

Kailua Christian Church (UCC)
Sunday, July 24, 2022
10:00 a.m. – Morning Worship
Special Guest Speaker, Pastor Elijah Pierick

Morning Message
Proverbs 1-3
A Message on Wisdom

Proverbs 1-3 NIV
Purpose and Theme

¹ The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:

² for gaining wisdom and instruction;

for understanding words of insight;

³ for receiving instruction in prudent behavior,
doing what is right and just and fair;

⁴ for giving prudence to those who are simple,^[a]
knowledge and discretion to the young—

⁵ let the wise listen and add to their learning,
and let the discerning get guidance—

⁶ for understanding proverbs and parables,
the sayings and riddles of the wise.^[b]

⁷ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools^[c] despise wisdom and instruction.

Prologue: Exhortations to Embrace Wisdom

Warning Against the Invitation of Sinful Men

⁸ Listen, my son, to your father's instruction
and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

⁹ They are a garland to grace your head
and a chain to adorn your neck.

¹⁰ My son, if sinful men entice you,
do not give in to them.

¹¹ If they say, "Come along with us;
let's lie in wait for innocent blood,
let's ambush some harmless soul;

¹² let's swallow them alive, like the grave,
and whole, like those who go down to the pit;

¹³ we will get all sorts of valuable things
and fill our houses with plunder;

¹⁴ cast lots with us;

we will all share the loot”—
15 my son, do not go along with them,
do not set foot on their paths;
16 for their feet rush into evil,
they are swift to shed blood.
17 How useless to spread a net
where every bird can see it!
18 These men lie in wait for their own blood;
they ambush only themselves!
19 Such are the paths of all who go after ill-gotten gain;
it takes away the life of those who get it.

Wisdom's Rebuke

20 Out in the open wisdom calls aloud,
she raises her voice in the public square;
21 on top of the wall^[d] she cries out,
at the city gate she makes her speech:
22 “How long will you who are simple love your simple ways?
How long will mockers delight in mockery
and fools hate knowledge?
23 Repent at my rebuke!
Then I will pour out my thoughts to you,
I will make known to you my teachings.
24 But since you refuse to listen when I call
and no one pays attention when I stretch out my hand,
25 since you disregard all my advice
and do not accept my rebuke,
26 I in turn will laugh when disaster strikes you;
I will mock when calamity overtakes you—
27 when calamity overtakes you like a storm,
when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind,
when distress and trouble overwhelm you.
28 “Then they will call to me but I will not answer;
they will look for me but will not find me,
29 since they hated knowledge
and did not choose to fear the LORD.
30 Since they would not accept my advice
and spurned my rebuke,
31 they will eat the fruit of their ways
and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.
32 For the waywardness of the simple will kill them,
and the complacency of fools will destroy them;
33 but whoever listens to me will live in safety
and be at ease, without fear of harm.”

Moral Benefits of Wisdom

2 My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,
2 turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding—
3 indeed, if you call out for insight
and cry aloud for understanding,
4 and if you look for it as for silver
and search for it as for hidden treasure,
5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.
6 For the LORD gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.
7 He holds success in store for the upright,
he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,
8 for he guards the course of the just
and protects the way of his faithful ones.
9 Then you will understand what is right and just
and fair—every good path.
10 For wisdom will enter your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.
11 Discretion will protect you,
and understanding will guard you.
12 Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men,
from men whose words are perverse,
13 who have left the straight paths
to walk in dark ways,
14 who delight in doing wrong
and rejoice in the perverseness of evil,
15 whose paths are crooked
and who are devious in their ways.
16 Wisdom will save you also from the adulterous woman,
from the wayward woman with her seductive words,
17 who has left the partner of her youth
and ignored the covenant she made before God.^[a]
18 Surely her house leads down to death
and her paths to the spirits of the dead.
19 None who go to her return
or attain the paths of life.
20 Thus you will walk in the ways of the good
and keep to the paths of the righteous.
21 For the upright will live in the land,
and the blameless will remain in it;
22 but the wicked will be cut off from the land,
and the unfaithful will be torn from it.

Wisdom Bestows Well-Being

- ³ My son, do not forget my teaching,
but keep my commands in your heart,
² for they will prolong your life many years
and bring you peace and prosperity.
- ³ Let love and faithfulness never leave you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.
⁴ Then you will win favor and a good name
in the sight of God and man.
- ⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
⁶ in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.^[a]
- ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD and shun evil.
⁸ This will bring health to your body
and nourishment to your bones.
- ⁹ Honor the LORD with your wealth,
with the firstfruits of all your crops;
¹⁰ then your barns will be filled to overflowing,
and your vats will brim over with new wine.
- ¹¹ My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline,
and do not resent his rebuke,
¹² because the LORD disciplines those he loves,
as a father the son he delights in.^[a]
- ¹³ Blessed are those who find wisdom,
those who gain understanding,
¹⁴ for she is more profitable than silver
and yields better returns than gold.
¹⁵ She is more precious than rubies;
nothing you desire can compare with her.
¹⁶ Long life is in her right hand;
in her left hand are riches and honor.
¹⁷ Her ways are pleasant ways,
and all her paths are peace.
¹⁸ She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her;
those who hold her fast will be blessed.
- ¹⁹ By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations,
by understanding he set the heavens in place;
²⁰ by his knowledge the watery depths were divided,
and the clouds let drop the dew.
- ²¹ My son, do not let wisdom and understanding out of your sight,

preserve sound judgment and discretion;
²² they will be life for you,
 an ornament to grace your neck.
²³ Then you will go on your way in safety,
 and your foot will not stumble.
²⁴ When you lie down, you will not be afraid;
 when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.
²⁵ Have no fear of sudden disaster
 or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked,
²⁶ for the LORD will be at your side
 and will keep your foot from being snared.
²⁷ Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,
 when it is in your power to act.
²⁸ Do not say to your neighbor,
 "Come back tomorrow and I'll give it to you"—
 when you already have it with you.
²⁹ Do not plot harm against your neighbor,
 who lives trustfully near you.
³⁰ Do not accuse anyone for no reason—
 when they have done you no harm.
³¹ Do not envy the violent
 or choose any of their ways.
³² For the LORD detests the perverse
 but takes the upright into his confidence.
³³ The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked,
 but he blesses the home of the righteous.
³⁴ He mocks proud mockers
 but shows favor to the humble and oppressed.
³⁵ The wise inherit honor,
 but fools get only shame.

DAVID GUZIK'S COMMENTARY

PROVERBS 1

A. Wisdom's beginning.

1. (1) The proverbs of Solomon.

The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

a. The proverbs of Solomon: The Book of Proverbs is a collection of practical life wisdom given mostly in short, memorable statements. Though part of a larger body of wisdom literature that includes Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, the Book of Proverbs is unique.

i. It is unique in its structure, being mostly a collection of individual statements without much context or organization by topic.

ii. It is unique in its theology, being concerned with practical life wisdom more than ideas about God and His work of salvation.

iii. Proverbs is also unique in its connection with the secular literature of its time.

Neighboring kingdoms had their own collections of wisdom literature, and in some places, there are significant similarities to these writings.

iv. As Ross notes, “The genre of wisdom literature was common in the ancient world, and a copious amount of material comes from ancient Egypt.” Some of these works are titled:

Egyptian:

- Instruction of Ptah-hotep.
- Teaching of Amenemope.
- Instruction of Ani.

