

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*Acquiring Wisdom.*"

Go ahead and turn to **Pro 1**.

We interrupted our series on wisdom for two weeks, so let me briefly review.

Wisdom's availability has seemed a little mysterious up to this point. Here's what I mean...

Our first sermon on **Job 28** was titled, "*Where Is Wisdom?*"

You might remember Job had grown weary of his friends' counsel. He said:

- **Job 28:12** "But where shall wisdom be found?"
- **Job 28:20** "From where, then, does wisdom come?"

Job was asking where to find wisdom, which made it seem like it's hard to find.

Then, our next sermon on **Pro 1:20-33** was titled, "*Wisdom Calls Out.*"

Briefly look at **Pro 1:20**...

Pro 1:20 Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice; 21 at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:

Wisdom **cries aloud...raises her voice**. She's **in the street, the markets, the entrance of the city gates**. She's in the most prominent places calling out to everyone passing by.

This makes Wisdom look very available.

So the question: "*Is wisdom hard to find...or is it available?*"

Here's the balance...

- Wisdom is near and available, but we must work to acquire it.
- Wisdom calls out to us, but at the same time we must put forth effort to obtain it.

This is what we'll see in the following verses. They describe the pursuit of wisdom better than any place in Scripture.

We're picking up where we left off after our last sermon. We covered the end of **Pro 1, verses 20-33**. This morning we'll look at **Pro 2:1-10**.

We'll go through the first four verses pretty quickly, and then talk about the application.

Look at **verse 1**...

Pro 2:1 My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you,

My words and **my commandments** are synonymous with wisdom, so the father tells his son to do two things w/ **wisdom**: **receive** it and **treasure** it. Let's consider both...

First, he tells him to **receive** it, which is receptiveness to wisdom. Wisdom is of no benefit to those who won't receive it.

You say, "*Well, who won't receive wisdom?*"

Lots of people!

Maybe you've spoken to people, shared wisdom w/ them, but they wouldn't receive it. You could tell they weren't listening to what you said.

This is one of the characteristics of fools...

As we talked about in the previous sermon, the issue with fools isn't that they haven't heard. They aren't ignorant. The issue is they've heard...but they won't apply what they've heard.

Second, he tells his son to **treasure** wisdom, which is sensitivity to it.

Wisdom is of no benefit to those who don't recognize its value. You might remember this from our previous sermon...

Job 28:13 Man does not know [wisdom's] worth.

Gaining wisdom begins with recognizing how valuable it is.

Look at **verse 2**...

Pro 2:2 making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding;

The **ear** and **heart** should be captivated by wisdom:

This is all about paying attention. Think about people during sermons:

- Some people **make their ear attentive and incline their heart** by listening intently. They love wisdom and they're captivated by it.
- Other people check their watch, wish they could be anywhere else, doing anything else. They don't love wisdom.

I'm sure for the rest of the sermon we're going to see some serious attentiveness 😊.

Look at **verse 3**...

Pro 2:3 yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding,

This is all about diligently pursuing wisdom: calling out for it and lifting your voice to get it.

Verse 4...

Pro 2:4 if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures,

These words reveal desire. There is a strong devotion to wisdom. The person doing these things really wants to be wise!

And only these people who truly desire it find it...

In our first sermon we saw man to go to great lengths to find earthly treasure. God expects us to go the same lengths - or greater - to find wisdom.

If you write in your Bible, circle the words **hidden treasures** and write, **Matt 13:44**.

Think of The Parable of the Hidden Treasure, and you'll see what we should do w/ wisdom...

Matt 13:44 The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

We should desire wisdom the way this man desired the hidden treasure and pursue wisdom the way he pursued the treasure.

The main point of these first four verses is acquiring wisdom involves effort on our part...and this brings us to lesson 1...

ACQUIRING WISDOM (LESSON 1) INVOLVES EFFORT ON OUR PART.

Verbs are important words in the bible because they indicate action and tell us to do something.

In these verses Solomon piles verb upon verb upon verb upon verb to communicate that acquiring wisdom requires action on our part.

Notice all the commands in these few verses:

- **Receive my words**
- **Treasure up my commandments**
- **[Make] your ear attentive**
- **[Incline] your heart**
- **Call out**
- **Raise your voice**

- **Seek**
- **Search**

He repeatedly tells us what to do to gain wisdom.

If we thought we could receive wisdom easily, these verses would destroy that notion...gaining wisdom is hard work!

- Nobody becomes wise by accident.
- Nobody stumbles upon wisdom.
- Nobody is walking along, trips and falls, and finds wisdom.

Picture people working 60 hour-work weeks, or laboring tirelessly for paychecks or promotions...but they won't do the same for wisdom. It's evidence they don't appreciate its value.

Most of us are willing to work diligently at our jobs because we know we'll earn money, but what about applying ourselves diligently to God's Word to gain wisdom and spiritual riches that are more valuable and that last forever?

If we had spiritual sight to see wisdom's value we'd pursue it more than anything else in our lives.

Let me conclude this lesson by pointing out something else that these verses indirectly teach...

