

The Way of Wisdom

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- [0 : 00] Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Heavenly Father, you said in your Word that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.
- So we want to come to your Word this morning with an appropriate sense of fear. Not terror, but reverence and awe. Submission to your authority.
- And inclining of our hearts to your Word. So that we might be directed in our ways. We might be taught to keep to the paths that you have laid out for us.
- In faith and obedience. So that in the end, preserved by Christ, we might arrive safely at our destination.
- A better country. A heavenly country. Home with you. Use your Word, Father.
- [1 : 22] To guide. To chasten. And encourage us this morning. In Jesus' name we pray.
- Amen. Starting in Proverbs chapter 1, verse 8. Hear, my son, your father's instruction.
- And forsake not your mother's teaching. For they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck. My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.
- If they say, come with us, let us lie and wait for blood. Let us ambush the innocent without reason. Like sheol, let us swallow them alive and whole like those who go down to the pit.
- We shall find all precious goods. We shall fill our houses with plunder. Throw in your lot among us. We will all have one purse. My son, do not walk in the way with them.
- [2 : 29] Hold back your foot from their paths. For their feet run to evil. And they make haste to shed blood. For in vain is a net spread in the sight of any bird.
- But these men lie and wait for their own blood. They set an ambush for their own lives. Such are the ways of everyone who is greedy for unjust gain.
- It takes away the life of its possessors. Wisdom cries aloud in the street. In the markets she raises her voice. At the head of the noisy street she cries out.
- At the entrance of the city gates she speaks. How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?
- If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you. I will make my words known to you. Because I have called and you refuse to listen.
- [3 : 31] Have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded. Because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when terror strikes you.
- When terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind. When distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call upon me.
- But I will not answer. They will seek me diligently but will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord.
- Would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way and have their fill of their own devices. For the simple are killed by their turning away and the complacency of fools destroys them.

But whoever listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease without dread of disaster. My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you.

[4 : 36] 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.

[5 : 42] Men 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. This is God's holy and authoritative word.

Before the widespread use of GPS. And turn by turn navigation. Drivers had to learn the roads.

[6 : 40] Right? They had to learn. Or use maps. They had to read signs on the roads. To get to where they need to go. And of course. Even now. There are times when the GPS information is not up to date.

For example. Many moving truck drivers. I guess the GPS doesn't take this into account. Many moving truck drivers. Have blindly followed their GPS.

Into a tunnel. Or under a bridge. Without paying attention to the low clearance sign. And cleaved off the top of their trucks. Some years ago.

It was reported that people going through. Luckington, England. Follow their GPS devices. And ignore the bridge closed sign. Driving straight into the water below. And then another instance.

The driver in Switzerland. Blindly followed the GPS. And ignored the footpath only sign. Eventually. Ending up on the top of a mountain. So he had to get airlifted with his car.

[7 : 39] Into safety. And so all these examples teach us. That despite improvements in the navigation system. It's important to pay attention to the road. To read the signs. And today's passage relies.

Heavily on this metaphor of. The way. The straight way of the righteous. And it contrasted with the crooked way. Of the wicked. And it teaches us that.

Those who wish to inhabit the land of God. Should walk in the way of the Lord. And it gives us signposts. Wrote signs that we need to pay attention to. To navigate safely through this.

Journey. And arrive at our eternal destination. And so using that as a key. We're going to talk about three points. First. Command and message is. Beware. Hazards ahead.

Second. Repent. Do a U-turn. Third. Lastly. Receive. Keep straight on the path. Of obedience. And so first. Let's look at the warnings.

[8 : 37] Of verses 8 to 19 of chapter 1. Beware. Hazards ahead. It's a parental warning. About the hazards that lie. In a youth's life. It begins in verse 8.

Hear my son. Your father's instruction. And forsake not. Your mother's teaching. The address in chapters 1 to 9. Is given in the voice of a father. Who is the primary teacher.

In the home. But even though he's the main speaker. We see here that wisdom he imparts. Also includes. The mother's teaching. And a son. Is mentioned as an addressee.

But this son. Here. Is never specifically named. Because as we talked about last week. Proverbs is democratized. To include all of God's people. So the Proverbs are placed.

In the mouths of every God-fearing parent. So that it can be passed down. To the next generation. In Deuteronomy chapter 6. Verses 4 to 9. When God renews his covenant.

[9 : 32] With his people. Moses says this. Hear O Israel. The Lord our God. The Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God. With all your heart. And with all your soul.

And with all your might. And these words. That I command you today. Shall be on your heart. You shall teach them. Diligently to your children. And shall talk of them.

