

## **Beloved, Get Wisdom**

You may be seated. It's a privilege to have the opportunity to open up the Word with you this morning while Pastor Jake and Susie and their family are on vacation. I'm certainly praying for them that it'll be a time of deep fellowship on the East Coast with dear friends and a time of rest and blessing.

Let's pray for the service this morning. Heavenly Father, we seek your help now as we open your Word. As we just sang, where else can we go? You have the words of eternal life.

So help us now, God, as we prepare our hearts to sit under your Word. God, would you do a work by your Holy Spirit this morning? We ask in Jesus' name, Amen. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

Fools despise wisdom and instruction. I probably don't really need to make the argument this morning that there was a lot of despising in the world today. I probably don't need to convince you in this room, there is a serious lack of wisdom.

The world is full of those who are wise in their own eyes. But despise true knowledge. Full of those who are filled with so-called knowledge and expertise, but despise true instruction.

There's a serious lack of wisdom in the world today. This doesn't surprise us. Paul tells us about it in Romans chapter one.

For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools. The world is in serious want of wisdom.

But that is not our concern this morning. The love of the church is in serious want of wisdom, is it not? Unbiblical ideas and sinful habits run rampant in the pews and in the pulpits. Worldly ideologies corrupt sound doctrine.

False teaching has crept in and is a constant threat to biblical orthodoxy. Without wisdom, we're susceptible to being tossed to and fro by the waves, as Paul writes in Ephesians. We're in danger of being carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

And this will be a danger unless and until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. To mature manhood, to the measure and stature of the fullness of Christ, Ephesians 4, in whom in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Colossians 2.3 Beloved, we need wisdom.

We need wisdom. Without it, we will be weak-minded, weak-hearted people, lacking in understanding, lacking in conviction, lacking in discernment, susceptible to lies, deceit from without, deceit from within, susceptible to temptations, to sin, and the evil influences of the

world. Beloved, we need wisdom.

Look carefully, then, how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise, Ephesians 5.15. We need wisdom. And if we're to get wisdom, we need to understand where wisdom begins. Proverbs 1.7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

Proverbs 9.10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. These are parallel verses. So, if we could trace wisdom back to its very beginning, the very moment that wisdom first came into someone's heart, we would find there the fear of the Lord.

It's the beginning of wisdom. In other words, we would find someone who believes all that God has revealed about himself and submits to him with trembling, reverential, awestruck love and worship. This is what we would find.

That's not all we would find. We would also find someone who possesses in their heart an impetus or a drive to get after wisdom. Someone who has an inclination toward it, an appetite for it, a will bent on getting it.

Proverbs 4.7 The beginning of wisdom is this. Get wisdom. How do you like that? The beginning of wisdom is this.

Get wisdom. Get it. Not wait for it, not produce it, not discover it in yourself, but get it.

Go get it. This means you don't already have it. You don't start with it.

So, wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord and the recognition that you need it, that you don't have it, that you need to go get it. True wisdom is reserved then exclusively exclusively for those who fear the Lord and for those who seek wisdom from the Lord. Open your Bibles to Proverbs 2. Now, when you think of Proverbs, you likely think of the sort of short, pithy, wise sayings like these.

Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. These concise snippets of wisdom make up most of the book of Proverbs, really all of chapters 10 through 29.

The first nine chapters of Proverbs are a bit different. They're longer discourses that set the foundation for the rest of the book. They teach us about the nature of wisdom, the foundation of wisdom, the value of wisdom, the availability of wisdom for those who seek it.

Proverbs 1, which we just read, serves as an introduction and tells us that Solomon is the author. He wrote most of Proverbs with a few exceptions. And these are words that he wrote to his son.

One pastor referred to Proverbs as divine discipleship between a father and his children. It's divine discipleship because these are not just Solomon's words. These are God's words.

So, while Proverbs was not written to us, Proverbs was written for us. We learn in Proverbs 1 that the purpose of the book is to impart wisdom to the simple and to help the wise increase in knowledge. We learn that the foundation of wisdom is the fear of the Lord.

This is the interpretive principle for the entire book. And then finally, in Proverbs 1, we see wisdom personified as a woman, offering wisdom in abundance to all who would receive it, and warning and even rejecting those who reject wisdom. Proverbs 1 makes it clear that we need wisdom.

We need wisdom. Proverbs 2 makes it clear that if you diligently seek wisdom, you'll get it. If you diligently seek wisdom, you will get it.

God will pour it into your heart. It will come into your whole person. Your mind will understand it.

