

(Proverbs) ch.1 & 2

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon on Proverbs emphasizes the foundational role of the fear of the Lord in acquiring wisdom and living a godly life.

Duration: 1:01:06

Scripture: Proverbs 2:1, Proverbs 3:1, Proverbs 3:3-7

Topics: "Wisdom And Guidance", "Youth And Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of wisdom and understanding in guarding and guiding young people. He highlights three areas of concern: obedience to parents, discerning the influence of companions, and the pursuit of wealth. By fulfilling the conditions mentioned in Proverbs 2:1-4, one can discern the fear of the Lord and gain knowledge of God. The preacher warns against the temptation of pursuing wealth through unrighteous means and encourages young people to listen to the voice of wisdom, which offers security and freedom from fear.

Transcript

Proverbs and chapter 1, Proverbs chapter 1 and we want to see here, first of all the theme of this book, we can say is found in chapter 9 and verse 10. If you look at that verse first, Proverbs 9, 10, it seems to describe the theme of the book of Proverbs, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. There are three words found there, wisdom, knowledge and understanding, three words that come very frequently in the book of Proverbs and basically all interconnected and it says here that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

We can say that wisdom means to act and to speak in a divine way, in the way God would act and speak, in the way God wants us to act and speak. And knowledge is to know God, what Jesus said in John 17, 3, His eternal life, this is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God in Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. And so, in a sense we can say that the book of Proverbs is a new covenant book in the Old Testament because there's a lot in this book which relates to us in the new covenant as we will see as we go on.

And the book of Proverbs has got a number of things to say about fools. Jesus spoke about the foolish man in a number of places and the book of Proverbs, more than any other book in the Old Testament, speaks about fools. In fact, through this book it speaks 66 things about fools and then it also speaks about

lazy people, sluggards.

It speaks 28 things about sluggards. If you keep just these two things in mind we find that it's speaking about those who are not wholehearted and those who are not wise. The sluggard is the person who is not wholehearted, he's spiritually lazy and the fool is the one who doesn't have wisdom.

And when we look at these two books which are side by side in the Old Testament, Psalms and Proverbs, when you read through the Psalms you find mainly it is man communing with God in prayer or praise and Old Testament worship, but in the book of Proverbs it's dealing more with how we are to behave in relation to our fellow man. Two commandments that Jesus said, one is our relationship with God where we are to love him with all our hearts and the other is to love our neighbor as ourselves. And these two are sort of brought together in the book of Psalms and Proverbs.

Psalms dealing with our relationship with God and Proverbs dealing primarily with our relationship with our fellow man as to how we are to conduct ourselves and behave during our earthly life. So with that as an introduction we'll come to chapter 1 and verse 1, the Proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel. As far as we know, Solomon wrote 29 chapters in the book of Proverbs.

The last two chapters, 30 and 31, were written by someone else. And the purpose of these Proverbs, we're told in verse 2, is to know wisdom and instruction, to discern the sayings of understanding, to receive instruction in wise behavior. We can say that that's really it, wise behavior.

Wisdom means to behave in a godly, divine way, to speak to people in a godly, divine way, to write to people in a godly, divine way. Humanly, we don't have that in us because nothing good dwells in our flesh. But God's will and purpose is that increasingly we learn to speak and to behave and to conduct ourselves in a godly way, the way God would act and speak and to deal with other people in a divine way.

And the sad thing is when many years go by in our life and we still speak in a human way, very often you find husbands, even after 10 years, 15 years of hearing about these truths, they still speak in such a Adamic way to their wives, and wives speak in such a human way to their husbands, and then we know that they haven't got any wisdom at all. Or people speak to one another in such a human, Adamic way, then you know they really need to go into the book of Proverbs and cry out for wisdom, because they don't have it. So, to receive instruction in wise behaviour, righteousness, justice, and equity, or in other words, how to be honest, just, and fair.

I have two other translations here with me. One is the Good News Bible, and the other is the Living Bible. And particularly for the book of Proverbs, I would really recommend studying these two translations.

They really bring out the meaning of some verses. Like here in verse 3, it says, they can teach you how to live intelligently and how to be honest, just, and fair. That is divine, wise behaviour.

And then it says in verse 4, to give wisdom or prudence to the simple. The simple person is the one who is inexperienced, and particularly the one who is open to every influence. Somebody says one thing, and he's influenced by that.

Tomorrow somebody else says something else, and he's influenced by that. And that's how most young people are. They are influenced so much by what they read in the newspapers, what their friends say, what their relatives say.

And that's the simple person. We read of that person in Ephesians 4.14, where it says, children tossed about with every wind of doctrine, never sure, never stable. And it says here that this book has been written to give prudence and wisdom to that simple-minded, unstable, unsteady person, so that he can be stable, steady, mature.

