
Wisdom's Fulfillment and Fullness

Proverbs 1-3; Colossians 2:1-3

Pastor Stevan Vaughan

Introduction Tonight, we take up Proverbs 1-3 to refresh our memories and to remember what we are learning through Proverbs with a New Testament lens.

With government elections this past week, I have been thinking about wisdom in leadership and politics, our military, business ownership, work, and church leadership and how wisdom applies to all these roles. I think there is much confusion over what is wise and unwise, and even what wisdom is and how to apply wisdom on a day-to-day practical level. I ask myself - do most people even care about wisdom and having wisdom themselves or being aware of it when it is or isn't in their lives?

Unfortunately, in politics and other leadership roles, I often see only foolishness and little wisdom. Where man devoid a relationship with God, decisions often seem to be made based on the desire and influence of a few, and for the personal power and benefit of the leader, which is the opposite of true biblical wisdom as presented in scripture.

Godly leadership is based in serving others with humility, while basing decisions on God's explanation and direction of his will through his written word, giving God the honor and glory instead of self. Ultimately wisdom is dependent on a personal relationship with Christ.

Christ is Wisdom (Colossians 2:1-3)

Turn to Colossians 2:1-3:

For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (ESV). The New Living Translation says, in him (Christ), lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Christ is wisdom. Christ embodies not only God's mysterious plan of salvation for his people, and all wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. The old covenant reader could not have seen Christ clearly through the wisdom literature because Christ had not been revealed yet but reading and seeking wisdom was always centered around and focused on God and the necessity of a personal relationship with God.

Wisdom's Nature and Need (Proverbs 1:1-7)

Proverbs were written to supply wisdom and instruction to the reader and to ultimately point the wisdom-seeker to Christ. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; wisdom and understanding is an on-going journey, and one where we are to continually grow and mature and where biblical wisdom begins with a personal relationship with God.

The author of Proverbs tells us the purpose of Proverbs in the early verses (Proverbs 1:1-7);

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

*To know wisdom and instruction,
to understand words of insight,
to receive instruction in wise dealing,
in righteousness, justice, and equity.
to give prudence to the simple,
knowledge and discretion to the youth—
Let the wise hear and increase in learning,
and the one who understands obtain guidance,
to understand a proverb and a saying,
the words of the wise and their riddles.*

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.
fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

The beginning of a life of wisdom begins and ends with Christ. Without Christ there is no true and lasting wisdom nor understanding. How does our understanding of wisdom and understanding change when looking at Proverbs from this side of the cross?

Through our relationship with Christ, we fear, honor and respect Him, that is the beginning of wisdom. The fear of the LORD suggests reverence and awe which we can show with a heart of obedience and humility. Through our relationship with Christ and through his word we can know wisdom, instruction and understand words of insight. We can receive instruction in wise dealing, justice, and equity. We can learn prudence and discretion. We can increase in learning, understand wise sayings, and understand scripture. We should be increasing our learning and obtaining guidance through life which will lead to God-given maturity.

The setting of much of the Proverbs is giving and receiving instruction within a family unit, with both father and mother taking part in the teaching. God has provided this total family instruction with the practical use of God's word no navigate an often difficult and confusing life. God's people are to hear God's word and instruction which allows us the wisdom and understanding to walk-through life in a steady, believing, understanding way.

Wisdom's Walk and Warnings (Proverbs 1:8-19)

In Proverbs 1-3 there appears to be two paths we can walk down in life. One is path is a path of wisdom and understanding and the other, sin, murder, theft and evil. As God's children we are called by God to embrace a life of wisdom and understanding like one might wear a precious family heirloom and resist the constant enticement of those who want us to live a life of sin and evil.

Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck. My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. My son do not walk in the way with them; hold back your foot from their paths, for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood. Such are the ways of everyone who is greedy for unjust gain; it takes away the life of its possessors. (Proverbs 1:8-10; 15; 19)

Wisdom is taught within a family context with the father and mother teaches, and the father having the ultimate authority over the learning environment. The mother was present and listening to the father's instructions and Proverbs makes clear that mom's teaching was not supposed to be forsaken but also treasured like fine jewelry.

