

I. Introduction to Proverbs

A. v 1 - Solomon (1 Kings 3)

1. God: "Ask for whatever you want me to give you ..."
2. Solomon
 - a. I am only a child and do not know how to carry out my duties.
 - b. Give me a discerning heart ... to distinguish between right and wrong.

B. The problem

1. We were not born with wisdom nor do we gain wisdom by getting older
 - a. God is the source and giver of all wisdom
Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, Who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (James 1:2-5, ESV)
 - b. Jesus Christ is the ultimate expression of God's wisdom
And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:30-31, ESV)

**Therefore, wisdom is gained by disciplined pursuit of God. It is a combination of knowing Him personally, knowing His Word, and doing what He says.

2. You were born already corrupted.
For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. (Romans 1:21-23, ESV)
 - a. Because of the Fall, our minds and hearts are corrupted by sin.
 - b. That confusion is compounded because of the world that denies absolute truth and encourages everyone to construct their own reality.
3. Wrong wiring
 - a. You are wired wrong. Wrong wiring results in wrong thinking. Wrong thinking leads to wrong living. You think wrong.
 - b. Who helps you recognize that you think wrong?
 - 1) Turn to someone next to you ...
 - a) "You think wrong."
 - b) "I think wrong."
 - 2) Who in your life tells you this that you actually listen to?

**We'll come back to this. Listen to what God says to us this morning.

II. The Purpose of Proverbs (vs 2-3)

A. To equip God's people with the moral skill for holy living and mental discernment

1. Wisdom is ...
 - a. The skill or ability to complete a commission through instruction and hard work
 - 1) Skill is not just intellectual or academic but moral and spiritual understanding.
 - 2) Instruction is practiced in a similar way. A child is chastened by a parent, or God's covenant people being transformed through discipline.

- b. How to live skillfully in every area of life including family, finances, relationships, speech and work.
 - 2. Our natural selves are foolish and lazy and we typically reject the hardship of learning by discipline.
 - a. Our very nature needs to be brought under discipline.
 - b. Note: Trying harder rarely ends well.
 - c. It's not about what we don't do; it's about who we run toward and who we begin to resemble.
 - B. Receive instruction in ...
 - 1. Wise dealing = act wisely in daily situations. Making good sense of normal stuff
 - 2. Righteousness = conformity to God's standards
 - 3. Justice and equality = ability to make trustworthy decisions with impartiality
- III. Who is Included? (vs 4-6)
 - A. The simple
 - 1. The immature, naive, gullible
 - 2. Two voices - wisdom and folly
 - 3. Prudence
 - a. Help you know the true facts of life
 - b. Discern between good and bad companions
 - c. Identify false values and beliefs
- **We all are born simple
 - B. The young
 - 1. Young - inexperience. However, experience does not equal wisdom.
 - 2. Tension between the moment and the future
 - 3. Discretion = ability to form plans so that you are successful
- **You may naturally grow out of invincibility but you do not naturally grow out of immaturity!
 - Fear often substitutes itself for wisdom
 - There are a lot of "old" people living by fear and calling it wisdom.
- C. The wise
 - 1. If you are truly wise, you will have an accurate perception of where you are and you'll always be teachable.
- **"I don't need to be disciplined anymore/right now," said no wise person ever.
 - 2. Obtain guidance - from where?
 - a. The world
 - b. Mystical guidance
 - c. Disciplined study and practice of God's Word.
- IV. Where Do We Begin? (v 7)
 - A. Fear of God
 - 1. Reverent awe/respect
 - a. God is holy, awesome, glorious, worthy and righteous
 - b. He is also loving beyond what you could ever imagine.
 - 2. Submission, surrender and trust
 - B. Two types of people
 - 1. Wise - characterized by fearing God
 - 2. Foolish - not mental disability but a moral and spiritual defect
 - a. They typically think more of themselves than they ought.
 - b. They reject God's wisdom because they hate discipline.
- V. Challenge
 - A. Are you a fool or becoming wise?

**This does not happen naturally. It is supernatural.

B. Test/assignment

1. You think wrong - more than you want to admit.
2. Who is in your life that you trust and who will lay aside your feelings to tell you that you are thinking wrong?
 - a. Pursuing God
 - b. Committed to your Christlikeness over your approval
 - c. Must have more than one