When you sit in your house. And when you walk by the way. And when you lie down. And when you rise. You shall bind them. As a sign on your hand. And they shall be as frontlets. Between your eyes. You shall write them.

On the doorposts of your house. And on your gates. Scripture places. The primary responsibility. For the spiritual. And moral instruction of children. On their parents.

So Ephesians chapter 6. Verse 4. Also charges fathers. To bring up their children. In the discipline. And instruction of the Lord. It's not the government. That is primarily responsible.

[10 : 29] It's not the schools. That are primarily responsible. It's not even the church. That is primarily responsible. It's the fathers. And mothers. And I think one reason.

Why fatherhood and motherhood. Are so depreciated nowadays. Is that we've lost. This glorious and weighty vision. For what parenting looks like. If all that parents have to do.

Is feed their kids. So that they. And make sure that they grow up. And get jobs. So that they can provide for themselves. If that's all we have to do. We really don't have to be involved. That much. You can pay people.

With degrees in child development. To take care of our kids. We can pay for teachers. Who are better educated. Or more specialized. In their learning.

To teach our kids. But that's not all. That parents are good for. Proverbs is said. In the context. Of the home instruction. Because. That's the primary space.

[11 : 26] In which spiritual. And moral education. Of our children. Takes place. And the father's instruction. And mother's teaching. If heeded.

Are a graceful garland. For your head. And pendants. For your neck. He says in verse 9. Graceful garland. Refers to the decorative wreath. That they would crown. They would use. To crown champions.

In a competition. And the pendants. Refer to these chain necklaces. That were used. In the investiture of office. When you appoint someone. To an authoritative role. An official position. You give them this chain necklace.

And in the ancient. Near eastern world. And in other. Parallel literature. These things symbolize. Guidance. And protection. So then the garland. And pendants. Are symbols of. Power. Prestige. Protection. And for the person. Who heeds the teachings. Of Proverbs. The father's instruction. And the mother's teaching. Become these. This is what provides.

[12 : 23] Guidance. Protection for them. And so. It's something. Wisdom of God. Is not something. That you just. Leave behind. It's something. You wear. At all times. And so that it protects. And guides us. And after this brief invitation. The father dives. Right into his warnings. Starting in verse 10. This is my son. If sinners. Entice you.

Do not consent. Sin. The word sin. Means to miss a mark. To fall short. Of something. And so. In biblical context. It means to miss.

The mark. Of God's standard. To fall short. Of his glorious standard. And the father. Anticipates. What these sinners. Enticement. Will sound like.

In verses 11 to 12. He says. If they say. Come with us. Let us lie in wait for blood. Let us ambush. The innocent. Without reason. Like a shield.

[13 : 16] Let us swallow them alive. And whole. Like those who go down. To the pit. It's a. If you think about. These words. If you reflect on it. A little more. It's. It's kind of.

Ridiculous. That they're tempting. This person. This way. Who would come to. This kind of invitation. Because it's really. Not that appealing. First. It's. They admit. That their victim. Is innocent. Second.

They admit. That their crime. Is without reason. It's senseless. And third. They compare themselves. To a shield. Which is the realm. Of the dead. They compare themselves.

To death. Bringing people down. To the pit. The grave. And fourth. They seek to swallow. Their victims. Alive and whole.

Right. It's an expression. That conveys. This kind of ravenous. Barbaric appetite. Of maybe a person. For example. That consumes. A whole chicken. With innards and bones. All alike. They're voracious.

[14 : 17] For blood. God. And of course. When sinners. Are trying to entice people. They don't usually. They're not usually. This forthcoming. But the father. Is trying to expose.

The ugly reality. Underneath. The enticement. Of sinners. This is in fact. What their enticement. Is calling you to son. That's what the father. Is saying. And they continue.

Their pitch. The sinners. In verses 13 to 14. We shall find. All precious goods. We shall fill our houses. With plunder. Throwing your lot. Among us. We will all have.

One purse. The way of sin. Offers a get rich quick scheme. That goes outside. The bounds of the law. While the way of wisdom.

Offers a grow wealth. Steadily plan. Within the bounds of the law. The way of sin. Offers the thrill. Of secretly plotting. A criminal activity.

[15 : 11] While the way of wisdom. Offers the satisfaction. Of honest. Hard work. The way of sin. Offers the companionship. Of sinners. Come with us.

Throw in your lot. Among us. We will have one purse. While the way of wisdom. Offers the fellowship. Of the saints. And if you've ever been tempted. By this.

Thrill of wrongdoing. Or the prospect. Of easy money. And the camaraderie. Of sinners. Then hear this warning. In verses 15. To 16. My son. Do not walk.

