

Proverbs – Wisdom That Works - Part 2
The Invitation and Foundation – Proverbs 1:1-7
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – May 23rd, 2021

Intro:

- Last week we took a deep dive into when Solomon interacted with God and asked for what was needed to accomplish his task. Solomon understood how God had extended mercy and love toward him and his family; he understood his place as a servant to God and to others and admitted in humility that he did not have what it took to accomplish the task.
- Solomon asked for a "discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong" (1 Kings 3:9, NIV). God was pleased with this request granted to Solomon "a wise and discerning heart" so much so "that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be" (1 Kings 3:10, NIV). And God granted him so much more beyond this out of His goodness and mercy.
- The wisdom of God through Solomon and others were collected in a book called proverbs. God had given these things to us by His goodness and grace so that we in turn, will know His wisdom and be shaped by it in this life.
- This morning we will extend our focus through the first seven verses, where you will discover how this book will benefit you, why the book was written, and the foundational principle that all wisdom is built upon. Proverbs is written to give you encouragement and hope, to equip you so you can persevere with the strength, insight, and wisdom of God. The opening lines are like an advertisement and invitation to obtain what is being offered, and the Lord and I strongly encourage you to do so.

Reap the rewards from the book of proverbs

Proverbs 1:1-3 NIV

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

2 for gaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; 3 for receiving instruction in doing what is righteous and just and fair;

For gaining wisdom

The purpose of proverbs is to give you the ability to know what to do.

- Would this not be a supreme gift? Are not most of our regrets because we made foolish or bad decisions? From what road to take, to what career path to follow, from the simple to the complex – God gives us wisdom to follow, and it is for the asking, and it is for the seeking.

James 1:5 ESV

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

and discipline

The purpose of proverbs is to coach you to excel

- Like a good coach, the proverbs will discipline you, so by training, you will be prepared for the challenges ahead. (Ill. of football coaching)

for understanding words of insight;

The purpose of proverbs is to give you the capacity to understand complex things

- The proverbs break life down into the component parts so you can understand how it fits together to know what is needed for life to run well, and when it does not, what is needed to be repaired or replaced. Proverbs is like a good guide. (slide - engine schematic diagram)

for receiving instruction in doing what is righteous

The purpose of proverbs is to coach you to do what is righteous

- Proverbs coaches you to do what is righteous; everything that is truly right is righteous because it views the action in light of eternity. It will show you the right way.

and just

The purpose of proverbs is to coach you to see truth clearly

- Part of our problem in decision-making is not understanding the truth of what is. You will make a flawed choice with flawed information. The proverbs will coach you to see situations, events and people clearly.

and fair

The purpose of proverbs is to coach you to be impartial

- How many bad choices have you made because you were biased? Biased toward your Facebook friends, biased toward your tribe, biased toward what you already believe or toward what you think is true.
- The wisdom of God is given to us so that we would have the ability to know what to do, that we would be coached to be disciplined so we can excel, that we can understand complex things, with the intent of making choices that helps life to run smoothly. The wisdom of God shows us what is right and righteous, to clearly see the truth, and to make impartial decisions that are fair to all. Do we not need more people like this? Don't you long to be a person like this? Don't you want people like this in your life? Read this book! Put it before you every day. Think about it, meditate on it, memorize it let it train, and coach and equip you.

Respond to the invitation from the book of proverbs

- The book of proverbs invites all types of people to come and gain from the wisdom of God.

Proverbs 1:4-6 NIV

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.

for giving prudence to those who are simple,

The gullible are invited so that you can gain discernment

- Some of you take on the same opinion of the last person you interacted; you are like a chameleon taking on the color of the last thing you came in contact and like a reed in the wind, bending in the direction of the wind.
- While others of you are simple in your thinking, you don't know the other side of the argument, nor take time to fully consider the other side.
- The wise person looks at an issue from all sides to gain understanding from multiple directions. Education, gaining knowledge so that you can apply wisdom. If you are simple, read this book, respond to this invitation.

knowledge and discretion to the young

The young are invited so that you can gain knowledge and discretion

- You have to love kids; they typically just blurt out all that they are thinking based on their limited knowledge. When you are young, you are still learning and give yourself to it. The one verse we have that governs the "growing up years" of Jesus (which was until he started his formal ministry around 30). Was "Jesus grew in wisdom, and stature and in favor of God and man" (Luke 2:52). If you are young, read this book and respond to this invitation.

let the wise listen and add to their learning

The wise are invited so that you can gain more wisdom

- Part of growing wise is coming to the understanding that the more you know, you realize the more you don't know. A dark place is to not know what you do not know. Those who are wise, and many of you are, out of their wisdom, they continue to seek wisdom. The wise are continually and intentionally growing. One of the best things about education and learning is that it gives you the tools and desire to continue to learn. If you are wise, read this book and respond to this invitation.

and let the discerning get guidance

The discerning are invited so that you will gain greater insight

- If you are already discerning, read this book so you will gain greater insight. There are always more things to know and more ways to grow. If you are discerning, read this book and respond to this invitation.

for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.

