

Words of Life: Wisdom
Proverbs

I. What are the Proverbs?

- Short, practical statements of truth that are easy to remember and understand, but vast in their depth of applicability.
- We gain the wisdom offered in a proverb by wrestling with it, meditating on it, thinking through its application and implication.
- They are not absolute commands or absolute promises. They are more divinely ordained observations about how the world works best.

Proverbs 22:6 – *Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

II. What is at the root of the wisdom held out in the Proverbs?

Proverbs 9:10 – *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.*

- **We can think about the fear of the LORD in two ways:**

1) Sinful Fear

- Sinful fear is the sort of fear that all sinners feel toward the God that stands over his creation as the holy and just judge.
- Sinful fear is that impulse inside of every unredeemed human being that forces them to flee from God.

2) Filial Fear

- Filial fear flows not from sin, but from salvation.

“The great line of distinction...is between that terror and dread of God, as the infinitely Holy One, before whom all sin must incur the intensity of punishment; and the love of God, as the Father of mercies, and fountain of blessedness, in the gift of his Son, and a sense of adoption into his family; by the influences of which the soul fears to offend him. This fear is purely evangelical; for if the slightest dependence is placed upon any supposed good works of our own, the filial fear of God is swallowed up in dread and terror.” (Michael Reeves, quoting George Offor, in *Rejoice and Tremble: The Surprising Good News of the Fear of the Lord*)

- It is the gospel of Jesus Christ that is the transition point out of a sinful, dreadful fear of God into a right, filial fear of God.

“In other words, the filial fear the Son shares with us is quite different from the sinner’s dread of God and dread of punishment. It is an adoration of God that dreads sin itself, not just its punishment, for it has come to treasure God and so loath all that is ungodly. As Calvin put it, the ‘pious mind restrains itself from sinning, not out of dread of punishment alone; but, because it loves and reveres God as Father, it worships and adores him as Lord. Even if there were no hell, it would still shudder at offending him alone.’” -Michael Reeves

- [Q] Where are you on this spectrum? How do you fear God?

III. What sort of wisdom do the Proverbs offer?

- **Explicit Wisdom for Particular Areas of Life**

- **Explicit wisdom for the family.**

Proverbs 31:28 – [28] *Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.*

Proverbs 22:15 – [15] *Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.*

- **Explicit wisdom on money.**

Proverbs 23:4-5 – [4] *Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist.*

[5] *When your eyes light on it, it is gone,
for suddenly it sprouts wings,
flying like an eagle toward heaven.*

Proverbs 30:8–9 – [8] *Remove far from me falsehood and lying;
give me neither poverty nor riches;
feed me with the food that is needful for me,*

[9] *lest I be full and deny you
and say, “Who is the LORD?”*

*or lest I be poor and steal
and profane the name of my God.*

o **Explicit wisdom on work.**

Proverbs 14:23 – [23] *In all toil there is profit,
but mere talk tends only to poverty.*

Proverbs 24:30-34 – [30] *I passed by the field of a sluggard,
by the vineyard of a man lacking sense,
[31] and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns;
the ground was covered with nettles,
and its stone wall was broken down.*

[32] *Then I saw and considered it;
I looked and received instruction.*

[33] *A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest,*

[34] *and poverty will come upon you like a robber,
and want like an armed man.*

o **Explicit wisdom on justice.**

Proverbs 31:8-9 – [8] *Open your mouth for the mute,
for the rights of all who are destitute.*

[9] *Open your mouth, judge righteously,
defend the rights of the poor and needy.*

• **The Pathways for Wisdom in the Unaddressed Areas of Life.**

“Wisdom is knowing the right thing to do in the 80% of life situations in which moral rules don’t provide clear answers.” –Tim Keller

IV. Jesus—In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3).

• **We can’t help but see Jesus as the personification of God’s wisdom.**

• **We can’t help but see Jesus as the perfection of God’s wisdom.**

Proverbs 27:14 – *Whoever blesses his neighbor with a loud voice,
rising early in the morning, will be counted as cursing.*

1 Corinthians 1:18, 20-24 – [18] *For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God...[20] Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? [21] For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. [22] For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, [23] but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, [24] but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

Proverbs 21:30 – *No wisdom, no understanding,
no counsel can avail against the LORD.*

• **We can’t help but see Jesus as the pathway to God’s wisdom.**

Proverbs 30:4 – [4] *Who has ascended to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered the wind in his fists?*

Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?

Who has established all the ends of the earth?

What is his name, and what is his son’s name?

Surely you know!

o [Q] Will you enter into the mentorship of Christ?

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