

PROVERBS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Proverbs chapter 8 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we saw last time in Proverbs chapter 8 the adulterous woman called out to the sons of men to seduce them and the warning that Solomon gave to those who are thinking about traveling down this path is as follows. **“Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her paths; For she has cast down many wounded, And all who were slain by her were strong men. Her house is the way to hell, Descending to the chambers of death.”** Proverbs 7:25-27.

The warning is very clear and if you think you are strong, if you think you can withstand her temptations, you are a fool! Look at the destruction that sexual sin has brought to people's lives, broken families, destroyed relationships! Don't listen to her call, don't go looking for her and be aware because she is out looking to find who she can devour like a lion!

Now, as we move into Proverbs chapter 8 we will see wisdom call out to us so that we may follow after her and the blessings that are found if we listen, if we follow after this wisdom! Who are you going to follow, who are you going to listen to? One will bring death and destruction to your life and the other the blessings of God. It seems so obvious and yet so often we don't listen to this wisdom of God. Why is that?

It is as Paul tells us in Galatians 5:17, “**For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.**” There is a war going on and the flesh tries to bring us down, it tries to fight against what the Spirit wants us to do and thus, whoever you feed the most will be the strongest in your life! May we learn to feed the Spirit, to grow in the Lord, to receive His wisdom into our lives!

With that said, let’s begin reading in Proverbs chapter 8, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

PROVERBS 8

VERSES 1-4

1. Please understand that God does not hide His wisdom from us, it is available and as we will see it is available to all who want to receive it. God’s wisdom is there for the taking you might say, there is no excuse why we are not wise. We can choose not to listen to God and again, that is a choice, there is no excuse! It is not that you “can’t” it is just that you “won’t.”

And look at this contrast that we see between wisdom and the ways of the wicked. First of all, like I have said, wisdom is calling to us wherever we are at. From the “**high hills**” (Proverbs 8:2), “**where the paths meet**” (Proverbs 8:2), “**by the gates, at the entry of the city**” (Proverbs 8:3). In other words, God wants to direct our actions and His call to us is open, it is available to all!

On the other hand, the ways of the wicked are “**lurking at every corner**” (Proverbs 7:12), and their actions are done “**in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night.**” (Proverbs 7:9). Why is that? Because that is how evil works. It lurks about seeking whom it may devour. It works in the night so it can’t be seen! That should be a red flag right there and yet the flesh buys into these lies and instead of the wisdom of God they are seduced by the lies of the world!

VERSES 5-9

1. As we are reading through this section on wisdom I want you to picture this as Christ. I believe that is what is being said in the Scriptures. Remember what Paul said in Colossians 2:3 that in Christ “**. . . are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**” God is calling out to us, He is crying out to us, He desires us to listen to Him and obey His Words. The problem comes when we don’t listen to Him! If you want wisdom, come to Christ!

2. I do understand that some people have a problem with the Bible, they disregard it, they don’t think it is accurate, there may be some truth in it but you really can’t trust it! But listen again to what Solomon says to the wise and to the fools, the learned and the not so learned, all of us, “**Q you simple ones, understand prudence, And you fools, be of an understanding heart. Listen, for I will speak of excellent things, And from the opening of my lips will come right things; For my mouth will speak truth; Wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; Nothing crooked or perverse is in them.**”

Proverbs 8:5-8.

Notice in the wisdom of God, in what Christ has for us, the Word, there is only **“excellent things”, “right things”, “truth”, “wickedness is an abomination”, “all the words of my mouth are with righteousness”, “nothing crooked or perverse is in them.”** How important that is for us to understand. We can trust God’s Word, it is truth. That is what Jesus said in John 17:17, **“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”**

Why is there so much sin in the Church? Why are so many Christians living lives that go against what God has said? The answer is very simple. When you move away from God’s Word then you don’t see right from wrong. It is God’s Word applied to our lives that helps sanctify us, set us apart. But when you move away from God’s Word there is no sanctification, only a conforming to this wicked world!

You see, God’s Word is pure, it is right, and thus in it are found all the treasures of life that we need, and that is exactly what Solomon is going to speak of next. You see, the problem is not with God’s Word, the problem is with the heart and mind of man rejecting what God has said!