And therefore, the book of Proverbs has been particularly written for young people. It says in the last part of verse 4, to the youth. Here is a book particularly written for young people, to give them knowledge and discretion, wisdom in dealing with situations and with people, and particularly the opposite sex.

And we find a tremendous stupidity among young people, which they themselves sometimes don't realize in many of these areas. And if they take the book of Proverbs seriously, they can become wise, even while they are young. They don't have to wait till they are fifty to become wise.

There are many people who are seventy, who are still quite foolish and simple. Simple in a bad sense, in the sense that they've got no steadiness in their life. They haven't acquired wisdom even though they are seventy years old.

And yet, a person who is twenty and twenty-five can be wise if he takes the instructions of this book seriously. And it says in verse 5, it doesn't mean this book is only for the young people, not just for the simple people. It's also for the wise people.

That means people who have already got a certain amount of wisdom, they will hear and they will increase in learning. And one mark of a wise man is that he is teachable, he has got a ear that's willing to hear and willing to be taught, and therefore he can become still more wise, acquire still more wisdom. And a man of understanding, here is a man who is already one of understanding, he will acquire wise counsel.

That means, in one translation it says, a man of understanding will get a steersman to steer his life. And wisdom will become like the man who steers the ship. And that a man of understanding has got wisdom to steer his ship.

And also, that we may be able to understand the proverbs and figures and the words of the wise and their riddles. In other words, it can give us understanding into the spiritual truths of God's word. So that's what the first six verses is talking about, the purpose with which Solomon wrote this book.

You remember that when God asked Solomon, what do you want? We read about that in 1 Kings chapter 3. And Solomon didn't ask for wealth, he didn't ask for honor, but he asked God for wisdom. And God said, alright, I'll give it to you. Of course, the sad thing is that later on Solomon drifted away, and that teaches us that you can even write a book like Proverbs and still drift away if you are not wholehearted.

So the life of Solomon is a tremendous warning when we read the book of Proverbs, that the man who wrote this book, this fantastic book, as we go through it, you'll find it finally drifted away. We can preach to others and be disqualified ourselves if we don't remain in humility and the fear of the Lord, which Solomon speaks so much about. So it's not just a question of understanding this book, but of living in this book all our days and enduring until the end.

And there Solomon is a frightening warning to all who think that they are something, or think that they have come somewhere, or think that they have achieved something. Even we can be used to write scripture and be a blessing to thousands and still drift away if we don't hold fast until the end. Right, now we come to the first proverb, and it's very significant that the very first proverb is, the fear of the Lord is the

beginning of knowledge.

When we say the beginning of knowledge, we can say that is the foundation. Later on, as we saw in Proverbs 9.10, it says it's the beginning of wisdom. Knowledge and wisdom are really interconnected, and because knowledge does not mean Bible knowledge, it means the knowledge of God.

When we read of knowledge, it doesn't mean academic knowledge of the Bible, because the devil has got that, and he doesn't have the fear of the Lord. So it's obvious that verse 7 is not referring to Bible knowledge, because the devil's got plenty of that, but he's got no fear of the Lord. So the knowledge spoken of here is the knowledge of God, and that's quite different from Bible knowledge.

A lot of people who have Bible knowledge, who have no knowledge of God. So the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent, to know more and more of what God is like.

Paul said that was the great longing of his life. He said in Philippians 3.10, that I may know Him. That was he wanted to know God more and more and more and more, to know more and more of what God was like, how God looked at people, how God looked at circumstances, how God looked at things, so that Paul could change his own mind to that way of thinking.

So that is the knowledge spoken of here, and it says here to know God, the first step is to fear Him, to have a reverence for Him, to hate sin, to love righteousness. That is to fear God, and then we can know Him better and better and better. And that's why it's not a question of how much intelligence we have, but rather how much fear of God we have that determines how much we increase in spiritual knowledge and spiritual wisdom.

So that's right at the beginning. The foundation, the cornerstone, the foundation stone, whichever way you like to put it, is the fear of the Lord. It's the starting line of the race.

The starting line. If you don't get there, you don't get anywhere. And we can also say that it is the essence of all knowledge.

That means it's the main part of all knowledge is the fear of God. And the day I lose the fear of God, I can't get any more understanding of God, no more wisdom. The way to increase in wisdom is to increase in the fear of God.

The way to increase in the knowledge of God is to increase in the fear of the Lord. Now we also understand from that verse who a fool is. When the Bible speaks about a fool, it's not speaking about somebody who got 15% in mathematics and 10% in science.

A person who got that much may still be wise, according to the scriptures, if they've got the fear of God. When the Bible speaks about a fool, it's not speaking about someone who is bad in studies. It's speaking about someone who does not have the fear of the Lord.