If wisdom is obtained by those who diligently pursue it and work hard for it, then it's not obtained by those who won't put forth effort.

Briefly look at...

Pro 1:32 For the simple are killed by their turning away, and THE COMPLACENCY OF FOOLS destroys them;

Indifferent and complacent people – or people who don't care – won't gain wisdom, b/c they don't desire it strongly enough.

The next lesson...

ACQUIRING WISDOM (LESSON 2) MUST BE OUR DAILY PURSUIT.

I was going to say a daily pursuit, but I put our, because I wanted it to be personal...and I wanted it to be personal, because the verses are very personal.

The words **you** and **your** occur seven times in these four verses. Do you know why? Because we must make wisdom our own. We must work for it. Nobody can gain wisdom for us or acquire it in our place.

Children have parents who share wisdom with them, but children must still learn it for themselves. There are wise parents who share wisdom w/ their kids, and maybe most of the kids end up wise but sometimes there will be a foolish one...despite the parents' best effort.

Why?

Because children must learn wisdom for themselves. Even wise parents can't learn it for them.

Similarly, people in the church have pastors, elders, and teachers who share wisdom...but they can't make people learn wisdom. We must all still learn wisdom for ourselves.

Notice that the verbs are not past tense. Instead, they're present tense:

- **Receive**
- **Treasure**
- **[Make] your ear attentive**
- **[Incline] your heart**
- **Call out**
- **Raise your voice**
- **Seek**
- **Search**

They're present tense, b/c they should be ongoing activities in our lives. Attaining wisdom isn't a yearly, monthly, or even weekly hobby. It is the daily discipline of a lifetime.

I think many examples could be used to illustrate this point, but I'll use one that I'm familiar with from my days working out.

When I went to the gym, most people fell into one of two categories...

There were people I'd see for a week or two, and then I wouldn't see them for weeks or months. They'd show back up and tell me that they're getting back into working out again. I had one friend and it seemed like every time I saw him at the gym, he told me he was getting back into working out.

As you might suspect, people who work out like this don't make much progress.

The other group were people I would see at the gym day after day, week after week, and month after month. These people would generally make good progress.

Now picture something...

You're talking to one of these people who make progress in the gym, and you ask:

- *I see you here often. Tell me which workout was it that allowed you to be so successful?*
- *You've made so much progress. Which meal did you eat that contributed so dramatically to your success?*

- *For months I've seen you at the gym. I can tell it's really helped you. Which day, or even week, what is it that you think was the best?*

They're going to look at you and say that it wasn't one workout, one meal, one day, one week, or even one month that allowed them to be successful. They're going to tell you it was all the workouts, meals, and weeks that allowed them to be successful.

More than likely, they can't remember 99% of the workouts and meals. They just know that it was their consistency that allowed them to be successful.

The reason I chose this illustration, is I think there are strong similarities with acquiring wisdom...

If you asked wise people, "Tell me:

- *Which time was it reading God's Word...*
- *Or which Bible study was it that you participated in...*
- *Or which sermon was it that you heard...*
- *Or which conference was it that you attended that allowed you to be so wise?"*

They're going to tell you:

- It wasn't one daily devotional time, or one sermon, or one conference, or one bible study.
- It also wasn't one strong week, or month, or even year that they were really committed to the Word.

While wise might remember a particularly good study, sermon, or conference, they can't remember most of them...but they still benefitted them.

It was all the years of consistency that allowed them to be wise.

So, to gain wisdom is to daily do what the verses say: **receive and treasure up** God's Word, **make our ear attentive, incline our heart, call out, raise our voice, seek it like silver and search for it like hidden treasure.**

Let me conclude this lesson, by saying this...

There is a price to pay to gain wisdom. It does take time, effort, and diligence. But there's an even greater price to pay if we don't gain it, and that's the consequences of lacking wisdom, or being foolish.

Now, after talking about the importance of acquiring wisdom, I can tell you about the benefits...so you'll be even more motivated to acquire it!

Let me get you to notice something...

The words **if you** occur three times:

1. **1 My son, IF YOU receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you**
2. **3 yes, IF YOU call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding**
3. **4 IF YOU seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures**

This shows, as we've been discussing, the conditional nature of these verses...or in other words, that we have a part in this.

The following verses contain the words **then you will**:

- **5 THEN YOU WILL understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God**
- **9 THEN YOU WILL understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path**

So the **if** statements in verses 1 through 4 are followed by the **then** statements in verses 5 and 9.

God wants us to know why we should pursue wisdom so diligently, so He tells us some of the benefits divided into two categories.

The first benefits relate to the vertical, or our relationship w/ God, and this brings us to Lesson 3...

ACQUIRING WISDOM (LESSON 3) HAS VERTICAL BENEFITS.

Look at verse 5...

Pro 2:5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

We've talked about this many times up to this point: wisdom goes hand-in-hand with fearing God. The pursuit of one leads to the other:

- If you find wisdom you'll fear God
- If you fear God you'll find wisdom

Pro 2:6 For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;

This explains why the **fear of the Lord** is the beginning of wisdom, and an essential aspect of its pursuit: **wisdom** is found in Him. He's the source of it; He **gives** it.

