, sinful friends will appeal to:
 - a. The lust of the flesh ("good for food")
 - b. The lust of the eyes ("pleasant to the eyes")
 - c. The pride of life ("desirable to make one wise") - cf. **Gen 3:6**
 2. Evil friends will offer easy gain
 - a. Such as wealth without work
 - b. Such as pleasure without commitment
 - c. Such as companionship without cost
- **It sounds so good and easy, doesn't it?**

B. THEY IGNORE THE COST OF SIN...

1. That sin destroys those who possess it
 - a. So called “friends” will eventually turn on one another
 - b. If they will **sin with you**, how do you know they won’t **sin against you**?
 - c. They will be friends only as long as it benefits themselves
 2. That sin eventually exposes those who continue in it
 - a. “Be sure your sin will find you out” - **Num 32:23**
 - b. Sin requires lies and deception; eventually one gets caught in their web of lies
 - c. Sin often carries a physical price that cannot be hidden
 - 1) Addiction (drugs)
 - 2) Disease (STDs)
 - 3) Unwanted pregnancy
- **Evil companions never talk about the cost of sin, do they?**

[Finally, let's glean from our text what is...]

III. THE SOLUTION TO EVIL COMPANIONS

A. DON'T LISTEN TO THEM...

1. “Do not consent...” - **Pro 1:10**
 2. What they promise they cannot really deliver, at least for long
 3. The truly blessed man does not walk in their counsel - **Psa 1:1**
- **Be wise enough not to heed their enticing words**

B. STAY AWAY FROM THEM...

1. “Do not walk in the way with them, keep your foot from their path” - **Pro 1:15**
 2. Do not let them be your companions - **Pro 13:20**
 3. Especially if they are unbelievers - **2 Co 6:14-18**
- **Be even wiser to avoid letting them become your companions**

CONCLUSION

1. This is not to say that we cannot try to save them...
 - a. We must be separate from the world, but we cannot isolate ourselves - cf. **1 Co 5:9-11**
 - b. Even Jesus was a friend to sinners - **Mt 11:19**
2. But we must be honest with ourselves...
 - a. Do we influence them more than they do to us?
 - b. If not, then we should stay away until we are strong enough to be a positive influence

What we have studied in **Pro 1:10-19** perhaps is best summarized by the apostle Paul:

Do not be deceived: “Evil company corrupts good habits.” - 1 Co 15:33

To be wise, we must know who to listen to (God, parents, and good friends), and who not to listen to (anyone who would entice us to do evil)...

Heed The Call Of Sophia

Proverbs 1:20-33

INTRODUCTION

1. We have seen that wisdom requires...
 - a. Fearing the Lord, so that we heed His Word - **Pro 1:7**
 - b. Respecting our parents, so that we listen to their advice - **Pro 1:8-9**
 - c. Not heeding friends who have us join them in doing evil - **Pro 1:10-19**
2. At this point, Solomon personifies wisdom as a woman...
 - a. A motif used several times in the first nine chapters - e.g., **Pro 8:1-5; 9:1-6**
 - b. A virtuous woman, later contrasted with the foolish woman who leads astray - **Pro 9:13-18**

[In Greek, the word for wisdom is **sophia**. To emphasize wisdom's personification as a woman, we'll use the name "**Sophia**" as we examine the text for our lesson (**Pro 1:20-33**). Notice first of all...]

I. SOPHIA'S PLEA

A. MADE PUBLICLY... (1:20-21)

1. She calls aloud outside, in the open squares
2. She cries in the streets, at the gates of the city
- **Wisdom is not hidden, but reaches out to all who will listen - cf. Pro 8:1-5**

B. TO THOSE WHO NEED HER... (1:22)

1. Simple ones, who love simplicity - the morally naive, easily influenced by others
2. Scorners, who delight in their scorning - the cynical and defiant, prone to ridicule others
3. Fools, who hate knowledge - those hardened to the point of hating that which is good
- **People caught up in varying degrees of hardness of heart - e.g., Ep 4:17-19**

C. BE FILLED WITH HER WISDOM... (1:23)

1. Turn at her rebuke - respond to her warning, and repent
2. She will pour out her spirit on them, she will make known her words to them
- **Wisdom stands ready to forgive and bless those who open their hearts and minds, much like God is for those who repent and turn - cf. Ac 3:19**

[The grace of God is clearly seen in Sophia's plea for all to heed her call for wisdom. Those caught up in varying degrees of hardness of heart are given opportunities to repent. But such opportunities do not last forever. Thus we now read of...]

II. SOPHIA'S WARNING

A. DIRECTED TO THOSE WHO REFUSED TO HEAR... (1:24-25)

1. Who refused her call, disregarded her outstretched hand
2. Who disdained her counsel, refused her rebuke
3. Just like Israel rejected her prophets - cf. **2 Chr 36:15-16**
- **Will we be like those who refuse to heed the Lord's wisdom and warnings?**

B. THERE WILL BE NO HELP WHEN CALAMITY COMES... (1:26-30)

1. She will laugh and mock when terror and destruction comes like a storm
 2. Despite their cries for help, it will be too late
 3. Because they hated knowledge when they had the opportunity
 4. They did not choose the fear of the Lord (the beginning of wisdom)
 5. They had rejected her counsel and despised her rebuke
- **Heed wisdom is when it is being offered, not when it is too late! - cf. Isa 55:6-7**

C. THEY WILL SUFFER THE FATE OF THEIR FOLLY... (1:31)

1. They will eat the fruit of their own way
 2. They will be full of their own fancies (foolish counsel)
- **Contrast of the righteous in times of trial to that of the wicked - Pro 3:25-26; 10:24-25**

[Too many people wait until it is too late to do any good. To benefit from the value of wisdom, we need to learn from her while we still have time. Finally, let's consider...]

III. SOPHIA'S SUMMARY

A. DESTRUCTION COMES UPON THE SIMPLE AND FOOLS... (1:32)

1. Because they turn away from the true wisdom God has to offer
 2. Because they allowed their complacency (regarding wisdom) to destroy them
- **Will we be naive and foolish when it comes to receiving God's wisdom?**

B. SAFETY AND SECURITY ARE FOR THOSE WILLING TO HEAR... (1:33)

1. Who are willing to listen to wisdom - cf. **Pro 8:32-35**
 2. Whose fear of the Lord will enable them to fear no evil - cf. **Pro 3:21-26**
- **Are we willing to listen and heed the wisdom God offers?**

CONCLUSION

1. From lady "Sophia", we learn that wisdom is a lot like the grace of God...
 - a. Opportunity to obtain it does not last forever
 - b. The time will come when it is too late
2. Today is the day to learn wisdom from God...
 - a. Just like today is the day of salvation - cf. **2 Co 6:1-2**
 - b. Who will we be like: those who are simple and fools? Or those willing to hear God's wisdom?

How we respond to "Sophia" reveals our true character and ultimate end...

"How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning, And fools hate knowledge.

Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you."

- Pro 1:22-23

Benefits Of Diligently Seeking Wisdom

Proverbs 2:1-22

INTRODUCTION

1. In chapter one of Proverbs, we began our study by noting...
 - a. The prologue, stating the purpose of the book - **Pro 1:1-6**
 - b. The theme of Proverbs, how the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge - **Pro 1:7**
 - c. The value of listening to one's parents - **Pro 1:8-9**
 - d. The danger of evil companionship - **Pro 1:10-19**
 - e. The importance of listening to wisdom (Sophia) while there is opportunity - **Pro 1:20-33**
2. The second chapter describes the benefits of seeking after wisdom...
 - a. With an admonition to search for wisdom with diligence - **Pro 2:1-4**
 - b. With a list of benefits that will come from such a search - **Pro 2:5-22**

[The benefits of seeking after wisdom are found only if we seek with the proper disposition...]

I. QUALITIES OF A DILIGENT SEARCH FOR WISDOM

A. AS EXPLAINED BY SOLOMON THEN...

1. It requires a willingness - **Pro 2:1**
 - a. To be receptive to the words of others
 - b. To treasure (highly value and remember) commands of wisdom
 2. It requires an engagement - **Pro 2:2-3**
 - a. Of the ear (willing to hear wisdom)
 - b. Of the heart (willing to understand)
 - c. Of the mouth (willing to cry out for discernment and understanding)
 3. It requires a high estimation - **Pro 2:4**
 - a. Seeking and searching
 - b. With the same fervor as seeking for silver and other hidden treasures
- **Thus a diligent search for wisdom requires an "all out" effort on our part**

B. AS EXPERIENCED BY CHRISTIANS TODAY...

1. It requires hearing the Word of God
 - a. **Note:** "incline your ear to wisdom" - **Pro 2:2**
 - b. Listening to preachers and teachers carefully (with all readiness) - **Ac 17:11**
 - c. Studying the Bible on your own (searched the Scriptures daily) - **Ac 17:11**
2. It requires meditating upon the Word of God
 - a. **Note:** "apply your heart to understanding" - **Pro 2:2**
 - b. Taking time to reflect and ponder on the Word - cf. **Ph 4:8**
 - c. Like the Psalmist sung of his meditations - cf. **Psa 119:97-100**
3. It requires diligent prayer for wisdom
 - a. **Note:** "cry out for discernment...lift up your voice for understanding" - **Pro 2:3**
 - b. We must ask in prayer with faith - **Ja 1:5**
 - c. We must persist in our asking - cf. **Mt 7:7-11**
4. It requires the same effort others expend seeking for material wealth

- a. **Note:** “seek her as silver...as for hidden treasures” - **Pro 2:4**
 - b. In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge - **Co 2:3**
 - c. Here’s a simple test to see if you are expending the proper effort to seek wisdom:
 - 1) If you worked as hard for your employer as you do seeking for God’s wisdom...
 - 2) ...would you have your job very long?
- **Finding God’s wisdom today requires the same diligence it did in Solomon’s day**

[Is the effort worth it? Let’s go now to **Pro 2:5-22** and find out what are the...]

II. BENEFITS OF A DILIGENT SEARCH FOR WISDOM

A. KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND HIS PROTECTION...

- 1. You will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God
 - a. That fear of the Lord which is the beginning of knowledge - **Pro 2:5a**; cf. **Pro 1:7**
 - b. That knowledge of God, whose storehouse of wisdom and understanding He gives to the upright - **Pro 2:5b-7a**
 - 2. You will have God’s providential protection guiding your life
 - a. He is a shield to those who walk uprightly - **Pro 2:7b**; cf. **30:5**
 - b. He guards the paths of justice (which the righteous take) - **Pro 2:8a**; cf. **Psa 23:3**
 - c. He preserves the way of His saints - **Pro 2:8b**; cf. **Psa 121:5-8**
- **What a blessing to go through life with God at your side!**

B. MORAL DISCERNMENT FOR LIVING...

- 1. You will have great understanding
 - a. Of righteousness and justice - **Pro 2:9a**
 - b. Of equity (fairness) and every good path - **Pro 2:9b**; cf. David’s prayer, **Psa 143:8-10**
 - 2. You will have great discretion
 - a. Once wisdom enters your heart and knowledge is pleasant to you - **Pro 2:10**
 - b. They will preserve and keep you - **Pro 2:11**; cf. **6:22-23**
- **What a blessing to go through life with God’s wisdom at your disposal!**

C. DELIVERANCE FROM EVIL MEN...

- 1. Who speak perverse things - **Pro 2:12**; e.g., **Ac 20:30**
 - 2. Who leave upright paths, walk in the ways of darkness - **Pro 2:13**; e.g., **2 Pe 2:20-22**
 - 3. Who rejoice in doing evil, delight in the perversity of the wicked - **Pro 2:14**; cf. **10:23**
 - 4. Whose ways are crooked, and devious in their paths - **Pro 2:15**; e.g., **1:10-19**
- **Wisdom can deliver us from evil men and their evil ways!**

D. DELIVERANCE FROM IMMORAL WOMEN...

- 1. The seductress flatters with her words - **Pro 2:16**; e.g., **7:5-21**
 - 2. The adulteress who forsakes her husband and covenant with God - **Pro 2:17**; cf. **Mal 2:14**
 - 3. Whose house and paths lead to death, and the place of no return - **Pro 2:18-19**; cf. **9:13-18**
- **Wisdom can deliver us from immoral women and their destructive ways!**

E. ENABLEMENT FOR RIGHTEOUS LIVING...

- 1. To walk in the way of goodness and keep to righteous paths - **Pro 2:20**; cf. **Psa 23:3,6**
- 2. To be upright and blameless, to dwell and remain in the land - **Pro 2:21**; cf. **Psa 37:3**
- 3. Unlike the wicked and unfaithful, cut off and uprooted from the earth - **Pro 2:22**; cf. **Psa 37:37-38**

-- **Wisdom can empower us to live more blessed, if not longer, lives on this earth!**

CONCLUSION

1. Are not the benefits of wisdom worth the effort necessary to obtain it...?
 - a. To know God and enjoy His providential care?
 - b. To obtain discernment for making the right moral choices?
 - c. To be delivered from the shenanigans of evil men?
 - d. To be delivered from the seductions of immoral women?
 - e. To be able to walk in goodness and righteousness, living lives blessed by God?

2. And what is the effort required to obtain God's wisdom...?
 - a. To hear the word of God ("incline your ear to wisdom")
 - b. To meditate on the word of God ("apply your heart to understanding")
 - c. To ask in faith for wisdom ("cry out for discernment...lift up your voice for understanding")
 - d. To highly value its worth ("seek her as silver...as for hidden treasures")

With such effort, one will not only find wisdom for daily, practical living, but will also find Jesus Christ...

"in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." - Col 2:3

He is indeed the greatest benefit of diligently seeking wisdom!

Fatherly Counsel For Godly Living

Proverbs 3:1-35

INTRODUCTION

1. Proverbs chapter two presents Solomon as a father encouraging his son...
 - a. To diligently seek after wisdom - **Pro 2:1-4**
 - b. To appreciate the benefits of diligently seeking wisdom - **Pro 2:5-22**
2. In chapter three, we find Solomon imparting wisdom to his son...
 - a. With six keys for a good life - **Pro 3:1-12**
 - b. With praise and illustrations of the value of wisdom - **Pro 3:13-24**
 - c. With six negatives for a wise life - **Pro 3:25-35**

[I like to think of this chapter as containing “**Fatherly Counsel For Godly Living**,” and imagine sitting at the feet of Solomon as he imparts wisdom by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. We first hear him speak of...]