In the way. With them. Hold back. Your foot. From their paths. For their feet. Run to evil. And they make haste. To shed blood. Right. In verse 11.

The sinners. Beckoned. Come with us. But the father says. Do not walk. In the way. With them. Since the sinners. Feet run to evil. The sons. Instead hold back. His foot. From their paths. And then.

[16:05] Verses 17. To 18. Give the reason. For this. Warning. With a humorous comparison. It says. For. In vain. Is a net spread. In the sight of any bird.

But these men. Lie in wait. For their own blood. They set an ambush. For their own lives. Notice the repetition. Of the same words. That were used earlier.

In verse 11. Sinners set an ambush. And lay in wait. For blood. The blood of their victims. But verse 18. Says. Is that these men. In fact. Lie in wait. For their own blood.

They set an ambush. For their own lives. This makes the way. Of sinners. Not only wicked. But also stupid. Fowlers. Don't use their traps.

In the sight of. Birds. Because. Even normal birds. I mean. Isn't that like a. Isn't that a derogatory term. Someone is bird brained. Right. Even. Even birds.

[16:59] Don't run into nets. That. That fowlers spread. In their sight. They're not going to run. They fly into something. That they see. These suspicious men. Put up. But this is worse.

Because. It's telling us. That these sinners. Are dumber than birds. They set their own traps. And then. They walk into it. Scripture is teaching us.

That there is a clear. And inescapable. Connection. Between sin. And death. You might escape. Punishment. For a little while. But divine justice.

Always. Arrives. So don't ever think. That you can flirt. With sin. Without courting. Death itself. We've all seen.

Kind of. Maybe immature. Young men. And women. Flirt with. Death. For the thrill. Of adventure. Maybe to get. A spectacular selfie.

[17:57] That they can share. With people. Let's see. How close. We can get. To the edge. Of this cliff. On the Grand Canyon. And take a picture. Let's see.

How close. We can get. To this bear. In the Yellowstone. So we can take. A selfie. With it. These are examples. But literal. You know. Examples. Of these things. Have happened. People have.

People have died. Trying. Attempting. Those feats. And that's. Precisely. What sin. Is like. It's a. Bloodthirsty.

Ambush. That is. After. Our very. Lives. Our souls. And yet. We make. Light of it. Flirt with it. Embrace it.

Intoxicate. Ourselves. With it. And. We're ultimately. Killed by it. The wages. Of sin. Is death. As Romans. 6. 23. Says. There's no.

[18:51] Way. Around it. So verse 19. Summarizes it. This way. Such are the ways. Of everyone. Who is greedy. For unjust gain. It takes away. The life. Of its possessors. Those who are greedy.

For unjust. Unjust gain. Those who are. Possessive. Greedy. Possessive. Will not possess. Their own lives. For long. And that's the warning. Of this first section.

Beware. Hazards. Ahead. And then. In verses 20. To 33. For those who already. Find themselves. In the thick. Of the hazards. Of life. There's a call. To repent.

To do a U-turn. And here. Solomon. Personifies. Wisdom. To make his point. It says. In verses 20. To 21. Wisdom cries aloud. In the street. In the markets.

She raises her voice. At the head. Of the noisy street. She cries out. At the entrance. Of the city gates. She speaks. Since wisdom. Is the experiential.

[19 : 46] Knowledge. Of navigating. The realities of life. It's applied knowledge. We're not surprised. To find lady wisdom. Here. Beckoning the simple. To come and learn. In the public square.

And not in the ivory tower. In social interactions. On the streets. He mentions the streets. In commercial dealings. In the markets. And in civil. And political proceedings.

At the city gates. Wisdom is present. And calls out for a hearing. And she says. In verse 22. How long. O simple ones. Will you love being simple.

How long. Will scoffers. Delight in their scoffing. And fools hate knowledge. The repetition. Of the expression. How long. Highlights. The lady wisdom's. Exasperation.

It's already been happening. For a while. She's been calling out. To these simple people. To learn. But they have not. Heeded her instruction. So she asks. How long. When will you finally.

[20 : 40] Listen to me. And lady wisdom. Uses three different words. Refer to her audience. First. The simple. Second. The scoffers. And third. Fools. These words.

All refer to the same group. Of people. But they highlight. Different aspects. Of foolishness. First. The simple. Refer to the gullible. And naive. Proverbs 14.

15. Says. The simple. Believes. Everything. But the prudent. Gives thought. To his steps. The simple. Are not thoughtful. Or careful.

They are thoughtless. And careless. They are often duped. Scammed. And second. The scoffers. Refer to those. Who are too prideful.