A person who can lust after women and not mourn over it, not weep over it, he's a fool. Even if he gets 90% in maths and science, he's an absolute fool. And he's the fool about whom Proverbs has written, Solomon has written 66 things about such fools, who don't have any fear of God when it comes to sin.

Who don't have any fear of God when it comes to telling lies and signing false statements and committing all types of sins, and they're not disturbed in their heart. Solomon has written 66 things about such fools. Fools are those who despise wisdom and instruction.

They do not understand to look at things from God's viewpoint. We can say that wisdom is to look at people and things and the whole world the way God looks at all these things and people. And the more wisdom I have, the more I should look at people the way God looks at them.

With tenderness, with compassion, with love, with purity. And if I can't look at people with tenderness and compassion and purity and love, well, I'm not getting wisdom. However much I may be increasing in Bible knowledge, which of course the devil has more than me in any case.

And that's where we need to see the fool that the Bible speaks of is the fool who does not fear God, who does not have a reverence for God in his life, who does not hate sin, who does not love righteousness. So that's the first thing, to fear God. And then, once having that foundation is laid, he goes on to build on that and says, no, here is where all your instruction begins after you have learned the fear of God.

First of all, in your home, as a child, with your father and mother. And notice how Proverbs links that together. Verse 7, the fear of the Lord.

Verse 8, to honor your father and your mother. And I'll tell you something that I've seen through the short years of my life, that those who have never learned to sincerely, wholeheartedly honor their earthly father and their earthly mother, they never, never, never acquire wisdom. Even though they may increase fantastically in knowledge and even Bible knowledge, they never become wise.

I've seen them again and again and again and again. Hear my son, your father's instruction, and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head and ornaments about your neck.

And there we see that the first commandment with promise was to honor your father and mother. And that's why if we want children to grow up into the wisdom of the book of Proverbs, we've got to first teach them to obey their parents. It's no use sending children to school if they haven't learned to obey daddy and mommy at home.

It's an absolute waste of time. You haven't given them the education they need first of all. That's what we need to tell our children.

Hear my little son. Listen to what your father tells you. Listen to what your mother is telling you.

And that's where we have to begin. And that's where all wisdom begins, with that little child at home. And if it begins like that, then as they grow up, this can promote them to honor.

And notice in verse 9, this word grace comes, a wreath of grace to your head. It's very interesting to see. I told you that the book of Proverbs is like a new covenant book in the Old Testament.

The word grace comes a number of times in the book of Proverbs. It comes in the book of Zechariah where it says, I'll pour out upon them the spirit of grace. And in that New Testament sense, we can say it is found mostly only in Proverbs and in Zechariah.

Consider, for example, Proverbs 3.34, which Peter quotes and James quotes. Proverbs 3.34 is, God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. That was written by Solomon in the Old Testament, long before Peter and James wrote it in the New Testament.

In fact, Peter and James quote it from Solomon in the Old Testament. He scoffs at the scoffers means he resists the proud. He gives grace to the afflicted, to the humble.

And so we find this word grace coming in the book of Proverbs. And that's why this is a book that we need to study carefully in those of us who are coming to the New Covenant. And this word by which Solomon writes, verse 10, my son, verse 15, my son, chapter 2, verse 1, my son, chapter 3, verse 1, my son.

He's speaking to someone who is willing to submit to him as a father. He's not speaking to people who have not understood the principle of submission. If we have not understood the principle of submission as a child to our earthly parents and in the church to those who are spiritually like fathers to us, we'll never get wisdom.

It's written to those who can hear an exhortation which says, my son, can you listen to that? Not when God says it, but when a man whom God has appointed over you says it. At home, an earthly father or mother. In the church, those who are above us in the Lord.

Yeah, that's a very important principle. I've come to see more and more of late how so much revolves around this principle of submission to authority. And how God would do almost anything for a man or a woman who has understood that one principle of submission to authority.

God will do anything for a child who has learned to submit to his parents, for a wife who has learned to submit to her husband, and for a person who has learned to submit to spiritual leadership in the church. Almost anything. That's a fundamental principle.

That's why the devil always tries to move us out from that place of submission so that God can do almost nothing for us. And we deprive ourselves of God's blessing because he gives grace to the humble, and the humble are those who have learned submission to authority. So, my son, if sinners entice you, if the first place where we have to learn wisdom is the home, verse 8 and 9, then the second place where we have to be careful is with our friends.

Now, verse 8 and 9 is referring to the child at home. Verse 10 is referring to the young man who has now gone to school and is growing up, and there are other companions of his who are enticing him, inviting him to sin. Just like it says, the lusts of the flesh entice us.

Here are our friends enticing this young man to sin. Sinners, sinners are those who don't have the fear of God, who entice the young man through flattery, saying something nice to you so that he can entice you away from the way of truth. Saying to you, be a man, smoke a cigarette if you're a man, have a drink with me if you're a man, or do something else and prove that you're a man.

