

THE VALUE OF WISDOM

Bible Background – PROVERBS 2

Printed Text – PROVERBS 2:1-11

2 My child, listen to what I say, and treasure my commands.

² Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding.

³ Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding.

⁴ Search for them as you would for silver seek them like hidden treasures.

⁵ Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD, and you will gain knowledge of God.

⁶ For the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

⁷ He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity.

⁸ He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him.

⁹ Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go.

¹⁰ For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy.

¹¹ Wise choices will watch over you. Understanding will keep you safe.

-----New Living Translation

Lesson Introduction

According to *Merriam-Webster*, “a proverb is a pithy saying or maxim that contains a wise thought.” A proverb is short, easy to remember, and useful for passing along a bit a advise or general truth. We have heard many throughout the years that have been passed down from one generation to the next. “A stitch in time saves nine.” “It takes a village to raise a child.” The early bird gets the worm.” Some proverbs are more truthful than others, depending on the source. **The Book of Proverbs** is a collection of proverbs that present instruction based on God’s Word for a successful life of security and Peace. King Solomon, the third king of Israel is credited with writing most of the book (3,000 proverbs), but other contributors are noted—Agur (Chapter 30 and Lemuel (Chapter 31:1-9). We can read the Book of Proverbs with confidence that these proverbs provide Godly wisdom on everything from family life to business decisions and that all that is spoken in these verses have a direct connection to our relationship with God.

Background: The theme of the book, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (1:7), immediately challenges the reader to evaluate which category they fall into. The writer then pleads with the reader, called: my son,” to heed the coming instruction (1:8). This plea occurs throughout the book as though the writer knows his readers will need to be reminded repeatedly to listen and obey. The rest of the chapter and the next set the stage for the remainder of the book with the call of wisdom (1:20-33) and the value of wisdom (chapter 2).

-----*Precepts for Living*, the UMI Annual Commentary 2019-2020, p. 489

The Pursuit of Wisdom

Proverbs 2:1-5: The pursuit of Wisdom is an active, urgent and persistent undertaking, not a passive one. As the wise father speaking to the child, we are urged to listen, then treasure the commands (v.1); tune your ears, then concentrate on understanding (v.2); cry out and ask for understanding (v.3); then, search and seek as you would for hidden treasure (v.4). Wisdom's value is likened to that of a treasure of silver, which was popular currency in the times of ancient Israel. We are called to passionately seek the wisdom of God. James 1:15 tells us, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."

The reward for pursuing wisdom is that it leads to one knowing God and understanding what it means to revere Him. We must know His character and attributes to understand who He is and to appreciate His holiness. It is important to develop a personal relationship with the Lord and understand what it is to fear Him and hold Him in respectful awe. It is through the study of scripture that we begin to understand how He wants us to live our lives and to put into practice His leadership and guidance.

◆ *What are some ways to pursue godly wisdom?*

The Provider of Wisdom

Proverbs 2:6-8: Even though we are called to actively seek wisdom, we should never forget that true knowledge and wisdom come from God. If we rely on our efforts only, we will come up short and experience many unnecessary failures. He is indeed the provider of wisdom, but He also offers safeguards and protection for those who follow the path of wisdom that leads to Him.

He is a buckler (Heb. *magen*) to them that walk uprightly (v. 8). This is the same word God used when He established His covenant with Abraham stating that "I am thy shield" (Gen. 15:1). This tells us that things sometimes arise and although things do happen to Gods people, we can rest assured that He always keeps us and He surely protects His people.

◆ *What is the difference between godly wisdom and other wisdom?*

The Purpose of wisdom

Proverbs 2:9-11: One purpose of wisdom is to provide discernment. If we are able to know what is right, just and fair we will know the right way to go (v. 9). The closer we grow to God, the more wisdom we gain. We learn to honor and fear Him and to trust that His way is the right way. As we grow in godly wisdom we begin to internalize the knowledge and it becomes an integral part of our own nature. There is a sense of joy that is derived from the wisdom and safety that comes with heeding the wisdom of God.

Once wisdom truly becomes a part of us, believers think differently. The wisdom of God is written on our hearts and righteousness is the desirable thing that we choose to do. Our resulting relationship with God is such that He promises to preserve and keep us. Because of our love for

Him we are free to love others according to His way. We diligently study His Word, receiving more of His wisdom that keeps us from unnecessary danger and avoidable situations.

Conclusion

Let us not be “wise in our own eyes” and neglect the wisdom that God gives freely to those who ask of Him. Let us be careful to not receive “wisdom” that is born of selfish ambition, self-preservation, and the desire to self-promote. Many maxims and witty sayings that we have heard throughout the years are not of God, but the repetition of hearing them frequently makes them “sound right” to our ears. Don’t be fooled! God’s wisdom brings us closer to Him and establishes true reverence and awe of who He truly is. This Wisdom is found in His Word.

Sources:

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Lesson for Next Week – June 21, 2020

The Gifts of Wisdom

Bible Background ♦ JOB 1; 42; PROVERBS 8

Printed Text ♦ PROVERBS 8:8-14, 17-21

Devotional Reading ♦ JOB 28:12-28