



*1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; 3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; 4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; 5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. 6 For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. 8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. 9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. (Prov 2:1-9)*

We resume today our study in the Book of Proverbs which holds forth the greatest wisdom to man ever written by the Mind of God. We cover the first 9 verses today of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter. But, looking at the overall plan for this complete chapter, we will observe how Wisdom will save us from many perils and disappointments and, in the end (if not always) reap high dividends. We may break this chapter down into four distinct categories of the benefits of Wisdom; 1) Wisdom sanctifies our soul (vv 1-6) when we first fear God and heed her counsel. 2) Wisdom provides the most security (vv 7-9) by becoming our shield and watchman. 3) Wisdom provides us immeasurable joy (vv 10-11) in our satisfaction of duty performed. 4) The Wisdom that calls us to Christ and His Righteousness will save us. a) From Godless men (vv 12-15, 20-22); b) From godless women (vv 16-19).

The Book of Proverbs makes a personification of Wisdom which closely resembles the efficacious Counsel of the Holy Ghost; and why shouldn't it, for all of the Counsel of the Holy Ghost is the purest distillation of Wisdom. Wisdom is not natural character of man, but of God. What wisdom we have comes from the Mind of God. In a sense, all unbelievers are out of their right mind because they lack the most critical knowledge and wisdom that points invariably to His Throne of Grace. A fifteen year old high school dropout on a farm in China may have more wisdom than the proud Princeton theologian and, therefore, be more acquainted with God. A mere child, whose father is President, has more influence than a corporate executive has – and the child will know his father better than that executive. It is our relationship with God that imputes righteousness, and it is our early fear of Him that drives us to the threshold of Wisdom.

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Our first benchmark in knowing God is to receive His Word. If we are prone to sitting in one church service a week and, hopefully, absorbing His Counsel through the process of osmosis, we will never make the mark. We may as well be an oyster on the bottom of the sea that neither labors nor chooses its own food. It consumes whatever is dropped down to its open shell. But the valiant soul is like the eagle that flies above the clouds and seeks diligently for its daily bread. And how does one hide God's Commandments with himself? He studies and meditates on all of the Scriptures, even searching between the lines for meaning, as a young lady peruses a love letter. It is a daily endeavor for one must eat daily to keep a healthy body – and spirit. We do not take into our hearts two rough-hewn Tables of Stone written there on Mount Sinai, but we attach them to the vehicle of warm love which penetrates deep into the lower chambers of our heart. It is love that gives our obedience legitimacy. It is just as a later Proverb states: "...**write them upon the table of thine heart.**" (Prov 7:3) We see this same truth beautifully expressed in the New Testament at many points, most wonderfully in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians: **2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: 3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.** (2 Cor 3:2-3) How beautiful that these souls, marred in times past with sin and wickedness, can actually become the letters of God to those who know us. Are you a letter of God to others?

**2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding** There are several thousand books in my library. My wife is baffled that I need so many. She asked me one day, "Jerry, have you READ all of these books?" Of course, I have not. I may have read some particular reading from each of them for they are reference books and not novels. The point is that we must do more than HAVE possession of a book if we will know its contents. We must crave the deeper things of God so much so that we acquire every tool to advance our understanding. Personally, I will not give two cents for modern theological works for most are tinged with a very low view of God. I prefer the old masters such as Augustine, Athanasius, Matthew Henry, Jonathan Edwards, Ryle, etc. I love them because their writings reflect the same love for Christ as my heart yearns to have. If we incline our ear to God, we must drown out all of the 'racket' of the world and concentrate on His still, small voice. Once we have an understanding of any truth that God imparts to us through His Word, we must then apply our hearts to its understanding. If you hear a particularly touching story from a friend, if you wish to remember that story for future reference, you must go out and share it promptly. The same with the Word of God.

**3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; 4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; 5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.** Knowledge and wisdom begin in fear, but they do not end in fear, but in courage and inspiration. If we have not feared the wrath of God as sinners, then what can ever bring us to search Him out? That fear will drive us to seek His face and when we have found Him, our fear turns to a loving reliance and a mild fear of disappointing Him. ***The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.*** (Psalms 111:10) Each Word of God is as precious silver, and silver must be mined from the rock – the Rock of Christ. Silver must be refined to remove impurities – so the soul that comes to Christ must be sanctified. **6 For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.** At last, we all discover that the Lord is the only source of true wisdom and knowledge – and it is free to those who seek it.

We are secure when we have put on the armor of wisdom. 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly The Lord lays up sound wisdom for the righteous? Yes, there is always more in His store room of wisdom after each bestowal of that precious commodity. It is laid up for us and it is imparted to us in measures which we can digest. Every morsel of wisdom is another link in our spiritual coat of mail. 8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints The Lord keeps us in His pardon for we are righteous in His eyes with the imputed righteousness of His Son. He preserves the way of the saints because the way of the saints is the Way of Christ – in Truth and Life!

9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. If you have sought out wisdom above all else, as did the author of these Proverbs (Solomon), then shall you understand how you can be accounted righteous in the eyes of the Lord. You will not face confusion of thought and action for your conscience, being informed of Wisdom imparted by the Holy Ghost, shall be your guide and compass. Knowing judgment, you will also know that you have been justified through the meritorious works of Christ. And what is every good path? It is that Way, that Truth, that Life made available in Christ. Being in Him as our Ark of Salvation, we cannot venture from that Way – for He is that WAY!