Remember what Paul said in II Timothy 3:16-17 regarding the Word of God, **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”** Paul tells us that **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God”** and that phrase **“given by inspiration of God”** in the Greek is THEOPNEUSTOS, (teh-op’-nyoo-stos) and it literally means “God-breathed.” All Scripture comes from God.

Now some would argue that point, but that is the reality. Paul is not just speaking of the Old Testament here, but from Genesis and ultimately through the book of Revelation. In I Timothy 5:18 Paul quotes out of the Gospel of Luke stating that it is Scripture. In II Peter 3:16 Peter tells us that Paul's writings are part of the Scriptures. And thus, the entire Bible is God's Word to us!

The Bible was written over a 1500-year time span. More than forty different authors from all walks of life – from kings to peasants, wrote it. It was written on three different continents – Africa, Asia and Europe. It was written in three different languages – Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. There are a variety of literary styles. It addresses hundreds of controversial subjects and yet there is harmony. And it is the unfolding story of God's love for sinful man. Prophetically it is awesome because what God has said would take place, has or will. There are over 300 prophecies of Christ's first coming and all of them were fulfilled down to the tiniest detail.

Some argue that the Bible, over the years, has many errors as it was copied. Look at the facts, the New Testament alone we see not more than one-one thousandth of the text is in question and not one significant doctrine is in question. The Old Testament is no different. Thus, God's Word is accurate, it is truth! Paul tells us that God's Word is "**profitable**" or helpful for us and he lists four ways that it is helpful to us:

- A. **DOCTRINE** – God's Word tells us what is right. What do you believe? It should follow what the Bible says!
- B. **REPROOF** – God's Word tells us what is wrong. It is the convicting of misbehavior.
- C. **CORRECTION** – God's Word tells us how to get right when we have gone astray. It is a restoration to its positive condition.

D. INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS – God’s Word tells us how to stay right. It tells us how to please God, how to live out our faith!

God’s Word makes us complete, it equips us for service. As you read God’s Word, as you apply it to your life, by the power of God’s Spirit, a believer will be able to meet the demands of righteousness, he will know what God desires of him and he will be able to stand strong, not for salvation but as evidence that a person is saved.

Thus, Satan leads pastors and people away from God’s Word because God’s Word is living and it is powerful and it will transform our lives if we allow it to. Paul’s warning to Timothy and to us is to be students of the Word of God if you want to stand strong against the perilous times and the perilous men that have come in and are coming in these last days! What a powerful lesson for us! Let us be wise and treasure God’s Word in our lives. That is wisdom!

3. If you have ever been to a major league baseball game you know how meticulously clean the infield is. That dirt is spotless, it looks great. It looks clean. But if you were to take that dirt that you thought was so clean, brought it home and put it on your white spotless carpet, how would it look? It would be horrible; you would see that the dirt is not clean like you thought. What was the difference? You saw it in the light of a white carpet and it showed you what it was really like - **DIRTY!**

I think the same is true with sin. Out in the world we look good. We look clean. We don’t see a problem in our life until we open up God’s Word and see His holiness; His purity and we then see ourselves as we really are! We need God’s Word; we need the wisdom of God in our lives.

Paul put it like this in Ephesians 5:25-27, “**... just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.**” Wisdom is calling out to us, may we listen and obey!

VERSES 10-11

1. Think about the goals that people have today and you will see that many times they are striving for external riches and have sold their eternal destiny with the Lord for it? Make no mistake about it, God’s wisdom is more precious than all the wealth in the world for it leads to life.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-21, “**Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**”

The wisdom that God has given to us and that eternal life that God has given to us can never be taken away and thus, “**... seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**” Matthew 6:33.

And for those of you who are seeking after riches and forsaking the wisdom of God in doing so, let me share this verse with you. In Revelation 21:21 we are told in regards to the New Jerusalem in the eternal state that, “**. . . the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.**” So gather all the gold you want now because in the new heavens and the new earth the purist of gold is used for asphalt. I guess you can fill in the holes with what you have!

Now listen to the wonderful promise that Jesus gives to us, “**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.**” Matthew 5:6. It is not the one who sits back and thinks he knows it all, but the one who hungers and thirsts to be taught, to be instructed, to be guided by wisdom who will grow, who will be filled! Again we see that wisdom is crying out, calling out, “Simple ones, foolish ones, come to Me.” And it is the wise individual who accepts the invitation. May we be wise!

