

Sacred Pursuit

Week 1

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(ME-WE-GOD-YOU-WE) (Orientation-Identification-Illumination-Application-Inspiration)

What do I want them to know? Why do I want them to know it?

What do I want them to do? Why do I want them to do it?

Discussion:

In the last 6 months, what have you earnestly pursued most?

ME:

Have you ever worked really hard for something in life? For me it was...(leader finish the statement)

Most recently, I worked really hard at pursuing a...(leader finish the statement)

WE:

What about you? For you, maybe it was an item (new car, house, Plasma TV)). OR, maybe it was a person? A spouse? There's a story in the Bible of a man named Jacob who worked 14 years for his wife? How would you like that??

What are you pursuing? Everybody is always in pursuit of something!

Transition: You know, the Bible has something to say about what one of our top Pursuits should be in life. In fact, in the book of Proverbs it says that this pursuit should be fairly simple and obvious...

Need to know about Proverbs: a collection of wise sayings that are generally true about life. Written mostly by King Solomon (1-29); one ch. by Agur son of Jakeh; one ch. by King Lemuel. Proverbs talks a ton about 'Wisdom' – 54 (of 234) times in fact!!

The Proverbs tell us that Wisdom should be one of our highest pursuits.

Well, in this new year we are going to explore the book of Proverbs together and see what it has to say to us about 'Wise Living.'

Wisdom in the Proverbs:

- 215 in NIV, 234 in KJV, 54 times in Proverbs (exactly 1/4)
- Proverbs wisdom is typically general wisdom that is generally true in all of life for most or all circumstances
 - These things are generally true about life

Shameless Plug for Daily Proverb reading: [read Prov. 1:1-6](#) – if you want to prosper in any area of life, read the Proverbs!!!

Big Idea: Make the Pursuit of Wisdom One of Your Highest Pursuits of the year

Why does Wisdom end with 'dumb'??

Collegiate Dictionary:

- accumulated philosophic or scientific learning : KNOWLEDGE
- ability to discern inner qualities and relationships : INSIGHT
- good sense : JUDGMENT
- generally accepted belief
- a wise attitude, belief, or course of action
- the teachings of the ancient wise men

Wisdom: the ability to skillfully apply knowledge
the ability to discern what is true or right.
What you ought to do based on how the world really works.

Dr. Larry Lea "Wisdom is the God-given ability to perceive the true nature of a matter and to implement the will of God in that matter."

Bill Hybels "Wisdom is what is true and right combined with good judgment."

Proverbs 1:20-21

20 Wisdom calls aloud in the street,
she raises her voice in the public squares;

21 at the head of the noisy streets she cries out,
in the gateways of the city she makes her speech:

- Wisdom is easy to be found, and is, in fact, usually obvious to see and hear!!
- Even among the noise of life, she is crying aloud

22 "How long will you simple ones love your simple ways?
How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?"

23 If you had responded to my rebuke,
I would have poured out my heart to you
and made my thoughts known to you.

24 But since you rejected me when I called
and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand,

25 since you ignored all my advice
and would not accept my rebuke,

26 I in turn will laugh at your disaster;
I will mock when calamity overtakes you- (the ultimate "I told you so" that is silent from Wisdom)

27 when calamity overtakes you like a storm,
when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind,
when distress and trouble overwhelm you.

28 "Then they will call to me but I will not answer;
they will look for me but will not find me. (it is never too late to make the right decision, but it IS
sometimes too late to avoid the consequences of an unwise decision)

29 Since they hated knowledge
and did not choose to fear the LORD,

30 since they would not accept my advice
and spurned my rebuke,

31 they will eat the fruit of their ways

and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. ('God cannot be mocked. A man will reap what he sows'

– Gal. 6:7)

32 For the waywardness of the simple will kill them,
and the complacency of fools will destroy them;

33 but whoever listens to me will live in safety
and be at ease, without fear of harm."

- If you ignore Wisdom (that which is obviously wise) you will reap difficulty
- If you heed (listen to) Wisdom, you will 'live in safety'

Proverbs 2:1-22

1 My son, **if** you accept my words
and (if) store up my commands within you,

2 turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding,

3 and **if** you call out for insight
and (if you) cry aloud for understanding, (pursuit is up to you!)

4 and **if** you look for it as for silver
and (if) search for it as for hidden treasure,

5 **then** you will understand the fear of the LORD
and (then you will) find the knowledge of God.

6 For the LORD gives wisdom,
and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

7 He holds victory in store for the upright,
he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,

8 for he guards the course of the just
and protects the way of his faithful ones.

9 Then you will understand what is right and just
and fair—every good path.

10 For wisdom will enter your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.

11 Discretion will protect you,
and understanding will guard you.

12 Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men,
from men whose words are perverse,

13 who leave the straight paths
to walk in dark ways,

14 who delight in doing wrong
and rejoice in the perverseness of evil,

15 whose paths are crooked
and who are devious in their ways.

16 It will save you also from the adulteress,
from the wayward wife with her seductive words,

- 17 who has left the partner of her youth
and ignored the covenant she made before God. [a]
- 18 For her house leads down to death
and her paths to the spirits of the dead.
- 19 None who go to her return
or attain the paths of life.
- 20 Thus you will walk in the ways of good men
and keep to the paths of the righteous.
- 21 For the upright will live in the land,
and the blameless will remain in it;
- 22 but the wicked will be cut off from the land,
and the unfaithful will be torn from it.

Proverbs 4:1-9, 23

- 1 Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction;
pay attention and gain understanding.
- 2 I give you sound learning,
so do not forsake my teaching.
- 3 When I was a boy in my father's house,
still tender, and an only child of my mother,
- 4 he taught me and said,
"Lay hold of my words with all your heart;
keep my commands and you will live.
- 5 Get (acquire, buy, possess) wisdom, get understanding;
do not forget my words or swerve from them.

