

Proverbs Pt. 1

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, August 1, 2021

COMMUNION

Communion is the Christ-ordained means whereby His people are to remember His sacrifice until He Returns...

- 1) The Wafer Symbolizes the BODY of Christ – Broken for Us**
- 2) The Juice Symbolizes the BLOOD of Christ – Shed for Us All**

1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (NIV)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us today! Whether you are here in person or watching via the livestream, you are most welcome. Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take notes. We have much to cover in a short amount of time (i.e., addressing a topic we have not meaningfully and/or systematically covered for a number of years).

A CALL FOR WISDOM

Ephesians 5:15–17 (NIV)

15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.

Q. What is the command of the apostle Paul herein?

A. Paul commands us to live both carefully and wisely, making the most of every opportunity in evil times. Since our time on the earth is short, we must make full use of our time to impact as many as possible for Christ. This necessitates WISE living and the casting aside of foolish behavior that both distracts and detracts from our mission.

KEY – Though there are sev. elements worthy of note, I want to spotlight his call for wisdom in Christian living.

WISDOM DEFINED

Of course, this raises a fundamental question: What is “wisdom”?

A1. Generally speaking, wisdom is defined as “insight and understanding”...

A2. Specifically, it is insight into and understanding of two crucial elements...

1) Insight Into and Understanding of the Nature and Working of the Lord

Those who are wise (i.e., biblically) properly regard the person, character and purpose of the Lord in the earth. Such individuals recognize His attributes (e.g., love, mercy and grace, holiness, justice, power, sovereignty, etc.) and their place before Him in kind. Such understanding and insight provide the foundation upon which we are to live and operate. Moreover...

2) Insight Into and Understanding of Godly Life and Living

Wisdom is insight into how to properly live before God and amongst men (i.e., in a manner that is both pleasing and healthful). It is understanding how to navigate life and living in a spiritually-informed yet deeply practical manner. Therefore, wisdom is not the domain of the intellectual and the philosopher (Greek), but all who seek to live life well. Thus said...

ON ACQUIRING WISDOM

Q1. How can we gain insight into the character and working of the Lord?

Q2. How can we learn to live pleasing before God and healthful among men?

Q3. Where can such necessary wisdom be found and what are possible sources?

1) Personal Experience

It is possible to gain insight into life and living through life and living! We tend to accumulate understanding into how life works as we live. How many have learned vital life lessons and principles through personal experience? How many have come to understand the nature of God and/or life through successes, failures the ups-and-downs of life, and the “School of Hard Knocks”? This body of learning can serve to inform us.

2) The Experience of Others

My father often shared the following: “A smart person learns from their mistakes—a wise person learns from the mistakes of others.” We glean insight and understanding (+ and -) in watching others navigate the treacherous waters of life and living! Open your eyes to the world around you and learn, learn, learn.

3) Supernatural Impartation(s)

James 1:5–8

5 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. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

FYI – However, the greatest source for wisdom is the following...

4) The Word of God (Scripture)

2 Timothy 3:16–17

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

KEY – Scripture provides the guidance necessary to live before God and men as He desires...

Psalms 19:7–11

7 The law of the Lord is perfect,
refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
8 The precepts of the Lord are right,
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the Lord are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.

9 The fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring forever.
The decrees of the Lord are firm,
and all of them are righteous.
10 They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.
11 By them your servant is warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

DELVING DEEPER

The entire Bible is a source of spiritual wisdom for practical life and living...

KEY – However, one book in particular is worthy of specific emphasis: the Book of Proverbs.

NOTE 1 – Of all the books of the Bible, no single work is a better source of wisdom than the Book of Proverbs. In fact, it was penned for the sole purpose of providing instruction to the reader or hearer (throughout space and time). Consider its opening...

Proverbs 1:1–6

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

- 2 for gaining wisdom and instruction;
for understanding words of insight;
- 3 for receiving instruction in prudent behavior,
doing what is right and just and fair;
- 4 for giving prudence to those who are simple,
knowledge and discretion to the young—
- 5 let the wise listen and add to their learning,
and let the discerning get guidance—
- 6 for understanding proverbs and parables,
the sayings and riddles of the wise.