Your soul will love it. Your heart will be transformed by it. And you will get divine protection through it.

It's by wisdom that God will deliver you from the path of evil and keep you on the path of blessing. Let's read our text together. Proverbs 2, beginning in verse 1. My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding, yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

For the Lord gives wisdom. From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright.

He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints. Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity. Every good path for wisdom will come into your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.

Discretion will watch over you. Understanding will guard you. Delivering you from the way of evil from men of perverted speech who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness, who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil and whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways.

So you will be delivered from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words, who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God. For her house sinks down to death and her paths to the departed. None who go to her come back, nor do they regain the paths of life.

So you will walk in the way of the good and keep to the paths of the righteous. For the upright will inhabit the land and those with integrity will remain in it. But the wicked will be cut off from the land and the treacherous will be rooted out of it.

For those of you who like to keep notes, the title of the message this morning is Beloved Get Wisdom. I'm going to walk through this proverb over the course of four points. First, wisdom is given to those who seek it.

Second, wisdom comes from God. Third, wisdom delivers us from the way of evil. And then finally, wisdom keeps us on the path of blessing.

Wisdom is given to those who seek it. Wisdom comes from God. Wisdom delivers us from the way of evil.

Wisdom keeps us on the path of blessing. First, wisdom is given to those who seek it. In the first four verses of Proverbs, we have one lengthy compound condition statement.

Beginning with if, my son, if. And so we look down at verse five and we see our first then. Verse five signals the result of the condition being met.

The rest of the proverb describes the result of you meeting this condition. So let's begin walking through verses one through four, which describe a sincere desire and longing for wisdom that culminates in an active and zealous pursuit of wisdom. Desire that becomes pursuit.

Verse one, my son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you. If you receive my words. Again, Solomon is writing to his sons, but God intends Proverbs for us as well.

So the words that we need to heed, the words that we need to receive certainly include all of Solomon's words recorded in Proverbs, but the application for us is broader than that. 2 Timothy 3.16, all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. We need to receive God's word.

To receive means more than simply to hear it, to sit under it, even more than just an intellectual understanding. To receive it means to believe it. It means to accept it.

We need to receive and treasure up God's word. To treasure up means to esteem something as having great value. It means to gather it up.

It means to store it up. It means to keep it hidden and guard over it. We're to treasure up God's word.

Again, this is much more than the accumulation of knowledge. It is agreement. It's laying hold of the commandments, hiding them in your heart.

It's taking them wherever you go. Psalm 119.11, I have stored up your word in my heart that I may not sin against you. Continuing in verse two, if you make your ear attentive to wisdom and incline your heart to understanding, we need to make our ear attentive to wisdom.

How do we make our ear attentive? Those of you with children know how to make your ear not

attentive. We see that on a regular basis. Truth is we know how to make our own ears unattentive.

The ear is pretty solidly in line with the heart and that we tend to tune into the things that we care about and tend to sort of tune out of the things that we don't care so much about. So if you're in an airport, maybe you have a layover and you're gonna be there for a few hours. You just hear the constant announcements coming over the PA system.

And what do you do? Are you taking notes? Are you writing down all that information? Are you tuning it out? Even maybe starting to doze off as you wait for your plane and then you hear your name. What happens? Well, you snap right to attention. Something's important and I need to hear it.

You make your ear attentive to it. If you desire to get wisdom, you need to make your ear attentive and you need to incline your heart to understanding. Can you recognize this condition is full of a lot of wisdom and a lot of verbs, instructions on what you're to do.

You're to incline your heart to understanding. To incline the heart is to turn it forcefully. So this is the language of submission.

This is the language of obedience and intention. We're to wrestle our hearts into submission to wisdom. The heart is not naturally inclined to wisdom so we have to incline it.

Your testimonies are my heritage forever for they are the joy of my heart. I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever to the end. Psalm 119, 112.

Continuing in verse three. Yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding. Here again, we have two more verbs that mean the same thing.

The picture here is someone who is asking but more than asking they are pleading. They are shouting. This calls to mind the blind beggar from Mark chapter 10.

You may recall blind Bartimaeus. He hears that Jesus is passing by and he's heard of Jesus. He's heard of all of the healing that Jesus has done and so this blind beggar cries out.

Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Raising his voice, crying out for healing. People around him start rebuking him, telling him to be quiet.

And this is not appropriate. You're making a scene. This is kind of embarrassing.

