

# Proverbs 10:1-5

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning. It's good to have you here today, and it's a special day. I know we have Mufiyu and Maggie, two children, from different families in our congregation today for the very first time.

Little infants walking into your midst. We praise you, Vivian, for your little one, and Dan and Jing for your third. And we are just thrilled that these little ones continue to find their way into our midst. Jesus said, let the little children come unto me. And I really pray that this will be a church who honors, respects, understands, and treasures all that comes with children.

And that we would be parental in some respect, all of us, as we have been entrusted with these little lives. Well, if you're visiting, we are in the midst of three weeks that skip like stones across the surface of Proverbs.

I want you to imagine that you've opened your Gmail or whatever server you have.

[ 1 : 18 ] And in your inbox are two invitations, courtesy of Evite, the latest way of letting somebody know that someone's invited to something.

Two invitations. Both of them are to dinner. Both of them are on the same night. Both of them are at the same time.

And both of them are asking for your RSVP. Which is French for, please let me know if you're coming.

Both are attractive. Both call out to you. And your hand hovers over them.

And you deliberate on which dinner party you are going to attend. Something like that has been at work in the book of Proverbs from the opening introduction through chapter 9.

[ 2 : 37 ] Or the very preceding verse of our own text. Wisdom and folly were introduced by the seventh verse in chapter 1.

But they are personified as individuals hosting a dinner party in chapter 9. It's worth just looking across the page at chapter 9 with the Bible in front of you.

To see that for nine chapters, the writer has been using literature in an artistic and narrative way.

To present an invitation to you, the reader, to attend a dinner party. Chapter 9 verse 1 and 2.

Wisdom in her home has made her meal. The phrase has also set her table. Verse 5. Her hand is out.

[ 3 : 39 ] But likewise, folly, verse 13, is also in the highest places of the town.

Asking that those would turn in here. And notice her meal, verse 17, consists of stolen water. But sweet it is.

And bread that's eaten in secret. For nine chapters. With great artistry. Wisdom and folly.

Have invited the reader. To dine with them at table. Those are the invitations in your inbox.

But now the book moves to these short, hard, hitting, pithy statements. Meant to show us what it looks like if you attend one or the other.

[ 4 : 46 ] Indeed, the heading is repeated now from the very beginning. We enter into the Proverbs of Solomon. And all the way through chapter 22 verse 16. We will see these statements by way of contrast with the word but.

Indicating the kinds of people, the implications that come, and the outcomes of the dinner party you decide to attend. So here we are.

Chapter 10, verse 1. Now, having had the invitation, the writer opens immediately with telling us what the outcomes will be.

The bookends of the first five verses demonstrate the outcome of the invitation you and I accept.

And it's almost as if the writer wants you to know, before you hit reply, I am coming. Here's the end result.

[ 5 : 53 ] These two verses, verse 1 and verse 5, are very similar to the mindset that was spoken to me when I was 18 years old.

When I began to become a follower of Jesus. The outcomes were put forward to me in black and white. Two roads diverging in my life.

And the one who had mentored me and been interested in me and invested in me said, At this point in your life, you need to know the end of the invitation you will accept.

Verse 1. A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.

The end, first then, will be whether or not you are wise or foolish. The invitation to the dinner table to dine with, to live with, to enjoy the pleasures of, wisdom or folly, will say something about me at the end.

[ 7 : 14 ] I will either be a wise son or a foolish son. You will either be a wise daughter or a foolish daughter.

Verse 5. He who gathers in the summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps and harvests is a son who brings shame. Not only am I a wise son or a foolish son, I am involved in an invitation that will either bring honor to my name or shame to my name.

Wise, foolish, honor, shame. If you look back at verse 1, you see very clearly that you will either fill your parents' hearts with gladness or fill their hearts with sorrow.

This is the general truth concerning the outcome of the invitation. Will I be wise or foolish? Will those who raised me be glad over my life?

Or will they be filled with the longing and the angst of the choices that I make? Will I myself bring honor to my name or shame?

[ 8 : 40 ] Wow. Such is the importance of which invitation we respond to.

You better get the regrets only right on this one. It would be nice to know, before we reply, if there's a way we could identify those who are going to the parties.

Have you seen this on Evite? Before you respond, you can look at the guest list, and you can actually see who's already going, so that you can have a sense of the sociability of the evening and whether or not you want to be there.

Well, the scriptures actually have identifying markers of those who are attending one world or the other. And they will arrive at one end or the other.

And the couplets of contrast in verse 2 and 4 indicate those who are already in attendance or who have responded. Look at the way it lays out.

