

The Paradox of Wisdom

Proverbs 2:1-10

Synopsis

As we continue through the first few chapters of Proverbs, we remain in the introductory poems in which major themes are laid down that will help us unlock the major proverbs found in chapter 10-31. In today's passage, we consider two distinct paradoxes of wisdom. On the one hand, while wisdom is right in front of us and calling for us from every street corner, we must also search for it and seek it out with all our heart. On the other hand, while we must search for wisdom with all our heart, only God can grant it to us in his way and on his terms. The wise Christian embraces these paradoxes as part of the spiritual formation process.

Sermon Outline

Main Idea: *We must embrace the paradoxes of wisdom.*

1. *Paradox 1:* Wisdom is right in front of us, yet we must search for it with all of our heart (1-5).
2. *Paradox 2:* We must search for wisdom with all of our heart, yet God ultimately gives it freely on his own time and in his own way (6-10);

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. **Observing the Text:** First, make sure to have your group spend time looking at the text, and observing the text without reflecting on the sermon. You want the group to get familiar with the text, and the words, and the flow of thought. Keep making observations until you feel the group has a solid grasp of the entire text.
2. This text says that we must search for wisdom like buried treasure (Proverbs 2:4). Make this really practical. What does it look like to search for wisdom in this way. Share stories and ideas with your group of how everyone can grow in this.
3. We discussed that one of the reasons that obtaining wisdom is often so difficult is because it is true 'soul work.' It is not just gaining knowledge (shallow), but delighting in God's knowledge (deep). It is not just receiving counsel (shallow), but it is relationship with Christ (deep). What practices or disciplines can we incorporate to challenge us to not settle for shallow formation, and to truly pursue deep spiritual formation.
4. Describe a time where you experienced an extended trial (a difficult situation that lasted far longer than you ever hoped), and what God taught you through that lengthy trial, that

perhaps you may not have learned if the trial had been shorter.

5. We discussed six important steps for reading God's word *experientially*: pray, read, reflect, confess, cherish the gospel, practice.
 - a. Define and describe each of these six steps.
 - b. Discuss what steps come easier, and what steps come harder for you.
 - c. Discuss a time recently you feel the Word of God really transformed you as you worked through it in your own personal reading and studies.

For Family Discipleship

Towards the end of the sermon, we discussed how we are to read the bible *experientially*. In other words, we don't just want to read it as a book, but as God's living word that can change us. Choose a passage in the Bible, and go through all six steps (see question five above) with your children. Note, this does not need to take a long time. The goal is not to bore our children, ha. Rather, it is to shape them, and train them to delight in the scriptures.

For Men and Women

Similar question, yet men and women will have unique answers to this that can be discussed in separate groups.

For Men: What do you think are the key things that men often "seek after" with greater passion or interest than wisdom. Why are these things so attractive to men particularly, and what would it look like to disciple men to prioritize wisdom over these other things.

For Women: What do you think are the key things that women often "seek after" with greater passion or interest than wisdom. Why are these things so attractive to women particularly, and what would it look like to disciple women to prioritize wisdom over these other things.