Babylonian:

- Instruction of Shuruppak.
- Counsels of Wisdom.
- Words of Ahiqar.

v. There are several sections of Proverbs (Proverbs 22:17-23:14 is an example) that seem to be borrowed from The Teaching of Amenemope, an ancient Egyptian writing. There is debate as to who borrowed whom, but most scholars believe Amenemope is earlier.

vi. “If Proverbs is the borrower here, the borrowing is not slavish but free and creative. Egyptian jewels, as at the Exodus, have been re-set to their advantage by Israelite workmen and put to finer use.” (Kidner)

b. The proverbs: Proverbs teach wisdom through short points and principles but should not be regarded as “laws” or even universal promises.

i. “Proverbs are wonderfully successful at being what they are: proverbs. They are not failed prophecies or systematic theologies. Proverbs by design lays out pointed observations, meant to be memorized and pondered, not always intended to be applied ‘across the board’ to every situation without qualification.” (Phillips)

ii. “Naturally [proverbs] generalize, as a proverb must, and may therefore be charged with making life too tidy to be true. But nobody objects to this in secular sayings, for the very form demands a sweeping statement and looks for a hearer with his wits about him. We need no telling that a maxim like ‘Many hands make light work’ is not the last word on the subject, since ‘Too many cooks spoil the broth.’” (Kidner)

iii. “Proverbs itself makes this clear. A proverb is not a magical formula, bringing wisdom and blessing by incantation: ‘Like a lame man’s legs, which hang useless, is a proverb in the mouth of fools’ (Prov. 26:7).” (Phillips)

iv. Proverbs rarely quotes other parts of the Hebrew Scriptures, such as the torah or law. “An analogy to this is American folk wisdom which, although often dominated by Christian morality and presuppositions, contains few allusions to the Bible or Christian theology.” (Garrett)

c. The proverbs of Solomon: Solomon was the king of Israel famous for his wisdom. In 1 Kings 3:3-13 Solomon asked God for wisdom to lead God’s people and God answered that prayer. 1 Kings then presents a remarkable demonstration of Solomon’s wisdom, seen in his response to the problem of the two women and the deceased son (1 Kings 3:16-28).

i. There is also this description of Solomon’s wisdom: He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five. Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish. And men of all nations, from all the

kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon. (1 Kings 4:32-34)

ii. The opening, the proverbs of Solomon should not be taken to mean that Solomon was the author of all these proverbs. There are a few other authors specifically mentioned. Yet, it may well be that Solomon collected all these other proverbs and set them in his book. Whether Solomon was the collector or some unnamed later person, we can't know for certain.

iii. "The book tells us that it is the work of several authors. Three of these are named (Solomon, Agur and Lemuel), others are mentioned collectively as 'Wise Men', and at least one section of the book (the last) is anonymous." (Kidner)

iv. Yet, the prominence of Solomon in these wonderful statements of wisdom gives the reader pause. We know that this remarkably wise man did not finish his life in wisdom.

2. (2-6) The purpose of the Book of Proverbs.

To know wisdom and instruction,

To perceive the words of understanding,

To receive the instruction of wisdom,

Justice, judgment, and equity;

To give prudence to the simple,

To the young man knowledge and discretion—

A wise man will hear and increase learning,

And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,

To understand a proverb and an enigma,

The words of the wise and their riddles.

a. To know wisdom and instruction: In the opening of his collection of proverbs, Solomon explained the purpose of these sayings of wisdom. They are intended to give the attentive reader wisdom, instruction, perception, and understanding.

i. To know wisdom: "We're living in the 'information age,' but we certainly aren't living in the 'age of wisdom.' Many people who are wizards with their computers seem to be amateurs when it comes to making a success out of their lives." (Wiersbe)

b. To perceive the words of understanding: The reference to sight (as also in Proverbs 3:21) implies that these words of wisdom could be read and were in fact read.

i. "In Sumer and in ancient Egypt, schoolboys wrote down the instruction literature, and in ancient Israel most children were literate (Deut. 6:9; 11:20; Judg. 8:14). With the invention of the alphabet in the first half of the second millennium, any person of average intelligence could learn to read and probably to write within a few weeks. The earliest extant text in Hebrew (ca. 900 b.c.) is a child's text recounting the agricultural calendar. A. Millard says that ancient Hebrew written documents demonstrate that readers and writers were not rare and that few Israelites would have been unaware of writing." (Waltke)

c. To know wisdom: It is helpful to remember the difference

between wisdom and knowledge. One may have knowledge without wisdom.

Knowledge is the collection of facts; wisdom is the right use of what we know for daily living. Knowledge can tell one how financial systems work; wisdom manages a budget properly.

i. "It is probably a safe bet to say that most people today are not much interested in wisdom. They are interested in making money and in having a good time. Some are

interested in knowing something, in getting an education. Almost everyone wants to be well liked. But wisdom? The pursuit of wisdom is not a popular ideal.” (Boice on Psalm 111)

d. To receive the instruction of wisdom: Proverbs is something of a school of wisdom. We come to it with open hearts and minds, receiving its teaching. If we do, it will show as justice, judgment, and equity flow from our lives.

i. “And herein, as one well observeth, the poorest idiot being a sound Christian, goeth beyond the profoundest clerks that are not sanctified, that he hath his own heart instead of a commentary to help him to understand even the most needful points of the Scripture.” (Trapp)

e. To give prudence to the simple: The simple one is uneducated and needs instruction. The wisdom of this book will make the young, inexperienced one know what to do and how to do it in life. It will give the young man knowledge and discretion.

i. One characteristic of the simple man is that he is gullible. The simple believes every word, but the prudent considers well his steps. (Proverbs 14:15)

ii. Simple: “The word indicates the person whose mind is dangerously open. He is gullible, he is naïve. He may have opinions, but he lacks deeply thought-through and field-tested convictions.” (Phillips)

iii. “The son and the gullible (Proverbs 1:4-5) stand on the threshold of full adulthood. The time is at hand when the son and the gullible (Proverbs 1:4-5) must make a decisive stand for the godly parents’ and sages’ world-and-life views and values. Two conflicting worldviews make their appeal, ‘of Wisdom/Folly, Good/Pseudo-Good, Life/Death,’ and one must choose between them, for there is no third way.” (Waltke)

f. A wise man will hear and increase learning: The Book of Proverbs is not only for the simple and inexperienced. Even a wise man will find much to help and guide him, if he will only hear. Even a man of understanding can attain wise counsel from Proverbs.

i. “Proverbs is not simply for the naive and the gullible; everyone can grow by its teachings. Discerning people can obtain guidance from this book so that they might continue in the right way.” (Ross)

g. To understand a proverb and an enigma: The wisdom of the Book of Proverbs can also help us to solve difficult problems and some of the riddles of life.

3. (7) The foundation of all wisdom.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

a. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: The Book of Proverbs focuses on practical life wisdom more than theological ideas. Yet it is founded on a vital theological principle – that true knowledge and wisdom flow from the fear of the Lord.

i. This fear of the Lord is not a cowering, begging fear. It is the proper reverence that the creature owes to the Creator and that the redeemed owes to the Redeemer. It is the proper respect and honoring of God. Several writers give their definition of the fear of the Lord:

· “But what is the fear of the Lord? It is that affectionate reverence by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father’s law.” (Bridges)

· “A worshipping submission to the God of the covenant.” (Kidner)

- “The fear of the Lord’ ultimately expresses reverential submission to the Lord’s will and thus characterizes a true worshiper.” (Ross)
- “The fear of the Lord signifies that religious reverence which every intelligent being owes to his Creator.” (Clarke)

ii. God should be regarded with respect, reverence, and awe. This proper attitude of the creature toward the Creator is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom. Wisdom cannot advance further until this starting point is established.

iii. If true wisdom can be simply gained by human effort, energy, and ingenuity (like the rare and precious metals of the earth), then the fear of the Lord is not essential to obtaining wisdom. But if it comes from God’s revelation, then right relationship with Him is the key to wisdom.

iv. “What the alphabet is to reading, notes to reading music, and numerals to mathematics, the fear of the Lord is to attaining the revealed knowledge of this book.” (Waltke)

b. The beginning of knowledge: Solomon probably meant knowledge here mostly in the sense of wisdom. The idea that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom is also found at Job 28:28, Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 9:10, and Ecclesiastes 12:13.

i. Beginning has the sense of “the first and controlling principle, rather than a stage which one leaves behind; cf. Eccl. 12:13.” (Kidner)

ii. “The fundamental fact, then, is that in all knowledge, all understanding of life, all interpretation thereof, the fear of Jehovah is the principal thing, the chief part, the central light, apart from which the mind of man gropes in darkness, and misses the way.” (Morgan)

iii. “The fall of man was a choosing of what bid fair ‘to make one wise’ (Gen. 3:6) but flouted the first principle of wisdom, the fear of the Lord.” (Kidner)

B. Instruction to a son.

1. (8-9) Appeal to hear and receive the wisdom of parents.