VERSES 12-13

1. Solomon says that both wisdom and prudence go together, they go hand-in-hand. In other words, God has given to us what is right, we need to apply that to our lives and be careful, use discretion in all that we do!

2. Remember back in Proverbs 1:7 and what we learned. That “**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. . .**” Now, after that relationship has been established, we are told that we are to hate evil. That should just make sense. If you are moving towards God then you are moving away from evil to the point of “**hat[ing] evil**”, “**pride**”, “**arrogance**”, the “**evil way**”, the “**perverse mouth.**” As Christians we should flee those things that the Lord hates. In fact, we should have a deep hatred for them instead of embracing them. Why? Because these evil practices destroy people’s lives.

Paul told Timothy in II Timothy 2:22-26, “**Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.**”

Once again the thought is that if you are seeking the Lord you will be moving away from these other things. That just make sense, you can’t be moving in two directions at the same time. You are either moving towards the Lord and it is reflected in what you do and what you say. Or you are moving away from the Lord and it is reflected in what you do and what you say!

Peter also gives us these words of encouragement and warning in I Peter 2:11-12, “**Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.**”

Here you can see the heart of Peter as he pleads with us to abstain from fleshly lusts, the things the world uses to lure you away from God. You see, those things should not have a hold on us because we are not of this world, we are just passing through on our way home because our citizenship is in heaven. But there is a battle and the word “**abstain**” is literally saying we are to “hold oneself constantly back from” these things that are going to bring us down. Yes, there is a tug if we take our eyes off of Jesus and let the lusts of the flesh tempt us! Stay focused on the Lord, follow after Him and you will not be swayed by these things!

It is as Jesus said in John 8:31-32, “... **‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’**” Free from the bondage of the things of this world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life!

VERSES 14-21

1. As you read these verses I think once again we see a picture of Christ being painted for us as I have said. Remember again what Paul said in Colossians 2:6-10, “**As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.**”

Notice, just as we have come to Christ we are to continue down that path, following Him. That we grow in our relationship with Him. And the warning is simple. The world has nothing to offer you. Their words are going to bring you into bondage, they are empty, they follow the wisdom of man and the simplistic principles of the world, which are contrary to Christ. So if you want to be complete, where are you going to go? To Christ of course!

2. Now in these verses we see what God has for us if we are willing to listen and obey. So I want to take a few minutes and just look at these because I think they are important.

- **GOOD COUNSEL** – We see that in verse 14a that the Lord has good counsel for us, He will guide us down the right path! What He has for us is perfect, the direction He has for us is right.
- **SOUND WISDOM** – We see that in verse 14b that the Lord has sound wisdom or sound judgment for us to follow.
- **UNDERSTANDING** – We see that in verse 14c that the Lord gives to us understanding. How important that is for us as we go through life and we need to understand what to do, where to go, what to say and-so-on.
- **MORAL STRENGTH** – We see that in verse 14d that the Lord gives to us moral strength to do the things that He wants us to do. To stand strong in this evil world!
- **LEADERSHIP ABILITY** – We see that in verses 15a and 16a that the Lord gives to us leadership ability, not to lord over people but to serve them in a godly way, to bless them in all that we do. To lead them down the right path!
- **JUDICIAL SKILL** – We see that in verses 15b and 16b that the Lord gives us the ability to make godly judgments in matters and those judgments are made according to the Word of God.
- **AFFECTION & COMPANIONSHIP** – We see in verse 17a that the Lord gives us the ability to reach out and care for others, to be a friend to them. We are told in Proverbs 17:17, “**A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.**”
- **OPEN TO THOSE IN NEED** – We see in verse 17b that the Lord gives to us the ability to help those in need. To be able to listen to them, to assist them through whatever they are going through. To be available to them!

- **EXCEEDINGLY ABUNDANT BLESSINGS** – We see in verse 18 the riches, the honor and righteousness that God blesses us with, things which will endure!
- **GOOD CHARACTER** – We see in verse 19 that the Lord gives to us good character, that the things we do will be fruitful.
- **GUIDES US** – We see in verses 20 and 21 that the Lord guides us down the right paths, the just paths, and in doing so others will follow along where we are going and they will be blessed!