To listen to. Or submit to. Anyone else's instruction. They have an overinflated. Confidence. Of their. Own opinions. In their own opinions. They're immune.

[21 : 33] To correction. They never change. Their minds. On issues. Proverbs 21. 24. Says. Scoffer. Is the name. Of the arrogant. Haughty man.

Who acts. With arrogant pride. Scoffers. Sigh. And sneer. And. And. Arch their eyebrows. And. Say snarky things.

They delight. In their scoffing. And they enjoy it. It makes them feel. Better about themselves. And superior. To other people. Then they appear.

To be intelligent. And sophisticated. To much of the world. But in reality. They are fools. And third. That's the final word. Fools.

How long will fools. Hate. Knowledge. Fools are ignorant. They hate. Knowledge. Notice the contrast. Between how they love. Being simple. And hate. Knowledge.

[22 : 28] They've made a decisive choice. Between. Naivete. And wisdom. Between ignorance. And knowledge. They have chosen. Not. Chosen. Ignorance. And this. Hatred of knowledge.

Is further described. In verse 29. This way. Because. They hated. Knowledge. And did not. Choose. The fear. Of the Lord. Biblically. Speaking.

A fool. Is someone. Who is ignorant. About God. And therefore. Insolent. Toward God. Rude. Toward him. A synonym. For this word. Fool. Is used.

In Psalm 14. 1. And defined. This way. The fool. Says. In his heart. There is no God. That is the essence. Of foolishness. And it's.

Underlies. It's at the root. Of all kinds. Of foolishness. Foolishness. The simple. The scoffers. And the fool. They all have it in common. It's not referring to people. With low IQs. They may have very high IQs.

[23 : 23] Yet their deficiency. Is in their heart's. Orientation. Toward God. And wisdom. Laments this situation. In verse 23. If you turn at my reproof.

Behold. I will pour out my spirit to you. I will make my words known to you. The conditional statement. Conveys wisdom's longing. If only you would heed my rebuke.

And turn around. The things that I would do for you. The word turn. Is a translation of the Hebrew word. That's most often translated as.

Return. Or to repent. To do. A U-turn. In your life. And if you're not following God. And living for God right now. Just recalibrating it a little bit.

To get rid of a vice. Here and there. And to maybe break a habit or two. Is not going to cut it. You need a radical. And complete. Reorientation of your life.

[24 : 18] And that's what repentance means. As Acts 2.38 says. Repent. And be baptized. Every one of you. In the name of Jesus Christ.

For the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift. Of the Holy Spirit. It's by turning from our sins. In repentance. And turning toward faith.

In Jesus Christ. That we receive the word of God. And are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. That's how we cultivate. The fear of the Lord. That is the beginning of knowledge. But unfortunately. Instead of fearing the Lord.

And receiving God's wisdom. Into their hearts. Because. They stubbornly. This group of fools. They turn a deaf ear. To the call of wisdom. And so it says. In verses 24 to 25.

Because. I have called. And you refuse to listen. Have stretched out my hand. And no one has heeded. Because you have ignored. All my counsel. And would have none of my reproof.

[25 : 14] This is the reason. They haven't listened. The image of wisdom. Kind of stretching. Out her hand. To grab the attention. Of the simple. Is a graphic portrayal. Of this rejection. Of wisdom.

I mean. You can think about it. It's embarrassing. Right? When you reach out. For a handshake. Or for a high five. And then you're left. Hanging. By your friends. It's embarrassing. Even when you know. That they didn't mean.

To do that. But that's in fact. What fools do. To the reach. Of wisdom. They snub. And spurn wisdom. And this is the reason.

That because. They have spurned wisdom. That these following. Consequences. Will take place. Verses 26 to 27. I also will laugh.

At your calamity. I will mock. When terror strikes you. When terror strikes you. Like a storm. And your calamity. Comes like a whirlwind. When distress. And anguish. Come upon you.

[26 : 12] First it says. I also will laugh. At your calamity. That's. Expanded by the parallel. I will mock. When terror strikes you. This is not a. Cold-hearted. Gloating over.

The perishing. Of evildoers. Rather. It's the laughter. Of triumph. It's the final step. Of victory. It's really poetic justice. Because. That's what in fact.

The fools did. To wisdom. They laughed. At wisdom. They delighted. In their scoffing. As it said. In verse 22. So their fitting fate. Is that they themselves. Become objects.

Of derision. It's wisdom. That gets the final laugh. And then the next two lines. Predict that terror. Like a storm. And calamity. Like a whirlwind. Will come. These represent.