I. SIX KEYS FOR A GOOD LIFE

A. THE KEY TO A LONG AND PEACEFUL LIFE...

1. Heed the guidance of your father (parents) - **Pro 3:1-2**
 2. The same thought as expressed by Paul - **Ep 6:1-3**
 3. Place more stock in this secret to longevity, than those given by the world
 - a. Diet, exercise, etc., are important
 - b. But here is a commandment of God with promise!
- **Do we honor our parents by giving them careful heed?**

B. THE KEY TO POPULARITY...

1. Some think the way to popularity is good looks, intelligence, or athletic ability
 2. The qualities of truth and mercy are key to lasting popularity - **Pro 3:3-4**
 3. Truth and mercy are more **enduring**, because they are more **endearing**!
 - a. They find great favor in the sight of God - cf. **Mt 5:7,37**
 - b. Likewise in the eyes of men
 - 1) No one likes a liar
 - 2) Mercy (compassion, forgiveness) is admired by many
- **Are we developing the qualities of truth and mercy in our lives?**

C. THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL VENTURES...

1. Have the Lord “direct” your paths - **Pro 3:5-6**
 - a. The word “direct” means to make smooth or straight
 - b. The Lord can help our journey in life go smoother with His blessing
 2. To ensure that the Lord directs your paths...
 - a. Trust in Him with all your heart - cf. **Psa 37:3-6,23-24,34-36**
 - b. Acknowledge Him in all your ways - cf. **Ja 4:13-16**
 - c. Don’t lean on your own understanding - cf. **Pro 28:26**
- **Do we involve the Lord in our decision making?**

D. THE KEY TO GOOD HEALTH...

1. Do not be arrogant, fear the Lord, and depart from evil - **Pro 3:7-8**
 2. Do not underestimate the harmful effects of anxiety and stress
 - a. Some authorities suggest that 50% of all illnesses may be psychosomatic
 - b. Our body's immune system is certainly weakened by anxiety and stress
 - c. Guilt is a major cause of anxiety, and can weigh heavily on our body - **Psa 32:1-4**
 3. There is also the physical cost of sin
 - a. E.g., the effects of drunkenness (cirrhosis of the liver)
 - b. E.g., the effects of fornication (STDs)
 4. Yet if we truly fear the Lord...
 - a. We will depart from evil - **Pro 16:6**
 - b. We will be freed from much anxiety, stress, and many diseases
 - c. And that will be good for our bodies! - cf. **Pro 14:27**
- **Is developing the fear of the Lord part of our "wellness program"?**

E. THE KEY TO PROSPERITY...

1. Give of your best to the Lord - **Pro 3:9-10**
 2. In the OT, that involved paying tithes and putting God first
 - a. When tithes were not given, it resulted in hardship - **Mal 3:8-12**
 - b. When God was not first, likewise - cf. **Hag 1:6-11**
 3. In the NT, it is not that much different
 - a. Put God and His kingdom first, and we enjoy His providential care - **Mt 6:31-33**
 - b. Give cheerfully and liberally, and God will empower us to give more - **2 Co 9:6-9**
- **Do we give to the Lord the "first fruits" of our time, energy, and money?**

F. THE KEY TO ACCEPTING THE LORD'S DISCIPLINE...

1. Value divine chastening as the actions of a loving father - **Pro 3:11-12**
 - a. Even the righteous may be allow to suffer - cf. **Job 1:8-22**
 - b. And God may deem fit to compensate for it even in this life - cf. **Job 42:10-13**
 2. Whatever persecution or hardship God allows, it is for our good
 - a. We should expect discipline, if we are His children - **He 12:7-9**
 - b. But it will produce the fruit of holiness and righteousness, if we let it - **He 12:10-11**
- **Do we appreciate the positive role of discipline in our lives?**

[How blessed many lives would be if people implemented these "Six Keys For A Good Life." Perhaps to encourage us to heed such wisdom, Solomon proceeds to describe...]

II. THE VALUE OF WISDOM**A. SEEN IN SOLOMON'S PRAISE OF WISDOM...**

1. Provides true happiness for those with wisdom and understanding - **Pro 3:13**
 2. Profits one more than silver and fine gold - **Pro 3:14**
 3. More precious than rubies, nothing we desire can compare with her - **Pro 3:15**
 4. Offers length of days, riches, and honor - **Pro 3:16**
 5. Her paths are ways of pleasantness and peace - **Pro 3:17**
 6. A tree of life to those who take hold of her, happiness for those who retain her - **Pro 3:18**
- **Do we share Solomon's high estimation of the value of wisdom?**

B. SEEN IN GOD'S USE OF WISDOM...

1. God used wisdom in His acts of creation - **Pro 3:19-20**
 - a. To create the earth and heavens - **Gen 1:1**
 - b. To break up the depths of sea, and create the clouds above - **Gen 1:6-9**
 - c. Its beauty and harmony were made possible by the use of wisdom - **Pro 8:22-31**
 2. Consider the implication for us
 - a. The same wisdom is being offered to us! - cf. **Ja 1:5-8**
 - b. To provide our lives with harmony and peace - cf. **Ja 3:17-18**
- **Don't we want to have the same divine wisdom guiding our lives?**

C. SEEN IN WHAT WISDOM CAN DO FOR US...

1. To make our lives "a thing of beauty and joy forever" - **Pro 3:21-22**
 - a. By offering wisdom and discretion
 - b. Which give "life to your soul and grace (adornment, beauty) to your neck"
 - c. Just as Jesus desired to give to His disciples - **Jn 10:10; 15:11**
 2. To make our lives safe and secure - **Pro 3:23-24**
 - a. To help us **walk safely**
 - 1) Our steps will be directed by wisdom
 - 2) We thus avoid many of the pitfalls experienced by others - cf. **Pro 2:8; 4:12**
 - b. To help us **sleep securely**
 - 1) For we will not be anxious about what may come
 - 2) For the Lord will guard His saints - cf. **Psa 3:5; 4:8**
- **Don't we want to have lives filled with grace and security?**

[With such praise of the value of wisdom, perhaps we will be more open to what Solomon has to offer. Sometimes wisdom comes in the form of various "thou shalt not" directives. Thus we now have...]

III. SIX NEGATIVES FOR A WISE LIFE**A. DO NOT BE AFRAID...**

1. Of sudden terror or trouble from the wicked - **Pro 3:25**
 2. For the Lord will be your confidence and keep you from harm - **Pro 3:26**; cf. **14:26**
 3. Besides, fear is indicative of weak faith - cf. **Mt 8:26**
- **Let faith replace fear in your life**

B. DO NOT DENY GOOD...

1. Especially when we owe it and have it - **Pro 3:27**
 2. As Christians we owe everyone love - cf. **Ro 13:8**
 3. We should not deny those we can help - cf. **1 Jn 3:17**
 4. Remember, to know to do good and not do it is sin - **Ja 4:17**
- **Do good unto all men as you have opportunity (Ga 6:10)**

C. DO NOT DELAY GOOD...

1. When it is in your power to do it today - **Pro 3:28**
 2. Too often, delay is a cover for selfishness, a secret hope the matter will be forgotten
 3. We may not have another opportunity - cf. **Pro 27:1**
- **Procrastination in doing good is a great evil**

D. DO NOT DEVISE EVIL...

1. Especially against your neighbor, who lives nearby for safety's sake - **Pro 3:29**
2. A neighbor expects you to be neighborly, and rightly so
3. A heart that devises evil is an abomination to the Lord - cf. **Pro 6:16-18**
- **Think well of your neighbor, that he and God might think well of you**

E. DO NOT STRIVE WITHOUT CAUSE...

1. Especially if he has done no harm - **Pro 3:30**
2. Left unchecked, strife can easily escalate - cf. **Pro 17:14; 18:6**
3. Strife can easily ruin one's reputation - cf. **Pro 25:8-10**
- **Leave vengeance to God, and seek to overcome evil with good (Ro 12:18-21)**

F. DO NOT ENVY OPPRESSORS...

1. Do not envy an oppressor (lit., a man of violence) , nor choose his ways - **Pro 3:31**
 - a. As seen earlier, the oppressor is eventually caught in his own snare - cf. **Pro 1:15-18**
 - b. The Lord is the avenger of those who oppress the poor - cf. **Pro 22:22-23**
2. The Lord will bless the upright and just, the humble and wise - **Pro 3:32-35**
 - a. But He will curse wicked and perverse - cf. **Pro 21:12**
 - b. He will scorn the scornful, and shame will be the legacy of fools
- **Don't be jealous of the prosperity of the wicked, they will never be as rich as the righteous!**

CONCLUSION

1. So we find that **"Father Counsel For Godly Living"** includes...
 - a. Six keys for a good life
 - b. A high estimation of the value of wisdom
 - b. Six negatives for a wise life
2. This chapter does not begin to exhaust the wisdom God offers...
 - a. More will be shared in the discourses to come in **chapters 4-9**
 - b. Much is to be found in the proverbs of **chapters 10-31**

Of course, Christ is the ultimate repository of wisdom and knowledge (**Co 2:3**), and many commentators suggest passages like **Pro 3:13-20** to be veiled references to Jesus.

Are we willing to let the wisdom of God in all its manifestations guide us in this life...?

Childhood Memories Of A Wise Man

Proverbs 4:1-9

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Pro 1-9**, we find Solomon pleading with his children to seek after wisdom...
 - a. Through a collection of discourses
 - b. Extolling and illustrating the value of wisdom time and again
2. In **Pro 4:1-9**, we find Solomon sharing recollections of his childhood...
 - a. Of his own father (David)
 - b. Exhorting him to seek after wisdom

[As we examine these “**Childhood Memories Of A Wise Man**,” we will find important principles in raising children to be godly and seekers of wisdom. The first memory might be stated in these words...]

I. “I WAS TAUGHT BY MY FATHER”

A. HIS FATHER HAD ACCEPTED HIS RESPONSIBILITY...

1. To teach him - **Pro 4:3-4**
 2. A responsibility placed by God on fathers - cf. **Ep 6:4**
 3. Not given to churches or schools per se
 - a. They may serve as aids
 - b. They should not become crutches
 4. For they are inadequate to teach as God intended - cf. **Deu 6:6-9**
 - a. God’s Word is to permeate the household
 - b. Something the church and school alone cannot provide
- **Blessed are children that have fathers who accept their responsibility!**

B. WHEN FATHERS FAIL TO FULFILL THEIR CHARGE...

1. They will be held accountable
 - a. Eli tried to correct his sons - **1 Sa 2:22-25**
 - b. But failed to his power to restrain them - **1 Sa 3:10-13**
 2. The responsibility has to be taken up by others
 - a. Timothy was blessed to have a godly grandmother and mother - **2 Ti 1:5**
 - b. They evidently taught Timothy the Scriptures as a child - **2 Ti 3:15**
- **Blessed are children that have mothers who provide where fathers do not!**

[So Solomon was taught by his father, one of the greatest gifts a father can give to a child. But we note also the following recollection from **verse 3**...]

II. “I WAS TAUGHT WHILE TENDER”

A. THE TEACHING OCCURRED...

1. While young enough to be impressionable
 2. Open to what the father has to say
- **While he was willing to do what the father says**

B. TEACHING OFTEN OCCURS TOO LATE...

1. After the child gets into trouble
2. After the child begins to question everything parents say
- **When a child is more likely to disregard or disobey**

C. TEACHING NEEDS TO BEGIN EARLY...

1. Long before they are in school with other children
2. Where peer pressure and poor behavior will encourage them to disobey authority
3. Where even some teachers will encourage them to reject parental authority
- **Before the child is exposed to unsavory influences**

[Teaching by a father needs to occur while the child is still in a position to be shaped and directed in the right way. Now for another thought we can glean from Solomon's childhood memories...]

III. "I WAS TAUGHT BY AN ANXIOUS FATHER"**A. THE ANXIETY OF HIS FATHER IS IMPLIED...**

1. By the exhortations: "Get wisdom! Get understanding!" - **Pro 4:5**
2. By the warnings: "Do not forget, nor turn away...do not forsake" - **Pro 4:5-6**
- **His father was anxious regarding his son's learning**

B. FATHERS TODAY NEED TO BE ANXIOUS...

1. In view of what is going on in schools and society in general (violence, sex, drugs)
2. In light of what is happening in many churches (apathy, worldliness, apostasy)
- **Community and sometimes the church no longer provide supportive roles**

C. FATHERS ANXIOUS FOR THEIR CHILDREN...

1. Will take the time to teach their children when they need it
2. Will implore God for wisdom in raising their children
3. Will be willing to sacrifice success and prestige in business to spend time with children
- **Fathers, do we have anxiety over the welfare of our children?**

[Finally, consider what Solomon's father was anxious for him to learn...]

IV. "I WAS TAUGHT THE IMPORTANT THINGS"**A. HE WAS TAUGHT TO VALUE WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING...**

1. To make wisdom the principal thing in life
 - a. "Get wisdom! Get understanding!" - **Pro 4:5**
 - b. "Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding." - **Pro 4:7**
2. To love, exalt, and embrace wisdom
 - a. "...Love her, and she will keep you." - **Pro 4:6b**
 - b. "Exalt her, and she will promote you.." - **Pro 4:8a**
 - c. "...She will bring you honor, when you embrace her." - **Pro 4:8b**
3. To appreciate the benefits of wisdom
 - a. "Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you.." - **Pro 4:6a**
 - b. "She will place on your head an ornament of grace;" - **Pro 4:9a**

- c. “A crown of glory she will deliver to you.” - **Pro 4:9c**
- **Solomon’s father wanted him to be wise above all else**

B. FATHERS OFTEN STRESS THE TRIVIAL...

1. Too often, if a father spends any time with his children it is on things like:
 - a. Sports
 - b. Mechanics
 2. Too often, the principal concern of fathers is that their children get:
 - a. College degrees
 - b. High paying jobs
 3. Yet such things are potentially harmful!
 - a. Worldly success presents many temptations
 - b. Many children have been destroyed by the careers encouraged by their parents
- **Without wisdom and understanding, our children will not be able to handle success!**

CONCLUSION

1. Solomon could look back on his childhood memories with happy recollections...
 - a. I was taught by my father
 - b. I was taught while tender
 - c. I was taught by an anxious father
 - d. I was taught the important things
2. Because Solomon’s upbringing stressed the value of wisdom...
 - a. We should not be surprised of his answer when given a choice - **2 Chr 1:7-10**
 - b. Who chose wisdom over riches, honor, and long life, and was blessed by all - **2 Chr 1:11-12**
3. Who would not like a son like Solomon? To have such a son, we must be like his father...
 - a. Not perfect, but still “a man after God’s own heart” (David)
 - b. A man with a similar attitude toward God’s word - cf. **Psa 19:7-11**

Fathers, are we telling our children these words...?

“Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.” - Pro 4:7

The Two Paths

Proverbs 4:10-19

INTRODUCTION

1. The acquisition of wisdom is stressed repeatedly in the fourth chapter of Proverbs...
 - a. “Get wisdom! Get understanding!...” - **Pro 4:5**
 - b. “Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.” - **Pro 4:7**
2. The importance of wisdom is further illustrated by two paths...
 - a. Described in **Pro 4:10-19**
 - b. We must take one path or the other

[In this study let's first summarize the two paths, and then take a closer look at the metaphor used to describe one of them...]

I. THE TWO PATHS

A. THE PATH OF WISDOM...

1. The way of wisdom - **Pro 4:11**
 2. The consequences of choosing this path
 - a. “...the years of your life will be many.” - **Pro 4:10**
 - 1) As stated before - **Pro 3:1-2**
 - 2) Generally speaking, this is true, for wisdom leads one down the path more likely to bless the body with good health - cf. **Pro 3:7-8**
 - b. “When you **walk**, your steps will not be hindered” - **Pro 4:12a**
 - 1) The reason for this was also stated before - **Pro 3:5-6**
 - 2) A person on this path has the Lord assisting them!
 - c. “And when you **run**, you will not stumble.” - **Pro 4:12b**
 - 1) Life can be hectic, there will be times when decisions must be made quickly
 - 2) Those on the right path are less likely to make mistakes, for they have chosen the way of wisdom
 3. In light of such consequences, the following admonitions are given - **Pro 4:13**
 - a. “Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go”
 - b. “Keep her, for she is your life.”
- **The path of wisdom is what God would have you take!**

B. THE PATH OF THE WICKED...

1. The path of the wicked, the way of evil - **Pro 4:14**
2. Note the strong admonitions regarding this path - **Pro 4:14-15**
 - a. “Do not enter the path of the wicked”
 - b. “Do not walk in the way of evil.”
 - c. “Avoid it, do not travel on it.”
 - c. “Turn away from it and pass on.”
3. Reasons to avoid to avoid this path
 - a. One easily becomes obsessed with doing evil - **Pro 4:16**

- 1) Sin is addictive, and enslaves - cf. **Jn 8:34**
 - 2) It dulls the senses, requiring ever more to satisfy - cf. **Ep 4:19**
 - b. It becomes a life of wickedness and violence - **Pro 4:17**
 - 1) Sin is violent in every form
 - 2) For it damages our relationships with either God, others, or self!
- **The path of the wicked is what God would have you avoid!**

C. THE TWO PATHS CONTRASTED...

1. The path of the just is like the shining sun - **Pro 4:18**
 - a. Just as the sun becomes brighter and brighter as it rises to reach its zenith in the sky
 - b. So those who walk down the path of wisdom are progressively enlightened
 2. The way of the wicked is like darkness - **Pro 4:19**
 - a. They go through life stumbling again and again!
 - b. In their ignorance, they know not why! - cf. **Ep 4:17-18**
- **Thus one path leads to increasing brightness, the other to blinding darkness**

[Which of the two paths will we take in life? To encourage us to make the right choice, let's take a closer look at the metaphor used to describe those who follow the path of the just...]

II. THE METAPHOR OF PROGRESSIVE BRIGHTNESS

A. THE METAPHOR OF THE SHINING SUN...

1. Describes a progressive brightness, not simply brightness per se
 2. Describing the sun as it rises in the sky until it reaches its zenith ("unto the perfect day")
- **Thus the path of the just is one of progressive brightness**

B. COMPARED TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE...

1. It is to be a life of progression
 - a. We begin as babes, but designed to grow - **1 Pe 2:2**
 - b. We are to grow in grace and knowledge - **2 Pe 3:18**
 2. Though not always the case with some Christians
 - a. Whose lives are not characterized by progression, but staleness or even regression
 - b. Who fail to grow because spiritual amnesia and blindness - **2 Pe 1:8-9**
 - c. Who grow weary in well doing - cf. **Mal 1:13**
 - d. Who think its time to retire spiritually, contrary to mind of Paul
 - 1) Who believed the inner man could be renewed daily - **2 Co 4:16**
 - 2) Who believed that we should ever press forward - **Ph 3:13-15**
 - e. Instead of being like the sun that shines ever brighter, they are like the fiery meteorites which flash for a moment and then flame out!
- **Does the metaphor of progressive brightness describe our life in Christ?**

[The Christian life and the path of the just are to be similar: with progressive brightness and no decline. How can we ensure that such will be the case in our walk with Christ...?]

III. MAKING LIFE WITH CHRIST PROGRESSIVELY BRIGHTER

A. JESUS IS OUR LIGHT...

1. He is indeed "the light of the world" - **Jn 8:12**
2. We must therefore remember "that our path will brighten, not because of any radiance in

ourselves, but in proportion as we draw nearer and nearer to the Fountain of heavenly radiance.” - Maclaren

3. The nearer we draw to Him, the more we shall shine - cf. **2 Co 3:18**
- **We are simply reflective luminaries (like the moon); Christ is our sun!**

C. WE DRAW NEARER TO THE LIGHT...

1. Through devotional use of our Bibles
 - a. For that is how Christ reveals Himself to us
 - b. His words and that of His inspired apostles enlighten us
2. Through diligent practice of prayer
 - a. For that is how we draw near to God and Christ - cf. **He 4:14-16**
 - b. Prayer ushers us into the throne room of God
3. Through doing the commands of Christ
 - a. Which ensures that the Father and Son will abide with us - cf. **Jn 14:21,23**
 - b. Obedience brings us into a closer relationship with Christ
- **These are simple steps that lead us on the ever brighter path of righteousness**

CONCLUSION

1. There are only two paths, just as Jesus described two ways...
 - a. One leading to destruction - **Mt 7:13**
 - b. The other leading to life - **Mt 7:14**
2. Which path will you take...?
 - a. The path of the just, that leads to increasing brightness?
 - b. The path of the wicked, that leads to blinding darkness?

The choice is yours; let Jesus be your light if you want to chose the path of the just... - cf. **Ep 5:8**

Somatic Therapy For Wise Living

Proverbs 4:20-27

INTRODUCTION

1. In our study of chapter four thus far, we have seen Solomon make two appeals concerning wisdom, which I entitled...
 - a. Childhood Memories Of A Wise Man (4:1-9)
 - b. The Two Paths (4:10-19)
2. Solomon's third appeal to wisdom (4:20-27) makes metaphoric use of body parts...
 - a. Such as the ears, eyes and mouth
 - b. Such as the heart and feet
3. I like to think of this section as "**Somatic Therapy For Wise Living**"...
 - a. **Somatic** means "of or relating to the body"
 - b. **Somatic therapy** normally refers to holistic treatment designed to integrate the mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects of one's being
 - c. I am using it accommodatively in this lesson for the sake of illustration

[If we are to live wisely, then we need to apply "somatic therapy". Let's begin with the fundamentals, what we might call...]

I. SOMATIC THERAPY 101

A. INCLINE YOUR EAR TO WISDOM...

1. "My son, give attention to my words; incline your ears to my sayings." - **Pro 4:20**
 2. In other words, careful attention to words of wisdom is required
 3. If we have ears to hear, then we must use them, leaning forward to listen if necessary
 4. Similar to the Bereans, who "received the word with all readiness" - **Ac 17:11**
- **Do we make good use of our ears, listening carefully when wisdom is shared?**

B. FOCUS YOUR EYES ON WISDOM...

1. "Do not let them depart from your eyes" - **Pro 4:21a**
 2. The eyes should be fixed on wise teaching
 3. This implies careful reading of that which imparts wisdom
 4. As Paul charged Timothy: "give attention to reading" - **1 Ti 4:13**
- **Do we make good use of our eyes, reading things that help make us wise?**

C. APPLY YOUR HEART TO WISDOM...

1. "Keep them in the midst of your heart" - **Pro 4:21b**
 2. The heart in the Bible often refers to the mind or affections of a person
 3. This implies meditation upon those things we have heard or read
 4. As Paul exhorted the Philippians: "...meditate on these things" - **Ph 4:8**
- **Do we spend time contemplating the wisdom we hear and read?**

D. THE BENEFITS OF SOMATIC THERAPY...

1. “For they are life...and health...” - **Pro 4:22**
2. Wisdom’s words are life-giving and creative - **Believer’s Bible Commentary (BBC)**
3. And they are health to the whole body because they deliver a person from the sins and stresses that cause so much illness - **ibid.**
4. As Jesus said: “The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life” - **Jn 6:63**
-- **Do we let the wisdom of God give us a better life for both body and soul?**

[Wise living truly involves more than just the inner man. We must use the whole man, including the eyes and ears that God gave us. As we continue, let’s progress to the next level..]

II. SOMATIC THERAPY 201

A. FOR THE HEART...

1. “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life” - **Pro 4:23**
2. Diligence is required to guard the heart (the mind, the thoughts)
3. For it is the fountain from which all actions spring - **BBC**
4. As Jesus revealed concerning sin: “For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts...” - **Mk 7:21-23**
-- **Are we careful about what goes into our hearts (minds)?**

B. FOR THE MOUTH AND LIPS...

1. “Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put perverse lips far from you.” - **Pro 4:24**
2. We must not use our mouths and lips to lie or otherwise mislead others
3. As Paul commanded: “putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor...” - **Ep 4:25**
4. Again: “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers” - **Ep 4:29**
-- **Are we careful about what comes out of our mouths and lips?**

C. FOR THE EYES AND EYELIDS...

1. “Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you.” - **Pro 4:25**
2. This suggests singleness of purpose, but it can also be take rather literally
3. In a day when the mass media bombard us with publicity designed to arouse our animal appetites, we must learn to keep our eyes on Jesus. - **BBC**
4. As Jesus warned, the eyes can be a conduit into the soul of man - cf. **Mt 6:22-23**
-- **Are we careful upon what we let our eyes linger?**

D. FOR THE FEET...

1. “Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established.” - **Pro 4:26**
 - a. Think about the direction in which your feet are taking you
 - b. Work toward walking on established ways, not the unstable
 - c. In this, the Lord is willing to assist us - cf. **Psa 37:23; 40:2; Pro 3:6**
 2. “Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil.” - **Pro 4:27**
 - a. With the Lord before you, don’t let the allurements of the world distract you
 - b. Should you take a step in the wrong direction, quickly step back
 - c. Again, the Lord is willing to help - cf. **Mt 6:13; 26:41; 1 Co 10:13; 2 Pe 2:9**
- **Are we careful about where our feet are taking us?**

CONCLUSION

1. Through proper “somatic therapy” we can live wisely...
 - a. Using our ears, eyes, and mouths in ways that are wholesome
 - b. Filling our hearts with good, so that it is good that proceeds from our hearts
 - c. Watching where our feet are taking us, turning away when headed in the wrong direction

2. How are we using our bodies as we go through life...?
 - a. Do we listen attentively to the spoken Word of God?
 - b. Do we read carefully the written Word of God?
 - c. Do we apply God’s word to our heart and soul?
 - d. Are we careful about what we see, say, and hear?
 - e. Are we watching the direction our feet are taking us?

Fail to apply the lessons of **“Somatic Therapy 101”** and **“Somatic Therapy 201”**, and we will fail to succeed in the course of life...!

The Peril Of Adultery

Proverbs 5:1-23

INTRODUCTION

1. Earlier in his discourses on wisdom, Solomon warned of being delivered from an immoral woman...
 - a. The seductress who flatters with her words - **Pro 2:16**
 - b. Who forsakes her husband and forgets her covenant with God - **Pro 2:17**
 - c. Whose home and paths leads to death - **Pro 2:18-19**
2. Similar warnings are repeated in these discourses of Solomon ...
 - a. In chapters five, six, and seven
 - b. Such repetition implies that the danger is great
 - c. It was a serious problem in Solomon's day, certainly no less today

[In chapter five, we read of “**The Peril Of Adultery**”. Beginning with a call to pay attention (**Pro 5:1-2**), we are warned about...]

I. THE PROMISE OF ADULTERY

A. THE FALSE PROMISE...

1. It sounds and feels good at first - **Pro 5:3**
2. For such enticement involves flattery - cf. **Pro 2:16; 6:24; 7:21**
3. And forbidden fruit is always tempting - e.g., **Gen 3:6**
-- **Adultery promises much, but what does it deliver?**

B. THE REAL PROMISE...

1. The end of adultery is sharp bitterness - **Pro 5:4**
2. The real promise is death followed by condemnation - **Pro 5:5**; cf. **He 13:4**
3. Thus the ways of adultery are unstable, unknowable - **Pro 5:6**
-- **Adultery delivers, but not what it promises!**

[To appreciate what adultery really delivers, we are next told of...]

II. THE PRICE OF ADULTERY

A. IT COSTS YOUR WEALTH...

1. Solomon pleads with his children to stay away from the immoral woman - **Pro 5:7-8**
2. His first reason: “Lest you give your honor to others...” - **Pro 5:9a**
3. He reiterates: “Lest aliens be filled with your wealth, And your labors go to the house of a foreigner.” - **Pro 5:10**
-- **Alimony and child support can eat away at your finances**

B. IT COSTS YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH...

1. Solomon's second reason: “...and your years to the cruel one.” - **Pro 5:9b**
2. He adds: “And you mourn at last, when your flesh and body are consumed.” - **Pro 5:11**
3. Bacterial STDs (e.g., Chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhea) are often brought on by immorality

4. Viral STDs (e.g., genital herpes, Hepatitis B, AIDS) are incurable
- **Sexually transmitted diseases can eat away at your body**

C. IT COSTS YOUR MENTAL HEALTH...

1. You will be filled with self-recrimination: “How I hated instruction, and my heart despised correction! I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me!” - **Pro 5:12-13**
2. You will not forget what your parents, teachers, preachers, and true friends told you
3. As you recall the violent affects of divorce on your spouse (and on your children who will likely suffer the worst), you will berate your stupidity! - cf. **Mal 2:16**
- **Your conscience can eat away at your peace of mind**

D. IT COSTS YOUR REPUTATION...

1. As suggested by these words: “I was on the verge of total ruin, in the midst of the assembly and congregation.” - **Pro 5:14**
2. People do not take lightly the sin of adultery - cf. **Pro 6:27-35**
3. Can a person be trusted who would lie to their spouse?
- **Your unfaithfulness can eat away at your reputation**

[Adultery destroys one’s wealth, body, soul, and reputation. Forgiveness is possible (**1 Co 6:9-11**), but many affects of adultery continue throughout one’s life. Much better, therefore, to take to heart...]

