

## **Sunday School Lesson June 7, 2020**

Good morning, I hope you are well and blessed. I hope you picked up your new Sunday school book for this quarter. If not, please pick up one while you are at church (in person) tomorrow, if you are able to be there. Hope to see each one tomorrow at church, in person. Take care, good luck and God Bless each one.

Lesson for June 7, 2020 "The Call of Wisdom" Scripture passage is from Proverbs 1.

*Sources for this lesson: The Bible, The Bible Knowledge Commentary by John Walvoord and Roy Zuck, Halley's Bible Handbook, the King James version, Wiersbe's Expository Outlines of the Old Testament, Rev. James C. Temple, Sunday School Lesson from Early County, and The Present Word Adult Bible Lessons.*

Historically, one of the goals of the "older generation" is to instruct the "next generation" in ways that would make the "path of life" easier to follow. This philosophy is built on the idea that the "next generation" is ready to learn "lessons from the past."

God wants his people to be wise. Two kinds of people portray contrasting paths of life. The fool is the wicked, stubborn person who hates or ignores God. The wise person seeks to know and love God. What we say shows our real attitude toward others. God views success as having a good reputation, moral character, and the spiritual devotion to obey him.

Proverbs can be difficult to understand. As the definitions show, they are often metaphorical, which means they use words figuratively, not literally. And they are often enigmatical, which means they were composed intentionally with obscure metaphors or other figures of speech to challenge the reader to discover their hidden lesson. They can be obscure and perplexing by design, which gives them unique appeal, beauty, and force.

Too often, mankind has the tendency to equate education with knowledge. The "accumulation of facts" can "clutter the mind" and allow the "true meaning" of the set of circumstances to be hidden. Solomon declared, "The fear (reverence) of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." (Proverbs 1:7a) This situation shows a stark contrast—"but fools (silly; perverse; without aim or counsel) despise (disrespect) wisdom and instruction." Proverbs 1:7b).

This wise man of old saw instruction as the responsibility of both parents. "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." He continued his admonition by giving the reason—"For they shall be an ornament (adding) of grace (favor; goodwill) unto thy head, and chains (badge of honor) about thy neck." (Proverbs 1:8, 9).

Even though the Proverbs are written with the "young man" in mind, the instructions can be applied to individuals of all ages.

Proverbs One – This chapter is all about the wisdom of God and it isn't that we have godly wisdom in ourselves, but the wisest thing that we can ever do, is to give glory to God and fear Him. This type of fear is a deep and holy, reverential respect for the holiness of God which compels us towards obedience. That is the beginning and the ending of all wisdom. This doesn't mean that we have all knowledge of course, but we have the wisdom to know where all knowledge comes from. The wisest man who ever lived, Solomon, left us a legacy of written wisdom in three volumes, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs.

From the section, "Stepping into the word" – The word proverb is a translation of the Hebrew *mashal*, "a saying". The truisms our elders passed along to us functioned in the same way as this book, which was composed to instruct a young man on the brink of adulthood. Jesus, influenced by the Hebrew Scriptures, offered his own wisdom in memorable sound bytes: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). We would be wise to study the meaning of the verses in context as well as examining what arises for us on the reading.

Prayer: Gracious God, guide our study of your word. Open our hearts and minds to new understanding as we seek your wisdom, stretching beyond time and place. Amen

From the section, "A word about wisdom" – What words of wisdom guide you in daily life? Wisdom is, first, a concept. It is the idea that there are ways of being, thinking, and doing that transcend the ordinary. Wisdom is a practice. Often we gain wisdom through painful experiences of loss, disappointment, or failure. Wisdom is a gift from God.

The specific purpose for this and all of Solomon's proverbs is to gain wisdom, receive instruction, and understand how to live in and to live it out in righteousness, justice, equality, prudence to those who are too young to know

when to use discretion and how to apply knowledge. Solomon's specific goal is to "Let the wise hear and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance" (Proverbs 1:5) and to realize that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline" (Proverbs 1:7).

Proverbs 1:10-12 "My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them. If they say, come along with us, let us lie in wait for someone's blood; let us waylay some harmless soul; let's swallow them alive, like the grave, and whole, like those who go down to the pit."