This sudden. Kind of destructive. Disasters. And this poetic justice. That comes upon the fools. It's highlighted. Highlighted by.

[27 : 06] The parallel structure. Between. Verses 20. 27. And verses 28. To 31. I can show that for you. On the screen. There's an. Alternating. Pattern. And the highlighted words.

That are on the screen. Are exact verbal parallels. First. Wisdom. Calls out to the fools. And then asks. When will you stop. Hating knowledge. You spurned counsel.

And despised reproof. And then finally says. You will get what is coming to you. And then that exact pattern repeats. It says. The fools now. Call out. To wisdom. Because.

But because they hated knowledge. Because they spurned counsel. And despised reproof. They will get what is coming to them. The structure conveys.

The basic idea. That just as fools. Once spurned wisdom. At the time of final judgment. Wisdom. Will spurn the fools. And notice. The abrupt shift.

[28 : 04] In the use of personal pronouns. In verses 20. To 27. Wisdom uses the second person pronoun. To refer to the fools. It addresses them directly. But in the second half.

Verses 28 to 31. Wisdom uses the third person pronoun. To refer to them. And this shift. Creates a sense of distance. Between wisdom and fools.

In the second half. At first. Wisdom was up close. And personal. In your face. Inviting you to repent. But later. She is distant.

When they call upon her. Wisdom does not answer. She is nowhere to be found. Can you guys hear me? I feel like wisdom calling out.

And nobody is listening. You guys should have said something. And.

[28 : 59] Man. That was an important point. I was about to get to too. It's a theological. It's an important theological point. Right. It always calls us to repent today. Right. Why does the Bible emphasize that point? Because the window of opportunity.

The hour of salvation. Is now. It's this very moment. It's not tomorrow. It's today. And wisdom's invitation is the same. It's wisdom will not stretch out her hand to you indefinitely.

And this is why we need to. It's not. I'm usually not a funny preacher.

So I'm glad I can at least provide accidental entertainment. I mean. I think too many people say. Yeah. To themselves. You know. Man. After I grow up and become an adult.

Then I will really follow God. Serve him. After I've graduated. Then finally I will serve God. When I'm less busy. Or after I've earned enough money.

[30 : 03] Or after I have worked hard. And climbed the corporate ladder. And have a stable position in my workplace. Then I will believe in God. And serve him. And follow him. After I've retired.

I will do this. After I've traveled the world. I will believe in God. And follow him. And serve him. After my kids are grown. Then I will finally love God with my whole heart. And believe in him. And serve him.

But the reality is. You might not have tomorrow. The day of salvation is today. Not tomorrow.

Isaiah 55 verses 69 says this. Seek the Lord. While he may be found. Call upon him. While he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way.

And the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the Lord. That he may have compassion on him. And to our God. For he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts.

[31 : 00] Neither are your ways my ways. Declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth. So are my ways higher than your ways. And my thoughts than your thoughts.

Today is the day of salvation. And even for those of you who already follow God. This is an important point to remember. Today are you doing everything you can.

To incline your ears. The ears of your heart. Toward the wisdom of God. Are you doing everything you can today. To stoke the fire of faith. In your life. Because that's important.

And that is necessary. For your ultimate perseverance. Hebrews chapter 3 verses 12 to 15. Says take care. Brothers. Speaking to brothers and sisters.

Believers. Lest there be in any of you. An evil unbelieving heart. Leading you to fall away. From the living God. But exhort one another. Every day.

[31 : 59] As long as it is called. Today. That none of you may be hardened. By the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ. If indeed we hold our original confidence.

Firm to the end. As it is said today. If you hear his voice. Do not harden your hearts. As in the rebellion. If we do not hold our original confidence.

To the end. If we don't persevere. In our faith in God. To the end. We will not obtain our final salvation. So we can't act like.

Faith happens naturally. And keep it on the back burner. While we attend to more important things. In our lives. Casual faith.

Is a dangerous pastime. Satan is at work today. The hardening effect of sin. Is in operation. Today.

[32 : 58] And unless we exhort one another. As long as it is called today. To love and good works. To faith. We are not going to persevere.

Till the end. Church is not something you attend. Once a week. It is not a service. It is the people of God. The family of God. That you interact with.

In your daily lives. It is the people of God. So if you see people. That are in this auditorium right now. Just once a week.

On Sunday morning. You are not obeying. Hebrews chapter 3. I encourage you. To get plugged into. A community group. Come to our prayer services.

On Wednesdays. Ask a brother or sister. To meet one on one. For a Bible study or prayer. Get involved. Speak the truth. And love to each other. If that is how we get built up.