You need to be silent. What does he do? He cries out all the more. Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

You call out and raise your voice when you have a desperate need and to hope that that need may be met. Or to cry out and raise our voice for understanding. Finally rounding out the condition here in verse four.

If you seek it, that is understanding. If you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, so the picture here is plain. Solomon's painting a picture of a sincere desire and longing for wisdom that produces a zealous pursuit of wisdom.

If you seek it, if you search for it, this isn't a casual sort of looking around. If you're looking for treasure, you don't just sort of look around at the ground. If you know there's treasure, you don't even just get a shovel and start digging for an hour or two or three and then give up.

No, if you know there is treasure to be found beyond the shadow of a doubt, you pull out all the stops. You rent the excavator. You bring that in.

You spend days, weeks, months and you don't give up until you find it. There's no such thing as seeking casually or half-heartedly. This verse implies an intense, unrelenting search that does not give up until it has what it wants.

Do you seek wisdom like that? Then in verse five, we see the result, the beginning of the result. We see that those who deeply desire wisdom and seek it zealously find it. They find it.

They're greatly rewarded for their seeking. Verse five, then, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. Okay, but I thought we were talking about wisdom.

Proverbs 1, 7. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Proverbs 1, excuse me, 9, 10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

If you seek wisdom diligently, you will find wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of it. So the reward for seeking wisdom is finding it.

Without a fear of the Lord, there is no such thing as wisdom. Not true wisdom. Not lasting wisdom.

To find the knowledge of God here isn't referring to the simple acquisition of facts about God. The knowledge of God here is knowing God personally. Knowing Him intimately.

And this is the reward for those who diligently seek wisdom. The reward for the one who receives and treasures the Word. The precepts, the commands, the promises of God.

The one who inclines his heart to true wisdom and understanding. Who calls out for it. Who seeks it as for hidden treasure with all of his heart.

The reward for his effort is wisdom. True wisdom. That flows out of the fear of the Lord and knowing God.

Wisdom is given to those who seek it. And it's given by God. Verse 6. For the Lord gives wisdom.

From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. This leads us into our second point. Wisdom comes from God.

Wisdom comes from God. Here in verses 6 through 11, we see that wisdom is given by God. It comes from His mouth.

We see that He gives it freely and generously to those who seek Him for it. And we see that He protects those who live according to it. Now, it's important to note here the twin truths in verses 5 and 6. That if you're looking closely, it might seem like they contradict one another.

They don't. Verse 5, we see that those who zealously seek wisdom find it. They find it.

If you seek it, you will find it. The foundational truth is in verse 6. Where we see that God gives wisdom to those who seek it. God gives wisdom to those who seek it.

So you don't find it in the sense that you're able to go out on your own and under your own might and under your own power lay hold of it. There is no sense in which you find wisdom without God giving it to you. James 1.5, if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to him.

So wisdom is given by God. But not in the way that a librarian would hand you a book off the shelf. God is the source of wisdom.

He doesn't go get it. It comes from his mouth. Neither does he give it through some kind of personal mystical impression or sense.

He speaks it. God speaks it and he speaks it clearly. Long ago at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets.

But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son, Hebrews 1.1. So the Lord gives wisdom. The Lord gives wisdom from himself. He's the source of it and he gives it generously.

Verse 7, he stores up sound wisdom for the upright. He's a shield to those who walk in integrity. So he stores up sound wisdom in abundance.

Ready, primed to give it to all who seek it diligently. The upright here are those who walk according to wisdom. That's really what it means.

This is more than, again, it's more than intellectual agreement. This is obedience. The upright don't just hear wisdom, the upright heed wisdom.

And then we see here in the second half of verse 7 that God protects those who walk according to wisdom. He's a shield to those who walk in integrity. To walk in integrity simply means that the outer life matches the inner life.

You know this. It means being upright, not just in outward appearance, but in the inner life of the heart. The one who walks in this integrity is guarded by God.

God himself is his shield. This theme of protection runs really throughout the rest of the

proverb. In verse 8, we see that God is guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints.

The picture here is that his saints walk securely. They walk securely. The path they're traveling is guarded by God.

He's watching over them as their great protector. There's another theme introduced here in this verse. It's the theme that runs throughout really all of Proverbs.

Not just chapter 2. It's the theme of life being described as a way or a walk or a path or a road. We see this in terms of the sharp contrast between a way that is protected by God and in a way that is outside of his protection. A walk that is upright and a walk that is wicked.

A path that is straight and a path that is crooked. A road that leads to life and a road that leads to death. These are the two options given in Proverbs.

