

WISDOM TAKES WORK

Wednesday, November 12

Reading: Proverbs 2:1-22

Proverbs 2:4 *if you look for [wisdom] as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, 5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. 6 For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

“There is nothing automatic about going wisdom’s way; one does not drift into it lazily; it takes a deliberate decision to begin and constant attention later to follow wisdom.”¹ In other words, wisdom takes work! In Hebrew, to “accept” has the idea of seizing or capturing and to “store up” means to hide something of great value. It involves “turning your ear” and “applying your heart.” Wisdom is to be sought like silver and precious gems which are found by tunneling under the earth to dig them out. All these terms show us that it takes effort to learn and follow God’s wisdom. It is interesting that the same words that were used for Lady Wisdom’s call are now repeated regarding the seeker (“call out...cry aloud” – see Proverbs 1:20-21). We must have this same intensity and urgency as we strive to walk in the way of wisdom.

The result of striving after wisdom is knowing how to please God and then doing it. The “fear of the Lord” speaks of our attitude of reverence and awe, while “the knowledge of God” speaks of our actions of obedience, faith, love, etc. It changes our entire lives. We find wisdom and understanding “from His mouth” – the very words of God have been given to us if we will accept, store up, apply, and look for them.

God is also “a shield” to those who walk in His ways. He guards the faithful in the way they live because His wisdom helps us know right from wrong. Wisdom is not a burden but “will be pleasant to your soul.” We then are given two examples of how God’s wisdom can save us from the temptations of the world: the perverted words of evil men (2:12-16) and the smooth words of loose women (2:17-20). Wisdom helps us see that they have “left the straight paths to walk in dark ways” (2:13) and that their “paths are crooked” (2:15). Their way always leads to death and not the paths of life (2:18-19).

“The upright will walk in the ways of the good and keep to the paths of the righteous. For the upright will live in the land...” (2:20-21). Walking is often used as an expression of daily living. Like walking, the life of wisdom is a steady progression, always moving forward toward our destination – to honor and serve God. It is following the paths of life and righteousness that He has spread before us. For the Israelites, “the land” was a picture of the blessing of God. When He delivered them from slavery in Egypt, God took them to “the Promised Land.” As long as they were obedient, God would bless them and allow them to live in the land. But God warned that if they turned away from Him He would remove them from the land. Thus, this discussion ends with a promise of God’s blessing on the faithful and a warning to the wicked.

Our world today is full of evil that tries to draw us away from the Lord. Only the wisdom found in God’s Word can keep us on “the straight and narrow.” How are you working to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ? (see 2 Peter 3:17-18).

¹ David A. Hubbard. The Preacher’s Commentary – Vol. 15: Proverbs, p. 61