

Series: God's Wisdom for Life – week 4

CDOBC – beginning on 1/8/12

Title: “The Blessings of Wisdom”

January 22, 2012

Proverbs 3:1-35

OBJECTIVE: To help everyone understand the blessings that God's wisdom brings into our life – if we obey Him and His commands.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Church Directory – business section
- AWANA Grand Prix – Darrell Horner to announce
- Children's Min need – Ashley Le Files
- Rodeo-Fest – Feb 19th – Food drive – cans!
- Golf outing – March 10

Opening prayer

Turn to Proverbs 3

Illus – skiing at Steamboat Springs, CO

We all have a default position of being proud and confident – very individualistic...I can do it!...I know what I'm doing!...I don't need your help or instruction!

I love to ski. I began skiing when I was in the 6th grade – and have never grown tired of hitting the slopes. When I was in college, I was able to take a week-long trip with two of my friends to Steamboat Springs, CO. You must understand that for me – Steamboat Springs was the place I had dreamed about for many years. I grew up when Billy Kidd was a skiing legend due to his Olympic success – and Billy Kidd was a Steamboat Springs icon. So, when I was able to ski for five days at Steamboat, I was beyond excited!

I can remember our first day on the slopes. After a long drive from the Chicago suburbs, we were finally at the base of the mountains. We couldn't believe how big the mountains were! We were used to little ski places that the vertical drop reached the glorious heights of around 250 feet! Now, we were in Colorado at Steamboat Springs where the vertical drop is 3,668 feet!

From the base of the mountain, we rode the gondola up to the midpoint. I had never rode in a gondola before that – they are much faster than a chair lift. You need to know that in the Midwest – at the places I had been skiing for almost 10 years, I was able to ski the expert slopes (black diamond) with no problem. As the gondola took us up the mountain, a ski patrol was also in the gondola – and he began to ask us some questions...where are you guys from...is this your first time here, etc. After hearing us talk about our skiing ability and how we couldn't wait to hit the 'moguls' and the expert slopes – with great calmness in his voice, he simply said, "Why don't you first hit the blue runs (intermediate) before you try the black diamonds."

Well, he obviously didn't know who he was talking to. We were skiing sensations! We had been skiing on black diamond runs in Wisconsin and Michigan for the past several years! Why would we waste our time on a blue run! This is not what we came to Colorado for!

The gondola delivered us to the midpoint of the mountain, and off to the nearest black diamond we went. After the first couple of minutes, we started to realize the wisdom of the ski patrol. We may be expert skiers in Wisconsin and Michigan, but this wasn't Wisconsin or Michigan...this was a mountain and some of the

moguls were as tall as we were! I think it took us about 30-45 minutes to get to the bottom of that run – a run which a truly expert skier can probably do in 5-10 minutes.

Just like the ski patrol was giving us wise advice to protect us from harm and to help us have a great time, Solomon gives us God's wisdom for the same reasons...to protect us from harm, and to bless our lives so that we will have a prosperous life in all aspects, and so we will enjoy all of God's blessings in every sphere of life.

The essentials of God's wisdom vs. 1-12

Learn the truth of God vs. 1-4

1 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 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.

The source of wisdom is the truth of God – the teaching of God we find in the bible. The key to attaining the wisdom of God is to learn the truth of God. Solomon opens up another conversation with his son and reminds him of what they have gone over in previous lectures. Most importantly, he tells his son to “keep my commands in your heart” – which means *don't just listen politely and respectfully to what I'm telling you – make sure you digest them into your deepest thoughts and passions!* Vs. 3 – love and faithfulness are more than ideas...they are actions...simply saying words that are loving and words that speak of faithfulness are not enough...the actions of our life will reveal if we are truly loving and faithful people.

Trust God's way of life vs. 5-8

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; **6** in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

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.

Do you ever wonder why God allows certain things to happen? Have you ever played the “what if” game as you look back at your life?

I never wanted to be a pastor. It was never on my radar through high school or college. I look back at high school and since the age of 8, I was a motivated baseball player. Problem was, no college wants a 145 lb. athlete, so I was never recruited to play in college. My first year in college I gained 35 lbs due to protein shakes, raw eggs, protein pills, and hours in the weight room. But God had other plans for me – and they didn't include baseball. I can only imagine today as I look back on my life and wonder what it would have been like if my growth spurt and physical maturity would have taken place 1 year earlier. Would I have been recruited to play baseball? What kind of lifestyle and choices would I have made if I was recruited and played ball? Knowing what I was like back then – my choices would not have been good.

I am here today because God directed my path. If I would have set my own path, then I would never have been blessed with Kim – my wife of 22 years. I would never have been blessed with my son Brian or my daughter Jessica. I would never have known the honor and privilege it is to share God's Word week after week in this place.

Trust the Lord – don't try to force the providence of God into your plans!

Vs. 7-8 – fear of the Lord – and obedience to His commands not only help in your spiritual life, but also in your physical life.

A sinful lifestyle will often abuse your physical body.

A sinful lifestyle will often produce guilt...which will cause physical problems (lack of sleep, digestive problems, stomach ulcers, health issues related to stress, etc.)

Trust God's provision and care vs. 9-10

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.

Do you really trust God "in all your ways"?

Vs. 9-10 – total commitment! “firstfruits” – nobody is totally committed to God until their bank account is also committed to Him!

