



10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; 11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: 12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; 13 Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; 14 Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked; 15 Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths: 16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; 17 Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. 18 For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. 19 None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life. 20 That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous. 21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. 22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it. (Prov 2:10-22)

In today's passage, we see that Wisdom has an effect seldom mentioned but surely realized by all who seek and find it – Wisdom gives us JOY! **10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;** There is a sympathetic chord struck in the heart when Wisdom enters therein. Of course, Wisdom never barges its way into the heart – it must be invited and welcomed, we will find a strange and different comfort to our souls – a comfort which we will have never experienced in past times. It is as if we have met a very refined stranger with whom we are enchanted, so much so that we invite them into our intimate confidence. Thereafter, we learn that this stranger is not a stranger, but the bosom friend of our soul. She is able to give advice and counsel that is truly amazing (and always correct and edifying). What reaction is made in the heart?

11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: 12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; Here is our protection for the evil ways of men. Discretion gives us the discernment to recognize the dangers of temptation and tells how to avoid them. Where will we be kept when we heed the voice of Wisdom? When we have understood the counsel of God given in Scripture, we shall be kept in the Will of God and away from error. This is the blessed way! We shall be delivered, not only from wicked men, but from wicked thoughts expressed through their lying tongues. Much of the weakness of faith in the modern church is caused by a lack of Wisdom and knowledge gained from a diligent study of the Bible. The whimsical modern preacher cannot deceive about the Bible if the people have understood it. Who are these evil men referred to? **13 Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; 14 Who rejoice to do evil, and delight**

in the frowardness of the wicked; 15 Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths. Remember that Straight path and Narrow Gate that the righteous must walk? The sinner will have none of it. We must walk not, stand not, or make ourselves at home in the counsel of the ungodly. (Psalms 1:1) The Way of the righteous is a known Way to God, but the sinner knows not this way. He is a fickle as the chaff which the wind scatters here and yon. The sinner has NO path but that path that leads to destruction. Associations are IMPORTANT as Wisdom has told us!

During the terrible draught and deprivation of the 1930's depression, my father worked with farmers in South Georgia. The most common tree was the tall lob-lolly pine. Though tall, the tree was not always straight. My father told me that, if a man wanted a long, straight tree from which to cut a prime timber, he must go to the center of the forest where the trees grew taller and straighter. Those around the edge of the forest were more likely to be crooked or dwarfed. Is it not the same with the proper worship of the Lord? Those 'casual observers' at church do not grow strong spiritual bones and muscles; but those at the center of the Bible Forest grow tall and straight.

Women, too, do not escape the lure of sinful willfulness. *16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; 17 Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. 18 For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. 19 None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.* The opposite of Wisdom and her good counsel is the cheapened woman of the street who speaks words of flattery and not truth. Instead of counseling for goodness, this sinful woman counsels to temptation – to deviate from the straight path of Wisdom, and of Wisdom's God. Remember the woman whom we shall discuss in the last chapter of Proverbs (Proverbs 31 woman). She is the essence of Wisdom. Her husband owes his success and respectability to the industrious and womanly Wisdom of his wife. Her hands are not idle, but weave cloth and invest in real estate. She rises early and works the long day. She does not neglect her family while pursuing her role in business and society. Her children, too, rise up and call her blessed. These women are not common, and are valuable. The Proverb calls her more precious than rubies. The ruby is precious, not because it is common found in all soils, but owing to its rarity and innate beauty.

It seems that men have somewhat of an edge on pursuing wickedness for the text returns to men to close the chapter. . *20 That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous. 21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. 22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.* Surely, the tall Cedars of Lebanon are choice timbers for their uprightness. If we will raise such Cedars, we must plant them in the proper place and soil – such as Lebanon. They will not grow in the tropical rain forest or the western prairie lands. There is a proper place for the righteous where they are regular recipients of the Wisdom and grace of God. It is the Way of the Lord, and there is no other Way that will suffice for eternal bliss.

It may often appear that wickedness and evil have the dominate hand in the world. This is true; however, it does not have the victorious and durable hand. Wickedness and evildoers shall be cut off as a timber and even the roots rooted up and destroyed. There will be not return of wickedness when the final trump of the bugle sounds across the final battlefield.

Where are you planted, and where do YOU stand, friend?