And this young person who is wanting to be a man is tempted so much, oh, I'm willing to show this person that I'm also a man. And thus, he is enticed into sin. The word of God says, My son, when sinners entice you, you've gone out of the home now, you're out with the friends out there, and they're trying to entice you, be careful.

Do not consent. Don't be deceived by their flatteries. Don't be deceived by their challenges to be a man or a woman.

No, you show that you're a man by saying, no, I'm not going to do what you say. I fear God. That's the proof that we have courage and that we are men of God.

If they say, come with us, let us lie in wait for blood. Let us ambush the innocent without cause. Let us swallow them alive like Sheol.

Even whole as those who go down to the pit. This is speaking about some extreme condition of a gang of murderers inviting some young man saying, come, let's be like highway robbers and murderers and kill people when they, let's lie in wait for them and ambush them and get their money, kill them to get their money. We shall find all kinds of precious wealth.

We shall fill our houses with spoils. There we see, enticing them to come and join them to commit murder. Now, I don't think anyone of us sitting here is in danger of being enticed to join some gang of murderers.

How shall we apply it to ourselves? We can apply it in this way and say, this is a backbiter inviting you to come and backbite against a brother. That is the New Covenant equivalent of murder. To shed a brother's blood or a sister's blood when he or she is not there.

Come, let's talk about so and so. Something bad about so and so. Listen to the word of God which says, my son, when sinners entice you to backbite, do not consent.

Take a stand there. Don't participate with them. That's the warning for us.

Why are these murderers and robbers after these innocent people? With one aim, to make themselves rich. We shall find all kinds of precious wealth. We shall fill our houses with spoils.

That means with all this wealth. And it need not be murder. There are people who do all types of other things in order to get wealth and fill their houses.

There are people who take bribes in order to fill their houses with television sets and video recorders and refrigerators and cars which they have got unrighteously. There are people who cheat the government of taxes in order to fill their houses with mixers and pressure cookers which they have been able to buy because they have cheated the government of taxes. There are so many ways.

It doesn't have to be murder. But to fill my house with a lot of things and to do it with unrighteous money. There is a warning here.

It's a warning against covetousness. It's a warning against the lust to fill our houses with things. When Jesus has said, a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things he has in his home.

If God gives you the ability to get things that are useful, get them. But if he has chosen not to give you that ability, we have got to learn godliness with contentment. And have no desire to do anything unrighteous or to be covetous in order to fill our houses, as it says in verse 13.

And then it goes on in verse 14 about these robbers who are trying to entice this young man saying, throw in your lot with us. We shall all have one purse. Do you know that this word, we shall all have one purse, is not Christianity? It's communism.

And it's put here in the mouth of sinners. We shall all have one purse. Sometimes people think, there are some groups where people think that it's spirituality for everyone to live together and just have one purse.

But you never find that anywhere in the word of God. In fact, it's a misunderstanding of Acts chapter 2 and Acts chapter 4. If you read carefully in Acts chapter 2 and Acts chapter 4, it never says that they all had one purse. Nowhere.

It says they had all things in common in the sense that if a man had something, his brother was quite entitled to use it. That's right. All things in common means that if you have a cycle or a scooter, it must be perfectly available for another brother to use if he needs it.

That's the meaning of having all things in common. Not that we all have one purse. Because if we pool all our resources and have one purse, none of us will be able to learn faithfulness and money.

It will just encourage all the lazy people to join us. No. Let's all have one purse is not Christianity.

It's communism. And we are never to get into that deception. Some people have got into that deception and found it doesn't work because God never intended that type of communism to be found among Christians.

But to not possess anything as our own, but to give according to people's need, that is Christianity. I just mentioned that in passing. To share with the needy is Christianity, but to have a common purse is communism.

And it also gives us a warning here about ungodly business partnerships. It's wrong for a believer to join hands with a man who doesn't have the fear of God in any business partnership. That's the meaning here also.

Come, let us have one purse. Let's get into this business enterprise together. And we will be partners and share together in what we get.

We shall share together the profit. That's the meaning. And when you join hands with those who don't have the fear of God, it's going to lead you into calamity.

And there we need to hear the word of God which says, My son, when a sinner invites you into a joint business enterprise, do not consent. Now we move on to verse 15. My son, do not walk in the way with them and keep your feet from their path.

In other words, break such relationships that are leading you astray. Verse 16, because their feet run to evil, that means they don't have any principles in the way they do their business, and you'll be entangled with them in that. They hasten to shed blood.

Then it goes on to say something very interesting. It uses a picture here about what it means to be greedy. You see, this is a young man who is growing up and wants to make money quickly, and therefore he's enticed by these people who say, Come, we'll show you how to make money quickly.