6 Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you;

love her, and she will watch over you. (it's so simple: walk in wisdom and make wise choices and she will guard you)

- 7 Wisdom is supreme** (first, beginning, best, chief); **therefore get wisdom.**
Though it cost all you have, get understanding. (WOW – cost all you have!!)
- Remember King Solomon – when offered one thing, he chose Wisdom!!

- 8 Esteem her, and she will exalt you;
embrace her, and she will honor you.
- 9 She will set a garland of grace on your head
and present you with a crown of splendor."

What amazing
promises for those
who gather wisdom!!

Proverbs 8:1-36 (in this chapter 'Wisdom' is amazingly personified)

- 1 Does not wisdom call out?
Does not understanding raise her voice? (same as ch. 1 – calling out to us!!)
- 2 On the heights along the way,
where the paths meet, she takes her stand;
- 3 beside the gates leading into the city,
at the entrances, she cries aloud: (available everywhere!)
- 4 "To you, O men, I call out;
I raise my voice to all mankind. (available to everyone!)

- 5 You who are simple, gain prudence;
you who are foolish, gain understanding.
- 6 Listen, for I have worthy things to say;
I open my lips to speak what is right.
- 7 My mouth speaks what is true, (whose mouth is this anyway?)
for my lips detest wickedness.
- 8 All the words of my mouth are just;
none of them is crooked or perverse.
- 9 To the discerning all of them are right;
they are faultless to those who have knowledge. (wisdom makes even more sense to those who
have already obtained some previous wisdom)
- 10 Choose my instruction instead of silver,
knowledge rather than choice gold,
- 11 for wisdom is more precious than rubies,
and nothing you desire can compare with her. (WOW!)
- 12 "I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence;
I possess knowledge and discretion. (if you acquire wisdom, you also get prudence, knowledge &
discretion)
- 13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil;
I hate pride and arrogance,
evil behavior and perverse speech. (you will also hate these things if you possess wisdom)
- 14 Counsel and sound judgment are mine; (more of the 'benefits package' of obtaining wisdom)
I have understanding and power.
- 15 By me kings reign
and rulers make laws that are just;
- 16 by me princes govern,
and all nobles who rule on earth.
- 17 I love those who love me,
and those who seek me find me. (great promise! – if you seek wisdom you will find it!)
- 18 With me are riches and honor,
enduring wealth and prosperity.
- 19 My fruit is better than fine gold;
what I yield surpasses choice silver.
- 20 I walk in the way of righteousness,
along the paths of justice,
- 21 bestowing wealth on those who love me
and making their treasuries full.
- 22 "The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works,
before his deeds of old;
- 23 I was appointed from eternity,
from the beginning, before the world began.
- 24 When there were no oceans, I was given birth,
when there were no springs abounding with water;
- 25 before the mountains were settled in place,
before the hills, I was given birth, (personified)

- 26 before he made the earth or its fields
or any of the dust of the world.
- 27 I was there when he set the heavens in place,
when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,
- 28 when he established the clouds above
and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,
- 29 when he gave the sea its boundary
so the waters would not overstep his command,
and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.
- 30 Then I was the craftsman at his side.
I was filled with delight day after day,
rejoicing always in his presence,
- 31 rejoicing in his whole world
and delighting in mankind.
- 32 "Now then, my sons, listen to me; (this is transition – it means "Listen up!")
blessed are those who keep my ways.
- 33 Listen to my instruction and be wise;
do not ignore it.
- 34 Blessed is the man who listens to me,
watching daily at my doors,
waiting at my doorway.
- 35 For whoever finds me finds life
and receives favor from the LORD. (remember Mary??) - pleasure, delight, favour, goodwill, acceptance
- 36 But whoever fails to find me harms himself;
all who hate me love death."

Lessons on Wisdom from the Proverbs

1. Wisdom is readily available to all who seek it (you must be the *pursuer*)
2. Wisdom is easily attainable to all who seek it
 - a. I believe that wisdom is readily available and easily attainable if only we will open our eyes to observe what is generally true about life!! If you were to read the Proverbs every day of your life and then watch to see how it is true, I think you'd be amazed. But instead, too often we simply block out what life generally demonstrates for us to be true b/c we don't want it to affect the decisions we want to make for ourselves.
3. Wisdom will greatly benefit your life if heeded
4. Wisdom will not guard your life if ignored

Benefits of Wisdom

1. 2:7 – Victory for the upright
2. 2:7 – protection for the blameless
3. 2:8 – guarding/protecting your course (ways)
4. 2:12 – save you from the ways of the wicked, from perverse men

5. 2:16 – save you from sexual sin
6. 2:18 – avoid death
7. 2:21 – will dwell in your land in safety
8. 8:2 – long life and prosperity
9. 8:4 – favor and a good name before God and man
- 10.

Conclusion:

Proverbs 4:23 “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”

- Make a promise to yourself and to God to Pursue Wisdom and to Guard your Heart – it is the wellspring of life!

11903 Any man who understands his own foolishness is already a little wise.

JEWISH PROVERB

11905 Being in the right does not depend on having a loud voice.

CHINESE PROVERB

11948 The one who knows most speaks least.

SPANISH PROVERB

11951 The wise man, even when he holds his tongue, says more than the fool when he speaks.

YIDDISH PROVERB

11958 We can be knowledgeable with other men's knowledge, but we cannot be wise with other men's wisdom.

MICHEL EYQUEM DE MONTAIGNE (1533–1592) **THEREFORE WE MUST PURSUE IT OURSELVES!!**