You are invited to gain understanding of difficult, nuanced complexities

- God invites you to gain the knowledge and wisdom to comprehend a thing and how it relates to another. Illustration of taking the Miller Analogies Test (MAT) for graduate school. In order to get the right answer, you have to have an understanding of the words and how they relate to one another. Here is a sample of a test questions: **(Slides)**

MASON : (____) :: CARPENTER : WOOD

- (A) iron
- (B) chisel
- (C) stone
- (D) building

(____) : INNOCUOUS ::
REPREHENSIBLE : PRAISEWORTHY

- (A) pretentious
- (B) virulent
- (C) antiseptic
- (D) widespread

- The simple are invited to gain discernment; the young are invited to gain knowledge and discretion, the wise are invited to gain more wisdom; the discerning are invited to gain more insight. All of us are invited to understand difficult, nuanced complexities. Accept the invitation of God to gain wisdom from Him. To learn, grow and understand. Read this book, it is for you.

Recognize the foundation of the book of proverbs

Proverbs 1:7 NIV

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

- This is the major theme in proverbs; it comes up 20 times in 31 chapters. "The book of Proverbs opens with 'the fear of the Lord as the beginning of knowledge' and closes with the praise of the woman who 'fears the Lord.' Everything in between reminds the reader again and again that one does right, not only because it benefits others and ultimately benefits oneself, but because it pleased God" (NIV Application Commentary).
- Why is "the fear of the Lord" the beginning of knowledge? Why is it not, "the Lord is the beginning of knowledge," or "the love of the Lord is beginning of knowledge", or "the grace of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge?" What is it about "the fear of the Lord" that makes this fear the beginning of knowledge, the place that true knowledge flows from, the foundation that knowledge is built upon?
- The fear of the Lord recognizes our place in the universe that there is a God, and we are not Him. *The fear of the Lord recognizes that we are utterly dependent creatures to an utterly sufficient God.* That He is perfect, and we are not. That He is holy, and we are not. That He is the source of everything, and we are not. He is glorious, and we are not. The fear of the Lord is when we realize, "I am not the measure of all things; I am being measured." And in Him are all things, and all things flow from Him and are found in Him. In Him, we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). "All things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in Him, all things hold together. (Col 1:16-18 ESV) He is to be honored, and revered, and feared. The fear of the Lord captures both aspects of shrinking back in fear and of drawing close in awe.
- Jesus taught us not to fear but also what to truly fear:

Matt 10:28 ESV

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

- All fear is not bad. The foolish person fears nothing; the wise person fears the right thing. Because you have faith, you will have fear, fear of the living God. A wise person knows when to be afraid; the fool fears nothing (or the wrong things) and pays the price.
- The "smartest" people who do not build their lives upon the word of God will see everything crash down in the end . . . the example of the wise and foolish builders was given at the end of the sermon of the mount to illustrate the point. (Matt 7:24-27) If you don't build your life upon the word of God in fear of Him, it will all come down in the end, no matter how "great" your life is. (Ill. of Jonny Cash song "hurt" – on the last album he recorded 106 million views on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AHCfZTRGiI>)
 - "What have I become? - My sweetest friend - Everyone I know goes away In the end And you could have it all - My empire of dirt - I will let you down - I will make you hurt - I wear this crown of thorns - Upon my liar's chair Full of broken thoughts - I cannot repair" (Lyrics from "Hurt")
- In a prophecy about the forthcoming Messiah, the Spirit of the Lord described Him this way:

Isa 11:2-4 ESV

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. 3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, 4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

- He "delighted" in the fear of the Lord. From this delight, from this foundation of wisdom, came understanding, and counsel, and might. God demonstrated His power so Pharaoh would fear him (Ex. 9). Jehoshaphat prayed the fear of the Lord would be upon the judges so they would judge and rule rightly (2 Chron 19:17). The fear of the Lord is described as being "clean, enduring forever" (Ps 19:9). The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil (Prov. 8:13). The fear of the Lord prolongs life (Prov 10:27). The fear of the Lord gives us strong confidence and is a refuge and the fountain of life (Prov. 14:26-27). The reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life (Prov 22:4).

Conclusion

- I pray that you will give yourself to wisdom, I pray that you will accept the invitation to learn. I pray that you will have a deep and abiding fear of the Lord. That you in humility would choose to walk in his ways, that you will choose to know Him and serve Him and live for him. Accept his invitation to know him and walk in his ways.
- Prayer