III. THE PREVENTION OF ADULTERY

A. LOVE YOUR SPOUSE...

1. Rejoice with the wife of your youth; be enraptured by her love - **Pro 5:15-19**; cf. **Ecc 9:9**
 - a. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church - **Ep 5:25,28**
 - b. Wives, learn to love your husbands - **Ti 2:3-4**
2. Why be enraptured by an adulteress (adulterer) and seductress (seducer)? - **Pro 5:20**
 - a. One’s true character is revealed by their immorality
 - b. If they commit adultery **with you**, they are likely to commit adultery **against you!**
- **Enraptured love is commanded, which means it can be learned (and relearned)**

B. LOVE YOUR LORD...

1. The Lord is omniscient, and sins will have their effect - **Pro 5:21-23**
 - a. He sees all - **Pro 15:3**
 - b. God will judge fornicators and adulterers - **He 13:4**
 - c. When one sins against the Lord, their sins will be exposed - **Num 32:23**
2. How much better to love the Lord, and be loyal to Him
 - a. He looks for those loyal to Him - cf. **2 Chr 16:9; Mt 22:37**
 - b. Joseph’s devotion to God prevented him from being tempted - cf. **Gen 39:7-10**
 - c. The Lord blessed Joseph because of his faithfulness - cf. **Gen 39:21; 41:50-52**
- **Those who love the Lord foremost, love their spouses forever!**

CONCLUSION

1. The **promise of adultery** is deceptive...
 - a. It promises pleasure
 - b. It really promises death and condemnation

2. The **price of adultery** is terrible...
 - a. Which too many learn by sad experience
 - b. Which all can avoid by heeding God's Word

3. The **prevention of adultery** is possible with our love is in the right place...
 - a. Loving the Lord with all our heart
 - b. Loving our spouses with God's blessing

Heed the wisdom of Solomon regarding **“The Peril Of Adultery”**, and we will not destroy our lives with misdirected affection...!

Surety, Sloth, Scoundrels, And Strumpets

Proverbs 6:1-7:27

INTRODUCTION

1. The first nine chapters of Proverbs contain discourses extolling wisdom...
 - a. Praising it over folly
 - b. Illustrating its value in life
2. Interspersed throughout are exhortations regarding wisdom...
 - a. Warnings against foolish conduct
 - b. Counsel on behavior that reflects wisdom

[Such is the case in the text for our study (**Pro 6:1-7:27**), where we find warnings concerning “**Surety, Sloth, Scoundrels, and Strumpets.**” Let’s start with the warning...]

I. REGARDING SURETY (6:1-5)

A. THE WARNING...

1. Do not become surety for a friend
2. That is, do not make yourself liable for someone else’s debt
3. If you do, get out of it as quickly as possible
4. If necessary, humble yourself and plead
5. The warning is repeated in Proverbs - **Pro 11:15; 17:18**

B. THE REASON...

1. It may seem like kindness to cosign a loan for a friend
2. But there are reasons it may not be (from the Believer’s Bible Commentary)
 - a. You might be helping him to buy something which it is not God’s will for him to have
 - b. You might be encouraging him to be a spendthrift or even a gambler
 - c. If he defaults and you have to pay for something that is not your own, friendship will end and bitterness begin
3. Thus it may be better to simply give or loan the money personally - cf. **Mt 5:42**

[From being too eager to help, we now turn to being too eager to sleep as we consider a warning...]

II. REGARDING SLOTH (6:6-11)

A. THE WARNING...

1. For sluggards who prefer sleep to work
2. Learn wisdom from the lowly ant
3. Observe her diligence without need of overseer
4. How she provides in the summer and gathers in the harvest - cf. **Pro 30:25**
5. The emphasis is on being diligent in one’s work

B. THE REASON...

1. Laziness is the parent of poverty

2. As taught elsewhere in the Proverbs - **Pro 10:4; 13:4; 20:4**
3. You only steal from yourself when you are lazy
4. Thus diligence in all that we do is the proper course - cf. **Ecc 9:10; Ro 12:15**

[From personal conduct in ourselves to that seen in others, we next find a warning...]

III. REGARDING SCOUNDRELS (6:12-19)

A. THE WARNING...

1. The tactics of the wicked described (especially a con man)
 - a. Walks with a perverse mouth (**crooked speech**)
 - b. Winks with his eyes, shuffles his feet, points with his fingers (**winking and giving signals to deceive others, CEV**)
 - c. Perversity in his heart, devises evil continually (**plotting mischief**)
 - d. Sows discord
2. Somatic therapy truly perverted!
 - a. Using the body in ways to deceive others
 - b. Whereas earlier we read of better ways to use the body - cf. **Pro 4:20-27**
3. Upon such a person calamity and destruction will come quickly

B. THE REASON...

1. The Lord hates such behavior
2. It is an abomination to Him:
 - a. A proud look (**arrogance**)
 - b. A lying tongue (**dishonesty**)
 - c. Hands that shed innocent blood (**murder**)
 - d. A heart that devises wicked plans (**contemplating evil**)
 - e. Feet that are swift running to evil (**quick to do evil**)
 - f. A false witness who speaks lies (**lying in giving public testimony**)
 - g. One who sows discord among brethren (**note well: this is ranked among lying and murder!**)
3. Conduct that destroys relationships with others is just as abominable as that which destroys our relationship with God Himself!

[Finally, resuming a thread first started in **2:16-19** and expounded further in **5:1-23**, we find a warning that starts in verse 20 and continues throughout the seventh chapter...]

IV. REGARDING STRUMPETS (6:20-7:27)

A. THE WARNING...

1. Listen to your parents when they warn you
2. They can keep you from the immoral woman
3. Who seduces with flattery tongue and allures with her eyes
4. Do not lust after her beauty in your heart
5. An illustration of one caught up in this folly - cf. **Pro 7:1-27**

B. THE REASON...

1. She will reduce you to a crust of bread, and prey on your life
2. She is too hot to handle safely, you will only burn yourself

3. People may have a little tolerance for one who steals out of hunger
4. But no one has respect for a man who steals another's wife
5. The husband in particular will never be appeased

CONCLUSION

1. Thus the wisdom found in Proverbs is seen to be very practical
 - a. Guiding one in their own behavior
 - b. Guarding one against the behavior of others
2. Warning us against such things as...
 - a. **Surety** that ensnares
 - b. **Sloth** that impoverishes
 - c. **Scoundrels** that mislead and sow discord
 - d. **Strumpets** that entice and destroy through the lust of the flesh

Will we heed the words of wisdom? In our next study we will find **Sophia** (wisdom) once again pleading for us to heed her cries...

Wisdom's Plea To Be Heard

Proverbs 8:1-36

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous study, we found warnings against the immoral woman...
 - a. Who seduces with her beauty and flattery - **Pro 6:24-25**
 - b. Who in the open square lurks at every corner - **Pro 7:12**
2. In the eighth chapter, we once again find **wisdom** personified as a woman...
 - a. Similar to what we read earlier in these discourses - **Pro 1:20-23**
 - b. Who cries out to be heard by the sons of men - **Pro 8:3-4**

[What does she have to say? Why should we listen to her? Let's study the eighth chapter of Proverbs to find out, beginning with...]

I. THE PLEA OF WISDOM (8:1-11)

A. SHE DESIRES TO BE HEARD...

1. By crying out, lifting up her voice - **Pro 8:1**
2. Not lurking in the corner (cf. **Pro 7:12**), but openly:
 - a. On the top of the hill, beside the way, where paths meet - **Pro 8:2**
 - b. By the gates, at the entry of the city - **Pro 8:3**

B. SHE DESIRES TO BE HEARD BY ALL...

1. By the sons of men - **Pro 8:4**
2. By the simple ones and fools - **Pro 8:5**

C. SHE DESIRES TO IMPART GREAT THINGS...

1. Excellent things, right things - **Pro 8:6**
2. Words of truth and righteousness - **Pro 8:7-8**
3. Things that are plain and right - **Pro 8:9**
4. That which is better than silver, gold, rubies, and all that can be desired - **Pro 8:10-11**

[So wisdom is crying out to be heard by everyone, to share things of great value. Will we listen to her? To encourage us to do so, read further what she says about...]

II. THE VALUE OF WISDOM (8:12-21)

A. SEEN IN WHAT SHE POSSESSES...

1. Prudence, knowledge and discretion - **Pro 8:12**
2. The fear of the Lord, prompting her to hate pride, evil, and the perverse mouth - **Pro 8:13**
3. Counsel and sound wisdom, understanding and strength - **Pro 8:14**

B. SEEN IN WHAT SHE GIVES...

1. To kings, princes, nobles, and justices, the ability to rule with justice - **Pro 8:15-16**
2. To all who love her, riches, honor, righteousness, justice, and wealth - **Pro 8:17-21**

[Doesn't the value of wisdom make us want to hear her? To help us appreciate the value of wisdom even more, we next read of...]

III. THE POSSESSION OF WISDOM (8:22-31)

A. BY THE LORD BEFORE THE CREATION...

1. At the beginning of His way, before His works - **Pro 8:22**
2. From everlasting, before there was an earth - **Pro 8:23**
3. Before there were depths of water, or mountains and hills - **Pro 8:24-25**
4. Before the earth was created, before the primal dust of the world - **Pro 8:26**

B. BY THE LORD IN HIS ACTS OF CREATION...

1. When He prepared the heavens - **Pro 8:27a**
2. When He created the world - **Pro 8:27b-29**
3. She was beside Him as a master craftsman, rejoicing in His creation - **Pro 8:30-31**

[The wisdom utilized by God in the creation of the heavens and earth is the voice crying out for us to hear! If we have ears to hear, shall we not hear? Finally, we hear wisdom speak of...]

IV. THE BLESSEDNESS OF WISDOM (8:32-36)

A. FOR THOSE WILLING TO KEEP HER WAYS...

1. They are blessed - **Pro 8:32**
2. So hear her instruction and be wise, do not disdain it - **Pro 8:33**

B. FOR THOSE WILLING TO LISTEN INTENTLY...

1. They are blessed - **Pro 8:34a**
2. As they watch daily and wait - **Pro 8:34b**
3. They find life and obtain favor from the Lord - **Pro 8:35**
4. Unlike one who sins against her (he wrongs his own soul - **Pro 8:36a**
5. Unlike those who hate her (they love death) - **Pro 8:36b**

CONCLUSION

1. So wisdom cries out to be heard...
 - a. To share understanding and knowledge, truth and righteousness
 - b. To bless our lives with riches and honor, especially that offered by the Lord
2. To whom shall we hearken...?
 - a. To the woman lurking in the corners, whose house is the way to hell? - **Pro 7:27**
 - b. Or the woman standing on the top of the high hill, and by the open gates? - **Pro 8:1-3**

The answer should be obvious...

“Blessed is the man who listens to me (wisdom), Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoever finds me finds life, And obtains favor from the LORD;”

- Pro 8:34-35

Two Invitations

Proverbs 9:1-18

INTRODUCTION

1. In his discourses on the value of seeking after wisdom, Solomon has varied his approach...
 - a. He makes his own appeal as a father to his son and children - cf. **Pro 1:8; 4:1**
 - b. He personifies wisdom as a lady who invites people to pay heed - cf. **Pro 1:20; 8:1**
2. His final discourse presents a picture of two women, both extending invitations...
 - a. One woman personifies wisdom - **Pro 9:1-12**
 - b. The other personifies folly - **Pro 9:13-18**

[Whose invitation will we accept? That of **Lady Wisdom**, or that of **Woman Folly**? Consider first...]

I. THE INVITATION OF LADY WISDOM (9:1-12)

A. HER PREPARATION...

1. Her beautiful home: a large house with seven pillars - **Pro 9:1**
 - a. The number seven suggests to many the idea of completeness
 - b. Compare the seven-fold qualities of wisdom described by James - **Ja 3:17**
 2. Her sumptuous feast: meat and wine, a furnished table - **Pro 9:2**
 - a. Carefully prepared
 - b. Beautifully presented
- **Lady Wisdom has made great effort in making provisions**

B. HER PLEA...

1. She wants to be heard - **Pro 9:3**
 - a. She has sent out her maidens (reminding us of Jesus, sending His apostles)
 - b. She cries out from the highest places of the city
 2. She invites the simple and those who lack understanding - **Pro 9:4-6**
 - a. To eat and drink of her prepared feast
 - b. To forsake foolishness and live, to go in the way of understanding
 3. Why She won't invite scoffers - **Pro 9:7-9**
 - a. Correcting a scoffer only shames and harms the one doing the correcting
 - b. The wise and just, however, appreciate and will learn from correction
- **Lady Wisdom makes great effort to reach those who will listen**

C. HER PROMISE...

1. Wisdom and understanding - **Pro 9:10**
 - a. To those who fear the Lord
 - b. To those who know the Lord
2. Long life - **Pro 9:11**; cf. **3:2,16**
 - a. Days will be multiplied
 - b. Years will be added
3. To benefit one's self - **Pro 9:12**
 - a. Wisdom will bless one's self (for you will have God's aid)

- b. Scorn, on the other hand, will hurt one's self (for you will bear things alone)
- **Lady Wisdom wants you to have the best life possible!**

[The invitation of Lady Wisdom is really quite tempting (in a good way). Especially when we carefully consider the alternative...]

II. THE INVITATION OF WOMAN FOLLY (9:13-18)

A. HER PREPARATION...

1. She really makes no preparation
2. Instead, she is "loud; she is seductive and knows nothing" (ESV) - **Pro 9:13**
3. The Believers' Bible Commentary describes her as "loudmouthed, empty-headed, and brazenfaced"
- **Compare her lack of preparation with that of Lady Wisdom**

B. HER PLEA...

1. She sits at the door of her house - **Pro 9:14a**
 - a. Unlike Lady Wisdom
 - b. Who sent out Her maidens to be heard
2. She sits on a high seat by the highest places of the city - **Pro 9:14b**
 - a. Where Lady Wisdom also cries out - cf. **Pro 9:3**
 - b. Note that Woman Folly cries out from a seated position (lazy?)
3. She calls to those who pass by - **Pro 9:15-16**
 - a. Especially the simple
 - b. And those who lack understanding
- **Woman Folly competes with Lady Wisdom for the souls of men**

C. HER PROMISE...

1. That stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant - **Pro 9:17**
 - a. An allusion to illicit intercourse - cf. **Pro 5:15**
 - b. But it is a false promise - cf. **Pro 20:17; 5:3-5**
2. The true promise is unknown to the simple lacking understanding - **Pro 9:18**
 - a. Her home is the house of the dead - cf. **Pro 2:18-19**
 - b. Her house is the way to hell - cf. **Pro 5:5; 7:27**
- **Woman Folly, known best for her adulterous ways, promises much but delivers the worst life possible!**

CONCLUSION

1. Whose invitation shall we accept...?
 - a. That of **Lady Wisdom**, who has prepared much and delivers what she promises?
 - b. Or that of **Woman Folly**, who promises much and delivers the opposite?
 - c. The choice should be obvious, even to the simple and those lacking understanding!
2. Thus ends the discourses of Solomon...
 - a. Designed to encourage the acquisition of wisdom
 - b. Illustrating the superiority of wisdom over folly

In our next study, we will continue our survey of Proverbs using a **topical** approach...