Make no mistake about it, true riches are not found in earthly treasures but in Godly wisdom! Now why is wisdom so valuable? Solomon said in Proverbs 6:23, **“For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life.”** It gives us true life, true riches for it places us on the right path. That word, **“traverse”** or **“walk”** in verse 20 speaks of walking steadily and continuously, moving forward each day in our relationship with the Lord. It is putting one foot in front of the other, not a sprint but a long distance race that has many obstacles in it but the Lord will guide us through them all!

3. Back in verse 17 it speaks of seeking the Lord and I think that is important. You see, so many people just ignore the Lord but as you do that it gets harder to come to know Him. Listen to what I am going to share with you and you will understand why even the unsaved seek the youth. After the age of thirty-five, the odds of a person becoming a born-again believer are said to be 1 in 50,000. If you think that is bad, hold on. After the age of forty-five, they’re 1 in 300,000. After the age of seventy-five, they’re 1 in 700,000. Why is that? Because the more a person resists the Spirit, the harder his heart becomes. Now obviously God can do anything but why harden your heart to Him? Seek the Lord early in the day. Seek Him early in the situation. Seek Him early in life. Today is the day of salvation, don’t pass it up!

VERSES 22-31

1. As you read through these verses you can once again picture Jesus speaking and the reality is, wisdom is Jesus Christ. It is as Paul said in I Corinthians 1:30, **“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God - and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”** Make no mistake about it, the wisdom we need to live out our lives is found in Christ for He is wisdom!

2. We also see here the creation process and of course we see Jesus involved in creation, we see God the Father involved in creation and the Holy Spirit is involved in creation. The Triune God was actively involved in the creation process! Let me show you what I mean.

In Genesis 1:1 we are told, **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”** Now what we miss in our English translation is that the Hebrew word that is used for God is not EL, which means one God, but ELOHIM and it is in the pleural form meaning more than 2. Thus, you can read this verse like this, ***“In the beginning Gods created the heavens and the earth.”***

Now that sounds like polytheism, but it is not. You see, the pleural noun **“God’s”** is attached to a singular verb, **“created.”** In other words, we see here a hint at the Trinity being actively involved in the creation process. Do we see this in the rest of the Scriptures? You bet we do. Yes, the word Trinity you will not find in the Scriptures, but the concept is there, beginning right here in Genesis!

In Hebrews 11:3 we see God the Father involved in creation, **“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”**

In Genesis 1:2b we see the Holy Spirit involved in creation, “**... And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.**”

And in Colossians 1:16-17 we see God the Son involved in creation, “**For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.**”

Thus, it is very clear to me that the Triune God, one God manifested in three distinct persons was involved in creation. It is as Clarke said, “He must be strangely prejudiced indeed who cannot see that the doctrine of a Trinity. And of a Trinity in unity is expressed in the above words.” And Leupold, quoting Luther on Elohim said, “But we have clear testimony that Moses aimed to indicate the Trinity or the three persons in the one divine nature.”

And if you still doubt that then listen to what we are told in Genesis 1:26, “**Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’**” Who is God speaking to here? Some would argue that it is just speaking of the plurality of royalty, but the Scriptures don’t support that. Or maybe He is speaking to the angels, but again the Scriptures do no support that. You see, angels do not create life, but God does. That means what we see here is the Godhead speaking and it is the Triune God that created all things!

3. Now here's the thing. God did not just place all the elements of life together and then He let them evolve. That is ridiculous and it is not Scriptural. God made the universe with wisdom. When I build something I may have the knowledge to put it together, the information, but the application for me is difficult. It doesn't look like it should when I am finished. God does not have that problem.

The all-knowing God takes that knowledge that He has and has created a world that was very good, and because of man's rebellion it has become very evil. That is why He came the first time, to cleanse us from our sins and He is coming again to redeem this world back, to take it back from the usurper, from Satan! The Lord purchased it back as He shed His blood on the cross of Calvary; He paid the debt that was owed!

4. One more point before we move on. I just can't pass it up. I am amazed at how man tries to do away with God. We have the SETI program or the Search For Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence which is a bunch of radio receivers positioned to the heavens looking for any pattern to the signals they are receiving to see if there is intelligent life out there.