From a new covenant perspective, I see the old covenant family being replaced in the new covenant by Christ and the Church. Christ is the head of the church, and we learn God's word largely within our local church community. We are to hear and cherish Christ's instruction through his word. That is where we learn wisdom within the church. Biblical instruction should continue at home, but largely under the instruction we receive from our church leadership. Christ is the head of his body, the church.

Outside the church, there will always be sinners trying to entice those around them to join in their sinful and destructive ways. But if we cling to Christ and his teaching, Christ's indwelling spirit and his word will give us the wisdom to walk down the path of wisdom and blessing and walk away from the path of sin.

Wisdom's Call and Calling (Proverbs 1:20-33)

Wisdom is never hidden, and Proverbs tells us that wisdom is always calling out from obvious places to get man's attention.

Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice; at the head of the noisy streets, she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates, she speaks: "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge? If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you. (Proverbs 1:20-23)

The New Bible Commentary explains it like this:

Vs 20–21 personify wisdom as a woman prophet preaching in the places where people gather in the city, in a way to which Israel would be accustomed. Vs 22–33 record what she was saying, taking further the image of a prophet preaching, being ignored (cf. Is. 65), then being unavailable when people want to consult her (see vs 23–24, 28). The image of the prophet helps to convey the urgency of wisdom's challenge to people who are in a critical situation. She speaks as if it is too late, as prophets often do in order to jolt people into a response before it really is too late.¹

Christ in his wisdom and mercy is continually reaching out a hand of forgiveness and acceptance to the foolish, the simple and the scoffers if they will simply turn to wisdom and understanding. But the fool, the simple and the scoffer refuse to listen and refuse to seek wisdom and will face certain destruction because they absolutely will not choose to fear of the Lord. Ultimately God will cease to hear their cries for help. Proverbs 1:24-33:

Because I have called and you refused to listen, have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded, because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when terror strikes you, when terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way, and have their fill of their own devices. For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them; but whoever listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease, without dread of disaster.”

Christ is always available for the sinner to turn to. It is as if Christ is on every corner calling for followers, calling from every rooftop in the city square to repent and turn away from their foolishness and hardness. Christ is no longer hidden in an old covenant veil of mystery. But most simply ignore Christ's call to follow him. Instead, most people cling to their simplicity, scoffing, and foolishness and reject the wisdom of Christ. They have no reverence or respect for God and categorically reject God's mercy, instead the fool will cling to his own wisdom and knowledge as finite and arrogant as that is.

Those who reject Christ, and his wisdom will suffer because of their foolish, sinful choices, in this life, but for sure when they reach eternity, God will turn his back on their distress and anguish as they call out for mercy. It will be too late.

¹ Goldingay, J. E. (1994). [Proverbs](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 587). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

Wisdom's Pursuit and Provision (Proverbs 2:1-22)

Always pursue and be aware of wisdom and understanding. Seek wisdom as looking for silver or hidden treasure. If one truly looks for wisdom as hidden treasure, they will ultimately find God, for it is God alone who gives wisdom and understanding. The way of wisdom is found through a relationship with God and through that relationship with God will he watch over you and guard you from evil and darkness.

My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. (Proverbs 2:1-5)

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 in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints. Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path; for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you, delivering you from the way of evil, from men of perverted speech, who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness, who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil, men whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways. (Proverbs 2:6-15)

Only in a relationship with Christ can we experience true godly wisdom that permeates our soul and protects us from a life of sin and foolishness.

Wisdom's Trust and Treasure (Proverbs 3:1-12)

Do not forget the wisdom and teaching from the Lord but keep God's commandments. Trust the Lord with all your being, acknowledge God in everything you do. Wisdom comes directly from God not from man. The reward of wisdom might be physical wealth and prosperity, but most wisdom will not come without the cost of God's reproof and discipline in our lives. Rejecting God's discipline is rejecting God's plan for us in the moment for our growing maturity. We are not to trust our own wisdom but only God's wisdom and plan.