[33 : 54] As the body of Christ. We cannot persevere without it. Just as muscles that are not exercised.

Regularly weaken. The faith that is not exercised. Daily will weaken. And the gospel that seems so real to you. Will gradually become.

Increasingly improbable. And irrelevant. And unreal. That is the heartening effect of sin. The deceitfulness of sin. And the voice of wisdom.

Will sound more and more distant. And muted. And soon. That extended hand of wisdom. Will be retracted. Verses 32 to 33.

Summarize this section this way. For the simple are killed. By their turning away. And the complacency of fools. Destroys them. But whoever listens to me. Will dwell secure. And will be at ease.

[34 : 48] Without dread of disaster. Only those who listen to the wisdom of Christ. Can have true security. And any alternative forms of security. Or experience of peace.

Their mere complacency. A sense of false security. And so if your life is characterized. By turning away from God. As it says in this verse. You must repent. Turn toward God.

To the path that leads to eternal life. And finally. How to get on that path. And stay on that path. Is the subject of chapter 2. Verses 1 to 22. And that's my third point.

Receive. Keep straight. Verses 1 to 4. Introduce this section. With a series of conditions. 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 make. If you call out for insight. And raise your voice for understanding. Yes.

[35 : 42] If you seek it like silver. And search for it as for hidden treasures. This contrast. The fool that refused to listen. Instead we should receive. And incline our hearts to listen.

To be attentive to wisdom. And we need to go beyond that. Not just receive passively. We need to also be proactive. We need to be receptive. But also proactive. It says in verses 3 to 4.

We should be calling out for wisdom. Just as wisdom called out to us. And raised her voice in the streets. In verses 20 to 21. We are to call out for insight. And raise our voices for understanding.

And we're to seek it. Like silver. And search for it. As for hidden treasures. Finding silver. And precious jewels. Or gold. It's. That's hidden away.

Or. It's difficult. It takes a lot of work. It takes commitment. And dedication. In the same way. We. Work hard to earn money. And to save money. And to.

[36 : 40] Protect money. We should seek. God's wisdom. And store it up. As treasure in our hearts. And verses. So verses. 1 to 4. Gave the conditions.

And verses 5 to 11. Give the consequences. If you treasure wisdom. Two parallel things will happen. First. It says in verses 5 to 8. Then you will understand.

The fear of the Lord. And find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom. From his mouth. Comes 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. And the second. Parallel consequence. Is in verses 9 to 11.

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.

[37 : 34] Will watch over you. Understanding. Will guard you. The fear of the Lord. Only comes. To those who seek God. Wisdom. Only comes.

Into the hearts. Of those who cherish it. The knowledge of God. Here. Is not merely referring. To an acknowledgement. Of him. But actually. Actual experience.

Of him. An allegiance. To him. It's not merely. Theoretical knowledge. But experiential knowledge. It's a personal knowledge. Of God. Knowing him.

And this knowledge. Of God. Is parallel. To the fear. Of the Lord. It means. We stand in awe of him. Revere him. Submit to him. And obey him. And it's only.

When we have. This fear of the Lord. And the knowledge of God. We can rightly. Apprehend. And apply. The book of Proverbs. That's why the thesis. Of the book. Which we discussed last week. In verse 7. Of chapter 1.

[38 : 28] Is this. The fear of the Lord. Is the beginning. Of knowledge. We don't begin. To get wise. Until we submit.

To God. Until we humble ourselves. Before him. And it's that knowledge of God. That humble faith. Before God. That relationship with God. That we ought to pursue. And seek. And cherish.

Because humility. And receptivity. Precede. Understanding. Faith. Precedes. Sight. If we want.

To receive divine wisdom. We must have faith enough. To ask God for it. And to seek it from him. Because. As verse 6 says. Ultimately. It is the Lord.

Who gives wisdom. From his mouth. Comes knowledge. And understanding. This reveals. An important point. We don't take. Wisdom. We don't seize. Wisdom for ourselves.

[39 : 22] Or earn it. Rather. Wisdom is bestowed. By God. Freely. As a gift. I hope you've. Notice the tension there. Between those two ideas. On the one hand.

We are commanded. To seek diligently. For wisdom. But on the other hand. We're told that wisdom. Is given freely. By God. This is a paradox. That we find. All throughout scripture.

Philippians chapter 2. Verses 12 to 13. Commends. Work out. Your own salvation. With fear and trembling. But then it immediately adds. For.

It is God. Who works. In you. Both to will. And to work. For his good pleasure. We have to work hard.

For our own salvation. Because. It is God. Who is working. In and through us. Tim Keller comments.