And they lead him into calamity. Young people can take a warning from this, particularly when young people are newly married and they suddenly desire to have all the things in their home which many others who have been married for 15-20 years have. And then they can be tempted in so many ways to do things that are unrighteous.

Here it says in verse 17 and 18, and I want to read it from the Good News Bible. It does no good to spread a net when the bird you want to catch is watching you. You understand that? I mean, to spread a net when that bird is watching, it's no use, because the bird's not going to come into that net, it's watching you spread the trap.

But greedy men are more stupid than that bird in the sense that they are setting a trap for themselves, a trap in which they will die because of their greed. That's the meaning of verses 17 and 18. That a man who is covetous, a man who has not conquered in his own flesh the lust to possess more and more and more and more to have what that brother has and to have what that person has, he doesn't realize that he's more stupid than a bird.

A bird sees that trap and avoids it, but this greedy, covetous man, through his greed, is making a trap by which he's going to destroy and ruin his own life. The Word of God speaks much about that in 1 Timothy chapter 6, about those who have the love of money piercing themselves through with many sorrows. It's very interesting to see how the Book of Proverbs begins, the practical instruction it begins with is concerning mammon and the pursuit of mammon and the desire to acquire mammon quickly.

That's what he speaks about and how young people can be tempted in that way. So are the ways of everyone who gains by violence. Such is the fate of all who seek to make more in unrighteous ways.

It takes away the life of its possessors. They lose their life. Now in contrast to all this, we find in contrast to the sinner inviting the young person, here is another person inviting the young man.

Wisdom shouts in the streets. This is the contrast in verse 10, sinners are inviting the young man. In verse 20, wisdom is inviting the young man and saying, young man, young woman, why don't you listen to me? And he's shouting in the street, trying to draw away these young people away from those foolish ways.

That's what we must do in the church. Wisdom must shout and lift her voice. Wisdom is pictured here as a woman, as a godly woman.

And in that sense, the bride of Christ, inviting people, shouting, inviting young people, turn away from folly. And it says here, at the head of the noisy streets she cries out, at the entrance of the gates of the city she utters her sayings. Wherever she finds young people going astray, she's shouting, warning them.

How long, oh simple ones, and you know the simple one is simple as I said in the sense of unstable, influenced by what this friend of his in school says, what that friend of hers in college says, and what this other person says, what the newspapers say. Influenced by all these people. These are the simple people, never steady in divine wisdom.

How long, oh simple young people, will you remain in your simplicity and folly? How long will you remain foolish? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing, and fools hate knowledge. Notice in verse 22, there are sort of three stages of going downwards into the pit. First of all, you're simple.

That means you're easily influenced. We can say the simple person in the book of Proverbs is the person who is easily influenced. We know that many young people are like that.

Easily influenced by other people in their school and college. That's where we start. And after some time, if they continue like that and they don't listen to wisdom, what will happen is, they will become scorners.

They will, you know, think, yeah, that's a bit old-fashioned what they preach in the church. He's become, he's gone a little step beyond now. He's become a bit of a scoffer.

He sits there and says, yeah, yeah, that's all old-fashioned, too rigid, too narrow-minded. He's become a scoffer. That's the second stage.

And then the third stage is where he becomes, in God's eyes, a fool. A fool. And we know, we saw that in verse 7, a fool is one who has no fear of God.

Notice these three stages. First, easily influenced. Second, you begin to look down and laugh at some of those things that are spoken by godly brothers in the church.

And then you finally, you don't realize that you have already taken this second last step down into the pit. And then the third step, which is a complete loss of the fear of God. And I want to warn all young people about these three steps.

Be careful. Don't be easily influenced. And be much more careful if you have gone beyond that stage to the place where you think, this is all old-fashioned religious stuff.

They're so narrow-minded. Because you're very close now to the third stage, if you've got that far. And that is the stage of losing the fear of God altogether.

Turn round. Turn round, it says in verse 23. Turn, turn, whichever step you are on.

If you're on that third step, turn quickly. If you're on that second step, turn. You might fall into the third step easily.

But the best is to turn at the first step itself. Turn to my reproof. Wisdom says, turn to my reproof.

Repent. And what will I give you? I won't give you knowledge, Bible knowledge. I will pour out my spirit on you.

Here is a new covenant experience. I will pour out upon you the Holy Spirit, who is called in Ephesians 1.17, the spirit of what? Wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of God. That's the Holy Spirit.

The spirit of wisdom and revelation that gives us the full knowledge of God. And wisdom says, I will pour out my spirit upon you. In other words, I'll change your way of thinking from inside.

I'm not just going to teach you how to behave and act in a nice way on the outside just like an actor who is pretending to be wise. No, I'll pour out my spirit within you so that from inside you will change. And I will make my words known to you.