My son, hear the instruction of your father,
And do not forsake the law of your mother;
For they will be a graceful ornament on your head,
And chains about your neck.

a. My son, hear the instruction of your father: This is a warm and appropriate scene. A father speaks to his son, encouraging him to receive the wisdom of his parents. It is often the nature of the young to be slow to receive the wisdom of their older generation.

i. The mention of a son reminds us of another tragedy or irony regarding the life of Solomon. The man who had 700 wives and 300 concubines left record of only one son, Rehoboam – and he was a fool.

ii. Because both the father and the mother are mentioned, we know that teaching the children wisdom is the responsibility of both parents.

iii. The mention of instruction shows that Solomon understood that children are not to be taught only, or even primarily, through bodily punishment (such as a spanking). Children are regarded as capable of thought, learning, and obedience beyond blind submission.

b. They will be a graceful ornament on your head: The idea is that the instruction and law given from parent to child will adorn the life of their children, if

they will only receive it. Like a crown on your head or chains about the neck, such wisdom will be a reward to a younger generation.

2. (10-14) The enticement of sinners.

My son, if sinners entice you,
Do not consent.

If they say, "Come with us,
Let us lie in wait to shed blood;
Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause;
Let us swallow them alive like Sheol,
And whole, like those who go down to the Pit;
We shall find all kinds of precious possessions,
We shall fill our houses with spoil;
Cast in your lot among us,
Let us all have one purse"—

a. My son, if sinners entice you: Solomon first warned his son about the danger of bad company. The actions of some people clearly reveal them to be sinners, more than in the general sense in which we are all sinners. The young must resist the enticements of these men.

i. Significantly, this first instruction and warning in the book of Proverbs speaks to the company we keep and the friendships we make. There are few more powerful forces and influences upon our life than the friends we choose. It has been said, show me your friends and I can see your future. It speaks to the great need for God's people to be more careful and wiser in their choice of friends.

ii. Do not consent: "They can do thee no harm unless thy will join in with them.... Not even the devil himself can lead a man into sin till he consents. Were it not so, how could God judge the world?" (Clarke)

b. Come with us, let us lie in wait to shed blood: When the wicked plot their evil actions, the wise son will not consent. He will distance himself from them, no matter what the promised or potential gain may be (we shall fill our houses with spoil).

i. Part of their enticement was simply the sense of belonging: come with us.

"Apparently in ancient Israel, no less than in the modern world, the comradeship, easy money, and feeling of empowerment offered by gangs was a strong temptation to the young man who felt overwhelmed by the difficulties of the life he confronted every day." (Garrett)

ii. Solomon described the words of sinners in terms of their real meaning and effect, and not what they actually said. Surely such sinners would appeal to riches and quick gain, and not merely invite this one to shed blood. Solomon tells us to hear what people mean with such promises of quick and easy riches, not only what they say.

3. (15-19) The end that will come upon the plotters of violence.

My son, do not walk in the way with them,

Keep your foot from their path;
For their feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed blood.
Surely, in vain the net is spread
In the sight of any bird;
But they lie in wait for their own blood,
They lurk secretly for their own lives.

So are the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain;

It takes away the life of its owners.

a. Do not walk in the way with them: The guidance from father to son was simple and clear. Stay away from the wicked and all their plotting, for their feet run to evil.

i. In vain the net is spread in the sight of the bird: “The bird does not see any connection between the net and what is scattered on it; he just sees food that is free for the taking. In the process he is trapped and killed. In the same way, the gang cannot see the connection between their acts of robbery and the fate that entraps them.” (Garrett)

ii. Tragically, Solomon’s company with sinners – in the form of his wives who were given to idolatry – became a trap he himself was caught in.

b. They lie in wait for their own blood: Ultimately, the gain promised by the wicked can never be fulfilled. They say, let us lie in wait to shed blood (Proverbs 1:11), but in fact they are the hunted. They seek to take the life and livelihood of others, but their greed takes away the life of its owners.

C. Wisdom calls to the simple ones.

1. (20-21) Wisdom’s public call.

Wisdom calls aloud outside;

She raises her voice in the open squares.

She cries out in the chief concourses,

At the openings of the gates in the city

She speaks her words:

a. Wisdom calls aloud outside: Solomon presents wisdom as a person, a woman who offers her guidance and help to the world. Her cry is aloud but often ignored.

i. “And this wisdom is said to cry with a loud voice, to intimate both God’s earnestness in inviting sinners to repentance, and their inexcusableness if they do not hear such loud cries.” (Poole)

ii. “The greatest tragedy is that there’s so much noise that people can’t hear the things they really need to hear. God is trying to get through to them with the voice of wisdom, but all they hear are the confused communications clutter, foolish voices that lead them farther away from the truth.” (Wiersbe)

b. Outside...in the open squares.... the chief concourses...the gates in the city:

Wisdom presents herself to everyone in every place. She offers her help to anyone who will give attention to her words.

i. “Here the open proclamation...to make it clear that the offer of wisdom is to the man in the street, and for the business of living, not to an élite for the pursuit of scholarship.” (Kidner)

2. (22-27) An appeal to the simple ones.

“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.

Because I have called and you refused,

I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded,

Because you disdained all my counsel,

And would have none of my rebuke,
I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when your terror comes,
When your terror comes like a storm,
And your destruction comes like a whirlwind,
When distress and anguish come upon you.

a. How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? Wisdom begins her appeal by addressing those who most need her help – the simple ones, those who are untrained in the ways of wisdom.

i. She challenged those without wisdom to give account for their lack, asking “How long?” How many more weeks, months, or years will the simple ones reject or neglect wisdom’s help?

ii. “If the call has been extended for some time—‘How long?’ (Proverbs 1:22; see also Isaiah 65:2)—then this warning is given for a prolonged refusal. Because wisdom has been continually rejected, wisdom will laugh at the calamity of those who have rejected it.” (Ross)

iii. The problem with these simple ones was that they loved their simplicity. They preferred their foolish ignorance than the effort and correction required by the love and pursuit of wisdom.

b. For scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge:

This scorn describes those who boastfully reject and despise God’s wisdom.

They love their simplicity and scorn, and they hate knowledge.

i. “Scorners think they know everything (Proverbs 21:24) and laugh at the things that are really important. While the simple one has a blank look on his face, the scorner wears a sneer.” (Wiersbe)

ii. “Fools are people who are ignorant of truth because they’re dull and stubborn. Their problem isn’t a low IQ or poor education; their problem is a lack of spiritual desire to seek and find God’s wisdom.” (Wiersbe)

iii. We can see a downward progression. You started gullible, then became a fool, and ended up a scorner (mocker).

c. Turn at my rebuke; surely I will pour out my spirit on you: The embrace of wisdom begins with a turn. One must be willing to change direction from the pursuit of foolishness and turn towards God and His wisdom. This response to wisdom’s rebuke invites wisdom to pour itself out.

i. It seems that the description here is of the spirit of wisdom, not specifically the Holy Spirit. The two concepts do not contradict each other, but they are also not exactly the same.

d. Because I have called and you refused: This is the rebuke that wisdom offered.