They initially positioned it towards the earth and they found that there was no intelligent life there and thus they are looking to the heavens now! No, sorry but it is foolish. If they would open their eyes and look at the design, the pattern that God has built into life, they would see that it could not happen by some random chance occurrence.

The simplest cell is not so simple. “The information content of a simple cell has been estimated at around 10^{12} bits, comparable to 100 million pages of the Encyclopedia Britannica.” So much for simple! You see, creation is crying out that there is a God, a designer and creator. But instead of looking at that, we are focused on the heavens looking for intelligent life, maybe because we haven’t found any on this planet like I have said!

VERSES 32-36

1. Can’t you hear our Lord crying out these words to us because He loves us! You see, if we find Christ, if we come to Him, we have life. If we reject Him we must love death for that is what we will get. It is as Jesus said in John 5:24, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”**

So the Lord is calling for us to be wise and that means we need to **“listen”** for the Lord, **“keep”** the things of the Lord, **“hear”** the words of the Lord, **“do not disdain [disregard]”** the things of God, **“watching”** for God’s direction, **“waiting”** upon the Lord. That is where wisdom is found, in the Lord!

As Paul said, **“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’”**

Hebrews 13:5-6. God loves us so much that He will never leave us, may we not walk away from Him. He wants to give us wisdom to live by, may we be diligent in our endeavor to follow after Him!

PROVERBS 9

VERSES 1-6

1. Hopefully all of you have enrolled in the College of Wisdom. I know that tuition today can be expensive for college, upwards of \$100,000 or more! But do not worry, the only cost for the College of Wisdom has been paid for by Jesus and all you have to do is come! God wants to make you wise.

2. Now Solomon speaks of these “seven pillars” in regards to wisdom and there are a lot of ideas of what that means but I like to keep it simple. I think they represent completeness. I am not saying that there are seven points or seven things that this is speaking of, but it is solid and it is complete this wisdom that God has for you because in the Scriptures seven is the number of completeness!

In other words, God is offering to us a complete education in regards to wisdom. When you finish you will have all that you need. “When do we graduate?” Well, graduation is when we go to be with Him, when we pass from this life to the next. That is when we finish this College of Wisdom. So it is longer than 4 years but it is also far more valuable and you get to use what you learn immediately!

Now some like to point out that James gives to us these seven points of wisdom that Solomon is speaking of as he tells us, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” James 3:17.

The problem I have with that is I count eight points that James makes and not seven, so again I think it speaks of completeness. The point that James is making, and I do agree with this, is that a truly wise man is a humble man. He places others ahead of himself, desiring to be a servant rather than to be served. You see, this is the fruit that is born out of a person's life that has sought the Words of God and then has taken those truths and applied them to their life. That is wisdom from above and that is what God is giving to us! The key is this, "**Forsake foolishness and live, And go in the way of understanding.**" Proverbs 9:6. May we do that!

VERSES 7-9

1. Now this just makes sense to me and I am sure we have experienced this in our own lives. First of all for the person who is not saved, they are not going to care that they are violating God's Word. It is of no real importance to them. That just makes sense. And what usually happens as you try to correct them is that they may verbally abuse you or even punch you in the nose.

2. But for the believer, for the person who has a relationship with Jesus Christ, that is who correction is really for. Yes they might not always listen, but they know what God has said and they need to be reminded. Now you can speak God's Word and allow the Holy Spirit to convict an unbeliever, but the reality is you are not to clean the fish that are swimming in the polluted waters of this world, but to catch them and bring them out of the world, be fishers of men, in a sense.

You see, the issue is not their behavior; it is their relationship with the Lord. Once they get saved, their heart is right with God, that inside love of the Lord will overflow to the outside and will be seen in their actions. If people are living basically good lives and are still unsaved, big deal! They are still going to hell outside of Christ!

3. Now I have to admit that we as Christians don't always correct our brothers or sisters in the Lord in a loving way. Sometimes it is done in anger, sometimes it is done in bitterness. That is obviously wrong, that is not what we are to do but hear me out on this. This is something my pastor taught me.

He told me that he has had people yell at him, scream at him, write nasty letters to him about something they disliked about him or something he did or didn't do and he does not ignore it. He tries to see if in all that anger, all that bitterness there is something that he can glean to help him do better. I think that is a good lesson.

It is wise to listen to what godly people have to say, even if it is said in anger or bitterness. Why? Because, like I have said, there might be a nugget of truth within all those words which you need to hear.