I will teach you the word of God. There are two things we need in our life. The Holy Spirit and the word of God.

And that's what we see in verse 23. To get wisdom, we need the Holy Spirit and the word of God. God needs to pour out his spirit upon us and then he can make known his words unto us.

And you find right from the beginning when God recreated the heaven and earth, it says the spirit of God brooded upon the waters, Genesis 1. And the word of God went forth saying, let there be light and so on. And the joint operation of the Holy Spirit and God's word changed the face of the earth. And it says here in

verse 23, the joint operation of the Holy Spirit and the word of God can change our lives from foolishness to wisdom if we turn when wisdom reproves us.

When we get a word of rebuke or reproof in the church or from an older brother who has a little more wisdom than you, if you don't get offended with that word, but turn at that word, that can be your salvation. That can be our salvation. When we can turn at a word of rebuke and reproof that comes either directly from the Holy Spirit or that comes through a brother who may have a little more wisdom than us.

But the sad thing is that most people don't take that seriously, particularly when they are young. And therefore wisdom has to say these sad words. Listen to these sad words now.

I called and you refused. And how did wisdom call? Wisdom shouted. She shouted and shouted and shouted.

We read in verse 20 onwards. They wouldn't listen. You say, yeah, I know how to take care of myself.

That spirit in young people of self-confidence, not being shattered, not being broken. And they refuse. They refuse the warnings of godly older people.

Wisdom stretches out her hand and saying, come, let me lead you. And they wouldn't pay attention. And all my counsel you neglected.

I advised you, I warned you, I told you. You just wouldn't listen. Think of the young brothers and sisters who can grow up like that.

Listen to exhortations and warnings in the church and don't take it seriously. And you did not want my rebuke. You got offended when somebody rebuked you.

You hung around the brothers who were always saying nice things to you. And you avoided the people who rebuked you and corrected you. Alright, wisdom says, one day when your calamity hits you, like a sudden flood or cyclone, we hear about that in the papers.

Suddenly people living on an island are all washed out. Suddenly a tidal wave came and hit them. And it says, when your calamity comes and hits you, wisdom says, I'll just stand back and laugh.

I'll mock when your dread comes upon you. And the dread will come like a storm, like a sudden cyclone. Your calamity will come like a whirlwind.

Distress and anguish will come upon you. Wisdom says, that's sure. Sure, those who go astray from God's paths one day or the other, certainly distress and anguish will come.

And then they will call on me. But I will not answer because it's too late. Do you know that a day can come when it is too late? When it is too late to get wisdom? Thank God that day hasn't yet come, brothers and sisters.

Now we can turn. Those are serious words. They will seek me diligently at that time.

They had no time to seek her diligently at the right time. But later on, after they've made a mess of their life, and when it is too late, they will seek diligently, but they will not find me. We can find him now, but a day will come when we will not be able to find him.

Because they hated the knowledge of God. They may have been interested in Bible knowledge, but they hated the knowledge of God who is pure and good and loving. And they did not choose the fear of the Lord.

They would not accept my counsel. They spurned all my reproof. They got offended when they were rebuked and reproved.

Notice how often the word reproof comes. So what's going to happen to them? They are going to reap what they sow. That's all.

It's not that wisdom is going to go and punish them. No, no, no, no, no. They are just going to reap what they themselves have sown.

Wisdom is only standing back and watching the whole thing. They are going to reap what they have sown themselves. They shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and they'll be satisfied with their own devices.

Their own cleverness is finally going to lead them astray, and they're going to reap the corruption that comes as a result of sowing to the flesh. Because the waywardness of the simple, the word naive means simple, shall kill them. And the complacency of fools shall destroy them.

Now here are two dangers. One is waywardness. Waywardness means you don't go along the right path, you sort of drift a little bit this way.

And complacency means that you sit back and say, yeah, everything's alright with me. Nothing's going to happen to me. I'm alright.

There's no fear and trembling in their lives in relation to working out their own salvation. They are quite complacent, happy with their own condition, and wayward. Two dangers.

The waywardness of the simple, and the simple person who has become wayward gradually becomes a fool who is quite satisfied in his waywardness. That's the second stage. It's the final stage into which he reaches, finally destroys him.

And the thief has come to steal and to kill and to destroy. And the way he steals and kills and destroys is by leaving a person, allowing a person to be influenced by his surroundings, and then finally allowing him to be satisfied with his condition. But, thank God that day has not yet come.

You can still listen to wisdom. It says in verse 33, But, he who listens to me shall live in security. That's a great word for the insecure days in which we are living in the world and in our country.

Security comes through listening to God speaking through His Spirit. Wisdom says, he who listens to me will not only live securely, but will have no fear in his life. There is no fear in love.