She promised that if she were rejected, she would laugh at your calamity. Rejected wisdom has nothing to offer the fool when destruction comes like a whirlwind.

i. “Wisdom does not laugh at disaster, but at the triumph of what is right over what is wrong when your disaster happens.” (Waltke)

3. (28-33) The consequences of wisdom rejected.

“Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;

They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.

Because they hated knowledge

And did not choose the fear of the Lord,

They would have none of my counsel
And despised my every rebuke.
Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way,
And be filled to the full with their own fancies.
For the turning away of the simple will slay them,
And the complacency of fools will destroy them;
But whoever listens to me will dwell safely,
And will be secure, without fear of evil.”

- a. They will call on me, but I will not answer: When wisdom is rejected, she has no alternative plan for the fool. In the time of crisis, the fool cannot expect to beg for and receive instant wisdom (they will seek me diligently, but they will not find me).
- b. And did not choose the fear of the Lord: Since this fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Proverbs 1:7, Job 28:28, Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 9:10, and Ecclesiastes 12:13), to reject this respect of God is to reject wisdom.
- c. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way: The consequences of rejecting wisdom cannot be avoided. The end result of this love of foolishness and scorn will be death (will slay them) and destruction (will destroy them).
- i. “Eat as they baked, drink as they brewed. They that sow the wind of iniquity, shall reap the whirlwind of misery.” (Trapp)

ii. Turning away: “The eleven other occurrences of turning away are all in Hosea or Jeremiah, always with reference to Israel’s apostasy, faithlessness, and backsliding from God and from the Mosaic covenant.” (Waltke)

iii. Their own way: “The reason for the sinner’s ruin is placed again at his own door. He is wayward since he turns away from wisdom’s beckoning voice. He despises the only cure.” (Bridges)

iv. “If, elsewhere in the book, fool and scorner appear to be fixed types, it is their fault, not their fate: they are eating of the fruit of their own way.” (Kidner)

d. But whoever listens to me will dwell safely: Those who do listen to wisdom’s call will be secure, without fear of evil. Their fear of the Lord resulted in their having no fear of evil.

i. “And as a wicked man’s mind is oft full of anxiety in the midst of all his outward prosperity and glory, so the mind of a good man is filled with peace and joy, even when his outward man is exposed to many troubles.” (Poole)

ii. Without fear of evil: “Death shall lose its terrors, and become the Father’s servant, ushering you into His presence. Pain and suffering shall but cast into relief the stars of Divine promise. Poverty will have no pangs, and no storms, no alarms.” (Meyer)

(c) 2020 The Enduring Word Bible Commentary by David Guzik –
ewm@enduringword.com

PROVERBS 2

A. God’s gift of wisdom.

1. (1-5) The search for wisdom.

My son, if you receive my words,
And treasure my commands within you,
So that you incline your ear to wisdom,
And apply your heart to understanding;
Yes, if you cry out for discernment,

And lift up your voice for understanding,
If you seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hidden treasures;
Then you will understand the fear of the Lord,
And find the knowledge of God.

a. My son, if you receive my words: In the first chapter of Proverbs Solomon began to speak to his son, instructing him in the ways of wisdom. Here he continues the teaching, appealing to his son to receive my words and to treasure my commands. Wisdom can never benefit us if it is not received and treasured.

i. “The search, strenuous as it must be, is not unguided. Its starting-point is revelation—specific (words) and practical (commandments); its method is not one of free speculation, but of treasuring and exploring received teachings so as to penetrate to their principles.” (Kidner)

ii. “‘Accept’ [receive] is paralleled with ‘store up’ [treasure], a figure that implies that most teaching cannot be used immediately but that some time will pass before education’s effects are felt.” (Ross)

iii. Treasure my commands within you: “God’s intention is that you and I make His wisdom our own. We are to learn it from the Bible. Nobody is to know it in our stead. Pastors are charged by God with helping us to grow, but we must make His Word ours, so as to keep it ‘with’ us.” (Phillips)

iv. Treasure my commands within you: “He who has the rule of his duty only in his Bible and in his head, is not likely to be a steady, consistent character; his heart is not engaged, and his obedience, in any case, can be only forced, or done from a sense of duty: it is not the obedience of a loving, dutiful child, to an affectionate father. But he who has the word of God in his heart, works from his heart; his heart goes with him in all things, and he delights to do the will of his heavenly Father, because his law is in his heart.” (Clarke)

b. And apply your heart to understanding: This implies effort. The heart must be applied to understanding. It won’t happen by accident. This wisdom, discernment, and understanding must be sought out as if it were silver and hidden treasures.

i. In these few verses, Solomon described many ways that we must seek after wisdom.

- Receive.
- Treasure.
- Incline.
- Apply.
- Cry out, lift up the voice.
- Seek, search.

ii. The one who pursues wisdom in this way will not be disappointed. “But this search must be serious, strenuous. The way of wisdom is never revealed to triflers.” (Morgan)

iii. “There must be willingness and desire to know (verses Proverbs 2:1-2). To this must be added diligence. The illuminative phrases are ‘cry,’ ‘lift up thy voice,’ ‘seek,’ ‘search.’ All indicate desire, expressing itself in devotion.” (Morgan)

iv. Apply your heart to understanding: “Attention of body, intention of mind, and retention of memory, are indispensably desired of all wisdom’s scholars; such as King Edward VI, who constantly stood up at the hearing of the word, took notes, which he afterwards diligently perused, and wrought the sermon upon his affections by meditation.” (Trapp)

v. Seek her as silver: “Refers to silver as mined and smelted, not as a precious metal in its native state.” (Waltke)

vi. If you seek her as silver: “With the same unwearied diligence, and earnest desire, and patient expectation under all delays, disappointments, and difficulties, which worldlings use in the purchase of riches, or in digging in mines of silver.” (Poole)

vii. “How do men seek money? What will they not do to get rich? Reader, seek the salvation of thy soul as earnestly as the covetous man seeks wealth; and be ashamed of thyself, if thou be less in earnest after the true riches than he is after perishing wealth.” (Clarke)

c. Then you will understand the fear of the Lord: Solomon established the principle that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom (Proverbs 1:7). Here he teaches us that without the effort to seek out wisdom, we will lack in our fear of the Lord and knowledge of God.

i. The knowledge of God: “In short, ‘knowledge of God’ refers to personal intimacy with him through obedience to his word (cf. 1 Samuel 3:7).” (Waltke)

2. (6-9) The benefit of wisdom.

For the Lord gives wisdom;

From His mouth come knowledge and understanding;

He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;

He is a shield to those who walk uprightly;

He guards the paths of justice,

And preserves the way of His saints.

Then you will understand righteousness and justice,

Equity and every good path.

a. For the Lord gives wisdom: This explains why the fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom, and an essential aspect of the pursuit of wisdom.

True wisdom is found in Him, and He gives it.

b. From His mouth come knowledge and understanding: The most significant way God gives wisdom is from the words of His mouth. His word reveals knowledge and understanding. In His word He stores up sound wisdom for the upright.

c. He is a shield to those who walk uprightly: God not only gives wisdom in His word; He actively works to defend, guard and preserve those who walk in His ways.

d. Then you will understand righteousness and justice: The sense is that we need this defense from God to gain this proper understanding. There are so many wrong ideas about in the world that we will never hold on to what is wise and true without being defended against the false and foolish.

i. Then you will understand righteousness and justice: “He who is taught of God understands the whole law of justice, mercy, righteousness, and truth; God has written this on his heart. He who understands these things by books only is never likely to practise or profit by them.” (Clarke)

ii. Every good path: “Track (magal; see Proverbs 2:15) refers to ‘cart tracks,’ ‘wagon ruts.’ While the earth is soft, wagon wheels press the trails that others are obliged to follow after it dries and hardens.” (Waltke) We will make tracks, ruts, paths for our life – wisdom helps us to make good and useful “ruts” or habits.

B. The protective power of wisdom.

1. (10-11) The general statement.

