

Proverbs 2-3

If the proverbs teach us anything its that wisdom is displayed not merely in intellectual knowledge but in life skill, moral skill, a transformation (truly) of character. If Proverbs 1 tells us *what* to do (pursue wisdom), Proverbs 2 tells us how to do it.

Vs 1-5

Or to understand all of that another way, "If you want wisdom, you're going to have to work for it." We're to be proactive in our pursuit of wisdom. There are reactive people & there are proactive people; there are those people who will only react when acted upon, then there are those people who will take the initiative & be proactive in the pursuit of their goals.

The word of God calls upon us to be proactive in our pursuit of wisdom. God wants you to seek Him w/your whole heart. Remember the greatest commandment? Jesus said that the single greatest commandment was this; "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." Matt 22:37 In Jeremiah 29:13 we read, "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." Which means there's a conditional clause attached to it. God says that you will find Him when you search for Him w/all your heart. We're to love Him w/all that we are, we're to seek Him w/all that we are, so to w/wisdom. Don't think that wisdom is going to slide into your soul through ½ hearted pursuits, thinking it will miraculously manifest because you prayed for it one day.

You guys, people will invest great time & resources to retrieve something they consider to be of value. Be it a treasure at the bottom of the sea, many people will invest significantly in stocks & bonds; the point being that people will place time, effort & energy in seeking to secure something of value. Solomon says, "Hey, wisdom is to be considered of more value than any earthly treasure & as such should be pursued diligently & sought after whole heartedly."

The question is how hungry is your heart for the word of God? Does your soul thirst for wisdom & knowledge, insight & understanding? In Ch 1 Wisdom *pleaded* w/us to pay attention to her; have you begun to heed her cry?

Now James said, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him." James 1:5 Because of that most people believe that God will supernaturally impart that wisdom w/out regard for personal responsibility. Obviously God *can* enlighten you supernaturally should He choose to...

However the proverbs make it clear that as a general rule God grants wisdom by means of a process, a process which will involve a responsibility on your end to seek after it, to labor in the word over it, searching for it, digging deep to uncover it.

How many thousands of people left the comfort of their homes in 1849 to head west, live in tents (somewhere in Calif) spending day after day in back breaking labor in the hopes of finding a few nuggets of gold? Yet how lackadaisically do we approach God's word? Just going through the motions of religion makes no one wise; we've got to dig for it, we have to learn to labor in the word of God & prayer.

Yet how many of us show up to church Sunday morning having stayed up too late Saturday night so we're tired, & unfocused? Really it's a disrespectful attitude that we take toward the word of God, we should be well rested & eagerly attentive to God's word. We (as parents) want our children to pay attention to our words, how much more does our heavenly Father want (& rightfully require) that we take heed & pay attention to *His* word?

I drew your attention to the conditional clause attached to finding God when you seek Him w/all your heart. We find the same to be true w/wisdom; there are 8 imperatives listed in these 1st 4 Vs & the word "if" is thrown in there 3 times. Meaning that "if" you will respond appropriately to these commands "then" (as we see in Vs 5) you will understand & find the knowledge of God...

What is it that we need to do? Here are the words you want to highlight & take heed to. "Receive, treasure, incline, apply, cry out, lift up, seek & search", these are all verbs; which implies an action on your behalf; laying hold of the word of God; storing up (treasure) my commands (hiding God's word in your heart). **Incline your ear, which means "pay attention" don't lose focus. The word "apply" means to "stretch out" stretch out your heart, reach for understanding; lift up your voice, pray for discernment, seek wisdom as silver, search for it as hidden treasures...**

(Vs 5) *Then* you will understand the fear of the Lord, & find the knowledge of the God. It's when we fulfill the conditions of Vs 1-4 that we'll enjoy the blessings of Vs 5-22.

Vs 6-8

Here's the point: wisdom doesn't find its source in any man or secular humanism. True wisdom originates *in* & flows forth *from* the Lord. "The *Lord* gives wisdom; from *His mouth* come knowledge & understanding." He stores it up & gives it out to those who seek Him. It's not subjective; it's objectively revealed in His word.

As we mentioned last week, wisdom isn't simply information or direction; God's wisdom produces a quality of life, safety & security. When you exercise wisdom you will avoid all kinds of pitfalls & snares in this life.

Vs 9-11

You see, wisdom will save you heartache, grief & much regret. When wisdom is received it changes your life; it causes you to walk a different path than what you would walk by naturally. As I mentioned it will preserve you from pitfalls & save you from snares (of which there are many); Solomon lifts out 2 examples... the perverse man & the immoral woman.

Vs 12-15

These are the enticing sinners of Vs 10-19 of Ch 1. Solomon says, "When wisdom enters your heart, it will evidence itself in the fact that you will stay away from this kind of crowd."