You see there's no neutral road. There's no road in between the straight road and the crooked road. Life isn't neutral and it's not something that happens to you.

You are on a road and you are walking right now. Whether it feels like you're going somewhere or not. You are on a road.

You are on a path and that leads somewhere. Either to prosperity or ruin. Security or disaster.

Life or death. Salvation or destruction. The stakes could not be higher.

The crooked road, the way of the wicked, the path of foolishness. This is the one that leads to death. Psalm 73 18.

Truly you set them in slippery places. You make them fall to ruin. Straight road, the way of the righteous.

The path of wisdom. This is the road that leads to life. And God himself is guarding this path.

Watching over his saints. Upholding them in times of trouble. Psalm 94 18.

When I thought, when I thought my foot slips. Your steadfast love, O Lord, held me up. The Lord watches over the way of his saints.

Continuing in verse 9, we see another then. So again, verses 1 through 4. The beginning of the condition and the rest of the proverb. Being the result of that condition being met.

So if you diligently seek wisdom. Verses 1 through 4. Then you will get wisdom and protection from the Lord. Verses 5 through 8. And now verses 9 through 11.

Expand on these themes of receiving wisdom and protection from God. What exactly does this mean? Verse 9. Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity. Every good

path.

The self-righteous love to twist words like justice and equity, don't they? Those are popular words today. But the one who gets wisdom from God will have true understanding. Of what righteousness is.

Will have God's understanding of what justice and equity are. Not the world's counterfeit versions. Not man's twisted definitions.

Proverbs 28 5. Evil men do not understand justice. But those who seek the Lord understand it fully. Have twisted definitions of justice and equity crept into the church today.

We need wisdom. Wisdom to understand righteousness, justice and equity. Righteousness here refers to how we relate to God.

Justice and equity refer how we relate to others. So wisdom, again, is not a mere matter of intellectual understanding. It's a matter of the heart.

Wisdom is a matter of the heart. And you know wisdom by its fruit. James 3 17.

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable. Gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits. Impartial and sincere.

So when God gives wisdom, it doesn't just come into the mind. But it transforms the heart. Verse 10.

For wisdom will come into your heart. One of those verses that's easy to just sort of read past. Is that what you were expecting? Maybe.

Perhaps you know Proverbs too well. But when we think of wisdom coming into a person, do we first think of the heart? Wisdom will come into the heart. And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.

The heart here really refers to both the mind and the heart. It refers to the whole person. These two phrases in verse 10 capture the idea that true wisdom and knowledge permeate through the entire person.

Delighting the mind and the heart and the soul. So just as we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, so the one who has wisdom is wise in thought and action and affection. It affects the whole person.

Continuing in verse 11. Now you'll notice there's a subtle shift here. A shift from God watching over and guarding to now discretion and understanding or wisdom.

Watching over and guarding. Discretion will watch over you. Understanding will guard you.

So the implication here is that God is guarding you. He is watching over you and preserving

you. And he's doing it through the wisdom that he gives freely.

Certainly there are times and ways that God protects and delivers us. And we're passive. We're just recipients of it.

Like when Israel was fleeing Egypt at the Red Sea and Moses tells them, the Lord will fight for you. You need only be silent. Just sit back and watch.

Of course, the best example of that is the cross, is it not? The Lord will save you. You need only be silent. Proverbs 2 is not about that kind of protection and deliverance.

Proverbs 2 is declaring the truth that if you seek wisdom from God, the result is that God will give you wisdom. And will deliver you from evil influences and temptations through your obedience to wisdom. This brings us to our third point.

Wisdom delivers us from the way of evil. Wisdom delivers us from all manner of evil. But specifically in this proverb, we see that wisdom delivers us from the influence of evil men.

And from the temptations of the evil woman. Picking up in verse 12. And no, this isn't a new sentence.

We're in the middle of a sentence. So we need to back up into verse 11 to understand our context here. Discretion will watch over you.

Understanding will guard you. Delivering you from the way of evil. From men of perverted speech.

So discretion and understanding. Wisdom. Wisdom will deliver you from the way of evil.

Now, this deliverance is not like delivering you from those who seek your harm directly. Those who are laying in ambush. This is deliverance from those who would influence you.

The evil men who would seek to persuade you to join them in their wickedness. These are the evildoers that we read about in Proverbs 1. Verse 10. My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.

Verse 15. My son, do not walk in the way with them. Hold back your foot from their paths.

So these evil men attempt to persuade you with perverted speech. And this stands in sharp contrast to verse 1. My son, if you receive my words. If you treasure up my commandments with you.

