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In these early chapters of Proverbs we are given a picture of a wise counselor, a sage, a father, instructing and encouraging his son, a neophyte in wisdom, as he is beginning his life journey to seek to find wisdom. To make it his priority to pursue a life of wisdom. He is explaining to his son how to live a life centered on the fear of the Lord and what it looks like to trust the Lord wholeheartedly and to not lean on his own understanding. The text before us today motivates us to pursue wisdom by showing us the value of wisdom. And it does so in two ways. First, by telling us that wisdom is the only life of true security. Wisdom is the path to true blessing or human flourishing. The foundation of God's creation is wisdom and the truest security of wisdom is by the Lord being your confidence. He is by your side as you journey through life. Second, the value of wisdom is that it creates a community of love. Verses 27-35 all focus on the practicalities of loving our neighbor. Wisdom not only focuses on our relationship with God but it also has a horizontal direction of our relationships with others.

Gospel Connections

Verse 18 invokes the memory of Eden. ***She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed (v.18)*** In Genesis 2 we learn that in the midst of the garden God placed the tree of life. And, after the sin, the Fall of the man and the woman in Genesis 3:24 God drove them from the garden and placed the cherubim and a flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life. Of course, God did that ultimately to protect the man for if he tried to get the tree of life in his sinful state he would have suffered the curse and been prevented from gaining life. What was necessary for wisdom to be a tree of life to those who lay hold of her? Laying hold of the fulfillment of that wisdom, which is Jesus Christ. In Deuteronomy 21:23 we learn that "His body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. Cursed is anyone who is hanged on a tree. Paul cites this passage in Galatians 3:13. Jesus was cursed by God on a tree so we could obtain the tree of life. So, as Tremper Longman reminds us, "Adam and Eve were prevented from extending their life by access to the tree of life; through wisdom we are given access once again to that tree." And the fullest revelation of that wisdom is Jesus Christ. Have you laid hold of Jesus Christ? Are you continuing to lay hold of Jesus Christ? That is the key to wisdom and to life.

Application and Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn from this sermon? Specifically

- a. What insights did you learn?
- b. What questions do you have? Are there any areas you don't understand?
- c. What areas of your life (be specific) do you sense God wants to change as a result of this passage of Scripture?

2. How are we motivated to pursue wisdom in this passage? Are you motivated to pursue wisdom? How valuable is wisdom to you?

3. The passage concludes with the promise, ***“The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace” (v.35)***. Who are the wise and who are the fools? From one perspective the cross looked like Jesus lost. It did not appear to be a sign of victory, yet through the cross Christ achieved our ultimate victory, and it was through the cross that we inherit honor. How can living a cross-shaped life create a community of love and wisdom? What can you do this week to live more of a cross-shaped life?