

Proverbs Pt. 2

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, August 8, 2021

SUMMATIONS

We are in the midst of an extended summer series on the Book of Proverbs. Though this will not be an exhaustive study of the work, it will provide you with a broad overview of the book and its dominant themes. Last Sunday we began by establishing a broad foundation for our series. We addressed...

1) The Mandate for Wisdom

Ephesians 5:15–17 (NIV, Emphasis Mine)

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.

2) The Nature of Wisdom

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

3) Sources of Wisdom

We gain wisdom from: a) personal experience; b) the experience of others; c) supernatural impartation; and d) Scripture. Of course, the Bible is the greatest source of wisdom since (2 Tim. 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”

4) A Singular Source

Of all the varying books of the Bible, no single book is a better resource of wisdom than the Book of Proverbs! In fact, this work was specifically penned for the purpose of providing spiritual wisdom and practical instruction for the reader and/or hearer...

Proverbs 1:1–5

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 . . .

5) The Nature of a Proverb

We addressed the “proverb” as a form of instruction or expression. Simply put, a proverb is a short and memorable statement meant to convey a lesson or truth. This form of teaching was quite common in the ancient Middle and Far East (and remains an element of contemporary culture)! The Book of Proverbs is quite literally a book of wisdom-inducing proverbs!

KEY – Feel free to check out this previous message online at www.NewLifeBarre.org.

SETTING THE STAGE – PROVERBS 4

NOTE 1 – The first nine chapters of the Book of Proverbs serve to extol the beauty and the benefit of wisdom and/or wise living. In many ways I am tempted to read the whole of these chapters to you, but such an activity would certainly go beyond the scope of our time today. Rather, I have chosen to share a selection or sampling of the work...

NOTE 2 – Specifically, we will read the whole of Proverbs 4 and then backtrack to address specific elements within (at times alluding to related passages). As we read, look for passages related to the beauty and value of wisdom...

Proverbs 4

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

Allow me to note several elements concerning wisdom found in this selection of Scripture...

1) The AVAILABILITY of Wisdom

We see herein that the Lord has made His wisdom accessible to the whole of humanity. It can be accessed and appropriated by any and all who will take the time to listen and receive it. Consider the openings words of Proverbs 4...

Proverbs 4:1–2 (Emphasis Mine)

- 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.

KEY 1 – The author of this portion of Scripture app. wanted to pass on the wisdom he had received in the Lord. He was offering it freely, calling upon his “children” to both listen and accept. The availability of godly wisdom is a theme that appears often throughout the Book of Proverbs...

Proverbs 9:1–6

- 1 Wisdom has built her house;
 she has set up its seven pillars.
- 2 She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine;
 she has also set her table.
- 3 She has sent out her servants, and she calls
 from the highest point of the city,
- 4 “Let all who are simple come to my house!”
- To those who have no sense she says,
- 5 “Come, eat my food
 and drink the wine I have mixed.
- 6 Leave your simple ways and you will live;
 walk in the way of insight.”

KEY 2 – Herein wisdom is personified as a woman (e.g., teacher or mother figure) who has made herself accessible to all who would desire her. She is calling out to any who will listen! Accordingly, the Lord wants us to receive His instruction that we might live pleasingly before Him and among men!

2) The VALUE of Wisdom

KEY 1 – The author of the fourth chapter of the Book of Proverbs goes to great lengths to underscore the value of wisdom, portraying it as something quite precious (i.e., as a treasure of incalculable worth). Consider the following passage...

Proverbs 4:7 (Emphasis Mine)

- 7 The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom.
 Though it **cost all you have**, get understanding.

Correspondingly...

Proverbs 3:13–15

- 13 Blessed are those who find wisdom,
those who gain understanding,
14 for she is more profitable than silver
and yields better returns than gold.
15 She is more precious than rubies;
nothing you desire can compare with her.

KEY 2 – The knowledge of how to serve the Lord and live pleasingly before Him is far more precious than any treasure, possession or prize. Possess wisdom and you will possess all that you need for this life in Christ Jesus! To what degree does your life demonstrate a desire for and/or valuation of the wisdom of God?

3) The REWARD(S) of Wisdom

There is benefit in possessing divine wisdom. Scripture offers much to those who will heed His instruction...

A) LIFE...

Proverbs 4:1–4, 10 (Emphasis Mine)

- 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**.
10 Listen, my son, accept what I say,
and the **years of your life** will be many.

NOTE 1 – Life and life to the full are the natural byproducts of wisdom. When we know His commands and seek to apply them, they bring forth vitality and keep us from many things that sap life and bring about ruination!

B) SECURITY...

Proverbs 4:6 (Emphasis Mine)

- 6 Do not forsake wisdom, and she will **protect** you;
love her, and she will **watch over** you.

Proverbs 2:11 (Emphasis Mine)

- 11 Discretion will **protect** you,
and understanding will **guard** you.

NOTE 2 – Wisdom keeps you from decisions that bring about needless pain and suffering in life!

C) STABILITY...

Proverbs 4:12 (Emphasis Mine)

12 When you walk, your steps will **not be hampered**;
when you run, you will **not stumble**.

NOTE 3 – When I live wisely, I am spared from missteps and self-induced hindrances. I can walk confidently in the knowledge that I have served the Lord and, even if I face difficulty, the knowledge that He works all things together for the good of those who are His own (cf. Rom. 8:28).