If you receive the words of God, then you will have wisdom to discern the false words of evil men. And avoid walking with them. You'll understand righteousness in every good path.

So you'll be able to avoid these men who, verse 13, forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness. They forsake the path of uprightness to walk in darkness. These are the

men that David describes in Psalm 1. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked.

Who does not stand in the way of sinners and does not sit with the scoffers. Rather his delight is in the law of the Lord. And on this law, on these words, he meditates day and night.

See the blessed man in Psalm 1 has treasured up the commandments of God. Wisdom has come into his heart and knowledge is pleasant to his soul. And so through the diligent exercise of wisdom, he's delivered from the counsel of evil men.

Evil men who do not delight in wisdom, but rather, verse 14, delight in evil. They rejoice in evil and delight in the perverseness of evil. So they delight in the perverseness of it.

These aren't men merely who are doing evil deeds in the dark and hiding secret shame. These men not only delight in evil, they delight in the evilness of it. They delight in evil for evil's sake.

Romans 1 comes to mind. Paul writes about those who suppress the truth of God and wickedness. Whose foolish hearts are darkened.

Those whom God has given over to unrestrained sin. They're filled with all manner of unrighteousness. Evil, covetousness, malice.

They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit. Their paths are crooked, verse 15. And they are devious in their ways.

And not satisfied to do evil alone, they want to entice others to join with them. And it's by holding fast to the truth and storing up the word of God in your heart. And walking in obedience to wisdom from God.

It's in this way that you'll be delivered from the influence of evil men. And avoid walking in their ways. In the same way, by the same wisdom, you will be delivered from the forbidden woman.

Verse 16. So you will be delivered from the forbidden woman from the adulteress with her smooth words. This is literally the strange and foreign woman.

Meaning she is strange to you. She is foreign to you. She's outside the covenant of marriage with you.

She's forbidden to you. And just like the evil men who would influence you with perverted speech, the evil woman would entice you with smooth words. With flattery.

With lies intended to draw you in. Proverbs 5, 3. For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey. And her speech is smoother than oil.

But in the end, she is bitter as wormwood. And just like the evil men who had forsaken the paths of uprightness, she also forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant

of her God. Abandoning all that is good and right and righteous to walk in wickedness.

And we see here again a clear parallel in the danger of evil men forsaking the way. And the woman who forsakes the way. There is an absolutely just vivid contrast in these verses.

On the one side, you have the one who zealously seeks after wisdom from God. This one is rewarded with wisdom as it is poured into his heart by God. He's blessed with understanding and discernment and insight.

And he is delivered from evil influence and temptation by God through wisdom. On the other side, you have the evil men and the evil woman. They despise wisdom and instruction.

They don't seek it. They never sought it. They don't delight in it.

They don't make their ears attentive to it. They don't have to necessarily outright hate it. They just have to not really care about it.

To despise includes the idea of hatred. It also includes the idea of complacency and not paying attention. So, you have these that despise wisdom and instruction.

They are not delivered from evil. They forsake the path of uprightness rather than being delivered. The forbidden woman here in these verses is given over to evil.

So, the one who seeks wisdom is delivered from the path of evil. The forbidden woman is given over to it. And what is her end? Her house sinks down to death.

And this is the end of all who go to her. Verse 18. Her house sinks down to death and her paths to the departed.

I think the NASB has a bit more of a clear translation here. Her house sinks down to death and her tracks lead to the dead. The word translated paths in the ESV and translated tracks in the NASB literally refers to tracks made by a wagon wheel.

These are ruts. And they lead to death. Ruts hold wheels in place.

They direct them. It's not easy to steer out of a rut, is it? Her house sinks down to death and the path that she's on leads to death. She is heading toward destruction and rather being delivered, she is firmly held by her sin.

I mean, just think about this picture. She's not just in a dangerous place that leads to sin. Her own house sinks down to death.

She's made her home in the paths of death. This is her end and it's the end of all who go to her. Verse 19.

None who go to her come back, nor do they regain the paths of life. So the wise will be delivered from walking with her. Through the exercising of wisdom, he will be delivered from

going to her.

But the fool says in his heart, well, maybe just this one time. Just a brief detour. I'm going to get off the path for a minute, but I'm going to get right back on it.

Is it just this once? Can you go to her and not get stuck in the tracks that lead to death? God is not mocked. Whatever you sow, you will reap. Proverbs 7.21. With much seductive speech, she persuades him.