Shall be at ease from the dread of evil. The fear that something evil may happen to me. Does any of us have that fear? Something evil may hit me, or my family, sometime.

It says here, you need not have that fear. If you make it a habit in your life, if we make it a habit in our lives, say, Lord, I want to listen to you. I want to do what Mary did, sit at your feet and listen.

That is the one thing needful. And he goes on in chapter 2, verse 1 to say, My son, again, he is speaking to those who have learned submission. Those who have understood submission to authority.

My son, if you will receive my sayings. Now this is for those who are willing to turn at the reproof of wisdom. Wisdom has shouted.

He has warned those people who don't listen what's going to happen to them. Now he is speaking to those who are willing to listen. And he says, okay, here is the first thing you need to do.

You need to receive my word and treasure my commandments. In other words, when you come to the word of God, you need to look for the commandments. Not just for the promises.

You need to take those commandments and treasure them. Not count them as a burden. But take them as a treasure.

Oh, here is a commandment. There, I have become rich. One more commandment.

And one more commandment and I am increasing my treasure. Treasure my commandments. That's the first step.

A right attitude to God's word is the first step to wisdom. To learn, to look for the commandments in God's word. You want wisdom? Here it is.

If, there is a big if there. And make your ear attentive to wisdom or as another version has it, attune to wisdom. In other words, just like you tune your radio set to a particular frequency, here it says tune your ear to the frequency called God's wisdom.

Always be listening for that. And incline your heart to understanding. Not your mind.

But your heart. Lord, I want to know you. Now there are three ifs here.

I want you to notice these three ifs. First if is in verse 1. Three steps to wisdom. First, to receive and treasure God's commandments.

The second if is in verse 3. Is to pray earnestly. That's the second condition. If you cry for discernment and lift up your voice for understanding.

And the third if is the third condition. Verse 4. If you forsake everything else that you consider valuable on the earth and seek for wisdom as the main thing. If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures.

Wisdom is called hidden treasures. If you search for wisdom as for silver and hidden treasures. So there are three requirements.

First, learn to value God's commandments. Verse 1. Second, cry out with all your heart because God is a rewarder of those who seek him diligently. And third, you must value wisdom more than anything else on the earth.

More than your job. More than your wife. More than your children.

More than your house. More than your property. More than anything on earth.

Anyone who fulfills these three conditions will get wisdom. That's clear. And we can meditate on those three conditions.

To treasure God's commandments. To cry out earnestly with all of our hearts. And thirdly, to value God's wisdom more than anything else on this earth.

And if people haven't got wisdom, it's because they have not fulfilled those three conditions. Very clear. Three ifs.

If, if, if. Then, verse 5. What will happen? You will discern the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is not something that we think we have.

God has to give it to us. We have to discern it. And we discern it when we fulfill those conditions mentioned in verse 3. And then, you will discover the knowledge of God.

If you fulfill the conditions in those first four verses, the three conditions, here's what all will happen. You will discern the fear of the Lord. You will become a God-fearing brother and sister.

You will discover the knowledge of God. You will know more and more what God is like. And your life will become more and more secure.

Because it is the Lord who gives wisdom. No human being can give us wisdom. And that clearly teaches that coming to the Bible studies and the book of Proverbs will not give us wisdom.

That can only show us the way where to get it. Because it is the Lord who gives wisdom. James 1.5 says, if any man lacks wisdom, let him go to the meetings.

No, let him ask God. Let him ask God. Because every good and perfect gift comes only from the Father.

So, we can't get it from man. For the Lord gives wisdom from His mouth. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth.

And from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding. Now, here are some wonderful promises. That God has stored up, that means He's reserved, sound wisdom for the upright.

That means those who are not crooked. Those who are upright, who don't bend in the moment of temptation and compromise, but who stand straight, upright, straight. The devil tries to bend them and they won't bend.

God has reserved some wisdom for them. He's got some treasure to give them. Here's another promise.

It says that God is a shield to protect those who walk in integrity. Those who walk straight forward, honest. God protects them and helps them.

Those who guard the paths of justice. He's a shield. You got to read verse 7 and 8 together.

He's a shield to those who walk in integrity and who guard the paths. That means are just in depth. Let me read that to you from the Good News Bible.

God protects those who treat other people fairly. Justice means to treat other people with fairness. God protects a person who treats other people with fairness.

That's wisdom. To do to others as you want others to do to you. Not to cheat them, not to do anything that will harm them in any way.

And those who treat other people with fairness and kindness find God's protection over their life. And it says here, he preserves the way of his godly ones. That means he keeps them from falling.

He guards those who are devoted to him. And when you fulfill these conditions in verse 1 to 4, here's another promise. Verse 9. And I want to read this from the Living Bible.

It's a wonderful promise. That God will help you to distinguish right from wrong. That's what we read in Hebrews 5.14. To discern between good and evil.