How is it that I'm to recognize the "perverse" or "morally crooked" man? 4 Things that surface here that are sure signs of one who is perverse, or morally crooked. We might call this section "Perceiving Perversity" #1 Their Dialogue, this is a person who speaks perverse things, confusing things, things that run contrary to moral uprightness. #2 Their Deeds, they leave the path of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness; their deeds are, they rejoice in doing evil; things which are ungodly. #3 Their Desire, they delight in the perversity of the wicked & #4 Their Deviance, their ways are crooked & they are devious (or deceitful) in their paths. Wisdom will cause you to detect, deflect & walk away from this kind of man.

Vs 16-19

Pitfall # 1, the perverse man, Snare # 2 the immoral woman, the adulteress. Many a man has fallen prey to the ways of the immoral woman. If the previous section we called "Perceiving Perversity" than this one we'll recognize as "Seeing The Seductress" We see here 3 things that she's guilty of & the ramification of falling prey to her alluring ways. #1 She Flatters, the man speaks perverse words, she speaks flattering words. She's knows men love to be flattered, to hear how great they are, how strong they are, how funny or smart they are, how spiritual they are, whatever it takes.

Someone has said that flattery isn't communication, it's manipulation; it's people telling us things about ourselves that we love to hear and wish were true.

She seeks to charm you; appeal to you through outward beauty & sensual pleasure. She's a seductress, the bible never hides the appeal of sin; it warns us regarding the ramifications.

#1 She flatters, #2 She Forsakes. She's unfaithful to her husband having forsaken the companion of her youth. If she's willing to destroy *her* family you can rest assured she cares nothing for *yours*. She's a quitter, if she's not faithful to her husband what makes you think she'll be faithful to you? The same is true of men, it's amazing how many people have been caught in the web of adultery thinking that when the man left his wife they'd be together forever & they're shocked when 5 yrs later he leaves them for someone else. If he or she was willing to forsake the companion of their youth, they'll be willing to forsake you when you've served their purpose or they think something better awaits them.

#1 She flatters, #2 She forsakes, #3 She Forgets, she has no fear of God, she forgets the covenant of her God, to honor Him above all else & to cleave to her husband honor the Lord. She doesn't keep God's word, she doesn't fear the Lord, she forsakes her husband & compels another through flattery. Here's what you've got to remember #4 She's Fatal, "her house leads down to death & her paths to the dead; none who go to her return nor do they regain the paths of life." You can never undo what's done; the wounds may heal but scars remain. The seductress will destroy your marriage, your family, your ministry; exercise wisdom & discretion & you'll be delivered from her.

Vs 20- 22

I don't want to be uprooted, I want to be deeply rooted & grounded in the word of God, the ways of God & the wisdom of God.

Proverbs 3

Vs1-4

You see, over & over again we're exhorted unto obedience to the word of God. If you want your life to be blessed *of* God, then it should be earmarked by obedience *to* God.

Vs5-6

These are undoubtedly 2 of the most popular Vs in the entire bible (& understandably so). Yet we need to realize that they are surrounded w/all kinds of context. There some conditions to meet; if you want to receive God's guidance, than you need to know & *obey* God's word (Vs 1-4; keep the commands, bind mercy & truth around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart). God's will (guidance) is revealed in God's word.

Really to learn God's word & obey God's word is to demonstrate a "Trust in the Lord w/all your heart". It's to say that God's way is higher than your own therefore you will default to His direction rather than relying on what may seem to you to be common sense or the obvious answer. That's what it means when it says, "Lean not on your own understanding."

That's what Abe did when he went down to Egypt (Gen 12), it's what Moses did when he killed the Egyptian; it's what Joshua did when he attacked Ai w/out consulting the Lord. These are examples of leaning on your own understanding. Now, it's not saying don't think for yourself or ignore your intelligence. What it is saying is that we're not to depend on our own experience, or our own wisdom, but that we're to recognize the Lord & seek instruction from the Lord even in what we might consider to be the insignificant details of our lives. It's when we become "wise in our own eyes" that we're headed for trouble. Notice.

Vs 7-8

So we're to trust God *entirely* (w/all our heart), we're not to be double minded, nor can a man serve 2 Masters, right? We're to trust Him *exclusively* (lean not on your own understanding) don't trust in your feelings, honor the word of God. Proverbs 28:26, "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But whoever walks wisely will be delivered." We're to trust God *extensively* (in all your ways acknowledge Him), not just as it pertains to your "religious life", in every detail, be it family, be it finances, friends, college, career, we submit all of it to Him because we want to walk wisely & pursue His path for our lives.