When wisdom enters your heart,
And knowledge is pleasant to your soul,
Discretion will preserve you;
Understanding will keep you,

a. When wisdom enters your heart: Solomon mentioned the idea of protection relevant to wisdom (Proverbs 2:7-8). Now he explains that something happens when we gain wisdom; when we value God's knowledge (it is pleasant to your soul).

i. "Proverbs 2:10-11 asserts that Wisdom gives both pleasure and surefootedness in life. The more wisdom one learns, the more one desires and enjoys it. The protection wisdom gives, moreover, is that it keeps its follower from making decisions that will later bring only regret." (Garrett)

ii. Knowledge is pleasant to your soul: "Spiritual joy mortifies sin. His mouth hankers not after homely provision that hath lately tasted of delicate sustenance. Pleasure there must be in the ways of God, because therein men let out their souls into God, that is the fountain of all good; hence they so infinitely distaste sin's tasteless fooleries." (Trapp)

b. Discretion will preserve you: We need God's protection to gain wisdom (Proverbs 2:7-8), but wisdom also protects us. Understanding will keep you from many foolish choices and harmful consequences in life.

2. (12-15) Wisdom rescues us from wicked men.

To deliver you from the way of evil,
From the man who speaks perverse things,
From those who leave the paths of uprightness
To walk in the ways of darkness;
Who rejoice in doing evil,
And delight in the perversity of the wicked;
Whose ways are crooked,
And who are devious in their paths;

a. To deliver you from the way of evil: Wisdom will keep us from going evil ways, and from associating with the man who speaks perverse things. Our fallen nature may be attracted to perverse things, but wisdom will guard us from that path, from those who leave the paths of righteousness.

i. "The promised protection is first defined as deliverance from apostate men who have opted for dark and crooked paths instead of the father's bright and straight ways." (Waltke)

b. Who rejoice in doing evil, and delight in the perversity of the wicked: Fallen nature is not only attracted to what is evil and perverse, it rejoices and delights in it.

Shame is cast away and what is wrong and twisted is celebrated. This celebration of perversity is not unique to our time, but it certainly marks our present age.

i. Delight in the perversity of the wicked: "They rejoice (yagilu), the outward parallel of their joy within, expresses exuberant, enthusiastic, spontaneous shouts of joy, like those heard in bawdy theaters and bloody stadiums." (Waltke)

c. Whose ways are crooked, and who are devious in their paths: Wisdom protects us from these evil men. If not protected by wisdom, their crooked ways will come to harm us, and we will suffer from their devious character.

3. (16-22) Wisdom rescues us from the immoral woman.

To deliver you from the immoral woman,
From the seductress who flatters with her words,
Who forsakes the companion of her youth,
And forgets the covenant of her God.
For her house leads down to death,
And her paths to the dead;
None who go to her return,
Nor do they regain the paths of life—
So you may walk in the way of goodness,
And keep to the paths of righteousness.
For the upright will dwell in the land,
And the blameless will remain in it;
But the wicked will be cut off from the earth,
And the unfaithful will be uprooted from it.

a. To deliver you from the immoral woman: Here Solomon especially spoke to his son (Proverbs 2:1), who could be easily deceived and trapped by the immoral woman. Wisdom could protect him from her.

i. The Bible's wisdom is much more sophisticated than much of popular thinking in today's world. Today there is the tendency to view things without nuance; for example, to think of all women as victims to men. This rejects the idea of the immoral woman, thinking that if there is a sexual liaison between a man and a woman, he must be the perpetrator and she must be the victim. The Bible recognizes that human beings and human relationships are far more complicated than that.

ii. Immoral woman...seductress: "Both these terms mean literally 'foreigner' or stranger; i.e., in such a context (cf. Proverbs 2:16b), 'one who is outside the circle of [a man's] proper relations, that is, a harlot or an adulteress'." (Kidner)

b. The seductress who flatters with her words: Before Solomon described the immoral woman in any other way, he wrote of her as a seductress who uses words to seduce. The Song of Solomon shows us that King Solomon knew the power of the female form, but there is also great power in the flattering words of the seductress.

i. Who flatters with her words: "Hechelikhah, she that smooths with her words. The original intimates the glib, oily speeches of a prostitute. The English lick is supposed to be derived from the original word." (Clarke)

ii. Flatters: "Comes from a root whose nominal derivative is used of David's five 'smooth' stones. The verb is used literally only of 'making smooth' metal (Isaiah 41:7). Once (Hosea 10:2) it is used metaphorically of a heart that is 'smooth' (i.e., deceitful)." (Waltke)

iii. "The subtlety of the appeal comes from flattering speech—the adulteress talks smoothly (see Proverbs 5:3). An example of such talk is found in Proverbs 7:14-20." (Ross)

c. Who forsakes the companion of her youth: The immoral woman Solomon had in mind had a past record of disloyalty and unfaithfulness. This was evident not only among men (the companion of her youth) but even more importantly in relation to God (who forgets the covenant of her God).

i. Forgets the covenant of her God: "Marriage is a mixed covenant, partly religious and partly civil: the parties tie themselves first to God, and then to one another. The

bond is made to God, who also will be ready enough to take the forfeiture.” (Trapp)

d. For her house leads down to death: This is an important part of wisdom’s protection, to see where a path leads. Time with the flattering seductress seems wonderful, but wisdom helps us to understand where it leads – and that is down to death.

i. Her house leads down to death: “But how many, alas! by this means have lost their souls. Fleshly lusts, by a specialty, ‘fight against the soul’ [1 Peter 2:11]. And nothing hath so much enriched hell, saith one, as beautiful faces.” (Trapp)

ii. Matthew Poole wrote of many ways that her house leads down to death: “By wasting a man’s vital spirits, and shortening his life; by exposing him to many and dangerous diseases, which physicians have declared and proved to be the effects of inordinate lust; as also to the fury of jealous husbands or friends, and sometimes to the sword of civil justice, and undoubtedly, without repentance, to God’s wrath and the second death.”

iii. Her house leads down to death: “The woman who abandons herself to prostitution soon contracts, and generally communicates, that disease, which, above all others, signs the speediest and most effectual passport to the invisible world.” (Clarke)

iv. Her paths to the dead: “Not only does she sink down to death, but her paths lead to the ‘shades’ (NIV, ‘the spirits of the dead’). The ‘shades’ are the inhabitants of Sheol; the term describes the shadowy continuation of those who have lost their vitality and strength.” (Ross)

v. Her paths to the dead: “Those who enter the house of the immoral woman, on the other hand, find only the ghosts of those who preceded them and discover too late that there is no exit.” (Garrett)

e. None who go to her return: As with many statements in the Proverbs, this is not an absolute promise, but a true principle. Solomon had seen many go down the path of death with an immoral woman, never to return to the way of wisdom.

i. Who go to her: This phrasing is translated go in to [her] in Genesis 16:2 and came in to [them] in Genesis 6:4 as specifically referring to sexual intercourse.

ii. A life early given to promiscuity and sexual sin is much more difficult to reclaim. It is far better to never go down such paths. That is why Solomon warned, none who go to

her return: “Adulterers and whoremongers are very rarely brought to repentance, but are generally hardened by the power and deceitfulness of that lust, and by God’s just judgment, peculiarly inflicted upon such persons.” (Poole)

f. The unfaithful will be uprooted: Solomon reminded his son of the consequences of the path of the seductress. It invites the discipline or the judgment of God, who according to His covenant with Israel promised that the upright will dwell in the land, but the unfaithful will be uprooted from it. These consequences give us a clear choice – one or the other.

i. “There’s a price to pay if we would gain spiritual wisdom, but there’s an even greater price to pay if we don’t gain it. We must walk with God through the study of His Word.” (Wiersbe)

ii. For the upright will dwell in the land: “Here the wise man speaks after the manner of Moses’ law, under which he lived; [Deuteronomy 11:8].” (Trapp)

iii. “Here the wicked will be cut off because they defile the earth and threaten the relationship of the righteous with their God.” (Waltke)

(c) 2020 The Enduring Word Bible Commentary by David Guzik –

ewm@enduringword.com

PROVERBS 3

A. My son, walk rightly with God.

1. (1-4) Walk rightly with God by valuing His word.