NOTE 2 – If you desire the wisdom necessary to serve the Lord and honor Him in daily life and living, I can think of no better place to start than the Book of Proverbs! Thus said, I have prayerfully decided to make this timeless and timely work the focus of the next 5–6 weeks (i.e., a “summer series”). I am delighted to delve once again into this insightful, inspired work!

Q1. Will this be a verse-by-verse study? No.

Q2. Will this be a chapter-by-chapter study? No.

Q3. Will this be an exhaustive study in any way? No.

FYI 1 – Rather, I will endeavor to provide for you a bird’s eye view on select topics often addressed in the work. As we will note, this book touches upon a myriad of consequential topics. We will only have the time to touch upon some of the “heavy hitters” contained within its pages!

FYI 2 – I would like to take the time today to broaden our foundation and provide some necessary insight(s)...

WHAT IS A PROVERB?

NOTE 1 – The Book of Proverbs is a compilation or collection of individual proverbs (i.e., truisms, adages, etc.). This is quite deep but please take note: the Book of Proverbs is called the Book of Proverbs because it is quite literally a book of proverbs! Of course, this begs the question...

Q. What is a proverb?

A. A “proverb” is a short, simple and memorable statement meant to communicate some sp. lesson or truth. They are designed to impart some impacting principle or insight so that the reader and/or hearer might become wise.

NOTE 2 – The ancients loved this style of teaching. Particularly, this was a common mode of communication employed by teachers of the East/Far East (i.e., including Christ Himself)! Proverbs are an enduring form of communication because they are short, easy to convey, easy to memorize, and can have nearly limitless application.

NOTE 3 – Of course, our own culture uses proverbs as well...

- a) “The early bird gets the worm” – a proverb stressing need for industry and maximizing opportunity.
- b) “A penny saved is a penny earned” – a proverb affirming the need for both saving and frugality.
- c) “Look before you leap” – a proverb that serves to express “caution” in making decision(s).

AUTHORSHIP PT. 1

Q. Who authored the proverbs found in this compilation entitled “The Book of Proverbs”?

A. Though the HS inspired these sayings of the wise, the following human authors are noted...

1) Solomon (Son of David and King of Israel)

The name of Solomon is noted throughout the work (cf. Prov. 1:1; 10:1; 25:1). This should be no surprise, as Solomon was noted for his divinely-inspired and exceeding wisdom (i.e., as we shall note in latter parts of this teaching).

2) The “Wise Men”

Proverbs 22:17–24:34 contain thirty sayings attributed to “the wise.” Though we do not know who these figures were, Scripture is clear in recording that they were individuals of particular insight into godly life and living.

3) Agur

The thirtieth chapter is attributed to a figure named Agur. His identity is unknown, though his name literally means “collector” or “gatherer.” He seems to have been a man of humility (v. 2–4) with an observant and inquisitive nature (5–33). He penned an oracle—a weighty message—to two figures named Ithiel and Ucal (whose identities are also unknown).

4) Lemuel

The final author, Lemuel, penned Proverbs 31. This name means “dedicated to God.” We know that this figure was a king (31:1). It is speculated that this may indicate Lemuel was a reference to Solomon, but most scholars treat him as a different character entirely. There is an interesting note re: this particular author...

Proverbs 31:1

1 The sayings of King Lemuel—an inspired utterance his mother taught him. . . .

Q. What is the significance of this passage?

A. Lemuel may have been the one to record the wisdom of Prov. 31, but it came from his mother!

AUTHORSHIP PT. 2

Let us delve a bit deeper on the primary author of this classic work: i.e., Solomon

Q. What do we know about Solomon?

A1. Solomon was the son of King David and Bathsheba

A2. Solomon was used of God to build the Temple in Jerusalem

A3. Solomon was a figure noted for his exceeding and divine wisdom

Q. How did he acquire this extraordinary wisdom? In the most extraordinary of ways...

1 Kings 3:5–14

5 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”

6 Solomon answered, “You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

7 “Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. 8 Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. 9 So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”

10 The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. 11 So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, 12 I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. 13 Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. 14 And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.”

FYI – Solomon because famous for his wisdom...

1 Kings 4:29–34

29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. 30 Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. 32 He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. 33 He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. 34 From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

AUTHORSHIP PT. 3

KEY – Tragically, this life of promise and enterprise devolved into a life of sin, compromise and folly...