If you write in your Bible, if it doesn't already contain the cross reference, circle the words **the Lord gives wisdom** and write **Jam 1:5**.

Jam 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

The most significant way God gives wisdom is from **His mouth**. He speaks wisdom to us.

Various NT verses make it clear that the words of God's mouth are Scripture. That's where He's spoken:

- **Heb 1:1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, GOD SPOKE to our fathers by the prophets**
- **2 Pet 1:20 knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. 21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke FROM GOD as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

Do you see how wisdom is somewhat paradoxical?

- God gives it to us; it's a gift
- But we also work hard to get it

Here's how it works...

God has spoken wisdom to us and made it available in His Word...but we must read it, study it, memorize it, meditate on it to mine the treasures.

Look at **verse 7**...

Pro 2:7 he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, 8 guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints.

These verses are filled w/ titles for believers: **the upright, those who walk in integrity, and saints.**

In a previous sermon I said that gaining wisdom doesn't require a high IQ or lots of education...but it does require being a believer:

- The Lord **stores up sound wisdom** for His people.
- He gives wisdom to the **righteous.**
- He has plenty of it for those **living upright lives.**

These are all ways of saying God gives wisdom to believers.

Think of Jesus' statement about parables...

Matt 13:13 I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand...16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.

Wisdom is concealed from unbelievers, but God reveals it to believers.

Notice these verses are filled w/ the language of protection:

- **he is a shield to those who walk in integrity**
- **guarding the paths**
- **watching over the way of his saints**

God actively works to defend, guard, and protect those with wisdom.

What does this look like practically?

- Wisdom keeps us out of trouble
- Foolishness gets us in trouble

Wisdom doesn't only have vertical benefits...and this brings us to Lesson 4...

ACQUIRING WISDOM (LESSON 4) HAS HORIZONTAL BENEFITS.

The following verses focus on wisdom's benefits in our relationships w/ others. Look at **verse 9**...

Pro 2:9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path;

Wisdom is the way to these virtues. Wise people are virtuous people, and virtuous people have wisdom.

Wisdom allows people to understand **righteousness, justice and equity**. These virtues describe the ethical aspects of wisdom, which means wisdom helps us understand how to treat people.

Notice this verse begins with the word **then**. The idea is man doesn't **understand righteousness and justice and equity** without wisdom.

Just take one look at the world. It's clear man doesn't understand these virtues. This is why man thinks socialism and murdering babies is **righteous, just, and equitable**.

Notice it says **every good path**.

Wisdom is not only a person. Wisdom is also a path.

These verses are about the blessings God's people enjoy when they walk that path.

The word for **path** is *ma`gal* (PR: mah-gahl), and it means an entrenchment, referring to cart tracks or wagon ruts.

This is fitting, b/c everyone makes tracks, or ruts, or paths for their life.

What does this have to do with wisdom?

Wisdom helps us make sure that that paths we're making for ourselves are **good paths**.

Look at **verse 10**...

Pro 2:10 for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;

This is where you want wisdom – in your heart – b/c as **Pro 4:23** says **from your heart flow the springs of life**. If you get wisdom in your heart, it will affect every area of your life.

The words **heart** and **soul** stress that wisdom must become internal...part of who we are.

If we consider the context, we'll see that this is making a beautiful point...

Sometimes doing what is right requires external pressure...from parents, friends, the church, our boss, or teacher...you name it:

- The good thing about this is we do what's right.
- The bad thing about this is maybe we wouldn't have done what's right w/o that pressure.

Think about parenting.

Your children make the right decision, which is wonderful, but you're hoping they made the right decision for the right reason. For example:

- You hope they weren't trying to get something in return
- You hope they weren't trying to avoid discipline or punishment
- You hope they weren't trying to impress someone

Basically, you hope they were making the right decision for the right reason.

Verse 10 says **wisdom will come into our hearts**, and the idea is we won't need external pressure to do what's right, because we will have been changed from within. We make the right choice b/c our hearts desire the right choice.

Listen to these verses from Ezekiel that make the same point...

Eze 1:26 I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Obedience – doing what's right – is produced from the heart change.

Wise people develop a God given moral compass in their hearts...which is why it's **pleasant to the soul**.

One commentator, Garrett, said, *“Wisdom gives both pleasure and surefootedness in life. The more wisdom one learns, the more one desires and enjoys it. The protection wisdom gives, moreover, is that it keeps its follower from making decisions that will later bring only regret.”*

This quote is making a couple important points related to this morning's sermon...

For those who reject wisdom, they will be filled with regret. What is the ultimate regret come from?

Rejecting Christ...

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

The Gospel is foolishness to those perishing. It's not pleasant to their soul. They will be filled w/ eternal regret b/c of their rejection.

If you feel like you've been on the path of foolishness, it's not too late. God's given you a new day to get on the right path.

For those who pursue wisdom—which is found in God's Word and a relationship with Christ—they will have no regrets.

They will find wisdom **pleasant**, and they will experience wisdom's benefits. They will be protected and guided into right decisions as they find themselves on good paths.

Let's pray.