

Series: God's Wisdom for Life – week 3

CDOBC – beginning on 1/8/12

Title: “The Pursuit of Wisdom”

January 22, 2012

Proverbs 2:1-22

OBJECTIVE: To help us realize we must pursue God's wisdom and how it will bless, protect, and guide us in life.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Church Directory
- AWANA Grand Prix
- Children's Min need – Ashley Le Files
- Pot-Luck following 2nd service
- Rodeo-Fest – Feb 19th – Food drive – cans!
- Golf outing – March 10

The pursuit of wisdom vs. 1-4

1 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 and 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,

Why do we need to pursue/search for wisdom? Because it's hidden from plain view...we aren't born with it and it doesn't come to us as we grow older. Second, because it has great value – like gold, silver...so it's worth pursuing!

Notice the specifics of what we are to store up – to treasure – “my words” and “my commands” (vs. 1).

If you pursue wisdom, the first place you look to find it is to God and His revealed Word.

Turning your ear to wisdom means to listen intently – with purpose.

Young people – when you are in church – in school – when your parents are talking to you trying to help you understand something...are you listening? Are you “turning your ear”? But beyond listening - your heart is the ultimate destination of wisdom. Wisdom is more than understanding something in your mind...it’s about a transformed heart that understands the truth of God.

You need to “call out for insight” – meaning we are to pray and ask God to give us His wisdom.

James 1:5

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

We are to actively pursue the wisdom of God – “call out for insight”, “cry aloud for understanding”, “look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure”

A wise person / someone who wants to be wise – is not a passive person. You need to be more than a sponge that simply soaks up what it can...you must be more pro-active – more intentional than that!

You must have a thirst for God’s Word – His truth – which will lead to knowledge of God – which will lead to having God’s wisdom in your life. You must desire wisdom like a miner desires the silver buried deep in the earth and works diligently day after day to find it.

The value of wisdom vs. 5-8

5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. **6** For the LORD gives wisdom, and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. **7** He holds victory 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.

Vs. 5 – Kidner – fear of the LORD and the knowledge of God -
“*poles of intimacy*”

Vs. 6 – the wisdom of God is more than an intellectual pursuit...it is spiritual insight and a spiritual blessing that the Lord gives those who seek Him.

There is a dual process of becoming wise. We must labor – but ultimately it is God who gives us wisdom.

Vs. 7 – 8: - God’s work on our behalf when we fear Him and seek to know Him more: “holds victory”, “shield”, “guards”, “protects”

The wisdom of God protects us from harm and gives us these things not so we can drift through our Christian life – but to help us have victory as we engage in spiritual warfare (Eph. 6).

The results of finding wisdom vs. 9-19

So many believers want to experience God – they want to have more meaning with their Christian faith – and they get frustrated when it doesn’t occur.

They go to church almost every Sunday, they may even attend a S.S. class and read their Bible during the week...but they still feel as if something is missing in their life...what they expected the Christian life to be like is not what they have experienced.

I believe there are two major reasons why this is happening with so many in the church today:

First, I believe that they have unrealistic expectations of what the Christian life is supposed to *feel* like. But we need to know that *feelings* are not the basis – or the measure of the Christian faith. Our faith is built on truth – truth about Christ – truth about our sin. Our feelings have a subordinate role in our faith.

They expect a supernatural – out of this world experience – some sort of spiritual euphoria. But the Bible never promises such an experience this side of heaven. There may be a few moments in your entire life that match that kind of a description – or there may not be moments like that in this life.

(First reason: unrealistic expectations & feelings)

Second, I believe they have looked at their Christian life as if it were a formula...if I do church, S.S., and read the Bible, then I'll be filled with all this knowledge and wisdom. This is close to being true...but it's missing a valuable ingredient...passion...desire...labor...effort – attitude of the heart.

Christianity is not like a tanning bed where all you do is show up and soak it all in.

It's much more like a health club or a mine (vs. 4). You can spend all day at the health club – but if you never lift a weight...if you never get on the treadmill...if you never step onto the stair-climber...nothing will change.

If you spend all day in a mine, yet never take the pick and begin searching for gold or silver, you'll never find it!

Wisdom gives spiritual and life understanding vs. 9-11

Read vs. 9-11

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.

What disasters have you saved your kids from?

What disasters has God saved you from?

Almost impossible to know! Since we give our kids certain boundaries in life, we never really know what we have saved them from because they never encountered certain dangers due to the boundaries we established.