The Fear Of The Lord

INTRODUCTION

1. We now change our approach to studying the book to the book of Proverbs...
 - a. Using a **topical** rather than **textual** approach
 - b. Noting recurring **themes** dispersed throughout the proverbs
2. A good topic to begin with is **“the fear of the Lord”**...
 - a. Described as “the beginning of knowledge” - **Pro 1:7**
 - b. Also as “the beginning of wisdom” - **Pro 9:10**

[Yes, we examined “the fear of the Lord” in an earlier lesson. But it’s importance to living wisely justifies another look. So let’s begin with..]

I. UNDERSTANDING THE FEAR OF THE LORD

A. THE MEANING OF THE WORD “FEAR”...

1. In Hebrew, the word is **yara’**
 2. In the Old Testament, it has a three-fold range of meaning:
 - a. Dread, terror - **Deu 1:29; Jon 1:10**
 - b. To stand in awe (in reference to a king) - **1 Kin 3:28**
 - c. To revere, to respect (in regards to parents) - **Lev 19:3**
 3. Notice when God descended upon Sinai amid geophysical convulsions - cf. **Exo 20:18-20**
 - a. Moses encouraged the Israelites to not be afraid of God arbitrarily striking them dead for no reason (“Do not **fear!**”)
 - b. He informed them that the Lord revealed Himself in such a terrifying manner to scare them from sinning (“God has come to test you, and that His **fear** may be before you, so that you may not sin.”)
- **The proper kind of fear is that which causes one to stand in awe, to revere, to respect**

B. ITS ROLE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN...

1. We are to fear God, not man - **Mt 10:28**
 2. The early church walked in the fear of the Lord - **Ac 9:31**
 3. We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling - **Ph 2:12**
 4. We should be fearful of apostasy, serving God with godly fear - **He 10:26-31; 12:28-29**
- **The fear of the LORD is expressed in reverential submission to his will - NET Bible**

[With a proper understanding of the fear of the Lord, we are more likely to appreciate the value of the fear of Lord as revealed in the Proverbs...]

II. APPRECIATING THE FEAR OF THE LORD

A. WITH THE FEAR OF THE LORD...

1. We will hate evil - **Pro 8:13**
2. We will prolong life - **Pro 10:27**
3. We have strong confidence and a fountain of life - **Pro 14:26-27**
4. We will be prompted to depart from evil - **Pro 16:6**

5. We will have a satisfying life, spared from much evil - **Pro 19:23**
 6. We will enjoy riches, honor, and life! - **Pro 22:4**
- **Sounds wonderful, doesn't it?**

B. WITHOUT THE FEAR OF THE LORD...

1. We deprive ourselves of the treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge
 2. We will flirt with evil and be corrupted by it
 3. Our lives are likely to be shortened by our refusal to heed God's word (e.g., suffering sexually transmitted diseases if we do not heed His Word on sexual relationships)
 4. We will not come to know the love of God that gives assurance and confidence of salvation
 5. When fallen into sin, we will not be motivated to repent and turn to God!
 6. We will not be motivated to truly "work out our own salvation"
- **Sounds dreadful, doesn't it?**

[The fear of the Lord should be a highly regarded and sought after trait, one that we desire to develop in our lives. With that in mind, here are some suggestions on...]

III. DEVELOPING THE FEAR OF THE LORD

A. THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD...

1. Just as faith comes by hearing the word of God - cf. **Ro 10:17**
 2. The same can be said for the fear of the Lord - cf. **Deu 31:10-13**
 - a. Israel was to gather every seven years to read and hear the Word
 - b. The purpose? "...that they may learn to fear the Lord"
 3. As one reads the Word of God, they should gain a healthy degree of the fear of the Lord
 - a. For example, consider the words of Paul - **Ro 2:4-11**
 - b. Or how about the words of Peter? - cf. **2 Pe 3:7-14**
- **Do we allow the Word to develop a proper reverence for the Lord?**

B. PROPERLY USED TO MAINTAIN BALANCE...

1. To avoid extremes we must read **all** of God's Word
 - a. Some read only about God's love, and have no fear of the Lord
 - b. Others read only about God's judgment, and know nothing of His loving kindness
 - c. The one develops an attitude of permissiveness that belittles God's holiness and justice
 - d. The other develops a psychosis of terror that forgets His grace and compassion
 2. Even in the passages noted above, the context of each speaks much of God's grace and forgiveness for those who will repent – cf. **Ro 2:4-11; 2 Pe 3:7-14**
- **We must be careful how we use the Word of God, but use it we must!**

CONCLUSION

1. If we desire to be truly wise, then let us begin with **the fear of the Lord**
2. Understanding it, appreciating it, and developing it in our lives as children of God!

"Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied." - Ac 9:31

The Folly Of The Fool

INTRODUCTION

1. The goal of Proverbs is to impart wisdom...
 - a. To know wisdom and instruction - **Pro 1:1-2**
 - b. To receive the instruction of wisdom - **Pro 1:3**
2. One way to learn about something is to consider its opposite...
 - a. Want to understand what is **wisdom**? Then know what is **folly**!
 - b. Want to be **wise**? Then don't be a **fool**!

[In studying the wisdom of Proverbs, then, we learn much about “**The Folly Of The Fool.**” Exactly what is a fool...?]

I. THE FOOL DEFINED

A. THE HEBREW WORD...

1. ‘**eviy**l; it appears primarily in wisdom literature - **Vine’s**
 2. An adjective meaning foolish in the sense of one who hates wisdom and walks in folly, despising wisdom and morality - **TCWD**
- **A fool thus despises wisdom and walks in folly**

B. DEFINED FURTHER...

1. The word is used in Scripture with respect to moral more than to intellectual deficiencies - **Unger’s Bible Dictionary, p. 375**
 2. The ‘fool’ is not so much lacking in mental powers, as one who misuses them... - **ibid.**
 3. In Scripture the ‘fool’...is the person who casts off the fear of God, and thinks and acts as if he could safely disregard the eternal principles of God’s righteousness - **ibid.**
- **A fool thus chooses to disregard God and His wisdom**

[To help us to further understand “**The Folly Of The Fool,**” let’s now consider...]

II. THE FOOL DESCRIBED

A. ONE WHO TRUSTS IN HIMSELF...

1. In his own eyes, he can do no wrong - **Pro 12:15**
 2. Foolishly, he trusts in his own heart - **Pro 28:26**
- **Conversely, we should trust in the Lord, not lean on our own understanding - Pro 3:5-6**

B. ONE WHO IS DEAF TO INSTRUCTION...

1. Fools despise wisdom and instruction - **Pro 1:7**
2. Even the instruction from one’s father - **Pro 15:5**
3. Thus fools die for lack of wisdom - **Pro 10:21**
4. A fool cares only to tell others what he knows - **Pro 18:2**
5. For a fool thinks he knows every thing - **Pro 18:13**
6. What fools know is soon known by all - **Pro 14:33**
7. Their foolishness becomes apparent to all - **Pro 12:23; 13:16**

-- **Therefore we waste energy in trying to share wisdom with a fool - Pro 23:9**

C. ONE WHO CANNOT BE DISCIPLINED...

1. Fools are destined for much punishment - **Pro 19:29, 26:3**
 2. Yet they are unlikely to learn from attempts to correct them - **Pro 17:10**
 3. Such hatred of correction is the height of folly - **Pro 12:1**
- **Trying to correct a fool is folly within itself - Pro 16:22**

D. ONE WHO IS IMPULSIVE...

1. A fool is one who vents all his feelings - **Pro 29:11**
 2. His wrath is soon known - **Pro 12:16**
- **His impulsiveness makes his folly worse - Pro 14:29**

E. ONE WHO COMMITS EVIL...

1. Evil is like sport to a fool - **Pro 10:23**
 2. They even make fun of sin - **Pro 14:9**
- **Thus it is difficult to get fools to depart from evil - Pro 14:16**

F. ONE WHO IS VIRTUALLY UNCHANGEABLE...

1. Despite the most extreme efforts to rehabilitate him - **Pro 27:22**
 2. Because he considers it an abomination to depart from evil - **Pro 13:19**
- **Truly a fool is like a dog that returns to his own vomit - Pro 26:11**

CONCLUSION

1. In summary, then, a fool is a person who...
 - a. Trusts in himself
 - b. Is deaf to instruction
 - c. Cannot be disciplined
 - d. Is impulsive
 - e. Commits evil
 - f. Is virtually unchangeable
2. Reinforcing these qualities of a fool...
 - a. Let's now read **Pro 26:1-12**
 - b. Where we find several observations about fools and their folly

Hopefully, such observations and warnings about **“The Folly Of The Fool”** will encourage us to choose an alternative path in life; especially when we consider the final contrast between the wise and the fools:

“The wise shall inherit glory, But shame shall be the legacy of fools.”
- Pro 3:35

What shall we inherit? What shall be our legacy? It depends on our willingness to listen to God...

Wisdom Regarding Friendship

INTRODUCTION

1. Living on an inhabited planet, it is impossible to avoid associations with fellow humans
2. In His all-sufficient Word, God has provided the wisdom necessary whereby we can...
 - a. Develop good relations with those around us
 - b. Avoid the pitfalls that too often destroy good friendships

[A good portion of this wisdom is found in **Proverbs**, where much is revealed regarding the subject of friendship. For example, note what is revealed about...]

I. THE VALUE OF FRIENDS

A. SOURCE OF COMFORT...

1. In good times and in bad times - **Pro 17:17**
2. In some cases, even better than that provided by a brother - **Pro 18:24b**

B. SOURCE OF GOOD COUNSEL...

1. Counsel that can “delight the heart” - **Pro 27:9**
2. The value of counsel in general is seen in **Pro 11:14**

[A friend who offers comfort and can be trusted to provide good counsel is certainly a blessing. But we must choose our friends carefully (**Pro 12:26**). Consider therefore, some advice on...]

II. THE CHOICE OF FRIENDS

A. FRIENDS YOU DO NOT WANT...

1. Gossips - **Pro 20:19**
2. Short-tempered - **Pro 22:24-25**
3. Those given to drinking and gluttony - **Pro 23:20-21**
4. Those given to change - **Pro 24:21-22**
5. Liars, those untrustworthy, and those inconsiderate - **Pro 25:18-20**
6. Those given to violence - **Pro 1:10-19**

B. FRIENDS YOU DO WANT...

1. Those who display wisdom themselves - **Pro 13:20**
2. For their teaching (counsel) will help lead you in the right way - cf. **Pro 13:14**

[The wrong kind of friends can be a corrupting influence (cf. **1 Co 15:33**), but a friend who is good and wise is one you want to hold on to! To avoid losing good friends, here is some wisdom on...]

III. MAINTAINING FRIENDSHIPS

A. THINGS WHICH DISRUPT FRIENDSHIPS...

1. Repeating everything you hear - **Pro 17:9**
2. Getting into senseless arguments - **Pro 17:14**

3. Overstaying your welcome - **Pro 25:17**
4. Meddling in affairs not your own - **Pro 26:17**
5. Playing bad jokes - **Pro 26:18-19**
6. Being a “talebearer” - **Pro 26:20**
7. Being contentious - **Pro 26:21**
8. Engaging in insincere flattery - **Pro 27:14**

[Following such advice, one is less likely to offend his or her friends. But sometimes we do, and regaining their confidence is not easy (cf. **Pro 18:19**). What can be done? Consider...]

B. SOLVING PROBLEMS WITH OUR FRIENDS...

1. Make sure that you are at peace with the Lord - cf. **Pro 16:7**
2. Be slow to anger - **Pro 15:18**; cf. **Ja 1:19-20**
3. Be slow to respond - **Pro 18:13**
4. Avoid quarreling - **Pro 20:3**
5. Speak gently - **Pro 15:1**
6. Speak briefly - **Pro 10:19**
7. Be quick to show love - **Pro 10:12**
8. But if necessary, rebuke rather than flatter - **Pro 28:23**

CONCLUSION

1. Properly applying the wisdom of God found in His Word can assure that...
 - a. We enjoy the blessings of good friends in this life
 - b. We can look forward to enjoying these dear friends in life eternal!
2. Rather than depend upon “trial and error” to learn “how to win friends and influence people”, let God’s Word be your guide!

But of all the friendships we could possibly develop, none can excel the one we can have with **Him** who truly “sticks closer than a brother” - our Lord Jesus Christ!

Have you become His friend? Consider what He has done for us...

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” (Jn 15:13)

Consider what He asks of us...

“You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.” (Jn 15:14)

Have you done what He commands? - cf. **Mt 28:18-20**; **Mk 16:15-16**

Wisdom Regarding Marriage (1)

INTRODUCTION

1. The value of Proverbs is that it provides wisdom from God to guide us in every realm of life
2. Whether it be family, business, social or spiritual relationships, we find inspired advice that enables us to walk in wisdom, “redeeming the time, because the days are evil” - cf. **Ep 5:15-17**

[Let’s examine what wisdom the Proverbs has to reveal regarding marriage, beginning with...]

