



21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion: 22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. 23 Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. 24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. 25 Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. 26 For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken. 27 Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. 28 Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee. 29 Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee. 30 Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm. 31 Envy thou not

the oppressor, and choose none of his ways. 32 For the froward is abomination to the Lord: but his secret is with the righteous. 33 The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just. 34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly. 35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools. (Prov 3:21-35)

Do we not read the clear Mind of the Good Shepherd in these lines today? The Wisdom of this text is summarized in the Ten Commandments, but they are not designed as a restraint to joy, but rather as an enabler of it. I will relate a true story of a very wise young lady whom I love as my own daughter. We will call her JJ for the sake of discretion. JJ came to my church from Korea in 1996. She was a mere ten years of age having recently lost her father to a tragic accident. In the Korean community, she and her sister and mother were looked down upon because there was no father in the home. I loved JJ as my daughter from the moment I met her. I taught her ESL classes, and she paid absolute attention to every word of instruction. Soon after, we lost our organist for the English language church service. JJ came and volunteered. She said she was not very good, but that she would do her best. Her best was not very good at first, but three months later, her best was to be able to play every hymn in the hymnbook with commendable proficiency. Her mother taught music, but JJ had never taken an interest in it until now. Soon, her mom was unable to teach JJ any more than she already knew.

The professor of Fine Arts at the local college heard JJ play and was impressed. She volunteered to teach JJ free of charge on weekends. Not long after, the professor was unable to teach JJ more, so Prof Lipovetsky of Florida State (FSU) agreed to instruct JJ. Within a few months, JJ had mastered his music program achieving the Master's level in music while still in high school. She served as pianist/organist for St Andrews from 1996 to 2005. This was her ticket to university. JJ received a full scholarship to Emory University after graduating valedictorian. After gaining her undergraduate degree at Emory, JJ enrolled in the University of Alabama School of Dentistry (Birmingham) and graduates this coming June (2013). She has placed all of the most important things in her life FIRST – God, family, learning, and future profession. She was forced to live very close to bone while at UAB. She would only turn her water heater on twenty minutes before taking a shower. She searched for all sales at which to buy food and clothing. But her frugal wisdom has now paid dividends. JJ will soon be practicing Dentistry at a handsome income. We are all very proud of JJ and consider her a bright star in the crown of St Andrews Church. Wisdom did it for JJ. Applying the principles of wisdom to her daily life has proven to bear many fruits of joy for JJ and those who love this Little Girl. This is wisdom rarely found in the youth of our day.

21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion. Do not allow the constant vision of wisdom and discreet behavior escape your awareness and daily living. Avoid all appearance of evil even if there is no abject evil in an act or word. Remember, the world looks more closely to find fault with a child of God than a child of the world. If we practice restraint on our desires today, what award may await us? **22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.** **23 Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.** Our souls are made strong and healthy through the sound diet of wisdom! The drowsy day-dreamer will have lost the profit of gainful labor. You will remember Aesop's account of the ant and the Grasshopper. When the summer was rich in food and plenty, the grasshopper went about in gay abandon playing his harp and paying not heed at all to the provision for tomorrow. But the ants were diligently working every available minutes of the day to store away food for the coming winter. The grasshopper ridiculed

their labors and continued in frivolity as if there were no tomorrow. When the cold winds began to blow and the frosty ice rid the land of all edible vegetation, the grasshopper, like the Prodigal Son, began to be in want. He remembered the industrious ants and went begging food, but they refused because he had squandered his productive hours away while they labored hard. We see the blinding example of the lack of wisdom in the indoctrination of our own citizens by the government into believing that they need government to provide their needs. They live off the backs of other hard-working Americans. They fail to experience the joy of liberty and duty well performed that others feel who are wise. Of course, we again see that the wise way is also the SAFE way. We will not stumble about as drunken men – the greater part of America does so today! *Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.* (Psalms 91:9-12)

24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. 25 Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. 26 For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken. The midnight terrors of Charles Dickens' *Scrooge* shall not attend your sleeping hours. Having a light and wholesome conscience, you will not be disturbed by the nightmares of your evil angels on your bed at night. Do not act without reason or logic at a sudden shock of fear. There is a tradition in the British Navy wherein the bugle sounds "The Still" during moments of sudden emergency or just prior to engaging battle. All hands cease their activities for a moment to collect their thoughts and intentions. When we witness the awful carnage and poverty of the wicked, be not dismayed or fearful. Judgment comes from the hand of the Lord, and it is He who keeps your foot on solid ground.

We are not only to abstain from sins of commission, but also from sins of OMISSION (as the General Confession rightly points out). It is a sin to have a cupboard full of bread while your neighbor starves. 27 Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. 28 Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee. Sin is not simply bad things that we overtly do, but also good that we fail to do. To whom is good due? Thy neighbor! Any oppressed or emaciated child over whom you have the power to grant goodness, do it! Our generosity is not a single occasion, but a continual way of life. The Jewish fellow who fell among thieves had no social right to the assistance of the Good Samaritan whom he hated and who helped him. This Good Samaritan even offered the inn keeper more money on his return for the fallen man if it were needed.

29 Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee. The fundamental building block of civilization is the family. And the extended family is the community of neighbors among whom we live. If love and respect fail among neighbors, what can be the hope of the nation? 30 Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm. I have heard this verse used to argue that we are not to take up arms in our own defense, or that of our families. But read this verse again and note the clause "*without cause.*" There is a cause for arms, for striving and argument in church against immoral or erroneous teaching. 31 Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways. We live in a world today that wants to dispense with all negatives. But these Proverbs are a good balance between the positive and the negative commands. Electric current will not flow unless there is a positive and a negative pole.

All consequence of bad behavior is excused by modern government. Do not envy the abusive power of either man or governments. Joining the forces of evil is not a road to victory.

32 For the froward is abomination to the Lord: but his secret is with the righteous. The forward man is devious and perverse. All perversion, including homosexuality, is an abomination to the Lord confirmed in both Old and New Testament scripture. The secret solution to the fires of the wicked lie with the promises granted to the righteous, but they will never lay claim to those promises. **33 The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.** Have you ever wondered why our beloved America has fared so well in safety from its founding? I have been criticized by those of liberal bent who feel that religion has no place in politics. Really? Where would America be today if the Founders had not appealed to Almighty God for His Guidance and Providence? Do we cease believing in truth the moment we enter a voting booth or public office? God has presently blessed America, but I feel that He shall not forever withhold His Mighty Arm of Judgment from these fair shores.

34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly Have you benefitted at the Throne of Grace? If not, you do not belong to God the Father. Have you become like unto one of these little children? If not, you are still lost and wandering – instead of being a set star in heaven, you are like a wandering meteor. The scorners, I remind you, perished outside the closed door of the Ark in the days of Noah.

35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools. Adam and Eve were 'ashamed' in the Garden for they had not wherewithal to cover their sins. Had they been wise, they would have followed the counsel of their Creator. But they foolishly believed their wisdom to be above that of their Maker and were found naked. Will you be found naked before the Lord on that dreadful Day of Judgment; or will you be covered by that White Robe of Righteousness purchased by our Lord on the brow of Calvary Mountain?