The same is true of our life and how God's wisdom has protected us from dangers we never encountered because when we are obedient to His commands – the boundaries of those commands keep us out of harm's way!

Sometimes our faith doesn't seem exciting or thrilling because it has protected us from the drama and crisis of sin.

Wisdom will save you from sinful choices vs. 12-19

Read vs. 12-19

12 Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, **13** who leave 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 It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words, **17** who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God. **18** For 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.

How do you know if you should say ‘yes’ or say ‘no’ when a situation is before you?

How do you know if something is right or wrong...or if it has a chance to lead down the wrong path?

God’s wisdom will save you from making these mistakes. The wisdom of God is not a passive thing...it is active – active truth in our life.

Vs. 12 & vs. 16 – “save” - Hebrew: - has the idea of ‘deliverance’, ‘escape’, ‘rescue’

God’s wisdom will rescue you from the dangers of life...from the concealed dangers of sin.

“Wicked men” and the “adulteress” will always present themselves as something good...as something that appeals to you and entices you.

The “wicked men” will use perverse words. How is this appealing or enticing? They may appeal to a young person’s desire to live on the edge – to live ‘free’ – to be daring and adventurous...a desire to break out of familiar routines and live compulsively.

The “adulteress” will use flattery to soften your defenses and put you at ease – and the lure of ‘free’ pleasure is a strong enticement – especially for men.

But Solomon helps us see the trap that is being set before us. He wants us to see the trap – to be aware of the trap so like the bird in 1:17; we will avoid the trap no matter what the bait is!

The truth behind the temptation:

1. The bad crowd is evil vs. 12-15

This group is not simply “off color”, unruly, or crass. They are evil! They are (bad crowd / wicked men) familiar with the Christian faith – they used to walk on the straight paths of God’s commands – but they have left the faith (“leave the straight paths”) and embraced sinful living (“walk in dark ways”). They are practicing a greater form of evil because they know the truth – and have rejected the truth and have embraced evil.

It is important for your close friends to be sincere believers...not those who simply look the part or go through the motions of faith. If they aren’t sincere believers, then you might wake up one day and find yourself walking along the “crooked paths” living in “dark ways”.

God’s wisdom will help you see where their path will lead – and that they delight in doing wrong and take great joy in evil things. Wisdom will help you see the trap!

2. Sexual immorality takes life away. vs. 16-19

Interesting how our culture gives the exact opposite message! *“You haven’t lived until you’ve tasted the fruits all around you!”*

Wisdom will help you see the trap of the “wayward wife” and her seductive words...and no doubt her seductive appearance – for the trap it truly is. The principle in these verses also applies to the wayward husband or the immoral man who is trying to seduce a young woman. The pleasure they offer is never *‘free’* and without strings attached. The strings attached to sex outside of marriage are either attached to the other person (no matter what they say), or to your own soul. They will be an anchor that weighs you down and prevents lasting joy from entering your heart.

Nothing the tempter says can be trusted since they have broken the covenant with their spouse, and they have broken the commands of God. Their word is not good. Their promises lack any commitment.

When Solomon says “...her house leads down to death” - he is not necessarily speaking of the grave – although in some instances either through disease – or a jealous spouse this may be the result. “Death” in Proverbs usually means a life of sin – a life apart from God and a life apart from His blessings. The wicked...the sinner...the fool – misses out on true life – the full and satisfying life that God offers and desires for those who fear Him.

Once you embark on the path of the “wicked men” or “wayward wife”, you may never walk again on “the paths of life.” This is a severe warning...nothing to mess around with!

Solomon is not saying repentance is impossible. He is helping us realize that the danger lies in the loss of freedom – loss of ability to choose righteousness – because sin’s hold is so strong – the chains of bondage are not broken easily!

The reward for pursuing God’s wisdom vs. 20-22

“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** and *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...”

20 Thus you will walk in the ways of good men 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.

Vs. 20 – “Thus” (“So” – NASB, NKJV, ESV) – means *as a result of...*

The entire chapter is conditional...it rests upon your willingness to do the things listed in vs. 1-4.

“If” you do the things Solomon mentions, the reward will be a life that is blessed by God...a life that is defined by goodness and righteousness.

A righteous and good life is not boring!

Illus. – Mission trips to inner city (L.A., Chicago, San Francisco)

However, if you don’t do these things (vs. 1-4), then you will be counted among the wicked, and judgment and misery will be your future.

Application

Understand the value of God's wisdom (vs. 20-22)

With it – life is good!

Without it – life is bad!

Pursue God's wisdom (vs. 1-4)

Close in prayer