I. THE SELECTION OF A WIFE

A. THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE...

1. Much happiness in life depends upon make the right choice - **Pro 12:4**
 - a. A good choice greatly enhances the life of the husband
 - b. But the wrong choice can destroy a man from the inside out!
 2. It is folly to think that a mistake in this area can be easily corrected
 - a. Many think divorce can be an easy solution
 - b. But God hates divorce and remarriage may not be a viable option for the disciple of Christ - cf. **Mal 2:16; Mt 19:8-9**
 - c. Even when it is, if there are children the selection you made will **always** be the mother of your children (for better or worse!)
- **A man needs wisdom from God in choosing whom to marry!**

B. GUIDELINES FOR FINDING A GOOD WIFE...

1. **Seek help from God - Pro 19:14**
 - a. Success in this venture may depend more upon God than we think!
 - b. In view of the seriousness of this matter, dare we go about it alone?
2. **Do not place priority on good looks alone - Pro 31:30**
 - a. Beauty is skin-deep, temporary, to which we can easily grow accustomed
 - b. It is therefore a poor foundation upon which to build a life-long relationship
 - c. Sadly, most marriages are built on little more than physical attraction
3. **Instead, look for these characteristics in a woman:**
 - a. **The fear of the Lord - Pro 31:30**
 - 1) Such a woman possesses the beginning of wisdom - **Pro 1:7**
 - 2) Having a wife who is a devout Christian should be the primary concern
 - b. **Discretion - Pro 11:22**
 - 1) This is the ability to do the right thing at the right time
 - 2) Without this, beauty is worthless, and can even be the object of ridicule (e.g., dumb blonde jokes)
 - c. **Wisdom - Pro 14:1**
 - 1) With this virtue in a woman, a good home can be built
 - 2) Without it, efforts by the husband will be undermined by the wife!
4. **Avoid a woman who is contentious (argumentative)!**
 - a. Picturesque descriptions of such a woman are found in **Pro 19:13; 27:15-16**
 - b. My grandmother (a faithful Christian who as a widow raised six children through the Great Depression, and remained a widow for over fifty years), pointed out these two

verses to me when I was a teen-ager: **Pro 21:9,19**

-- **It is better to be single and alone, than to be married to the wrong person!**

[To be married to a godly woman, however, is a wonderful blessing from the Lord (**Pro 18:22**). With the aid of Proverbs, we are more likely to find a good spouse. The same is true for women in...]

II. THE SELECTION OF A HUSBAND

A. THERE ARE WAYS TO LEARN ABOUT A MAN...

1. **How does he treat animals?** This reveals a lot about his character - **Pro 12:10**
 2. **Does he listen to the advice of others?** That will tell you whether he is a fool, or a wise person - **Pro 12:15**
 3. **What type of company does he keep?** You might be destroyed along with him - **Pro 13:20**
 4. **Is he quick-tempered?** That reveals whether he is a person of understanding - **Pro 14:29**
 5. **How does he make money?** You will suffer the consequences of his actions - **Pro 15:27**
 6. **Does he feel like he always has to put in his “two-cents” worth?** If so, he lacks knowledge and a calm spirit - **Pro 17:27-28**
 7. **Does he have compassion for the poor?** If so, his prayers will be answered - **Pro 21:13**
- **See how the Proverbs can guide a woman in deciding whom to marry?**

B. MEN TO DEFINITELY AVOID...

1. **A womanizer**
 - a. He will destroy himself and hurt all those involved - **Pro 6:27-29**
 - b. If he flaunts God’s will before he is married, what assurance is there he will not flaunt God’s will after he is married?
 2. **A quick-tempered man**
 - a. You will become like him and destroy yourself as well - **Pro 22:24-25**
 - b. Men are usually on their best behavior before marriage, think of what an angry man will be like after marriage!
 3. **A drinker**
 - a. Alcohol has destroyed many good men - **Pro 23:29-30**
 - b. Most husbands become verbally and physically abusive after drinking
- **Again, it is better to be single and alone, than to be married to the wrong person!**

CONCLUSION

1. Among the most important decisions we make in life will be these two...
 - a. **With whom shall I spend my life?**
 - 1) Divorce and remarriage is not an option for the faithful Christian - **Mt 19:6**
 - 2) With one exception - **Mt 19:9**
 - b. **Who shall be the father or mother of my children?**
 - 1) This choice cannot be undone once the children are born
 - 2) Divorce is a violent action, with long-lasting effects - **Mal 2:16**
2. Dare we make such decisions without consulting the wisdom found in God’s Word...?
 - a. This certainly does not exhaust all that Proverbs has to say about selecting a spouse
 - b. But I trust that we see that the Proverbs are extremely practical, worthy of careful study

In our next lesson, we shall consider gems of wisdom in regards to **being** a good spouse...

Wisdom Regarding Marriage (2)

INTRODUCTION

1. We saw in our previous lesson that Proverbs can be a helpful guide in **selecting** a good spouse
2. In this study, we will consider what it says about **being** a good spouse
3. The importance of this subject should be evident...
 - a. Happiness in life is greatly affected by how successful we are in marriage
 - b. Even our usefulness to the Lord is affected by the relationship between husbands and wives
 - c. For example, a husband's prayers can be hindered by his treatment of his wife - **1 Pe 3:7**

[Appreciating the importance of a good marriage, let's begin with that beautiful passage in Proverbs 31 where we read about...]

I. THE VIRTUOUS WIFE

A. THE IDEAL WIFE...

1. **Trustworthy - Pro 31:11**
 - a. The husband can safely entrust her with his income
 - b. She will not squander what he gives her, but use it in a manner that benefits them both
 2. **Filled with an enduring love - Pro 31:12**
 - a. Devoted to doing her husband good all her life
 - b. Just as she vowed in the wedding ceremony
 3. **Has practical skills - Pro 31:13-15,21-22**
 - a. Such as sewing
 - b. And cooking
 4. **Industrious - Pro 31:16,24**
 - a. Makes investments (buys land and plants a vineyard)
 - b. Provides extra income (makes clothing and sells to merchants)
 5. **Compassionate - Pro 31:20**
 - a. Helping the poor
 - b. Reaching out to the needy
 6. **Strong character - Pro 31:25**
 - a. Character matters, and she has developed a strong one
 - b. Just as Peter stressed in **1 Pe 3:3-4**
 7. **Speaks words of wisdom and kindness - Pro 31:26**
 - a. She is thus concerned about what proceeds from her mouth
 - b. Just as Paul stressed in **Ep 4:29**
 8. **Diligently sees to her family's need - Pro 31:27**
 - a. Makes whatever preparation necessary - cf. **Pro 31:15**
 - b. So that her family does not go in want - cf. **Pro 31:21**
 9. **Fears the Lord - Pro 31:29-30**
 - a. She understands that this quality is more important and praiseworthy than physical beauty
 - b. With the fear of the Lord, she has the potential for great wisdom - **Pro 1:7**
- **Such are the qualities of being a good spouse**

B. WHAT A WIFE DOES NOT WANT TO BE...

1. Contentious - cf. **Pro 21:9,19**
 2. Hateful - **Pro 30:21-23**
- **Both make it where the husband does not want to be around her**

[Enough about being a good wife; where can we go in Proverbs to learn about being a good husband...?]

II. THE VIRTUOUS HUSBAND

A. WHERE'S THE PASSAGE DESCRIBING THE VIRTUOUS MAN...?

1. A question often raised by women, sometimes suggesting there is none
 2. But bear in mind that the Proverbs are primarily addressed to the man!
 - a. There is half a chapter describing the virtuous woman
 - b. There are thirty plus chapters describing the virtuous man!
- **The entire book, if followed, produces a husband any woman would love**

B. THE IDEAL HUSBAND...

1. **Values his wife highly - Pro 18:22; 19:14**
 - a. He realizes that she is a gift from God
 - b. Especially when she proves to be prudent
 2. **Gives his wife her due - Pro 31:31**
 - a. Allows his wife the opportunity to develop her own abilities
 - b. Lets her reap the benefits of her own labors
 - c. I.e., does not treat her simply as an appendage of himself
 3. **Praises his wife profusely - Pro 31:28b-29**
 - a. Praises her frequently
 - b. Does not take her for granted
 4. **Trusts his wife implicitly - Pro 31:11**
 - a. Demonstrates a willingness to trust her
 - b. In such areas as her intelligence, her faithfulness, her abilities
 - c. Is not jealous or suspicious
 5. **Content with his wife's love - Pro 5:15-21**
 - a. Does not look elsewhere
 - b. Will save him and his family much harm
- **A few examples of how Proverbs can help a man be a good spouse**

CONCLUSION

1. So much of the joy and meaning of life that God would have us enjoy is lost if there is not a good marriage
2. As Solomon wrote in another book of wisdom...

“Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.” - Ecc 9:9

The book Of Proverbs can also guide us in developing wholesome families. Our next study shall consider examples of inspired advice on providing for a family and raising children..

Wisdom Regarding Family

INTRODUCTION

1. As we continue our study of the Proverbs, we should keep in mind two things:
 - a. Life is short
 - b. Our eternal existence is greatly influenced by how we live during this short life
2. It is imperative, then, that we not waste our time through rash and foolish decisions...
 - a. Which not only jeopardize our eternal destiny
 - b. But can also make this life miserable
3. The value of wisdom is especially seen in **family** relationships...
 - a. “He who troubles his own house will inherit the wind...” - **Pro 11:29**
 - b. Life is too short and families grow too fast for us to raise a family through “trial and error”
4. We must seek advice in this all-important task...
 - a. But where shall we go?
 - b. To so-called “experts” who authoritatively give advice, but then all too often change their views later on after the damage has been done? (e.g., Dr. Spock and his earlier views on child-raising)

[Fortunately, in His grace God has preserved in His all-sufficient book the wisdom needed to provide for and raise a family. Much of this wisdom is found in **The Book Of Proverbs**! To illustrate, let's first consider some wisdom in...]

I. PROVIDING FOR A FAMILY

A. WHAT MANY THINK IS MOST IMPORTANT...

1. Many would say it is the “necessities” of life
 - a. Such as food and clothing
 - b. And a place of shelter
2. Most would feel that other things are also necessary...
 - a. Such as the “finer things” (luxuries) for the children, which parents never had as children
 - b. A good “education” for the children, so they too can be affluent

[While there is some merit in these things, inspired wisdom from **The Book Of Proverbs** teaches us not to place emphasis upon such material things...]

B. WHERE THE EMPHASIS SHOULD BE...

1. **Instilling a fear of the Lord - Pro 15:16**
 - a. More important than riches is providing for your family through your own example a deep and abiding respect for the Lord
 - b. For the fear of the Lord provides:
 - a. The beginning of knowledge - **Pro 1:7**
 - b. A means to prolong life - **Pro 10:27**
 - c. The key to avoiding sin - **Pro 16:6**
 - d. The key to true wealth - **Pro 22:4**
 - c. The fear of the Lord, then, is perhaps the most important “provision” that one can give

- to his or her family
2. **Giving them love - Pro 15:17**
 - a. Providing an environment where love reigns is more important than providing material abundance
 - b. Troubled children come from homes where “love” is lacking, not money!
 3. **Providing a peaceful family life - Pro 17:1**
 - a. Where there is peace and tranquility in a family, material affluence matters little
 - b. But what value is there in wealth, if we are always fighting over the things it provides?
 4. A wise father (or mother) realizes that **spiritual** provisions are more important than **material** ones
 - a. They will see that the family receives what is truly important
 - b. Even it means cutting back on less important things

[But when God’s wisdom is truly followed, it won’t be necessary to go without material necessities! To see why, consider what can be done...]

C. TO ENSURE ADEQUATE MATERIAL PROVISIONS...

1. **Be righteous - Pro 20:7**
 - a. Today that means putting the kingdom of God first in your life - **Mt 6:33**
 - b. Then God will watch out for you and providentially see that your needs are adequately met!
 - c. Children of righteous parents are truly blessed!
 - d. But parents who fail to put God first go through life without God’s providential help, and their children may suffer as a result!
2. **Concentrate on acquiring wisdom and knowledge, not wealth - Pro 24:3-4**
 - a. This would involve a careful study and application of God’s Word, especially a book like Proverbs
 - b. But it also involves living a dedicated life as a disciple (learner) of Jesus Christ, in whom are hidden the treasures of wisdom and knowledge - cf. **Co 2:2-3**

[From the Proverbs, then, we learn that the best and wisest thing parents can do for their family is to provide themselves as obedient servants of God, and to instill such faith in their children. If this is done, God will see that their material needs are met! But what about the matter of raising children...?]

II. RAISING CHILDREN

A. THE PROPER USE OF CORPOREAL PUNISHMENT...

1. Used properly, it is a demonstration of true love - **Pro 13:24**
2. Proper discipline has proper objectives...
 - a. To remove foolishness from the child - **Pro 22:15**
 - b. To save the soul of the child - **Pro 23:13-14**
 - c. To impart wisdom and to avoid shame - **Pro 29:15**
3. Proper discipline has its rewards - **Pro 29:17**
 - a. Such as “rest” and “delight”
 - b. A child who will love you and live in such a way as to bring you delight
4. Of course, there must be the proper application of corporeal punishment - **Pro 19:18**
 - a. To be applied before the situation gets out of hand (“while there is hope”)
 - b. To be applied under controlled circumstances (“do not set your heart on his destruction”)

- 1) I.e., do not put it off until you strike in anger
- 2) There **is** a difference between proper “spanking” and “child abuse”!
- c. Corporeal punishment should never be a vent for letting off steam...
 - 1) Rather, a controlled use of one method to discourage bad behavior
 - 2) To be accompanied with love! - cf. **Ep 6:4** (as implied by the word “nurture”)

B. MORE WISDOM FROM A FAMILIAR VERSE - Pro 22:6

1. As commonly translated: *“train up a child in the way he should go”*
 - a. This allows for the common interpretation in which a child’s outcome is virtually dependent upon his training, especially in spiritual matters
 - 1) I.e., if the child is brought up right by godly parents, the child must turn out all right
 - 2) So if a child is not a faithful Christian, it must always be a failing of the parents
 - b. But this view suggests “environmental predestination”, or “behavioral determinism” (shades of B. F. Skinner, cf. his book “Walden II”)
2. Literally, the verse can be translated: *“train up a child according to his way”*
 - a. That is, train up a child according to his or her inclinations
 - b. For example, don’t try to force a child who is mechanically inclined to be a doctor or a lawyer
 - c. Rather, bring up a child according to his or her aptitude, and they will likely continue what they start out in life doing (i.e., no “mid-life” crisis or career changes)
 - d. Therefore, this verse, like so many in Proverbs, is simply giving us practical advice in raising our children (without necessarily any spiritual implications)
3. However, I might add that trying to force a child to go against their “aptitude” may encourage a child to rebel in **all** areas of parental influence (including spiritual)

CONCLUSION

1. My purpose has not been to provide an exhaustive treatment of this subject covered in **Proverbs**
2. Rather, to illustrate its value to Christians in all areas of our lives..
 - a. That it does speak to such matters as providing for a family, raising children
 - b. So that we will study and meditate on it more often

Since so much of our happiness or lack of it is affected by our family life, we should want to take advantage of the wisdom offered in this area by the book of **Proverbs**...!