[40 : 17] On this paradoxical idea. This way. If it were. All up to us. We would labor. Under crushing. Anxiety. And burnout. But if God.

Only worked. Apart from us. We would lose. All sense. Of initiative. The paradox. Gives us. Enough incentive. And enough. Assurance.

To pursue. The knowledge of God. All. Our life. Long. If wisdom. Is a reward. For the acquisitive mind.

Those who attain it. Would become prideful. And they would. Would look down. On people. Who have not attained it. But if it is a gift.

We have. We can't help. But be humble. And receptive. If wisdom. Is given to those. Who neither seek. Nor believe.

[41 : 10] Than those who observe. That would become. Passive and apathetic. But because. God gives wisdom. To those who believe. In him. Pursue him. And seek him.

It motivates us. To strive. Daily. To believe. And obey. And when we. Receive this wisdom. From God. It watches over us. And guards us.

And those pair. That pair of words. Are repeated. In verse 8. And in verse 11. It becomes. Wisdom for us. A shield. To those who walk. In integrity. When we keep.

The commandments. Commandments of God. The commandments of God. Start to keep us. To protect us. And to guide us. But how exactly. Are we being kept. And what exactly. Are we being kept from.

Being guarded from. And we. See that in verses. 12 to 15. And 16 to 19. First. It tells us. In 12 to 15. That we are being guarded. From perverse men. And then.

[42 : 06] Secondly. In verses 16 to 19. It tells us. That wisdom. It tells us. That wisdom. It guards us. From adult. From the adulterous woman. First. It tells us. That wisdom. Will guard us. From perverse men. It says. Delivering you.

Verses 12 to 15. 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. Men whose paths. Are crooked. And who are devious. In their ways. So perversity. Is a recurring theme here. It refers to.

A waywardness. A willful determination. To go. Contrary. To. What is expected. Or demanded. Of you. It's rebellion.

These men. Have forsaken. It says. Abandoned the paths. Of uprightness. The word forsake. Is often used. To refer to people. Who abandoned.

[43 : 00] Their covenant. Relationship with God. To apostates. People who apostatize. Second. Verses 16 to 19. Tells that wisdom. Will guard us.

From the adulterous woman. Or if you're a woman. From the adulterous man. It says. So you will be delivered. From the forbidden woman. From the adulterous. 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. Go. Just as perverted men. Were described. As people who forsook. Their covenant. With God. So this adulterous woman. Is described.

As someone who forsakes. The companion. Of her youth. And forgets. The covenant. Of her God. And verse 19. Says. None who go to her.

[43 : 52] Come back. Nor do they gain. Regain. The paths of life. The word go. Is. Is. It's a double. Has a double meaning. In Hebrew. It literally means. To enter into. The adulterous woman.

Becomes the casket. For any man. Who enters. Into her. And notice. Also. This focused. On. In both of those passages. On the words.

Of. Enticement. Verse 12. Spoke of the man's. Perverted speech. That's how they. Lead people straight. Through their perverted speech. And verse 16.

Like why. Speaks of the woman's. Smooth words. This is somewhat surprising. Because we might expect. The son. To be enticed. By the adulterous woman's. Sexual allure.

Her physical. Attractiveness. But instead. The primary mode. That we see. Here. Is. The mode of her temptation. Is words. This draws.

[44 : 49] An interesting contrast. An intentional contrast. Between the father's. Words of wisdom. That we are to store up. And. The words of. The perverse men. And. The smooth words.

Of the adulterous. Words are important. Because. Whenever. There is a temptation. Whenever. Sin is involved. There are words.

Being spoken. Satan is being. Is speaking. To people. As he. As he's the liar. And the accuser. As the bible defines him. Whether.

The temptation. Involves your eyes. Or your minds. Or your hands. Or your mouth. Every temptation. Comes with words. It whispers. To our souls. God. Is withholding.

Something from you. God does not. Have your best interest. In mind. You should take this. For yourself. God does not see.

[45 : 43] You will escape. This. Unscathed. You are your own master. Do what. Pleases you. These are the words.

Of Satan. That always. Accompanies. Temptation. But they are lies. They are not true. Our God. Is a loving. Heavenly father. All his ways.

Are good. And the only way. To dispel. These. Words. Of the enemy. Is to drown them out. With the word of God. That's why.

This chapter. Began. With the series. Of conditional statements. If you receive. My words. And treasure up. My commandments. Making your ear. Attentive to wisdom. And declining your heart. To understanding.

That's the only way. We drown out. The words. Of the enemy. And nothing less. Than your very soul. Is at stake. This is. The battle for souls. Whose voices.