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.

a. Do not forget my law: Solomon's advice as a father to his son in this section begins with a warning to never forget God's word (my law). Solomon didn't mean "my law" in the sense of his own personal decrees, but as God's word that he had internalized and made personal.

b. Let your heart keep my commands: Deciding to not forget God's word is more than a mental exercise of memory. It is also connected to a life of obedience, in which one does keep the commands of God. If one mentally remembers God's word yet fails to obey it, we could rightly say he or she has forgotten God's commands.

i. We note also that this obedience is one of the heart. Our goal in obedience is not mere outward conformity to God's will, but a heart that loves and obeys Him.

ii. "The heart is the first thing that wanders away from God, and it is also the first thing that returns to God." (Bridges)

c. They will add to you: There is a real benefit from this life and heart that obeys God. In principle, life and heart obedience bring long life and peace. This is a blessed combination; length of days could be a curse and not a blessing without peace.

i. We say in principle because this is largely how Proverbs was written and should be regarded. The principle of Proverbs 3:2 is not an absolute promise; there are some people who truly are given to obedience in both conduct and heart and die relatively young. Some godly persons have trouble living in peace. We regard these as true principles, not absolute promises.

d. Let not mercy and truth forsake you: Solomon wisely told his son to keep God's loyal love (mercy, the great Hebrew word *hesed*) and truth close. They should be so close that it would be as if they were a necklace on him at all times (bind them around your neck) and written on the tablet of your heart.

i. Matthew Poole observed that mercy and truth could be understood both as God's mercy and truth to us and as the mercy and truth that is man's duty to show to others. Both are important and should never be forsaken.

ii. "Mercy and truth are frequently joined together, as they are in God, as in Psalm 25:10, Psalm 57:3, etc., or in men, as in Proverbs 16:6, Proverbs 20:28, Hosea 4:1, and here." (Poole)

iii. Bind them...write them: "Striking expressions for glorying in, meditating on and (Proverbs 7:3) acting by these principles." (Kidner) "By 'binding' and 'writing' the teacher is stressing that the teachings become a part of the disciple's nature." (Ross)

e. So find favor: The blessed, obedient life is magnetic. It enjoys the favor of the God

it honors and attracts the favor of man.

i. "Favor (hen, see Proverbs 1:9), the common word for 'grace,' here denotes the positive disposition of heaven and earth toward the son because of his attractiveness. Like hesed, it cannot be compelled; it is extended voluntarily and unilaterally to preserve a valued relationship." (Waltke)

ii. "This means that others will recognize the competence and intelligence of the wise individual." (Garrett)

iii. Trapp on having favor before man: "As did Joseph, Moses, David. He was a man after God's own heart, and whatsoever he did pleased the people. It is God that gives credit; he fashioneth men's opinions, and inclineth their hearts, as Ezra oft acknowledges with much thankfulness. [Ezra 7:27-28]"

2. (5-6) Walk rightly with God by truly trusting Him.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.

a. Trust in the Lord: Solomon advised his son to live a life of trust in Yahweh.

Solomon had found that God was worthy to be trusted. It is our nature to put our trust in something or someone, even if it is our self. Solomon told us to consciously put our trust in the Lord, the covenant God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

i. "The word translated 'trust' in Proverbs 3:5 means 'to lie helpless, facedown.' It pictures a servant waiting for the master's command in readiness to obey, or a defeated soldier yielding himself to the conquering general." (Wiersbe)

ii. "To trust in God is to be unbottomed of thyself, and of every creature, and so to lean upon God, that if he fail thee thou sinkest." (Trapp)

b. With all your heart: If trust in God is to be true, it must be complete. To put half our trust in God and half our trust in self or something else is really failure to trust the Lord at all. We should endeavor to give God all our conscious trust.

i. "They trust not God at all that do it not alone. He that stands with one foot on a rock, and another foot upon a quicksand, will sink and perish as certainly as he that stands with both feet on a quicksand." (Trapp)

ii. This aspect troubles some because they fear there is some part of their heart that is not truly trusting God. We may sympathize with this concern, knowing that as imperfect people it is impossible for us to trust in the Lord perfectly. In principle, we gather that Proverbs 3:5-6 does not describe an objectively perfect trust in God, but a heart and life that does not consciously reject or defy God with unbelief.

iii. In fact, the following phrases will explain what Solomon intended with the phrase with all your heart.

iv. "This trust is not the mere cold assent of enlightened judgment. It is trust...with all your heart. It is a childlike, unwavering confidence in our Father's well-proved wisdom, faithfulness, and love." (Bridges)

c. Lean not on your own understanding: Trusting God with all our heart means to decide to put away our own understanding and instead to choose to trust God and His understanding, especially as declared in His word.

i. Lean not: "Do not rely, or lean as on a broken crutch, depicts what is meant by 'trust.'" (Waltke)

ii. "It is on GOD, not on thyself, that thou art commanded to depend. He who trusts in

his own heart is a fool.... Self-sufficiency and self-dependence have been the ruin of mankind ever since the fall of Adam. The grand sin of the human race is their continual endeavour to live independently of God.” (Clarke)

d. In all your ways acknowledge Him: Trusting God with all our heart means to honor and acknowledge Him in all that we do. It is the choice to “invite” God into our everyday life and conduct. It is to practice the presence of God in the regular and sometimes mundane things that happen every day.

i. In all your ways acknowledge: “Ask counsel at his mouth, aim at his glory, be evermore in the sense of his presence, and light of his countenance.” (Trapp)

e. He shall direct your paths: This is the great principle of God’s response towards those who trust Him in the way described in the previous lines. When we acknowledge Him in our ways, He will direct our paths in the fulfillment of His will, into what is right before Him and pleasing to us.

i. More than a few are afraid to have God direct their paths. They would much rather direct themselves! This, fundamentally, is the heart that does not trust in the Lord with all the heart. The surrendered heart delights in God’s direction and in God’s paths.

ii. One of the most frequently asked questions among believers is, “How can I know the will of God?” In principle, Solomon gave a wonderful answer in Proverbs 3:5-6. When we:

- Decide to put our trust in the Lord.

- Decide to not trust in our own understanding, but give attention and priority to God’s revealed word.

- Decide to acknowledge and honor God in all that we do.

When we do those things, we can trust that God will direct our paths. We can go forward in peace, believing that through His word, through the leading of the Holy Spirit, through the counsel of others, through godly common sense, and through life circumstances, God will direct our paths. We will walk along our way of life and come to see that we have been on the path God intended all along.

iii. G. Campbell Morgan gave his own testimony to the truth of Proverbs 3:5-6: “The measure in which I have trusted Jehovah and acknowledged Him, has been the measure of walking in the paths of real life.”

3. (7-8) Walk rightly with God by a humble, reverent life.

Do not be wise in your own eyes;

Fear the Lord and depart from evil.

It will be health to your flesh,

And strength to your bones.

a. Do not be wise in your own eyes: We can regard this as an explanation of what it means to lean on one’s own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). It is to regard our wisdom as better and greater than God’s.

i. Do not be wise in your own eyes: “Be not puffed up with vain conceit of thine own wisdom, as if that were sufficient for the conduct of all thine affairs without direction or assistance from God, or without the advice of others.” (Poole)

b. Fear the Lord and depart from evil: This is the natural result of trusting God. As we trust Him, we come to know Him better, leading to natural reverence and awe (to fear the Lord). As we trust Him, we are drawn more to God and further from evil.

c. It will be health to your flesh: A life of surrender and trust in God has real benefits to the health of the trusting one. It gives a greater sense of peace and strength that

one would not have apart from a life of trust and surrender to God.

i. Flesh is literally navel and is usually taken as a center point referring to the entire body.