[ 9 : 51 ] Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death. Or verse 4. A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.

Just as verses 1 and 5 demonstrate the outcomes of honor and shame, gladness and sorrow, whether I'm wise or foolish, verses 2 and 4 provide couplets of contrast that give me the characteristics, the distinguishing marks of those who are attending one or the other.

And the first one there, in verse 2, let's look at it simply. The couplet of contrast is integrity, not iniquity. Those who are heading toward an outcome of foolishness make their way through life by means of iniquity rather than integrity.

Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death. The righteousness there, and in proverbial wisdom more generally, is not to be thought of simply in some Martin Luther-esque term of you are justified by the righteousness of another, but rather right living.

Doing it the right way. Going about your life upright, not underhanded. It's the difference between somebody who is truly noble and someone who is nefarious.

[ 11 : 38 ] Someone who is trying to get their way forward in an inappropriate manner. It's the difference between morality and actually being down in the mud.

Integrity or iniquity. In other words, are your hands clean? If you're making your way in the world and acquiring wealth or work in an underhanded way rather than a way that's upright, in a dishonorable rather than an honorable way, it will, according to this, lead to no profit.

Yet the other one will deliver you even at the time of death. Integrity, not iniquity.

I mean, think about it. Compromise your integrity.

You undermine your ends. It may not appear for a while. It may not appear even in this life. It might wait all the way until the moment of death.

[13:02] And all the treasures that are gained will not profit you at all. They will be passed on to someone else and you will enter into the next world impoverished in any way.

This is why you need to protect your conscience. To sin against your conscience is a sin of undoing, unmaking.

It's taking a wall of rightness and removing brick and mortar. It's stepping over until you're able to step through. It's stepping through and never going back.

Do your work in the right way. Be a person of integrity. Those who are people of integrity are those who are walking in the way of wisdom.

Those who are people of iniquity are those who are compromised. But it moves. It's not just a question of integrity. Look at verse 4. If verse 2 centers on one's integrity, verse 4 centers on one's industry.

[14:27] And it's an industry in contrast to indolence. A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.

We are to be industrious. We are to be diligent. It's not just working right. It's working well. It's working hard.

And it is hard work to do it well. You don't even have to be a person to know this. I mean, just take a look back at chapter 6.

And you can go to an ant, verse 6, to be informed of the profit of industrious labor, personal initiative.

Go to the ant, O sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief officer or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food and harvest.

[15:33] How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber and want like an armed man.

Wisdom is not, therefore, a question of intelligence. An ant can be wise. We are to be industrious. I was raised by a father and mother who fortunately nurtured me, drove me, taught me, cajoled me toward integrity and industry.

Now, I realize that I am fortunate that not all of us have either familial models in our rearview mirror or even a broader model of the context in which we were raised.

many of us might have even had parents who were foolish and not wise and who wouldn't actually be happy with going about life the right way.

[17:04] But, generally, I was raised by a mother and father who taught me to be industrious and not indolent. I was raised in a world where inactivity was not a good thing, where idleness was not an option, where if I was to live without initiative, I was going to be in trouble.

It came down to little things. I had to make my bed before going to school. Now, if you're a kid here today and you don't have to make your bed, you're like, oh my gosh, if my parents go home and now they tell me I went to church and they're going to tell me to make my bed, well, go ahead, you can yell at me.

My father taught me how to make a bed. I still remember the quarter that, you know, he told me how to make sure it would bounce. And if I didn't make my bed in the morning before I went to school, I was grounded.

Now, that seems absurd to me today. But guess what? I always made my bed. And I learned that when you get up and get going, you get ready.

And getting ready is making sure things are in order. it was a way of life for me.

[18:36] I remember at age 15, almost 16, I was turning 16 that week on the industrious nature of life. I think I've shared it with you before.

And it was opening day for the Chicago Cubs. When I was a kid, I was a Cub Power t-shirt. It wasn't until later in life that I properly converted to the South Side and became a White Sox fan for life. But at any rate, when I was young, you could go to a Cubs game on the North Side for five bucks and sit in the bleachers.

And my best friend, Steve Tunn, had a four-door Plymouth whose doors were as heavy as some big old iron gate. I mean, a real door.

And we were going to go down to opening day. Problem was, first week of April, it was a school day. And I walked into my parents' room while they were still in bed really early.

[ 19 : 35 ] And I said, Dad, Steve and I want to go to the Cubs game today. And he said, What? And he was waking up and I said, We want to go to the Cubs game today. I need you to call the school to let them know I won't be in today.

Like I'm skipping. Trying to catch him while he was asleep, you know. He surprised me. He said, All right. That's your choice.

