



13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. 14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. 15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. 16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. 17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. 18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her. 19 The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. 20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew. (Prov 3:13-20)

There is one aspect of wisdom that is seldom noted – that is, wisdom brings happiness and joy. The world most often seems to turn to the wise decision reluctantly and with dread. It seems that the world feels that wisdom is a governor against their happy endeavors, but those endeavors that the world believes will lead to happiness most often carry a heavy cost that will leave the worldly man in rags and poverty of joy. ***13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.*** The discovery of true wisdom does not occur from a casual observation – true wisdom must be sought out as a diamond in the stones of the earth. Once found, after much seeking, the result will always bring joy. There seems to me to be at least two reasons for the happiness that comes with the discovery of wisdom: 1) When we have diligently searched out a gem of great value, we are always elated at its discovery. The same is true of the wisdom we **glean** (not causally harvest) from the pages of God's Word. 2) We are already familiar with wisdom and are glad that we recognize it even if in the

rough-hewn stones of law and righteousness. Having possessed a single gem of wisdom we are driven to further mining of it to possess more of this valuable gift of God.

What is the merchandise of wisdom? It is rare in its enduring peace and satisfaction conveyed to its owner, and it is more solid than fine gold and silver. It is the coinage of the realm of Heaven, and is accepted at all exchanges in the world. It is the reward of duty well performed and honestly executed before the Lord. The conscience is made at ease through wisdom. Like gold and silver, wisdom is refined in the heart of man many times over in its perfection. **14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.** Its value is not EQUAL to gold and silver, but BETTER than! Gold and silver will not bring peace of mind to the greedy merchant – wisdom WILL!

I need not point out to the perceptive reader that Wisdom is made reference to in the feminine gender. Like the perfect lady, Wisdom is gentle, undemanding, earnest, diligent, generous, productive, and beautiful. We will study this characteristic in the famous description of the "Proverbs 31 Woman." **15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.** This is the same description given for a "virtuous woman" in Proverbs 31:10. It is not coincidental. When I was a young boy, the schools of the old South still taught manners, etiquette, and virtuous demeanor to young girls. How I long to have such discretion in education return to public education, but I fear it is lost forever except to dedicated home-schoolers. When a young man of character meets and falls in love with a virtuous woman, his conduct and manners will be curbed by her virtuous refinement. He will love her beyond any worldly treasure and would literally lay down his life for her. Her value is far above rubies. Why is the ruby red gem referred to here? Because, unlike a diamond whose beauty is dependent upon the reflected outside light source, the beauty of the Ruby is intrinsic to its inner being. The scarlet color represents sacrifice and love. These are properties that can be purchased at no currency.

The person of wisdom will be wise in all things, including hygiene, diet and daily constitution. **16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.** Wisdom is the treasure with which all other treasures can be purchased. **But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.** (Matt 6:33) The greatest wisdom of all is to know God. Having the first Promise in Wisdom, all other virtuous gifts will fall to our share. **For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.** (1 Tim 4:8)

17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. What does Wisdom offer as a destiny? Is it not the home of the weary pilgrim beyond Jordan Waters? They we plod as pilgrims through the unfriendly wilderness, are our steps not glad since each brings us closer to our destiny? When I was a cadet at the Military Academy, I hated the long marches up hill and mountain as we drew further and further away from our barracks. But when our march turned back in the direction of home, even though this was the greatest distance between us and that home of the entire march, our steps became light and lively in contemplation of the coming rest. We were now headed in the RIGHT direction! The ways of Wisdom are pleasant and peaceful simply because we are marching in the right direction! It is not religion, but the lack thereof, that makes man unhappy. Of course that religion must also be the RIGHT religion of Christ if it is to be authentic. True religion does not merely look beyond

present sufferings to future rewards. The Wisdom of true religion offers its own joy and reward not only for the future time, but in the present moment as well. Even our suffering can be a pleasantry when accompanied by the Wisdom of God.

Wisdom's ways are PLEASANT: Here ways are pleasant because they are **1) SAFE**. It is the very BEST way to travel. The God in whom we trust neither slumbers nor sleeps. He will direct our footsteps with the Light of His Word. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* (Psalms 119:105); they are **2) pleasant ways** for the Godly experiences of love and charity which we have on the way. Those moments when we have been mean and uncharitable are not memories we cherish. But those moments when we have shared both love and treasure are significant in our memories even at the abyss of the grave; they are **3) full of good works**. Our labors of love last forever and mark our course in this life. Unlike the sand-blown Ozymandias, our monument is an eternal and living monument of works that last. The way of Wisdom is **4) pleasant to contemplate** for that way is full of hope and contemplation of our meeting with the angels. We are free of fear because our consciences are clear. Faith in Christ engenders no fear at all, only hope – it's opposite.

The Way of Wisdom presents us with a Duty: **1) Our duty to Wisdom is one of Joy!** The testimony of joyful believers has a profound impact on the unbelieving world. Even in adversity, our joy sends out a beam of light as from a lighthouse, as to the reason for our joy – and that joy is Christ! The world will note that our joy and pleasure is not inhibited by our religion, but that our religion is the very source of our joy and pleasure. **2) Our duty of joy is also for the sake of Christ.** Our joy in wisdom honors our Lord. The heavens rejoice also when our hearts are filled with the joy of the Lord. **3) Our duty of joy is owing to our own sake.** We owe a debt of joy to ourselves in the faith that has made us free. If we lack joy in the knowledge and wisdom of the Lord, we are cheating ourselves of a great benefit. **4) We owe a duty of joy to others around us.** If we labor for a harsh master, our downcast countenance will reflect our misery; but if we work for the Lord and Master of our souls, our joy must be reflected in a happy countenance to others. No one will be drawn to labor for a harsh master, but untold millions will flock to a Master of Love and Forgiveness.

18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her. Had Mother Eve possessed the wisdom she should have had, she would have partaken of the Tree of Life and not the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Wisdom gives joy, vibrancy, and meaning to life. Without wisdom, life is an empty tomb waiting to be filled.

We next learn that Wisdom is the fuel of Creation itself: **19 The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.** When we observe the perfect symmetry and balance in nature and in the heavenly bodies, we are forced to admit that a Great Intelligence had to be behind the plan. That Great Intelligence is God who is the very Author of Wisdom. He has instilled that wisdom in the daisy flower, the flowing rivers, the baby colt, and every other of His creatures.

20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew. Not only does God use Wisdom in His Creative endeavors, but also in sustaining that which He has created. Man cannot control the fountains of the deep, or the rumblings of earthquakes and volcanoes. These are left to the sole province of God. Man cannot form dew from nothing, but God does. Silent and invisible does the dew form on the rose and the corn. We cannot see its distillation, but we can see its results.

Have you diligently sought after wisdom and knowledge? If not, you may not know their Author.