Wisdom Regarding Work

INTRODUCTION

1. The responsibilities of being a Christian are many, one of which is providing a proper example...
 - a. We are to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth - **Mt 5:13-16**
 - b. This requires outstanding and honorable conduct on our part - **1 Pe 2:12**
 - c. This is especially true as we go about the business of making a living - cf. **2 Th 3:11-12**
2. But how can we be sure that we behave properly toward outsiders in our business affairs...?
 - a. We've seen that Proverbs has much wisdom to offer in regards to friends and family
 - b. It also has much to say regarding every day work and business!

[As one who was employed in secular work before devoting my full energies to preaching the gospel, I found Proverbs to be especially helpful in this area. For example, from Proverbs I learned...]

I. TO KEEP WORK IN ITS PROPER PLACE

A. REMEMBER WHAT SHOULD TAKE PRIORITY...

1. It is a fact of life that we must work to live and provide for our families
 - a. If we aren't willing to work, the church is under no obligation to help us - **2 Th 3:6**
 - b. If we don't provide for our families, we are worse than unbelievers - **1 Ti 5:8**
2. But misplaced priorities can be very harmful to our well-being!
 - a. Righteousness, not riches, is what is truly profitable - **Pro 11:4**
 - b. One should therefore seek to be righteous, not rich - **Pro 11:28**
3. It is better to have a little with righteousness, than to be rich and wicked - **Pro 16:8**

B. INVOLVE GOD IN OUR BUSINESS AFFAIRS...

1. For then our efforts are more likely to succeed - **Pro 16:3** (cf. how the Lord blessed Joseph - **Gen 39:2-5**)
2. We are more likely to be able to enjoy what we receive - **Pro 10:22**; cf. **Ecc 5:18-6:2**

C. REMEMBER THAT BUSINESS HAS A MAJOR SHORTCOMING...

1. We never know what might happen tomorrow - **Pro 27:1**; cf. **Ja 4:13-16**
2. Wealth is a fleeting commodity not worth killing yourself in order to obtain - **Pro 23:4-5**

[Many people come to learn these truths only after a lifetime, when they realize they wasted their years on things not truly important, but the value of Proverbs is that even the young can know them early and apply them to their lives! From Proverbs I also learned...]

II. TO BE SUCCESSFUL LABORER

A. WHAT "NOT" TO DO...

1. Be lazy, for it will greatly irritate your boss! - **Pro 10:26**
2. Be slothful in your work, for it will ruin your company as quick as a competing company (and how long will your job last if your company can't compete?) - cf. **Pro 18:9**

B. WHAT ONE "SHOULD" DO...

1. Develop skill in your work (it will not go unnoticed) - **Pro 22:29**
2. Be diligent in your work to ensure your promotion - **Pro 12:24**
3. Impress people with the quality of your work, not the quantity of your words - **Pro 14:23**

[In today's competitive job market, among the best "skills" one can have are such things as "diligence" and "honesty". The wisdom from Proverbs can help one become a valuable commodity! Proverbs also provide wisdom on how...]

III. TO BE A SUCCESSFUL MANAGER

A. BE A WISE MANAGER...

1. Be diligent in your planning, and not too hasty in getting things done - **Pro 21:5**
2. Nurture and utilize counsel from others - **Pro 15:22**
3. Stay on top of your job! - cf. **Pro 27:23-27**

B. BE A GOOD LEADER...

1. Don't be oppressive - **Pro 28:16**
2. Be concerned for the rights of your employees - **Pro 29:7**
3. Provide good treatment, and you will gain loyalty and love - **Pro 29:21**
4. Help the employee see how his work benefits himself as well as the company, so he will be diligent in his efforts - **Pro 16:26**

CONCLUSION

1. My experience as both a laborer and a manager gave me opportunity to test the wisdom found in **Proverbs...**
2. I found that if one...
 - a. Keeps the need to work in proper perspective
 - b. Applies the principles found in Proverbs and other Scriptures
3. That in His providence God...
 - a. Not only provides you with the necessities of life
 - b. But more often than not a good degree of material abundance!

The important thing to keep in mind is that throughout our business dealings, we must always heed the words of Jesus:

"Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness!" (Mt 6:33)

Wisdom Regarding Speech

INTRODUCTION

1. Christians are to give careful heed to their speech...
 - a. Avoiding corrupt words, speaking that which edifies - **Ep 4:29**
 - b. Abstaining from filthy talk, giving thanks instead - **Ep 5:4**
2. The book of Proverbs has much to say about speech...
 - a. The power of speech
 - b. Both to tear down and to build up - **Pro 11:9,11**

[What wisdom can be gleaned from Proverbs concerning our speech or language? First, there is the...]

I. DESTRUCTIVE USE OF SPEECH

A. LYING...

1. Which is an abomination to God - **Pro 12:22; 6:17-19**
 - a. Lying lips, a lying tongue
 - b. Bearing false witness
 2. Often fostered by hatred - **Pro 10:18; 26:24-28**
 - a. In efforts to hide hatred
 - b. Trying to disguise one's true feelings
 3. Which will prove to be short-lived - **Pro 12:19; 20:17; 21:6**
 - a. Just for a moment
 - b. Sweet at first, but only a fleeting fantasy
- **Lying will eventually destroy the liar, and often the one lied about**

B. FLATTERY...

1. Not sincere compliments, but deceitful praise to win another's favor and to manipulate
 2. Also a source of ruin - **Pro 26:28; 29:5**
 - a. Often crushing others
 - b. By entrapping those who are flattered
 3. Often used effectively by the adulteress - **Pro 6:24; 7:21**
 - a. A truly evil woman
 - b. Who uses enticing speech to seduce
- **Like lying, flattery can destroy both the user and subject of it**

C. GOSSIP...

1. Also known as the tale-bearer, slanderer, whisperer - **Pro 11:13**
 - a. Who reveals secrets
 - b. Unlike a faithful person
2. Betrays and destroys friendships - **Pro 17:9**
 - a. By repeating a matter
 - b. When one who truly loves will remain silent
3. Creates strife - **Pro 16:27-28; 26:20-22**
 - a. Revealing the perverse character of the gossip
 - b. Whose words are like wood to a fire

4. Destroys character and integrity - **Pro 11:9; 25:9-10**
 - a. The work of a true hypocrite
 - b. Whose own reputation will eventually be ruined
- **Whether true or not is incidental; gossip destroys both the user and the subject**

D. CURSING...

1. Especially one's parents - **Pro 20:20; cf. Exo 21:17; Lev 20:9**
 - a. Such a person's lamp would soon be put out in deep darkness
 - b. Under the Law of Moses, it was a capital offense
 2. But also another's associate - **Pro 30:10**
 - a. Even maligning a lowly servant can be disastrous
 - b. The master (or servant) may turn on you
- **Speaking evil of others harms one's self as much as those spoken against**

[As James tells us in his epistle, there is great danger in misuse of the tongue (**Ja 3:2-12**). But there can also be much good done through proper speech (**Pro 15:4**)...]

II. CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF SPEECH

A. GOOD WORDS...

1. Words of the righteous - **Pro 10:11,20-21**
 - a. A well of life
 - b. As choice silver
 - c. That feeds many
 2. Pleasant words - **Pro 16:24**
 - a. Like a honeycomb
 - b. Sweetness to the soul, health to the bones
 3. Comforting words - **Pro 12:25**
 - a. Addressed to the anxious and depressed
 - b. Making their hearts glad
- **Such speech reveals the good heart of the speaker**

B. TIMELY WORDS...

1. Well-timed words - **Pro 15:23; 25:11**
 - a. Spoken in due season, how joyful and good it is!
 - b. Like apples of gold in settings of silver
 2. Well-thought words - **Pro 15:28**
 - a. Studied carefully by a righteous person
 - b. On how best to answer
- **Such speech reveals the wisdom of the speaker**

C. CONTROLLED WORDS...

1. That benefits the one who speaks - **Pro 13:2-3; 15:1-2; 21:23**
 - a. Preserving the life of the one who guards his mouth
 - b. Defusing potentially violate situations
 - c. Keeping one's soul from trouble
2. That reveals true knowledge and understanding - **Pro 10:19; 17:27-28**
 - a. By sparing words, with a calm spirit
 - b. Which even a fool can benefit from

-- **Such speech will enhance the reputation of the speaker**

CONCLUSION

1. From Proverbs we learn the value of being careful of our speech...
 - a. Avoiding much harm to ourselves and to others
 - b. Doing much good to ourselves and to others

2. Which may help us appreciate why Paul was so concerned that Christians...
 - a. Let their speech always be with grace - **Co 4:6**
 - b. Let no unwholesome word come out of their mouths, only good words - **Ep 4:29**

Do we truly appreciate the importance and wisdom of the right kind of speech...?

Wisdom Regarding Alcohol

INTRODUCTION

1. A serious problem today involves the consumption of alcohol...
 - a. More than thirty percent of Americans at some time in their lives has had an alcohol use disorder - **Bridget Gant**, National Institute On Alcohol Abuse And Alcoholism
 - b. Nearly 100,000 people die every year of alcohol-related causes - **Dr. James C. Garbutt**, medical director of the Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program (UNC at Chapel Hill)
 - c. Alcohol is more dangerous than some illegal drugs like marijuana or Ecstasy and should be classified as such in legal systems - **Professor David Nutt**, Bristol University
 - d. Alcohol is blamed for more than half of all visits to hospital emergency rooms - **ibid.**
2. The Book of Proverbs warns against the dangers of alcohol...
 - a. Whether in the form of wine or strong drink
 - b. With the potential of leading one astray - **Pro 20:1**

[What further wisdom can be gleaned from Proverbs concerning alcohol? Let's see...]

I. ALCOHOL IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

A. ALCOHOL CAN LEAD TO POVERTY...

1. A warning against those who love wine - **Pro 21:17**
2. A warning against spending time with winebibbers and drunkards - **Pro 23:20-21**
-- **Alcohol has been the downfall of many businessmen**

B. ALCOHOL CAN DESTROY LIVES...

1. It can lead to woe and sorrow, contentions and complaints, wounds without cause and redness of eyes - **Pro 23:29-30**
2. It is seductive, and can destroy one just like the seductress - **Pro 23:31-32; 5:3-5; 6:24-26**
3. It can alter your senses, leading you to say things you'll later regret (e.g., "office parties") - **Pro 23:33**
4. It gives a false sense of security, exposing you to great danger (e.g., "driving drunk") - **Pro 23:34-35**
-- **Alcohol has destroyed many lives, both those who drink and innocent ones who cross their paths**

C. ALCOHOL IMPAIRS JUDGMENT...

1. Which is why kings and princes were to abstain - **Pro 31:4-5**
2. It is better reserved for the dying and devastated - **Pro 31:6-7**
-- **Alcohol is not for those who would be wise**

[Indeed, "Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise." (**Pro 20:1**). Because of such warnings, and with the serious problems with alcohol in our society, let's review what is said about...]

II. ALCOHOL IN THE LIVES OF CHRISTIANS

A. WHAT IS CONDEMNED...

1. Drunkenness
 - a. A work of darkness, not an element of the armor of light - **Ro 13:11-14**
 - b. Conduct that not repented of will keep one out of the kingdom of God - **1 Co 6:9-10; Ga 5:19-21**
 - c. Conduct suitable for church discipline - **1 Co 5:11-13**
 2. Social drinking
 - a. We are to dedicate ourselves to doing the will of God, not the lusts of men - **1 Pe 4:1-2**
 - b. Thus we are to abstain from drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties - **1 Pe 4:3**
 - c. Though we should expect others to think ill of us for abstaining - **1 Pe 4:4**
- **The popular and common use of alcohol has no place in the life of the Christian**

B. WHAT IS COMMANDED...

1. Concern for the weaknesses of others - **Ro 14:14-18**
 - a. Are we willing to destroy the one for whom Christ died?
 - b. Are we more interested in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit?
 2. Willingness to forego wine if a stumbling block to others - **Ro 14:19-21**
 - a. Do we know someone who struggles with alcohol abuse and addiction?
 - b. Do we love them more than any presumed right we may have to drink?
 3. Evidently Timothy had chosen to forego wine for such reasons - cf. **1 Ti 5:23**
 - a. Paul prescribed that Timothy drink wine for medicinal purposes
 - b. Wine was often used to purify water, yet for some reason Timothy had abstained
- **The Christian must prayerfully consider the role of influence regarding alcohol**

CONCLUSION

1. What is wisdom regarding the consumption of alcohol...?
 - a. In view of the warnings found in Proverbs?
 - 1) It can lead to poverty
 - 2) It can destroy lives
 - 3) It impairs judgment
 - b. In view of the teachings found in the New Testament?
 - 1) Prohibitions concerning drunkenness
 - 2) Concerns regarding influence on weaker brethren
2. What is wisdom in light of the problems of alcohol abuse in our society today...?
 - a. Shall we flirt with the seducing effects of alcohol?
 - 1) Alcohol can be tempting and easily ensnare the unsuspecting
 - 2) If one in three have succumbed, might not we?
 - b. Shall we be insensitive to the weaknesses that many have regarding alcohol?
 - 1) Alcohol is the number one drug problem we face today
 - 2) If one in three have problems with it, dare we become stumbling blocks to them?

It shouldn't take the wisdom of Solomon to see that Christians should take the dangers of alcohol seriously and be proactive in helping themselves and others to remain free from its clutches...!

Wisdom Regarding Money

INTRODUCTION

1. People often have conflicting ideas about **money**...
 - a. Some say that it is sinful to be rich; others, that it is a virtue to be poor
 - b. Many think that money provides the ultimate security
2. The Bible says a great deal about money...
 - a. It speaks about earning and spending, saving and giving
 - b. It even warns about wasting our money
3. The **Book of Proverbs** in particular discusses issues related to money...
 - a. Such as wealth and poverty
 - b. Such as generosity and greed

[What wisdom can be gleaned from Proverbs concerning money? Let's first consider what is said regarding...]