God will honor a heart like that & He will guide you & direct you; you're not thinking more highly of yourself than you ought, but you're walking in humility, you're seeking Him wholeheartedly. How else do I demonstrate the fact that I trust in the Lord w/all my heart? This might sting a little...

Vs 9-10

Allow me to be blunt, I could tell if you were growing *in* the Lord by simply seeing whether or not you're giving *to* the Lord. Not out of your leftovers, if there's anything left at the end of the pay period. But straight off the top, God's portion is the very 1st priority on your list because you recognize that He's the One providing *for* you, taking care *of* you & it's your delight, your desire to honor Him in that.

If you're not giving faithfully *to* the Lord, the fact of the matter is that you're not truly trusting *in* the Lord.

I'm not saying you're not saved, I'm saying you won't practice what you preach & that God isn't your 1st priority. J. Vernon McGee went as far as to say, "*genuine spirituality is not the length of the prayer that you pray; it is the amount on the check that you write. That is the way one can determine spirituality.*"¹

Trusting the Lord wholeheartedly, making Him your 1st priority involves how you handle your money. He wants to have the 1st place, the top priority & if you honor Him, He will honor you.

Now we don't live under the old covenant so there's no promise to the church of material prosperity; we've been blessed w/every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph 1:3). The NT equivalent would be found in Matthew 6:33 "*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*"

I suppose I should also make clear that we don't give to God because He needs our help, but it's a way that we honor Him & worship Him.

That word "honor" in Vs 9 literally means, "heavy", "Heavy the Lord w/your possessions, & w/the 1st fruits of all your increase." Honor Him abundantly, value Him greatly & He will bless your life & you will store up great treasures in heaven. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Vs 11-12

I think that sometimes we get confused right here; we can both despise & detest the Lord's chastening & correction in our lives. We think of ourselves being punished; like a criminal at the judge's bench. The fact of the matter is that God's chastening is parental in nature; it's to bring correction & proper direction into our lives like a loving father steering his son or daughter away from danger &/or destruction. God's desire is that we become partakers of His holiness; other people may get away w/things because they're not His children, but you are, so you won't (& they won't either; ultimately).

But here's what we need to understand, no matter how much the experience may hurt us, it will never harm us because always chastens in love. It's when you can sin w/out conviction, w/out correction & chastening that you should be worried; because that means you're not His...

Vs 13-20

This is the power & the relevance of wisdom, understanding & knowledge.

¹ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Pr 3:10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

If God used them in the establishing of the earth; they must be a pretty powerful force to have working for you & flowing through you. If God used them, how much more do I need them?

Vs21-26

Look at the # of benefits that come from walking in wisdom; & keeping discretion. We see beginning in Vs 22, life, grace, safety, security, (Vs 25-26 confidence for the future) & look at Vs 24 "sweet sleep." Why do I draw attention to this one? Because millions upon millions of Americans suffer from sleep disorders, according to a recent poll (2011) 48% of Americans report occasional insomnia, 48%! That's over 150 million people! 22% experience insomnia every night or almost every night, that's nearly 70 million people in America alone. The highest categories are the divorced, the widowed &/or those who are separated.

Those who've either been placed in position of strain, or who have sacrificed trust through sin & so they can't sleep at night. Oh they may attribute it to this or that, but let me encourage you w/this, if you're trusting in the Lord, you'll lay your head on the pillow & be out like a light.

There are times that we all have a lot on our mind, or are thinking things through; but as a general rule when you really believe & act upon Vs 5-6; Vs 24 comes alive.

Vs 27-35

We've considered some things that wisdom will cause you to do. Here are some things wisdom will cause you *not* to do. They involve your interaction w/others; don't w/hold good from who it is due if you have the means to make it right.

Don't hold out on someone when they're in need & you have the means but simply choose to make them wait (some sorta power trip or something). Don't do your neighbor wrong, you may need some help yourself one day & better to make friends than enemies. (Vs 30), Don't be a jerk! Don't envy people who wield authority oppressively, & treat others cruelly. For the perverse person is an abomination to the Lord; He curses the house of the wicked; but blesses the home of the just.

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Shame will be the legacy of fools, but the wise shall inherit glory. The burden of foolishness, the blessing of wisdom. Let's choose the path of blessing!

Prayer points:

Father may we see the value of mining Your word, digging for the hidden treasures of wisdom, knowledge & understanding. Teach us to keep discretion; to bind mercy & truth around our neck & inscribe them on the tablet of our heart. We thank You that You are our shield, our security & our safety. May we live out what it means to trust in You w/all of our heart, to lean not on our own understanding, to acknowledge You in all of our ways, that You might direct us, when necessary correct us & be glorified in us.