With smooth talk, she compels him. All at once he follows her as an ox goes to the slaughter or as a stag is caught fast till an arrow pierces its liver. As a bird rushes into a snare, he does not know that it will cost him his life.

And now, oh, sons, listen to me and be attentive to the words of my mouth. Let not your heart turn aside to her ways. Do not stray into her paths.

For many a victim has she laid low and all her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is the way to shield going down to the chambers of death. With seductive words, she would persuade you to your death.

Those who seek wisdom will be delivered according to wisdom. Love it if you zealously seek wisdom, diligently seeking wisdom from God. And you are careful to obey it.

God will deliver you from the influence of evil men and from the allurements of the evil woman. And he will deliver you through your diligent exercising of wisdom. The wisdom he has poured into your heart, you'll be kept from the paths of the wicked and you will keep to the paths of the righteous.

This brings us to our final point. Wisdom keeps us on the path of blessing. Verse 20, again, this continues the result for those who diligently and carefully and zealously seek wisdom from God.

So you will walk in the way of the good and keep to the paths of the righteous. This is in direct contrast to the way of evil men and the paths of the adulterous woman. You will walk in the way of the good.

In other words, you'll walk in the way of good men. You'll walk in the way of good people. And unlike those evil men who left the paths of uprightness, verse 13, you will keep to the paths of the righteous.

You'll stay. You won't stray. You won't wander.

You won't take detours. It's by wisdom that you will keep to the paths of the righteous. Remember the tracks of the woman.

The path that she's on, these are like ruts and they hold her fast on the path that she's in. In the

same way, wisdom keeps the upright on the path of life. They will not turn to the right or to the left.

Proverbs 4.26, watch the track of your feet and all your ways will be established. Do not turn to the right or to the left. Turn your foot from evil.

Lies are held firm by wisdom. Finally, this proverb closes with the ultimate contrast in the form of a promise and a warning. Verse 21, for the upright will dwell in the land and the blameless will remain in it.

But the wicked will be cut off from the land and the treacherous will be rooted out of it. So the promise of land is a recurring theme in scripture. It entails God's covenant faithfulness to his people, his kindness, his care, his provision, his blessing.

The point is those who walk according to wisdom keep to the paths of the righteous and they keep to the paths of blessing. The road that leads to blessing from God and those who walk according to foolishness who despise wisdom and instruction, they're kept fast by the ruts of wickedness and they're led to destruction. Beloved, wisdom does not just protect you from evil.

It preserves you for blessing. It doesn't merely keep you from the path of the wicked men or from the fate of the evil woman. It trains you in righteousness as you grow up into Christ in whom are hidden all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Do you have wisdom? Do you desire wisdom? Do you seek wisdom? Are you getting after it? If you have it, you need more of it. If you lack it, ask God who gives generously to all without reproach. Pray that he would give you an appetite for it.

That you would make your ear attentive to it. That you would seek it out. That you would treasure it up.

That you would run after it. Making your ear attentive in personal reading of the word and the fellowship of the body as you sit together with Bibles open and you sit under the preaching of the word. There is so much vying for our attention.

It's not just wisdom that calls out. Lady foolishness also calls out. And she's also loud.

She entices. There is so much seeking for our attention. Not just wicked sinful things, but just worthless things.

Things that just don't really matter at the end of the day. Is there anything more important? Than pursuing wisdom from God. Is there anything more worthy of your time and attention? And so I ask you again, do you give it your time and attention? Worthless pursuits dull the senses.

They dull the mind. They dull the appetite for wisdom. Listen to the words of the wise from Psalm 19.

May this reorient us if we don't have a love and an appetite for wisdom. The law of the Lord is perfect. Reviving the soul.

The testimony of the Lord is sure. Making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right.

Rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure. Enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean. Enduring forever. The rules of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold. Even much fine gold. Sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them your servant is warned. In keeping them there is great reward. Beloved, we need wisdom.

We need to run after wisdom. If you leave this morning with one thing only, let it be this. My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding.

Yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding. If you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom.

Will you pray with me? Heavenly Father, God, we need your help in these things. God, I confess that I have not treasured wisdom as I ought. I have not inclined my ear and my heart as I ought.

God, would you help us in this? That the words of David in Solomon 19 would find fertile soil in our hearts. That we would be able to say with David with conviction more to be desired than gold, even much fine gold. Your words are sweeter than honey, even drippings from the honeycomb.

God, help us to value your word. Help us to treasure your word. By your grace, help us to run after wisdom.

We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.