Listen, wait, and pray before you speak too quickly. It is as David said in Psalm 141:5, **“Let the righteous strike me; It shall be a kindness. And let him rebuke me; It shall be as excellent oil; Let my head not refuse it. For still my prayer is against the deeds of the wicked.”** Now let me say this before we move on. If there is something that I have said or done don't **“strike me”** and say, “Pastor Joe, I am doing what the Psalmist said, and **‘It shall be a kindness’ to you!**”, Nice try, don't do it!

The idea here is that of reproof and believers should at least have compassion when they rebuke us or correct us. And if we listen to what the godly person is saying, it will be refreshing, soothing, comforting if we obey what God has to say through this person. But if an unbeliever reproves us there is no compassion, no mercy usually.

VERSES 10-12

1. Here we are again with the fear of the Lord. We have seen that idea of the fear of the Lord and how important it is. We saw in Proverbs 1:7, **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.”** It is where it all begins.

Then in Proverbs 8:13 we are told, **“The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.”** If you love the Lord you will hate what He hates, you will hate evil!

And now, here in Proverbs 9:10 we see that **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”** The idea here, and it is important, that we get to know God in truth.

Too often today people are trying to know God outside His truth and they get a warped concept of God and what He desires of us. That is not wise at all. Listen to these examples that show what can happen as we move away from God’s truth, the knowledge of the Holy One, and you will see that they lack true understanding.

It is as Paul said in Romans 10:2-3, in speaking of the Jewish people as a nation, but can truly be applied to the church today. He said, **“For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.”**

The key is that if they do that they are not saved because they will never be saved in their own righteousness. The Bible says that our righteousness is like filthy rags and thus, it is only the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed into our lives by faith that we can be saved, coming to Jesus.

In saying that, listen to these examples, and I think you will see what I mean.

One of the most visible American televangelists, the Rev. Robert Schuller . . . through his weekly Hour of Power TV program . . . reaches 20 million viewers from his Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, Calif.

The cathedral houses an organization called Christians and Muslims for Peace. . . . Schuller told [Iman Alfred] Mohammed that if he [Schuller] came back in 100 years and found his descendants Muslims, it wouldn’t bother him so long as they weren’t atheists.

- Grand Rapids Press, 9/1/97

Now Robert Schuller and the Crystal Cathedral have fallen in recent years but that concept of Christians and Muslims has come into the Protestant church and it has been embraced! That is not truth and that is not wise.

We are also told that,

Seattle Roman Catholic Archbishop Alexander Brunett, who chairs a national Catholic bishops' committee on ecumenism, said there are many avenues to finding common truths in religion. . . .

"I think we can say God has expressed himself or herself in other religions that are valid in other places, at other times," said [William] Cate, an ordained Methodist minister. . . .

- Seattle Times, 1/17/98

Once again that is not truth in regards to God. All roads do not lead to God, there is only one road, one door and that is through Jesus Christ. Apart from that you are not wise!

Here is another one that took place several years ago with the Promise Keepers movement. We are told,

In Atlanta, Georgia early last year PK [Promise Keepers] gathered 39,000 pastors. The conference brought together representatives of the apostate World Council of Churches and National Council of Churches, evangelicals, Mormons and Roman Catholics, including 600 priests.

PK vice-president of Pastoral Ministry Dale Schalfer declared that this new unity is based not upon doctrine (i.e., truth) but upon relationships. . . . Mike Timmis [said] at the huge October 4, 1997 PK gathering in Washington, D.C. . . . "[W]e recognize that we do have doctrinal differences . . . but, Father, we will not let these differences destroy our unity. . . this applies to Protestants of all persuasions; it applies to the Orthodox Church; it applies to Roman Catholics, of which I am one!"

- The Berean Call, 4/98

Again, apart from the Jesus of the Bible there is no unity with unbelievers. That is unwise!

One more for you to show you that wisdom is only based in truth, otherwise you are unwise. We are told,

Chapman University's . . . Wallace All Faiths Chapel represents the latest spiritual trend, genuinely interfaith structures that reflect growing religious diversity nationwide. . . . Some plan to read Scriptures - from the Bible, Koran, Hindu texts and Buddhist sutras. Others will likely give voice to religious songs. And still others might burn incense, perform Wiccan rituals or beat drums during an American Indian dance. Their invocations will lay the bedrock for a house of worship that every faith tradition can call its own.