4. (9-10) Walk rightly with God in regard to your possessions.

Honor the Lord with your possessions,
And with the firstfruits of all your increase;
So your barns will be filled with plenty,
And your vats will overflow with new wine.

a. Honor the Lord with your possessions: This is another practical way to show that you do trust in the Lord with all your heart (Proverbs 3:5). When we truly trust Him, we can honor Him with generosity that realizes He is the great provider and God has inexhaustible resources.

i. Many commentators note that the word honor has a connection with sacrifice. "Commentaries note that this is the only place where Proverbs alludes to the ceremonial worship.... Proverbs is not so much concerning itself with ceremonial religion here as it is exhorting the reader to demonstrate gratitude toward and confidence in God (rather than in wealth)." (Garrett)

ii. "The third piece of advice is to give back to God some of one's wealth as a sacrifice in recognition that God gave it." (Ross)

b. With the firstfruits of all your increase: According to the principle of the sacrifice of the firstfruits, we should give to God the first and best. If we will truly honor the Lord with our giving, it won't be with the last and leftovers.

i. Firstfruits: "It takes on the technical sense of offering the best of material things." (Waltke)

ii. The principle of firstfruits also means that we give to God in active anticipation that He will provide more. We honor Him by thinking, "I can give You the first and the best because I know You can and will give much more."

iii. "The Old Testament Jews brought the Lord the firstlings of their flocks (Exodus 13:1-2) and the firstfruits of their fields (Leviticus 23:9-14), and in this way acknowledged His goodness and sovereignty." (Wiersbe)

c. So your barns will be filled with plenty: This is a wonderful principle. God is the master and distributor of unlimited resources. He knows how to prosper and take care of those who honor Him with the resources He has given to them.

i. New wine: "New wine, according to F. S. Fitzsimmonds, 'represents wine made from the first drippings of the juice before the winepress was trodden. As such it would be particularly potent.'" (Waltke)

B. My son, receive the hard lessons of wisdom.

1. (11-12) Receiving correction from God with the right heart.

My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord,
Nor detest His correction;
For whom the Lord loves He corrects,
Just as a father the son in whom he delights.

a. Do not despise the chastening of the Lord: In giving advice to his son, Solomon taught him how to regard correction or discipline from God, the chastening of the Lord.

i. "The word musar [chastening] signifies correction, discipline,

and instruction. Teaching is essentially necessary to show the man the way in which he is to go; discipline is necessary to render that teaching effectual; and, often, correction is requisite in order to bring the mind into submission, without which it cannot acquire knowledge.” (Clarke)

ii. “When the father’s admonitions are violated, the son can expect the Lord to back it up with a “spanking” to prevent the wrong from becoming habitual.” (Waltke)

iii. We may despise God’s chastening, “By accounting it an unnecessary, and useless, and troublesome thing.” (Poole)

iv. The writer to the Hebrews quotes this passage in his encouragement that Christians should endure their own seasons of chastening and the discouragement that often comes with it. They could be encouraged in knowing that such suffering is a sign of sonship.

b. Nor detest His correction: This is when God either brings or allows some discomfort or affliction in the life of the believer for the good of:

- Exposing a sin or evil not previously seen.
- Showing the nature of the problem and need to address it.
- Discouraging the previous embrace of the sin or evil.
- Guiding to the rejection of sin or evil and embrace of God’s best.

i. The particular discomfort or affliction could come in many ways. God may do it through the inward conviction of the Holy Spirit. It may come through critics and adversaries. It may come through disappointing and sour circumstances. However it may come, it will not feel good, but before God could be allowed to do much good in the life of the believer.

ii. “‘Discipline’ primarily involves teaching or training rather than punishment for wrongdoing. It is analogous to military training, in which, although the threat of punishment is present, even stern discipline is not necessarily retribution for offenses. Hardship and correction are involved, however, which are always hard to accept.” (Garrett)

iii. “The Lord’s discipline is like that in a family, not in a school, let alone in a prison. The Lord corrects his children and does not treat them as criminals. ‘I love the rod of my heavenly Father,’ exclaimed the saintly Fletcher. ‘How gentle are the stripes I feel. How heavy those I deserve.’” (Bridges)

c. For whom the Lord loves He corrects: Seen rightly, God’s correction of His people is a wonderful sign of His love. In our instinctive desire for ease and comfort we often

wish God would not correct us. Yet because He loves and delights in us, according to His wisdom He will deal with our sins, weaknesses, and failings.

i. A father who truly loves his children will correct them appropriately. For a father to leave sins and failings uncorrected is not a sign of love; it is a sign of indifference and the selfish disregard that often accompanies indifference.

ii. “C. S. Lewis illustrates the truth by noting that an artist may not take much trouble over a picture drawn to amuse a child, but he takes endless effort over his great work of art that he loves.” (Waltke)

iii. “Sometimes He chastens because we have rebelled and need to repent; other times He chastens to keep us from sinning and to prepare us for His special blessing. No matter how much the experience hurts us, it will never harm us, because God always chastens in love.” (Wiersbe)

2. (13-18) The wonderful benefits of God’s correction.

Happy is the man who finds wisdom,
And the man who gains understanding;
For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver,
And her gain than fine gold.
She is more precious than rubies,
And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her.
Length of days is in her right hand,
In her left hand riches and honor.
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.
She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her,
And happy are all who retain her.

a. Happy is the man who finds wisdom: Solomon longed for his son (and all who would read Proverbs) to seek after wisdom. In the fear of the Lord, wisdom and understanding (often the result of God's loving correction) would guide men and women into a truly happy life.

i. Happy: "'Blessed' describes heavenly bliss stemming from being right with God; it depicts the human condition of well being that comes with God's blessing or as a divine reward for righteousness." (Ross)

ii. Happy: "Is wisdom a sullen matron who entertains her followers only with sighs and tears? Does this mean that to gain the joys of the next life we must bid eternal farewell to the benefits of this life?... This is the world's creed, and it is a slander from the great liar." (Bridges)

b. Her proceeds are better than the profits of silver: Wisdom (especially that which comes from God's correction) is better than material gain. It imparts the kind of character and training that brings contentment and quality of life that money can't provide.

i. Solomon sought wisdom and God took care of the rest (1 Kings 3:9).

c. All the things you may desire cannot compare with her: This wisdom is greater than all kinds of riches – silver, fine gold, or rubies. To have the wisdom that comes from God's loving correction is to have something better than material wealth.

i. By inheritance from his father and through his own shrewd business dealings, Solomon was a fabulously wealthy man (2 Chronicles 9:22). In a way that few would ever know, Solomon knew that the blessings of relationship with God and godly character were greater than all that a man may desire of material things.

d. Length of days is in her right hand: In principle, wisdom brings many benefits. Wise people live longer, enjoy great prosperity (riches) and esteem (honor). They live lives marked by pleasantness, by peace, and by happiness (happy are all who retain her).

i. "Wisdom is here represented as a great and generous princess distributing gifts to her subjects." (Poole)

ii. She is a tree of life: "Alluding most manifestly to the tree so called which God in the beginning planted in the garden of Paradise, by eating the fruit of which all the wastes of nature might have been continually repaired, so as to prevent death for ever." (Clarke)

C. My son, value wise living before God and man.

1. (19-20) The wise Creator.