How easy is it to get caught up with the crowd and be swayed to make an unwise decision? It is very easy, speaking from experience. Paul warned, "Do not be deceived: "Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character" (1st Corinthians 15:33).

Proverbs 1:15-16, 18-19 "My son, do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths; for their feet rush into sin, they are swift to shed blood. These men lie in wait for their own blood; they waylay only themselves. Such is the end of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the lives of those who get it."

Solomon speaks to us as a wise father and refers to his readers as "my son" and of course this includes "my daughter." He urges us, the children of God, to "not walk in the way with them (sinners)" because it is very costly, and could even cost them their lives (Proverbs 1:19). The point is that those who set ambushes for others will end up being caught in their own trap. It might not be today or tomorrow, but it will come. I feel ill-gotten gain is greed and we all know that greedy desires can destroy a person.

Proverbs 1:22-23 "How long, will you simple ones, love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you.

The mockers today are those who hate the knowledge of God. The psalmist tells us what God thinks of the scoffer or fool "The fool says in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good." (Psalm 14:1) There is nothing more foolish than defying or denying God (Revelation 20:12-15). Solomon leaves room for hope as he writes "If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my heart to you; I will make my words known to you." This "turn" is like the word "repent" and means to turn around, go the other way, forsake the way you were going and turn toward God and only then will God pour out His Spirit on you. After the Spirit is resident, then the words can be made known to us, the words being the Bible. "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my

name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything" (John 14:26).

Proverbs 1:25-27 "But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh, at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you – when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you".

Ignorance is no excuse. The Bible says that we are all without excuse (Romans 1:20). The more times a person hears the gospel and rejects it, the harder their heart becomes; and the less likely they'll be to turn to Christ.

Proverbs 1:28-31 "Then they will call out to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes."

Unbelievers reject the knowledge of God, they also rejected the fear (respect, reverence) of the Lord. They plug their ears toward the counsel found in faithful witnesses and in the written Word. They despise God's reproof just as they thought the cross was foolish just as Paul wrote "the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God" (1st Corinthians 1:18). In time, they will receive the consequences (Proverbs 1:31).

Proverbs 1:32-33 "For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm."

The wisdom from this proverb is for those who will listen to God, can dwell in security with no fear of condemnation (Rom 8:1) and be at ease about any disaster because they are at peace with God (Rom 5:1). There is no peace with God until you've made peace with God. The simple pass right on down the broad path that leads toward destruction (Matt 7:13b) which is why Jesus said "Enter by the narrow gate. " (Matt 7:13a).

Wisdom is personified and given a human voice in verses 20–33. Wisdom is shouting in the streets, on the corners, and the entrance of the cities to the "simple ones." They are questioned about how long they will continue to act foolish (verse 22). We should ask, why continue down the same path you have seen others go down and be destroyed (verse 32)? Wisdom is not hidden, if we listen to God's wisdom, we can live in safety and peace no matter what the future holds (verse 33). We know God promised not to leave or forsake

us. He will guide us as we face challenges, if we ask for wisdom to make the right choices.

We should ask ourselves, what foolish acts have you witnessed others do that godly wisdom has helped you avoid?

There is great wisdom to be found in the Book of Proverbs. One of the wisest things we could do is to read one chapter a day from the Book of Proverbs and apply them to our lives. There are 31 chapters in Proverbs. Remember the very common theme in this book; "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, fools despise wisdom and discipline" (Proverbs 1:7).

From stepping into the world section – Look at what Jesus taught, who he spoke to, what kind of stories he told. Reading Scripture, we might also make the case for a moral framework of peace, justice or mercy. Perhaps we can pull through some threads from Proverbs and interlace them with the wisdom of the gospels to build our framework. Wisdom comes from God, who wants to be in relationship with us and teach us. When we have choices to make, things we pray about, we might consider what it would be like to talk out the matter with God and apply the values we have learned in a life of faith to the situation we face. Which choice would please God? Does a potential decision align with the mercy and justice the prophets proclaimed as God's desire? Can we view the outcome through the lens of love and feel it would be wise?

**Closing: For the love that casts out fear, the faith that sustains and the hope that never perishes, be with us now and forever more. Amen. God watch over us and take care of us.**

Next week's lesson June 14, 2020 "The Value of Wisdom" from Genesis 39 and Proverbs 2.