I'll tell them you're not going to be in. I'm not going to tell them you're sick. And if they ask me for a reason, I'll tell them you decided to go to the Cubs game. I said, Fine. He laid down.

Thought I was leaving the room. I said, Oh, one more thing. I need five bucks. My dad had one of those big old school wallets.

I don't know how they put them in their pockets back then. He had everything in there. I don't know what he had in there, but he had everything in there. My mom kept all her money in a purse in the front hall closet.

[ 20 : 35 ] She wasn't as attentive to where it was, which helped me at other times. But on this morning, I had to get five bucks from my dad. And I can still remember him in bed handing me the five and I reached and I grabbed it and as I began to go, I could tell he was holding it still.

And I looked back and he said, David, this is the last five dollars I give you before you have a job. Fine.

Took that five bucks, went to the game. Within a couple of weeks, I had our town paper open to the want ads and I was looking for work because I knew my father was not going to give me five more dollars.

And when I was 16, I walked down to Hocker U-Haul and Car Wash, interviewed for a job, they gave it to me and I made a buck 80 an hour.

I'm that old. A buck 80 an hour before taxes. I held that job from the second week I was 16 years old until I finished college.

[ 21 : 54 ] Probably doubled my salary by the time I got out. The best thing I ever did. Now, I'm kind of an old guy that whatever I learned I pass on to my kids.

I have five children. I've told them all, when you turn 16, you need, Lord willing, you need to demonstrate to your mom and dad that you have been working hard and to get a job.

They're like, well, I don't need a job. You and mom are doing fine. I'm like, no, you need to get a job. I said to Baxter, what do you want to do? He goes, I want to work for Kenny Williams in the Chicago White Sox.

I said, well, then go work for Kenny Williams. He said, really? I said, if that's what you want to do, go do it. He came back a half hour later, said, I went online. They don't have any openings.

I said, that's it? Your dream of working for Kenny Williams in the Chicago White Sox is done because you went online for 10 minutes? I said, I thought you said you wanted to work for the White Sox.

[ 22 : 57 ] He said, I did, but they don't have any openings. I said, you can't let that stop you. He disappeared. About a day later, I've got an interview.

Really? How did you get an interview? Well, it's not quite with the White Sox. It's with a firm that works every game and they outsource and I could be there at every game like one of those guys that takes the tickets.

Can you give me a ride over to get an interview? We drove over to Comiskey Park as fast as you could imagine and I still remember Baxter, age 16, walking out across the parking lot and I was the only car in the whole lot and I could tell he had gotten a job and he'd take the bus, 55 bus, he'd get on the red line, get out at 35th, walk across the street, started to work.

A slack hand causes poverty but the hand of the diligent makes rich.

There is something about industry and integrity that we need more of today. We need it in ourselves. We need to up the ante in regard to what we require of ourselves, in regard to the kind of church we want to be and the kind of children we want to raise, the kind of city we want to live in.

[ 24 : 21 ] Let me put it to you this way. Nothing will kill the country faster than a desire for wealth without work. It's the lottery, it's the casino, it's the gaming, it's the gaming.

It's more than that. It's a desire to be paid even without a willingness to work that makes a foolish people, a foolish state, a foolish family.

we have to reverse industry rather than indolence, activity versus inactivity, idleness versus initiative.

If you are not taking personal initiative to move your way along, and we expect someone else to do it, not that people don't need help, but in the context of a family that will help and work, this is what is on the hit button of those who are wise.

It doesn't mean that you're going to be healthy and wealthy. There's enough life experience to know that people do get treasures by attending the other party, but in the end it doesn't profit.

[ 26 : 14 ] And yet the little meagerness that you have, a slice of bread without compromise and through your own effort is the most beautiful piece of bread you can ever taste because it's yours.

It's yours. This is the way of wisdom. These are the pathways. Integrity not iniquity.

Industry not indolence. Saving gathers in the summer. Why do you go to gather in the summer?

winter. Because winter's coming. I want to be as practical as I can here and as helpful as possible.

One of the things that our society is built on is enabling us as its citizens to work our way ever more quickly into a problem area where we almost can't get ourselves out.

[ 27 : 25 ] in other words, they are paving the way for our own demise. And you have to find a way in the context of the community of faith to say, I was on that road.

I hit that button. I didn't even want to be in that world and I feel like I can't get out. Credit card debt.

Forty percent of American households carry credit card debt.

Somewhere between nine and sixteen thousand dollars by way of balance sitting on them. It's risen over eighteen and a half percent over the last five years. Why? Because anyone will let you spend money you don't have.