D) EXALTATION & HONOR...

Proverbs 4:7–9 (Emphasis Mine)

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**."

NOTE 4 – The Lord honors those who honor Him. A life of integrity, biblical morality and righteous living brings about reward and result. This is generally true in this life. It will absolutely be true for those who are His in eternity!

E) BEAUTIFICATION...

NOTE 5 – Wisdom makes the life of the godly more and more beautiful. Wisdom adds beauty that does not fade over the years—it adds a beauty that abounds in ever-increasing degrees! With the Lord the best is always yet to come...

Proverbs 4:18

18 The path of the righteous is like the morning sun,
shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

Q. How many have come to see the benefit and beauty of wisdom in this selection?

CONSIDERATIONS PT. 2

Of course, the writer adds a recurring word of warning (i.e., the wise must “remain” on the path of wisdom)...

Proverbs 4:2 (Emphasis Mine)

2 I give you sound learning,
so **do not forsake** my teaching.

Proverbs 4:5–6 (Emphasis Mine)

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.

Proverbs 4:13 (Emphasis Mine)

13 **Hold on** to instruction, **do not let it go**;
guard it well, for it is your life.

Proverbs 4:20–21 (Emphasis Mine)

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 . . .

Proverbs 4:27 (Emphasis Mine)

27 **Do not turn** to the right or the left;
keep your foot from evil.

KEY – One can attain wisdom and then depart from it, forfeiting the benefits thereof. Diligence is required of the wise! We must keep in mind the lesson of Solomon’s life (i.e., he who began so well and became the wisest of all men departed from the sacred path and incurred great penalty in kind)! Heed the oft-repeated warnings of Scripture...

Colossians 1:21–23 (Emphasis Mine)

21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23 **IF** you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

CONSIDERATIONS PT. 3

As we move to a close on the value and benefit of wisdom, we must pause to consider the theme of folly...

NOTE 1 – Folly is a recurring topic in the Book of Proverbs and serves as the antithesis to wisdom. If wisdom is insight into how to effectively live before God Lord and among men, folly is a spiritual recklessness in living devoid of any divine influence. It is best to think of folly as the inverse of wisdom...

- 1) If Wisdom is **Invaluable**—Folly is **Utterly Worthless**
- 2) If Wisdom Brings **Life**—Folly **Takes Life** (Brings **Death**)
- 3) If Wisdom Brings **Security**—Folly Brings **“Catastrophe”**
- 4) If Wisdom Brings **Exaltation**—Folly Ends in **Humiliation**
- 5) If Wisdom Brings **Beautification**—Folly Yields **Ruin**

NOTE 2 – Wisdom and folly are two different paths that lead to two very different destinations. Thus, the “wise man” and the “fool” are two very different kinds of people who will lead very different lives before the Lord and amongst men! However, wisdom and folly share one thing in common: they both make themselves available to all...

KEY 1 – Whereas wisdom is personified as an accessible teacher or mother figure in **Proverbs 9:1–6...**

- 1 Wisdom has built her house;
she has set up its seven pillars.
- 2 She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine;
she has also set her table.
- 3 She has sent out her servants, and she calls
from the highest point of the city,
- 4 “Let all who are simple come to my house!”
To those who have no sense she says,
- 5 “Come, eat my food
and drink the wine I have mixed.
- 6 Leave your simple ways and you will live;
walk in the way of insight.”

KEY 2 – Folly is personified as a ready seductress bent on ruin in **Proverbs 9:13–18...**

- 13 Folly is an unruly woman;
she is simple and knows nothing.
- 14 She sits at the door of her house,
on a seat at the highest point of the city,
- 15 calling out to those who pass by,
who go straight on their way,
- 16 “Let all who are simple come to my house!”
To those who have no sense she says,
- 17 “Stolen water is sweet;
food eaten in secret is delicious!”
- 18 But little do they know that the dead are there,
that her guests are deep in the realm of the dead.

CONSIDERATIONS PT. 4

KEY – Thus said, do not be like the fool who...

1) Spurns Instruction

Proverbs 1:7

7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

2) Resists Discipline

Proverbs 12:1

1 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but whoever hates correction is stupid.

3) Is Impulsive and Impatient

Proverbs 14:29

29 Whoever is patient has great understanding,
but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.

4) Delights in Evil

Proverbs 10:23

23 A fool finds pleasure in wicked schemes,
but a person of understanding delights in wisdom.

5) Committed to Folly

Proverbs 26:11

11 As a dog returns to its vomit,
so fools repeat their folly.

SUMMATIONS

Ultimately, the wisdom of the Lord is available to you. He longs for you to heed His instruction, that you might leave well before Him and others! There is beauty, benefit and reward in His wisdom (i.e., if you will diligently hearken to His voice). Resist and reject the allure of folly, for the end thereof is death!

CONCLUSIONS

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

NOTE 3 – Katie Barry (Director of the Nursery) is looking for volunteers to participate in the ministry! See her.

NOTE 4 – May the Lord bless those who will be part of Katie Barry's "Baby Shower" Later on this afternoon!

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.