My son does not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. So, you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. (Proverbs 3:1-4)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. (Proverbs 3:5-8)

Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine. My son do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights. (Proverbs 3:9-12)

The implication is that the wisdom seeker will face the Lord's discipline and reproof. God reproves and disciplines those he loves, and with the Lord's reproof comes understanding, wisdom, and spiritual maturity. When we are in a time of discipline from the Lord we are not to lean on our own understanding of the situation, but trust in the Lord and his plan for our lives, because we often do not understand why we are suffering, and our suffering does not mean we did anything sinful or wrong. We know that when life becomes difficult it is because of the Lord's discipline in our lives and it is because he loves us and is maturing us into his image and for his glory.

Wisdom's Blessing and Benefit (Proverbs 3:13-20)

Finding wisdom and understanding results in blessings and gain that is far better than earthly riches. Wisdom is greater than gold and silver and rare jewels. Nothing we can want compares to wisdom. The benefits of wisdom are long life, riches, honor, peace, and pleasantness. Those who hold fast to wisdom will have life and blessings. Proverbs 3:13-18.

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed.

Blessed is the one who finds Christ and in turn finds wisdom and understanding. For the gain of finding Christ is better than any gain from finding silver and gold. Christ is more precious than jewels and nothing we want can compare to Christ. Eternal life awaits those who find Christ along with eternal riches and honor. A life in Christ should be filled with pleasantness, peace, and blessings even during our suffering.

Wisdom's Safety and Sharing (Proverbs 3:21-35)

Do not lose sight of wisdom, understanding and discretion, for they will be life for your soul, and clarity for your walk and safety on your path. If you treasure wisdom, your sleep will be sweet and secure, because the Lord will always be your confidence. That is true

wisdom. But wisdom is not simply a vertical relationship with God wisdom is also acted out on a horizontal plane with those around us. Do not withhold good from your neighbor and live wisely and humbly among others. Do your best to spread the treasure and blessings of living a wise life towards and in front of others. Proverbs 3:21-27.

My son, do not lose sight of these—keep sound wisdom and discretion, and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck. Then you will walk on your way securely, and your foot will not stumble. If you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror or of the ruin of the wicked, when it comes, for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught. Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.

Do not lose sight of Christ and keep sound wisdom and discretion. Christ is life to our soul and the one who accompanies us through life. His word and spirit will provide us a confident, secure walk, through a potentially difficult and sometimes hazardous life. When we lie down at night, we will not need to be afraid, and our sleep will be sweet. We will not be afraid of sudden terror because the Lord will be our confidence and Christ will keep our foot from being caught in the snare of sin.

As the Lord is our confidence, we should never withhold good from those around us, especially when it is in our power to give it, and this command is not just meant for fellow believers, but for everyone and anyone we come in contact within our life and work. Our life in Christ should be lived outward toward others.

Conclusion

- Christ is wisdom
- Christ is the fulfillment and embodiment of wisdom and understanding. A life of wisdom is a life of, in and through a personal relationship with Christ and learning how to live wisely through his word.
- Even though we are to seek Christ and wisdom as silver and gold, pursuing a life in Christ and pursuing wisdom does not guarantee a life of ease, blessings, and riches.
- Pursuing a life of Christ and his wisdom has an eternal trajectory of peace, blessing, healing, safety, and life.
- Wisdom most often comes through godly discipline and reproof from God's hand.
- God is always available like wisdom calling from the town square to walk with us through reproof and discipline even when we don't understand our suffering.
- In times of suffering, we are to continue to seek Christ and wisdom as one seeks a rare treasure, as we patiently and persistently wait for God.

Seek Christ and his wisdom daily and live a life of wisdom in such a way that everyone can see Christ and his wisdom working in your life.