I. WEALTH AND POVERTY

A. REGARDING WEALTH...

1. Wealth does have its advantages
 - a. A degree of security - **Pro 10:15; 18:11**; e.g., **13:8**
 - b. Companionship of 'friends' - **Pro 14:20; 19:4,6-7**
 - c. Power or influence - **Pro 22:7**
 - d. The ability to speak more freely - **Pro 18:23**
 2. But wealth does not provide everything
 - a. It does not deliver us from death - **Pro 10:2; 11:4**
 - b. Those who trust in their riches will fall - **Pro 11:28**
 3. The acquisition of wealth
 - a. Must be gained honestly, such as through labor - **Pro 13:11**
 - b. Best if by labor, not inherited - **Pro 20:21**
 - c. Best if gained gradually, not with haste - **Pro 28:20,22**
 - d. Wealth acquired unscrupulously is temporary and bitter - **Pro 20:17; 21:5-6; 28:8**
 4. Keeping wealth in perspective
 - a. Do not overwork to be rich - **Pro 23:4**
 - b. Riches easily disappear - **Pro 23:5**
- **Wealth can be blessing, but it can easily become a curse; wisdom makes the difference!**

B. REGARDING POVERTY...

1. Some are poor because of circumstances beyond their control
 - a. The greed of others - **Pro 30:14**
 - b. Usury and extortion - **Pro 28:8**
2. Others are poor because of their own sinful conduct
 - a. Laziness - **Pro 6:6-11; 10:4; 14:23; 20:13; 24:30-34**
 - b. Refusing to heed correction - **Pro 13:18**
 - c. Pleasure seeking - **Pro 21:17**

- d. Drunkenness, gluttony - **Pro 23:21**
- e. Wasting time on frivolous things - **Pro 12:11; 28:19**
- **Poverty is not always self-inflicted, but in many cases it is!**

[Poverty also comes from other causes (natural disasters, God's chastisement, persecution, even voluntary choice). But as most Christians today are blessed with relative wealth, let's now consider what wisdom can be gleaned from Proverbs regarding the use of our money...]

II. GENEROSITY AND GREED

A. REGARDING GENEROSITY...

- 1. The expression of generosity
 - a. Toward the needy (giving to the poor) - **Pro 28:27**
 - b. Toward the Lord (honoring Him with our first fruits) - **Pro 3:9**
- 2. The benefits of generosity
 - a. Natural benefits (the inherent joy of giving) - **Pro 11:17; 14:21**
 - b. Divine benefits (the blessing of the Lord) - **Pro 3:10; 11:24-25; 19:17**
- **For true happiness, with the Lord as our Benefactor, we must be generous**

B. REGARDING GREED...

- 1. The qualities of greed
 - a. Insatiable desires (like a leech) - **Pro 30:15-16**
 - b. Laziness - **Pro 21:25-26**
 - c. Hypocrisy - **Pro 23:6-8**
- 2. The danger of greed
 - a. Troubles one's self - **Pro 1:19**
 - b. Troubles one's family - **Pro 15:27**
- **To avoid misery, for ourselves and others, we must not be greedy**

CONCLUSION

- 1. With the aid of the Book of Proverbs, we can have wisdom regarding...
 - a. Wealth and poverty
 - b. Generosity and greed
- 2. With the blessing of the Lord, we can experience both...
 - a. Wealth that comes from honest labor
 - b. Generosity that springs from a merciful heart

Certainly there is no place for arrogance and abuse when we have been materially blessed:

The rich and the poor have this in common, The LORD is the maker of them all.
- **Pro 22:2**

He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy. - **Pro 14:31**

May the Lord give us the wisdom and grace to use our wealth properly...!

Wisdom Regarding Authority

INTRODUCTION

1. Throughout life, we must deal with the matter of **authority**...
 - a. Sometimes we find ourselves in positions of authority (boss, parent, elder, president)
 - b. Most of the time we find ourselves having to submit to authority (employee, child, citizen)
2. Wisdom regarding authority is a virtue often lacking...
 - a. People with authority frequently do poorly, even abusing their authority
 - b. People under authority don't always handle it gracefully, making their situation worse
3. In **Proverbs**, we find wisdom regarding authority...
 - a. Mostly spoken in terms pertaining to the rule of a king or prince
 - b. Which can easily be applied to other areas involving authority (work, family, church)

[In this study, we shall seek to summarize what is said in Proverbs about the subject of authority, beginning with some...]

I. WISDOM FOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY

A. THEIR DUTIES...

1. To make judgments - **Pro 16:10; 25:2**
 - a. Those in authority are often called upon to make decisions
 - b. Decisions that affect those under their authority
 2. To administer justice - **Pro 20:8,26; 29:4a,14**
 - a. Such is the responsibility of those in authority
 - b. Not for their personal benefit, but for those under their authority
- **Whether one is a king, a company CEO or manager, an elder, or a parent, God expects them to exercise authority with justice**

B. THEIR QUALITIES...

1. They must be righteous - **Pro 16:10,12**
 - a. Necessary to administer justice
 - b. To judge righteously and fairly
 2. Free of evil influence - **Pro 25:4-5**
 - a. Such as covetousness, the love of material things - **Pro 28:15-16**
 - b. Such as bribery, the tool of many 'lobbyists' - **Pro 29:4**
 - c. Such as women and alcohol, bane of many politicians and businessmen - **Pro 31:1-5**
 3. They must be fair and merciful - **Pro 31:8-9**
 - a. For those unable to speak for themselves
 - b. For those who are poor and needy
- **Those in authority need the qualities that will ensure righteous and merciful judgment**

[In other words, the same sort of judgment they would want if they themselves were not in positions of authority! Now for some...]

II. WISDOM FOR THOSE UNDER AUTHORITY

A. THEIR DUTIES...

1. To honor those in authority - **Pro 24:21-22**
 - a. To fear (reverence, respect) them like we do the Lord
 - b. Avoid those given to 'revolution', who often bring calamity on themselves
 2. To gain their favor, when possible and appropriate - **Pro 16:15; 19:12; 20:2**
 - a. For such favor can be a blessing
 - b. And their wrath can be a curse
- **Those in authority deserve our respect - for the position if not the occupant**

B. THEIR QUALITIES...

1. Wise conduct, not shameful - **Pro 14:35**
 2. Righteous speech - **Pro 16:13**
 3. Purity of heart and graceful lips - **Pro 22:11**
 4. Excellence in one's work - **Pro 22:29**
 5. Self-control of one's passions and appetites - **Pro 23:1-3**
 6. Humility - **Pro 25:6-7**
 7. Patience and gentleness - **Pro 25:15**
- **Such are the qualities that gain the favor of those in authority**

CONCLUSION

1. If such wisdom regarding authority were commonplace...
 - a. In nations
 - b. In businesses
 - c. In churches
 - d. In families
2. Where those in authority...
 - a. Fulfilled their duties with justice
 - b. Were men and women of righteous conduct
3. Where those under authority...
 - a. Respected those over them
 - b. Gained the respect of those over them through their own conduct

Then how wonderful it would be! With the aid of such wisdom as that found in Proverbs, it can happen...

Wisdom Regarding Riddles

INTRODUCTION

1. In the prologue of Proverbs, among the purposes of the book stated is this one...
 - a. “To understand a proverb and an enigma,”
 - b. “The words of the wise and their riddles.” - **Pro 1:6**
2. According to the **Preacher’s Commentary**...
 - a. “Proverbs that begin with clusters of questions may be classified as riddles or their offspring (see **Pro 23:29-30; 30:4**)”
 - b. “As may be some of the numerical sayings in chapters **6** and **30**.”
3. Among the more picturesque riddles are **the numerical sayings** of King Agur...
 - a. Containing observations of common things in groups of four or more - **Pro 30:1,11-31**
 - b. Shedding light on human behavior and conveying moral truth - **Roy Harbison**

[In this study, we shall consider the numerical sayings of King Agur, first posing them in the form of actual riddles. For example...]

I. WHAT ARE FOUR CLASSES OF EVIL DOERS?

A. THOSE THAT DESPISE THEIR PARENTS...

1. Who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers - **Pro 30:11**
2. Whose end is graphically depicted later in this chapter - **Pro 30:17**; cf. also **20:20**

B. THOSE THAT ARE BLIND TO THEIR FAULTS...

1. Who are clean to their own eyes, but not washed of their filth - **Pro 30:12**
2. Who may justify themselves, but will be judged by the Lord - **Pro 21:2**

C. THOSE WHO ARE ARROGANT...

1. With lofty eyes, who lift their eyelids high - **Pro 30:13**
2. Clearly condemned elsewhere in Proverbs - **Pro 6:17; 21:4**

D. THOSE WHO CONSUME THE POOR...

1. With teeth like swords, and fangs like knives - **Pro 30:14**
2. Who will themselves come to poverty - **Pro 22:16**

[Such conduct is indicative of **an evil generation**, and evidenced by some living in the “last days” (**2 Ti 3:1-5**). Continuing with the numerical sayings, we ask in the form of a riddle...]

II. WHAT THINGS ARE NEVER SATISFIED?

A. THE LEECH...

1. Who has two daughters: Give and Give! - **Pro 30:15**
2. The leech depicts those filled with insatiable **greed**, they are never satisfied - cf. **Ecc 5:10**

B. THE GRAVE...

1. The grave (Sheol, the Hebrew word for the dead) can never be filled - **Pro 30:16**
2. And so **covetousness** is insatiable like Hell (Sheol) and Destruction - cf. **Pro 27:20**

C. THE BARREN WOMB...

1. The woman who desperately wants to conceive and give birth - **Pro 30:16**
2. Like Rachel said to Jacob, “Give me children, or else I die!” - cf. **Gen 30:1**

D. THE EARTH...

1. The dry earth that absorbs rain, soon wanting more - **Pro 30:16**
2. Another illustration of insatiable greed

E. THE FIRE...

1. Which consumes as long as combustible matter is available - **Pro 30:16**
2. The final example of things never satisfied

[These five images appear designed to illustrate **covetousness and greed**. Now for another “riddle”...]

III. WHAT THINGS ARE A WONDER TO BEHOLD?

A. THE WAY OF AN EAGLE IN THE AIR...

1. The grace and speed of an eagle in flight - **Pro 30:18-19**
2. Soaring high in the sky, but then leaving no evidence behind

B. THE WAY OF A SERPENT ON A ROCK...

1. The slithering of a serpent - **Pro 30:19**
2. Who leaves tracks on the sand, but not on a rock

C. THE WAY OF A SHIP IN THE SEA...

1. The sailing ship, tacking back and forth - **Pro 30:19**
2. Progressing forward, but whose waves soon dissipate

D. THE WAY OF A MAN WITH A VIRGIN...

1. The mystery of courtship - **Pro 30:19**
2. The exchange of affection and attraction between them

E. THE WAY OF AN ADULTEROUS WOMAN...

1. How she can commit adultery, and then claim innocence - **Pro 30:20**
2. Note: “This is the way...” - tying this verse with the proceeding verses
3. Thus she maneuvers, toying with affection and attraction like a man and a virgin, but like the eagle, serpent, and ship, believing she leaves nothing of substance behind

[These five images illustrate the ultimate wonder of **adultery that claims innocence**. The next “riddle” might be expressed in this way...]

IV. WHAT THINGS CAUSE TURMOIL?

A. A SERVANT WHEN HE REIGNS...

1. It normally is not fitting - **Pro 30:21-22**; cf. **19:10**
2. He becomes arrogant and overbearing, drunk with his new position - **Believer’s Bible**

Commentary (BBC)

3. Like Jeroboam, such is the rule - Joseph was the exception

B. A FOOL WHEN HE IS FILLED WITH FOOD...

1. Having all that he desires to eat - **Pro 30:22**
2. His prosperity causes him to be more insolent than ever - **BBC**

C. A HATEFUL WOMAN WHEN SHE IS MARRIED...

1. Who finally succeeds in getting married - **Pro 30:23; cf. 21:9,19**
2. Her wretched disposition would normally have kept her single, but by some fluke, she lands a husband. Then she becomes imperious and haughty, taunting those who are still unmarried.
- **BBC**

D. A MAID SERVANT WHO SUCCEEDS HER MISTRESS...

1. Who now rules over those who were once her equals - **Pro 30:23**
2. She doesn't know how to act with refinement and grace, but is coarse, rude, and vulgar.
- **BBC**

[These scenarios contribute to **social chaos**. Our next “riddle” reveals examples of **wise behavior**...]

V. WHAT THINGS ARE LITTLE BUT WISE?

A. THE ANTS...

1. They are not strong, but they prepare their food in the summer - **Pro 30:24-25**
2. A lesson for all, especially the sluggard - **Pro 6:6-8**
3. The lesson: **plan ahead**

B. THE ROCK BADGERS...

1. They are feeble, but they make their homes in the crags (cliffs) - **Pro 30:26**
2. Where they are able to escape animals of prey or human hunters - **Psa 104:18**
3. The lesson: **make wise choices**

C. THE LOCUSTS...

1. They have no king, yet all advance in ranks - **Pro 30:27**
2. Like a well-drilled army - cf. **Joel 2:7-11,25**
3. The lesson: **work in unison with others**

D. THE SPIDER (LIZARD)...

1. Skillfully grasps with its hands, and is in kings' palaces - **Pro 30:28**
2. Newer translations have “lizard”; probably like a gecko
3. The lesson: **skillfully persevere**

[Much wisdom can be gleaned from observing God's creation, even its smallest creatures. Finally, we ask again in the form of a riddle...]

VI. WHAT THINGS ARE MAJESTIC?

A. A LION...

1. Mighty among beasts, turning away from none - **Pro 30:29-30**

2. Majestic and unruffled as it walks - **BBC**

B. A GREYHOUND (STRUTTING ROOSTER)...

1. The Hebrew is uncertain (lit., “girded at the loins”) - **Pro 30:31**
2. Whether greyhound or strutting rooster, both are stately in their walk

C. A MALE GOAT...

1. “a picture of noble bearing as it strides at the head of a flock” - **BBC**
2. “which marches in the head of the flock in grave and stately manner, conducting them with great courage and resolution, and being ready to fight for them, either with beasts or men that oppose him” - **Poole**

D. A KING WITH HIS TROOPS...

1. “against whom there is no rising up” (KJV) - **Pro 30:31**
2. How foolish then, to lift up oneself, to think evil, or to be angry (against such a king?) - cf. **Pro 30:32-33**

CONCLUSION

1. These “riddles” that we’ve considered are not always easy to understand...
 - a. The Hebrew word actually means “dark saying, hard question” - cf. KJV, ASV
 - b. Scholars vary quite a bit in their interpretation and application of these riddles
2. But for the most part, the riddles offer illustrations and lessons providing wisdom...
 - a. On human behavior
 - b. On moral truths

Such is the nature of the book of Proverbs. Like the Old Testament as a whole, it was written for our **learning** and **admonition** (cf. **Ro 15:4; 1 Co 10:11**). I hope this study has increased your appreciation for Proverbs, which like all Scripture...

“...is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” - 2 Ti 3:16-17