

FPFWC Christian Development



Wisdom In Proverbs

June 2020

Spring Quarter

June 13, 2020

Lesson #2 – Value Wisdom

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Proverbs 2:1-11

Key Verse: The LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.—Proverbs 2:6

ICE BREAKERS -

1. Why do people pursue sin when they know it will destroy them?
2. In what way is wisdom like hidden treasure?

LESSON BACKGROUND

Proverbs often uses a form of Hebrew poetry called *parallelism*. This is where two or more lines of text make the same point by using synonyms or near synonyms. For example, Solomon says all of wisdom's ways are the same as her paths, and the pleasantness of those are peaceful. The effect of this literary technique is to emphasize the point being made. Parallelism occurs frequently in today's lesson.

Today's lesson continues the appeal from the father to the son (Proverbs 1:8, 10, 15; see lesson 1). Though the son could find many other enticing treasures to seek, the father impresses on the young man the superiority of finding wisdom.

LESSON COMMENTARY

Wisdom's Conditions: Receive and Seek It (2:1-4)

2:1-4. This section, introduced by *if* (vv. 1, 3, 4), and followed by "then" in the next section (vv. 5, 9), sets up the conditions for receiving the benefits of wisdom. To receive wisdom's benefits one must first know well and fully accept wisdom's teachings (vv. 1-2). The father's **words** and **commandments**, which refer to his lessons throughout chaps. 1-9, are equivalent to **wisdom** and **understanding**. Second, one must also actively seek wisdom, pursuing it fervently like a supplicant in need of help (v. 3) or a treasure-seeker bent on his trove (v. 4). **If** one does so, the result then will be life-changing reward from the Lord.

b. Wisdom's Benefits: Protection (2:5-11)

The two sections in this part of the lesson (vv. 5-8 and 9-11), both introduced by "then," present the benefits of seeking wisdom. Together they promise protection to the one who is wise, although the first seems to have a more vertical focus, in relation to the Lord, and the second a more horizontal one, in relation to people (Garrett, *Proverbs*, 75).

2:5-8. Wisdom is the priority of life because the pursuit of wisdom leads to the **knowledge of God** Himself and a genuine understanding of the **fear of the LORD** (v. 5). Wisdom is inextricably bound to a relationship with the Lord, the pursuit of either one leading to the other (cf. 1:7; Longman, *Proverbs*, 120). This is because **wisdom** (and its counterparts, **knowledge and understanding**) comes from the Lord, who bestows it to seekers (v. 6). Indeed, the father here equates his lessons in Proverbs with the inspired words of the Lord Himself, which come **from His mouth**.

Those who are in right relationship with God consequently experience protection from folly (vv. 7-8). They are described as the **upright**, as **those who walk in integrity** and in **the paths of justice**, and as **His godly** (or faithful) **ones**, reminding us that biblical wisdom clearly has both moral and covenantal dimensions. The Lord provides for them an abundance of **sound wisdom**, resourcefulness "to help one escape a fix" (Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, 114). This is why He is a protective **shield** for them, **guarding** and preserving them on life's path.

2:9-11. If the previous section focused on the vertical dimension of wisdom's benefits in relation to the Lord, this section focuses on its horizontal aspects in relation to others. Acquiring wisdom and knowing God will result in one's being able to **discern** how to act in **righteousness and justice and equity** (or fairness) (v. 9; cf. 1:3). These terms describe the ethical aspects of wisdom, particularly in one's dealings with others. Together they constitute **every good course**, summarizing a desirable way of life that "encompasses the full gamut of ethical behavior that leads to life, peace, and prosperity (see 3:1-12)" (Waltke, *Book of Proverbs 1-15*, 227).

The wise man develops this God-given moral sense so that his **heart** and affections are transformed (v. 10). **Wisdom** and **knowledge** become part of who he is and are therefore **pleasant** to him. Along with a changed heart he also develops **discretion** and **understanding** that serve to protect him from evil (v. 11). **Discretion**, used in parallel with **understanding**, refers to a shrewdness that involves "thinking through the consequences of an action and choosing the way of integrity" (Longman, *Proverbs*, 122; cf. Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, 117). Together these terms describe a perceptiveness that is vital when facing temptations.

LESSON NUGGET – Wisdom is not only a person to know (chap. 1) but also a path to walk. Proverbs suggests to us that life involves direction, decision, and determination, just like walking a path. God will do His part (vv.6-9) if you do your part (vv. 1-5). The path of wisdom is a guarded path (vs.8) and a good path (v.9) that leads to life (v.19) and righteousness (v.20). If you want to walk on the path of God's wisdom, heed the admonitions in vers 1-5)