- The Orange County (CA) Register, 2/9/98

These words, these ideas, these doctrines of demons should have been a wake-up call for the church but they fell on deaf ears. You see, that was some 15 years ago and now look at where we are at today. These winds of false doctrine are not blowing into the church, they are in the church! We are seeing that the truth of the Bible is put aside and we are allowing these false doctrines into the church and that is not the fear of the Lord because you are negating what the Lord has said and you are unwise! If you are truly wise then you will listen and apply God's instructions to your life. If not, you are a fool! We must worship God in truth or we are not worshiping God, He will not accept that kind of worship!

VERSES 13-18

1. Now how in the world did we go from the wisdom of God to this foolish woman who is trying to seduce men? Keep in mind that sexual sin and spiritual adultery are both spoken of here. And just as sexual sin will lead a person down a destructive path, so too will spiritual adultery!

Let's look at sexual sin or sin in general for that matter. If sin didn't bring pleasure; no one would succumb to it. You see, it does bring pleasure and yet that pleasure is only short-lived and it turns into bondage before you know it! You are traveling down a path that leads to death and destruction in your life! And notice the deception of sin as Solomon warns us, **“But he does not know that the dead are there, That her guests are in the depths of hell.”** Proverbs 9:18.

Sin is pleasant for a season, but there is death in those waters. Listen to what Paul said of Moses and what sin meant to him in Hebrews 11:24-26, **“By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.”**

You see, he knew that sin was pleasurable but it was short-lived, it was just passing by, it did not last. And thus, he followed the Lord and looked to the reward which was eternal! That is what we must do for **“There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.”** Proverbs 14:12.

We must understand the destructive power of sin if we let it into our life. We tend to downplay it today or ignore it but it cost our Lord His life to free us, to cleanse us from this sin. Don't take it lightly!

The late Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman used to tell of a Methodist preacher who often spoke on the subject of sin. He minced no words, but defined sin as “that abominable thing that God hates.” A leader in his congregation came to him on one occasion and urged him to cease using the ugly word.

He said, “Dr. Blank, we wish you would not speak so plainly about sin. Our young people, hearing you, will be more likely to indulge in sin. Call it something else, as ‘inhibition,’ or ‘error’ or a ‘mistake,’ or even ‘a twist in our nature’.”

“I understand what you mean,” the preacher remarked and going to his desk brought out a little bottle. “This bottle,” he said, “contains strychnine. You will see that the red label here reads ‘Poison.’ Would you suggest that I change the label, and paste one on that says ‘Wintergreen?’ The more harmless the name the more dangerous the dose will be.” (Source Unknown). May we never forget that!

2. Now for those that are committing spiritual adultery, going after other gods, it is also a sin! No some may laugh at that, “Going after other god’s” but if you add anything to God’s Word, if you change who Jesus is you are going after other god’s!

Remember, **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.”** **“The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.”** And **“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”**

The wise person comes to the true and living God, repenting of His sins and asking Jesus to be Lord and Savior of His life. That is wisdom! A wise person hates evil, hates what the Lord hates. That is wisdom! And the wise person knows the Lord in truth; he understands the things of God because he rightly divides the Word of truth, the Bible! That is wisdom!

I want to close tonight with these words from Charles Spurgeon. He wrote,

The gate of Mercy is opened, and over the door it is written, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*.” Between that word “save” and the next word “sinners,” there is no adjective. It does not say, “penitent sinners,” “awakened sinners,” “sensible sinners,” “grieving sinners,” or “alarmed sinners.” No, it only says, “sinners.” And I know this, that when I come, I come to Christ today . . . I dare not come as a conscious sinner or an awakened sinner, but I have to come still as a sinner with nothing in my hands.

- Charles Spurgeon, None but Jesus, <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0361>

Never lose sight of that. Jesus lived that perfect life. He was perfect in all He did. He chose wisdom every time. He then died on a cross that He did not deserve; He sacrificed His life for rebellious man, you and me. All you have to do is receive that gift by faith, receive Jesus and He will give you His perfect record, His righteousness will be imputed into your life by faith! That is wisdom, won't you enter into it?