That is wisdom. Wisdom is to discern between good and evil. To discern.

Yeah, that's a human way of reacting. But I don't want to be human. I want to be divine.

That's a human way of speaking. I want to be divine. And God will show you how to distinguish right from wrong.

And God, this is Proverbs 2.9 in the Living Bible, God will help you, will show you how to find the right decision every time. Think of that. How to find the right decision every time.

And in the mind of a soulish, carnal believer, immediately the decision he thinks of is which job to take and which person to marry. But he's not talking about such decisions. He's talking about decisions as to how to live a godly life.

And the spiritual person is thinking of that. How to live a godly life. And he will show us how to find the right decision at every time.

In some of the complicated situations of life. To say, what shall we do now? What is the divine way to react? Yeah, God will show you if you fulfil those conditions in the beginning. That you treasure his commandments, you cry out for knowledge, and you desire wisdom more than anything else on the face of the earth.

Here's something more of that promise there. Wisdom will enter your heart. Or as another translation says, wisdom will make herself at home in your heart.

That means wisdom will not be a visitor coming and going, but wisdom will come and settle down permanently as make a home in your heart and dwell there. That's a wonderful thing. That we don't have a reputation for occasionally acting wisely and most of the time acting foolishly, but that wisdom has made a permanent home in our heart.

Think of that. And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. To know God will be the thing that gives you pleasure more than any earthly pleasure.

To know God more. And discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you. That's a tremendous thing for young people.

When you think of the number of foolish things that young people can do. To think of a promise like this, that discretion will guard you and understanding will watch over you. That you can be saved from folly if

you submit to the teaching of wisdom.

To deliver you from the way of evil. And now we come to the third area. There are three areas spoken of in chapters 1 and 2. The first area we saw was the home.

Chapter 1 verse 8 where the child must obey his parents. The second area we saw in chapter 1 verse 10 was when the child grows up to be a young person going to school or college and the young people are enticing him, his companions. And the third area is the whole world where there are evil men and evil women.

It speaks of the evil men in verses 12 to 15. And it speaks of the evil woman in verses 16 to 19. And it says God can deliver you from the way of evil.

From the man who speaks perverse things. That is the man who is proud. The man who leaves, verse 13, the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness.

The crooked man. The man who is not straight forward. God can deliver you from that.

And there is a beautiful translation of this in the Good News Bible verse 12. It says God can save you from those people who stir up trouble by everything that they say. Have you met people like that? Who got a tremendous ability to stir up trouble by the words they speak.

They got a great ability to go into a home and say something and stir up trouble. Think to be such a foolish, stupid man. A foolish, stupid husband who's got a great ability to stir up trouble by the words he speaks.

Or a wife who's got a great ability to stir up trouble by the way she speaks and the words she speaks. Brothers and sisters, let's be delivered from that folly. God will keep you from such people who stir up trouble by what they say.

Who delight in doing evil and rejoice in the perversity of evil. Whose paths are crooked, who are not straight forward, who are devious in their ways. Dear young people, steer clear of these ungodly friends who will lead you astray.

Seek your fellowship with God fearing young people. That's the warning of the Book of Proverbs. And it will also deliver you from the strange woman.

That's also for young people. Be careful about those attractive young girls who are trying to draw you. And how will they draw you? With flattery.

Verse 16. They will say nice things about you. Oh, you look so nice.

That's enough for that young man. He's finished. Or you sing so nicely.

Finished. And he runs like a sheep for the slaughter behind that girl who's flattered him. God can deliver you.

Wisdom can deliver you. From the adulteress. She's an adulteress.

She's leading you astray from God. Spiritual adultery and physical adultery. Part of Babylon.

Who flatters. Beware of flattery young people. Beware of flattery.

That leaves the companion of her youth. Leaves her husband. Forgets the marriage covenant which he made before God.

Her house bows down to death. Inclines to death. That means when you go after such girls, you're on an inclined plane.

It's just a matter of time before you hit the bottom. Be careful that you don't get onto that inclined plane and go right down. Her tracks lead to the dead.

To Sheol. To hell. It inclines downwards.

And no one who goes to her returns again. Nor do they reach the paths of life. What does that mean? That means once you've started fooling around with girls, it'll have a permanent effect on your life.

You can recover from it. But you can never recover completely. There is some damage done that can never be rectified in all of your life.

Thank God if you're saved. But there's some damage done by all fooling around with the opposite sex. If it's only a little bit, a little bit damage done.

More, more damage done. But there's a permanent effect on our life. Remember that.

All sexual sin has a permanent effect on our life. We can be forgiven. But it has a permanent effect on our life.

None who go to her return again. Nor do they reach the paths of life. Be careful in fooling around with the opposite sex.

And walk in the ways of godly people.

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