The Lord by wisdom founded the earth;
By understanding He established the heavens;
By His knowledge the depths were broken up,
And clouds drop down the dew.

a. The Lord by wisdom founded the earth: In His work of creation, God showed great wisdom. This is remarkably seen in both the large features and small details of creation. The universe around us has the marks of a brilliant Designer whose design shows His wisdom.

i. God's self-revelation through His creation is an important theme of Romans 1:18-20, which also describes the guilt of mankind in ignoring and rejecting God's self-revelation through what He created.

ii. "This section shows that the wisdom that directs life is the same wisdom that created the universe (see discussion on Proverbs 8:20-31); to surrender to God's wisdom is to put oneself in harmony with creation, the world around one." (Ross)

b. By understanding He established the heavens: God's creative wisdom is seen in the smallest details of the single cell, but also in the expansive majesty of the heavens. In His great understanding God created a universe that some call "just right." According to physicists and scientists, we live in a just right universe.

i. Established the heavens: "Or fitted or ordered them; framed them in that exquisite order which now they have." (Poole)

ii. The universe has a just-right gravitational force. If it were larger, the stars would be too hot and would burn up too quickly and too unevenly to support life. If it was

smaller, the stars would remain so cool, nuclear fusion would never ignite, and there would be no heat and light.

iii. The universe has a just-right speed of light. If it were larger, stars would send out too much light. If it were smaller, stars would not send out enough light.

iv. The universe has a just-right average distance between the stars. If it were larger, the heavy element density would be too thin for rocky planets to form, and there would only be gaseous planets. If it were smaller, planetary orbits would become destabilized because of the gravitational pull from other stars.

c. By His knowledge the depths were broken up: This is likely a reference to what happened at the flood described in Noah's day (Genesis 7:11). God knew that such a judgment was necessary, and He knew how to make it happen. The radical ecological changes suggested by the flood of Noah possibly set in motion our earth's modern hydrological system (clouds drop down the dew).

i. Drop down the dew: "The west wind after sunset brings enough moisture of the sea with it that during the night it falls in rich dew (tal; cf. Song of Solomon 5:2). In Canaan's almost rainless summer the land was dependent on this moisture for life, and so dew was more impressive to Orientals than to Westerners who, having a more abundant amount of rainfall, have less dependence on dew." (Waltke)

2. (21-22) Giving attention to God's wisdom.

My son, let them not depart from your eyes—
Keep sound wisdom and discretion;
So they will be life to your soul
And grace to your neck.

a. Let them not depart from your eyes: Solomon told his son the importance of constant attention to God's wisdom and discretion. This requires not only a life-

diligence, but also an appropriately surrendered heart that recognizes that God's wisdom and discretion are greater than my own.

b. They will be life to your soul: Constant attention to God's wisdom and discretion brings real benefit to life.

3. (23-26) The safety of walking in God's wisdom.

Then you will walk safely in your way,
And your foot will not stumble.

When you lie down, you will not be afraid;
Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.

Do not be afraid of sudden terror,
Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes;

For the Lord will be your confidence,
And will keep your foot from being caught.

a. You will walk safely in your way: In principle, God guides those who honor His wisdom into paths of safety. There is nothing safer than living in the wisdom and will of God.

b. The Lord will be your confidence: The wise life can let go of fear (you will not be afraid) and in the release of anxiety know the blessing of sleep. Confident in God, we need not be afraid of sudden terror or trouble from the wicked.

i. Your sleep will be sweet: "Free from distracting cares and terrors, which oftentimes haunt sinners even in their sleep, because thy mind shall be composed and serene through the sense of God's favour and providence, and the conscience of thine own integrity." (Poole)

ii. "Wicked men's sleep is often troublesome, through the workings of their evil consciences; as our Richard III, after the murder of his own two innocent nephews, had fearful dreams." (Trapp)

iii. "When Peter was in prison, in chains, between two soldiers, on the eve of his expected execution, when there seemed but a step between him and death, he was able to lie down and not be afraid." (Bridges)

4. (27-30) Some lessons from God's wisdom.

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,
When it is in the power of your hand to do so.

Do not say to your neighbor,
"Go, and come back,
And tomorrow I will give it,"

When you have it with you.

Do not devise evil against your neighbor,
For he dwells by you for safety's sake.

Do not strive with a man without cause,
If he has done you no harm.

a. Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due: Here Solomon gave some practical examples of the lessons wisdom teaches. He began with the simple principle that we should do good when it is in the power of our hand to do so.

i. "Do not refuse a kindness when it is in thy power to perform it. If thou have the means by thee, and thy neighbour's necessities be pressing, do not put him off till the morrow. Death may take either him or thee before that time." (Clarke)

ii. Those to whom it is due: "May be laborers who have earned their pay, the poor

who rightly plead for help, or suppliants at the city gates who call for justice.” (Garrett)

iii. To whom it is due: “The Hebrew of Proverbs 3:27a (‘...from its owners’) brings out the injustice, not merely inconsiderateness, of delay.” (Kidner)

b. Do not say to your neighbor: The good we should do should be done promptly, while opportunity still exists. If we leave it to tomorrow, it may never happen – and will certainly not happen as soon as it could and should.

c. Do not devise evil against your neighbor: God’s wisdom teaches us to treat others well. Since our own security and safety are connected to the good of our neighbor, then for safety’s sake we should not strive with our neighbor when there is no cause (if he has done you no harm).

i. Do not devise: “Do not plan renders a verb meaning concretely ‘to plow’ and figuratively, always ethical, ‘to prepare [i.e., plan]’ good or evil deeds.” (Waltke)

ii. “Do not be of a litigious, quarrelsome spirit. Be not under the influence of too nice a sense of honour. If thou must appeal to judicial authority to bring him that wrongs thee to reason, avoid all enmity, and do nothing in a spirit of revenge.” (Clarke)

iii. “We must beware of becoming involved in quarrels (Proverbs 17:14; 18:6; 25:8-9) instead of pursuing peace (Romans 12:18). A spirit of strife is a great hindrance to holiness (Hebrews 12:14; Colossians 3:12-15) and is inconsistent for any of God’s servants (2 Timothy 2:24). (Bridges)

5. (31-35) The benefit of a life that loves God’s wisdom.

Do not envy the oppressor,

And choose none of his ways;

For the perverse person is an abomination to the Lord,

But His secret counsel is with the upright.

The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked,

But He blesses the home of the just.

Surely He scorns the scornful,

But gives grace to the humble.

The wise shall inherit glory,

But shame shall be the legacy of fools.

a. Do not envy the oppressor: Wisdom teaches us that though the way of the wicked may seem good and at times enviable, we should choose none of his ways. In honor to God, in love to others, and in wisdom of life we should never oppress others (as Jesus said in Matthew 10:25-28 and other passages).

b. The perverse person is an abomination to the Lord: We should not envy or imitate the oppressor because God knows how and when to judge such wicked.

God blesses the home of the just, but He also scorns the scornful. The temporary prosperity of the wicked should never make us envy or imitate them.

i. The perverse person: “The Lord abhors intrigue, but people who are candid and upright, who know the virtue of openness and simplicity, have his ear.” (Waltke)

c. He scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble: This wonderful principle is repeated three times in the Bible (also in James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5). It shows how pride sets God in opposition to us, but humility invites the grace of God. We want to be humble and receive God’s grace.

i. There is a sense in which Solomon spoke of wisdom and humility as being closely related. Those who are wise enough to see God as He really is and ourselves as we really are will have a natural and appropriate humility.

ii. James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5 quote the Septuagint translation of this verse, which – if anything – softened the force of the Hebrew phrasing here. “The verse uses a strong anthropomorphic idea: ‘He mocks the proud mockers.’ The LXX [Septuagint] has a softened interpretation: ‘The Lord resists the proud’.” (Ross)

d. The wise shall inherit glory: Whatever exaltation the wicked seem to have, it is only temporary. Their legacy shall be shame, but God has a destiny of glory for His wise, humble ones.

i. Inherit glory: “Not have it only, but inherit it...they shall have it as their proper, perfect, and perpetual right.” (Trapp)

ii. “By contrast, fools are those who acquire or earn, not inherit, by their intractability, public shame.” (Waltke)

(c) 2020 The Enduring Word Bible Commentary by David Guzik –
ewm@enduringword.com