But this wisdom is I've got to reverse this. And you might say to yourself, I've got to be the first person I know in my sphere that reverses this.

Or you might need to say, I need help to reverse this. I want to walk in an integrity way and an industrious way and I need to find my way back up and out of this.

[ 28 : 37 ] It may take five years, it may take six years, but freedom is at the other end of this. I'm so concerned for the health of the church.

Not that you'll tithe all the more. I'm not talking about that today. I want you to be free. Free from the world that's asking us to their dinner without our means to be able to get ourselves through or up or out.

Which means, get this now, which means you can't spend what you don't have. And it means that even what I do have, I've got to put some away in the summer for the day I don't have.

Let me put it to you as simply as possible. You want a luxury item? Great. This is what I've heard. If you want a luxury item, pay cash.

Because then you could really buy a luxury item. But the world is pulling itself upon us in ways that are undoing us.

[ 29 : 47 ] And someone somewhere has to stand up and say, enough. Dave Helm, why don't you play the lottery? Because if I won the lottery, I would have demonstrated myself to be an individual who was looking for wealth without work.

I'm not going to do it. But you can't win if you don't play. That's correct, and I'm not playing. We need more casinos to help with our pension problem.

No, we have to find another way. Because the casinos are simply going to have us throwing our efforts at things that don't require our industry.

But I just do it for fun. Not me. Well, I need to slow down here, don't I?

I don't want to preach at you. I want my heart for you to be revealed.

[ 30 : 52 ] There is a better way than the way they have taught us. God, I will do anything in my power to help you economically!

economically get in a lane that will free you from the bondage of what foolishness has been hoisted upon us.

Two outcomes according to two invitations. Two guest lists that demonstrate the characteristics of the attendance.

And finally, one final thing to keep in mind. Look at what's right in the middle of verses one to five.

The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.

This is interesting. All of a sudden the Lord appears. He's on both sides of the couplet. The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry.

[ 32 : 12 ] The Lord will thwart the craving of the wicked. Let me put it to you this way. There is a God who sees us. There is a God who knows us.

And according to this verse, there is a God who stands ready to help us. It's not at the end of the day all my efforts that have put me where I am or you and your efforts have put you where you are. The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry. In other words, generally stated, by way of principle, Yahweh will be your help.

Yahweh will be your bread. Yahweh will be your sustenance. In plenty and in want. In sickness and in health. He is your covenantal partner.

And he will forever keep restricting the cravings of the wicked to where they're never satisfied. Let me put it to you this way.

[ 33 : 28 ] God is committed to supporting and strengthening you if you want to be at the table of wisdom. That's my encouragement to you. You're not alone. God will support and strengthen you.

So how does he do that? He finds a way. He sees you through. He introduces you to someone. We were young. We had four or five kids. They were young. They were young. We were in a month here in Hyde Park.

We couldn't pay the bills. Not for any lack of effort. We couldn't get it done. There was a family in this church.

They did not know our situation. Did not know it. we were weeping at home under the weight of our inability to get to the 31st of the month.

[ 34 : 44 ] And this person in our church hands me an envelope on the streets of Hyde Park. my husband and I for some reason just want you to have this.

And it got us through. The Lord will find a way. He will find a way when there is no way he finds a way.

When you don't have a thing he finds a way. When there is nothing he is still the way. Though he slay you he is your life.

He is it. He'll do it through people. He'll open a door. Or he won't. And when he doesn't your righteousness will deliver you from death.

There was a preacher and I'll close with this. Jesus the Nazarene who gave us the final measure of wisdom.

[ 36 : 00 ] You need to look at it. Matthew 7 He provides the wisdom that we will be measured by.

If you want the way of wisdom this is where all of proverbial wisdom is moving. Verse 24 Matthew 7 everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who has built his house on the rock.

And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and they beat on the house but it did not fall because it was founded on the rock. and everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand and the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house and it fell and great was the fall of it.

The measure of wisdom that you and I will be measured by is not merely the written word of proverbial literature but the living word of our Lord Jesus Christ as you give yourself to Jesus Jesus help me be wise he will he will I'm not the oldest one in here but I'm 58 almost he is ever faithful when I have nothing he's good when I've had plenty he's good when I've had to get a kid through school he's good when I've had someone show up at my house he's good all the time he is good the word of Jesus the word of

Jesus is your life 2019 your finger hovers over the keyboard two invitations!

[ 38 : 18 ] Two desperately different outcomes! Fortunately they can be discerned by two different ways with the encouragement that there is one God and his son who will establish me may it be so for you and for your family may he meet your every need may he put us as a church on the road that leads to life to to to