[46 : 46] Are louder. In your head. Which words. Occupy your heart. More. You probably noticed. Already. That there's a dozen.

Or more words. And phrases. That are. Connected to the metaphor. Of the way. In this last section. And that repetition. Teaches us. That there's a right way. To live. And a wrong way.

To live. And that there is. No middle way. The word. Upright. Or straight. Is. Is repeated. Four times. In verses. Seven. Nine. Thirteen. And twenty.

One. In this passage. Is contrasted. With the crooked paths. And the devious ways. Of evildoers. There is no neutral ground. You're either going straight. Or you're being led astray. And the word.

Path. Used in verse nine. And the word. Ways. In verse fifteen. Are actually. Same Hebrew words. And they refer to the. Groves. Or tracks. That form. On the ground. When you. And you repeatedly.

[47 : 41] I guess. Wheel a car through it. The longer you stay. On those same tracks. The grooves. Get deeper. And eventually. They dry. And harden. So it becomes.

Nearly impossible. To extricate yourself. From those grooves. That's where that expression. Comes from. To be in a rut. A one-off sin.

Becomes. An occasional sin. Becomes. A habitual. Sin. And it becomes. An obsessive. Compulsive. Sin. That controls you.

Conversely. Obedience. Begets more obedience. At first. It's difficult. And takes great discipline. But then it becomes. More and more natural. Which rut are you in?

Only those who stay. On the way of the Lord. The tracks. Of the Lord. Will arrive. And dwell. In the land of the Lord. Verses 20 to 22. Summarize this entire passage.

[48 : 45] 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. The land. In Old Testament times. Referred primarily to. The promised land.

In Deuteronomy chapter 4. Verse 1. God said. Listen to the statutes. And the rules. That I am teaching you. And do them. So that you may live. And go in. And take possession.

Of the land. That the Lord. Your God. Is giving you. The promised land. In scripture. Is intimately connected. To the idea of life. The life. That God promises.

And being in the land. It meant that you were. Under God's good graces. And that the presence of God. Dwelled in your midst. And that promise of. The promised land.

[49 : 39] For shadows. And ultimately. Is fulfilled by. The land of promise. That Hebrews chapter 11. Verses 8 to 16. Speaks of. It calls it. A heavenly country.

The earthly promised land. Was a mere shadow. It was a type. Of the heavenly promised land. To come. And in the new testament. The idea of being.

In the land. Being in God's favor. Is superseded. By this all important phrase. Of being in Christ. When his disciples.

Asked him about. The way to heaven. Jesus. Replied to them. In John chapter 14. Verse 6. I am the way. And the truth.

And the life. No one comes to the father. Except. Through. Me. Some of you. Feel like you are in a rut.

[50 : 38] You feel. Your inability to change. Bring change in your life. You feel powerless. To save yourself. Some of you. Are stuck in a rut. But you don't know it.

The wheels are still turning. So you think. You're still in control. But in fact. You have no control. You're going headlong. In the wrong direction.

The truth is. All of us. Are. We're at one point. Stuck in a rut. And unable to free ourselves. From the way. Of sin and death. I don't know. If you've ever.

Skidded on the road. On the highway. Or veered off the highway. Got into an accident. Unfortunately. I have. And it's a scary. Experience. To lose. Control entirely.

Of the steering wheel. And to be completely. At the mercy. Of the vehicle's momentum. That's. Exactly. What. This passage. Is describing. About the life.

[51 : 36] The way of sin. And that's why. Because we are helpless. To save ourselves. In that situation. That God. The father. Sent his only son.

Jesus Christ. To save us. The son of God. Became a son of man. So that he could. Dwell among us. And then he bore. Our sin on his back. And died on the cross.

He took our place. In essence. He took. Our wayward wagons. And took it. To its conclusion. To the end. Of the journey. And faced the death.

That we deserve. That was waiting for us. On that path. And then. He was raised from the dead. He reversed course. For humanity. And it set the tracks.

For us to follow. So that all those. Who put their trust. In Jesus. Renounce their sinful ways. And say. No. I. I'm done living. For myself. I am renouncing.

[52 : 32] My independence. And my own sovereignty. And I'll follow God. And I will walk on his path. All those people. Can follow him. To inhabit that land. To get to that.

Better country. That awaits. All of God's people. That's why only those.

Who turn to Jesus. In faith. Will arrive at their destination. That's why. Please take a moment.

To reflect on that truth. Where are you on this. Journey of life. What path are you on. And after you've.

Reflected. And prayed a bit. That we're going to respond. By praying together. As a church. Amen. I'm going to think. That way. I'm going to think. I'm going to think. Thank you.