1 Kings 11:1–11

1 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. 2 They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. 3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. 4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been. 5 He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. 6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord; he did not follow the Lord completely, as David his father had done. 7 On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. 8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

9 The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. 10 Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord's command. 11 So the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.

QUOTE – "Solomon's actions brought about changes to his life and the nation. Near the end of his life this once wise king became a tragic figure. He lost his devotion to God and allowed for idolatry to besiege his land. His sinful compromise facilitated the downfall of a unified Israel. The nation of Israel split during the reign of his son. Moreover, the people of Israel would struggle with idolatry for centuries, leading to the Assyrian onslaught and Babylonian captivity!"

Q. Does this detract from the words or wisdom of Solomon recorded in Proverbs?

A. No! Rather it reinforces them by illustrating that his words are so true, even he could not rise above the penalty and consequence of violating them! In light of these sentiments, let us heed the wisdom of James (1:22): "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

A FINAL CALL...

Let us receive and/or pursue the wisdom of the Lord with all of our hearts, that we might live well before Him and amongst men. I would like to close with the following selection from this enduring work. It is a bit lengthy, but it affirms all that has been said in this opening installment of our summer series...

Proverbs 4 (Entirety)

- 1 Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction;
pay attention and gain understanding.
- 2 I give you sound learning,
so do not forsake my teaching.
- 3 For I too was a son to my father,
still tender, and cherished by my mother.
- 4 Then he taught me, and he said to me,
"Take hold of my words with all your heart;
keep my commands, and you will live.
- 5 Get wisdom, get understanding;
do not forget my words or turn away from them.
- 6 Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you;
love her, and she will watch over you.
- 7 The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom.
Though it cost all you have, get understanding.
- 8 Cherish her, and she will exalt you;
embrace her, and she will honor you.
- 9 She will give you a garland to grace your head
and present you with a glorious crown."
- 10 Listen, my son, accept what I say,
and the years of your life will be many.
- 11 I instruct you in the way of wisdom
and lead you along straight paths.
- 12 When you walk, your steps will not be
hampered; when you run, you will not stumble.
- 13 Hold on to instruction, do not let it go;
guard it well, for it is your life.
- 14 Do not set foot on the path of the wicked
or walk in the way of evildoers.
- 15 Avoid it, do not travel on it;
turn from it and go on your way.
- 16 For they cannot rest until they do evil;
they are robbed of sleep till they make someone
stumble.
- 17 They eat the bread of wickedness
and drink the wine of violence.
- 18 The path of the righteous is like the morning
sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.
- 19 But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness;
they do not know what makes them stumble.
- 20 My son, pay attention to what I say;
turn your ear to my words.
- 21 Do not let them out of your sight,
keep them within your heart;
- 22 for they are life to those who find them
and health to one's whole body.
- 23 Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it.
- 24 Keep your mouth free of perversity;
keep corrupt talk far from your lips.
- 25 Let your eyes look straight ahead;
fix your gaze directly before you.
- 26 Give careful thought to the paths for your feet
and be steadfast in all your ways.
- 27 Do not turn to the right or the left;
keep your foot from evil.

KEY – We will continue next Sunday (**PRAY**)...

CONCLUSION

Thank you for joining us today! Allow me to close with the following...

NOTE 1 – Those who wish to give online may do so at www.NewLifeBarre.org. Those who wish to give in person can utilize the offering boxes located throughout the church facility. Thank you for your faithfulness in supporting the work of the Lord!

NOTE 2 – Thank you to the many who made Family Fun Day a success. God bless you!

NOTE 3 – Sunday School each week at 9:15am; Thursday Bible Study at 6:30pm; WM 2nd Tuesday; MM & CYC...

NOTE 4 – Katie Barry (Director of the Nursery) is looking for volunteers to participate in the ministry!

NOTE 5 – Those who wish to linger in this sanctuary may feel free to do so. This is to be a house of prayer, so those who feel the need to pray may do so as they please. Moreover, I would be more than happy to pray with those who have need(s).

Numbers 6:24–26

24 The Lord bless you

and keep you;

25 the Lord make his face shine on you

and be gracious to you;

26 the Lord turn his face toward you

and give you peace.