The idea of “firstfruits” is from the agricultural world. The first-fruits/first-crops harvested were given to God as an offering – a sacrifice. For us, the equivalent is to give God the first ‘bill’ payment. When you sit down to pay your bills – the first ‘bill’ you pay is your tithe/offering to God. You don't pay all your other bills first – then give to God if there's some left. Giving your ‘firstfruits’ acknowledges God as the owner of all you have – and it helps you prioritize how you live. It prevents you from materialism and greed, and helps you keep God as a primary focus in your life.

But there's a benefit / blessing for you when you are faithful in honoring God with your money...with your ‘first-fruits’.

Vs. 10 – God will bless you – so you can continue to honor God with your wealth. This is not a proof-text for the prosperity Gospel – we’re not giving to God so we can get for ourselves.

Trust God through *difficult* days vs. 11-12

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.

As we saw a few Sunday’s ago in 1:27 – wisdom will *rebuke* US (synonyms = scolded, chided, reprimanded, corrected, admonished, criticized) – but we tend to reject wisdom’s rebuke on our life – and justify our actions or attitudes.

But God’s discipline and His rebuke of us is a sign of His love for us.

Vs. 11-12 – “*God does not whip the Devil’s children, but He certainly does spank His own.*” – J. Vernon McGee

Job 5:17

“Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.”

“Now remember that chastening is not punishing. We have confused punishment with chastisement. The criminal is to be punished; the child is to be corrected.” – J Vernon McGee

Hebrews 12:7-11

“Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? **8** If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. **9** Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!**10** Our fathers disciplined us for a

little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.¹¹ No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

If He didn't love us, He would let us do whatever we want and live however we desire. If He didn't love us, what would He care if we messed up our life and inflicted pain on the people around us? But God does love us – which is why He sent His Son to die for us – and why He has given us His Word so we can live in obedience to Him and receive His wisdom and His blessing.

God's wisdom in everyday life... *vs. 13-35*

As a father, I want the best for my kids. I want Brian and Jessica to leave the house at some point! But – more importantly, I want them to become young adults who love Christ and love His grace and truth.

I want them to have the wisdom of God in their life – and the reason I want that is because I want them to be successful in all areas of their life!

At the end of this chapter – vs. 35, Solomon states that God will honor the wise person. I want that to be true for Brian and for Jessica – which is why Kim and I have rules, expectations, rewards and consequences for our kids. They don't always like the rules, expectations, and the consequences, but they are helping to form and mold them into young adults who will have God's wisdom in their life – which will lead to God blessing their life.

This is the same motive that Solomon has in sharing these ‘*wisdom sound bites*’ with his son. He is giving his son a view of life – and how wisdom works in everyday situations.

Wisdom is greater than wealth vs. 13-18

13 Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains 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 embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed.

The person who finds wisdom will be blessed / happy.

Psalm 1

Wisdom’s value is more than silver, gold, rubies, or anything else that is highly coveted by the world. Wealth is not a bad thing...in fact, we’re told throughout Proverbs that those things are a by-product of wisdom. But attaining wealth is not the source of blessing or happiness – yet it often is the focus and passion of people in search of blessing and happiness.

In the O.T., the right hand is the dominant hand – a sign of strength, power, and favor. Here (vs. 16), wisdom is pictured as a woman - and in her right hand is long life. The person who lives a godly life will typically live a long life – a blessed life. In her left hand are riches and honor.

A person who lives a righteous, wise life will often have a long life, and also be blessed by material or relational wealth.

God's wisdom established the natural world vs. 19-20

19 By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; **20** by his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew.

Don't work against what God has set in course as the natural order of things. God has created the world with 'laws' that govern the natural cycles and the natural order – both nature and relationships! The fool doesn't acknowledge these things and wonders why life is so difficult! The wise person acknowledges these basic laws of nature and operates in accordance with them – not against them.

Wisdom combats fear and enables sleep vs. 21-26

21 My son, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight; **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 your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared.

The guilt – and the broken relationships that a sinful lifestyle produces will cause great anxiety and fear.

“Will my lies catch up with me?”

“How long will I be able to hide this from my boss?”

“Did anyone see me last night?”

“What if they find out I stole the money?”

“What if she's pregnant?”

However – a righteous life – a life that fears God and rejects evil will produce a life of peace – a life where you

can sleep like a baby – because your conscience has not been violated!

Wisdom enables good relationships vs. 27-30

27 Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. **28** Do not say to your neighbor, "Come back later; I'll give it tomorrow"-- when you now have it with you. **29** Do not plot harm against your neighbor, who lives trustfully near you. **30** Do not accuse a man for no reason-- when he has done you no harm.

4 “do not” commands

God’s way really does work! He created us – He has established the rules of nature – which includes how we relate and react to one another – so when we follow His commands and pursue righteousness in our life – we will be blessed by good relationship in our life.

Wisdom leads to God’s blessing and honor vs. 31-35

31 Do not envy a violent man or choose any of his ways, **32** for the LORD detests a perverse man 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 gives grace to the humble. **35** The wise inherit honor, but fools he holds up to shame.

Don’t envy and covet what a non-believer has.

Don’t look at those who have a lot of money, possessions, and privilege and think their life is better than yours...simply because they have more stuff and are able to do more things!

You need to look deeper...and not judge only by appearances and make assumptions that more money and more stuff = more happiness and more joy!

Look at the contrast in these verses.

The judgment and opposition of God – vs. the blessing, grace, and honor the God gives to those who obey Him.

What side do you think is a better life?

A life that opposes God but has lots of stuff –

Or –

A life that embraces God and received His blessing and honor?

Application

Embrace the wisdom of God...the truth of God.

Write it on the tablet of your heart!

Wisdom is practical...it will bless your life and prosper you!

Close in prayer