

Proverbs: Skillful living - Cheerfulness

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[0 : 00] I'm grateful that you have come today to hear from the Lord, and we have this opportunity today to read His Word and hopefully gaze at the face of God and leave this place changed.

We are in the beginnings of a new sermon series in the book of Proverbs. And Proverbs is a book about wisdom. And wisdom is, in the Hebrew, it's derived from a word that just means skilled.

Someone can be a wise counselor or a skilled counselor. Someone could be a wise craftsman, and meaning a skilled craftsman.

And so what does it mean to live in wisdom and biblical wisdom, and what does it mean to live in God's wisdom? It means to be skilled, if you will, at life.

How is it that God has ordered this world that we can work in concert with Him and His ways to be skilled at living and be pleasing to Him?

[1 : 06] Daniel Estes says it this way, that it's the ability, what is wisdom? It's the ability to make wise choices and to live successfully according to God's moral standards and in community with others.

So it is this that we're looking at, and Proverbs, because the book is a collection of individual sayings rather than an extended discourse, Proverbs would be difficult to go verse by verse.

And so as a result, we have kind of picked out 12 or 13 virtues that we are going to look over the course of time. And today we come to this topic of cheerfulness, that someone who is skilled at living, someone who is wise, someone who we looked at last week, the motto of the book of Proverbs, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

So someone who reveres the Lord, fears the Lord and has this reverence for the Lord, that is the beginning of living, wise, the beginning of wisdom.

This person who is skilled at life and one who is skilled at life because they have this reverence for the Lord will have something of and grow in cheerfulness.

[2 : 25] So what does the book of Proverbs say about being joyful, being cheerful? What does the book of Proverbs have to say?

The basic principle, first I want to look at, there's a couple of things we could say. There's the principle of cheerfulness and then there's going to be how do we grow in cheerfulness.

But before we get there, I want to say a few things that cheerfulness, society and culture could use a little more of.

Even perhaps even in the church, we could use a little more of cheerfulness. As many live in silent despair that indicates the absence of cheerfulness, others are consumed with angry hostility, which is the rejection of cheerfulness, and still yet others distract themselves in mindless amusement.

And this is a counterfeit to genuine cheerfulness. So what does this look like? Well, let's look at our first principle of cheerfulness. So I'm going to just be walking through different verses found here in the text.

[3 : 41] And it refers to, there's two Hebrew roots that we derive different words for cheerfulness in our English vernacular, but they all means this spontaneous vocal outburst of rejoicing.

That there's this outburst of rejoicing of praising the Lord in something, in some way, there's this joy that is exuded.

And these terms in the Hebrew language are contrast to words like mourning and or gloom. So you have this better knowing the antithesis of it, you have this better understanding of what perhaps cheerfulness may look like or joy.

And this kind of joy is not just an expression of this effervescent personality. We have met those people who they just are this effervescent personality with those bubbly people and we love them.

But rather this is a verbal overflowing of one's heart, of something is deep within us and there's this verbal outflow from the heart that is just cheerfulness.

[4 : 54] So we look at the principle Proverbs 15 verse 13, it reads this, that glad heart makes a cheerful face, but a sorrowful heart, the spirit is crushed.

We could say it this way, one's visible attitude is determined by the condition of one's heart, whether it be joyful or one's spirit is crushed, there is the proverb is indicating to us that there is a visible attitude that is expressed in someone's physical being as a condition of their heart.

So the glad heart makes the cheerful face, a sorrowful heart, the spirit is crushed, affecting an outward expression. Because this is true, you and I have this wonderful opportunity to engage in helping one another with regard to counseling.

People pay good money to see counselors and as people who have reverence for the Lord, fear the Lord and are growing in wisdom, you can also be skilled at counseling.

We can grow in that. And so knowing that there's this outward expression of either sorrow or of joy that helps us indicate how we might engage someone in counseling.

[6 : 15] And so this is something that I do often is when I am visiting or meeting with someone, and someone passing in the hallway, someone in a class, someone in my office, and many of you have maybe been the victim of what I'm about to say, I will say to folks often, and here's what you do, you state the observation.

God's word says that there's going to be this external expression of either joy or of sorrow or somehow there's this going to be this external expression from the person that you can observe.

So then use that and state an observation. You could say, Sir, Ma'am, you look unusually cheerful today. Can you please share with me what it is that I'm observing?

Sir Ma'am, you look sorrowful. You seem like something is disrupting you today. Can you please share? And then many of you have heard me say something like this.

If I feel like the person isn't ready to share, I will say, you know, should you be willing to share? I'm willing to listen and whenever that may be.

[7 : 27] And what am I doing? I am just taking God at His word that there is this visible expression that I'm observing and I want to know what's going on underneath. Please share.

That being said, and I also am taking Proverbs 20, verse 5, and you don't have this on the screen, but it says this, that the purpose of a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding draws it out.

So imagine this, a person's heart, God's word is saying, is like deep water. Imagine in your mind's eye a well cavity that is in someone's heart.

It's a deep well. And God's word says, but a man of understanding has the ability to draw it out. So you make a statement about someone's visible expression, but you have no idea what's under that deep well of a heart they have.

What is going on inside? And so that's why I extend the invitation. I have no idea. I don't presume to know. You and I both have had these kinds of things said to us.

[8 : 32] One person could say, and so please don't do this, you seem rather disturbed today. Are you still thinking about what I said to you?

We all know that, but I presume not to know what the deep well of the heart is. I see the visible expression, and so I make a statement on the expression, I see this.

I don't know what's going on, but should you be willing to share, I am eager to listen, and you can choose the time and the place. But I'd love to hear what's going on inside.

I'm just taking God at His word. There's a visible expression, and I know your heart is a deep well, and I'm wanting to engage in that. And a person of wisdom, a man of understanding has the ability to draw that out.

Second thing we notice about cheerfulness is that a cheerful heart can overcome adverse circumstances.

[9 : 36] The Proverb 15:15 reads, all the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast.

So the antithesis, this is the antithesis of a victim mentality that is so prevalent today. There's a recognition that the wretched are being oppressed, and the days of the oppressed are wretched.

However, in contrast to one's circumstances of being oppressed, it is possible for the one to have a cheerful heart, and not only just a cheerful heart, but a continual feast in that cheerful heart.

All the days of the oppressed, the verse reads, are wretched, but a cheerful heart has a continual feast. True and real happiness of a person is defined not by the external things or external circumstances but the state and the condition of one's heart.

It can be expressed in two ways. In spite of the prosperous condition, a secret sorrow may die, but also in spite of the external sorrowful state, the heart may be at peace and joyfully confident in the Lord.

[10 : 56] I perhaps witnessed this most poignantly when I was in the country of Rwanda, out in these villages of Mutara and Kahara. They're on the Burundi border, near the Burundi border I could see into Burundi.

This part of Rwanda, Rwanda is known for rains. Around three o'clock every day it rains. It's a beautiful afternoon rain that often frequents much of Rwanda, especially in the rainy seasons.

But toward the Burundi border it's pretty arid, and those who were victimized in the genocide and some other circumstances, they moved out into some not so good, prosperous areas of the nation of Rwanda.

Here were these people, and I was ministering in this village out in the rural area, very rural, it took us hours to get there on some not so good roads and then some hiking to further get to these villages.

But there was this church planting endeavor going on out there that was beautiful. So they invited me to come and share God's word with them, and the missionary asked me, do you want to stay in town or stay out in the village?

[12 : 19] Number one, I thought I'm not going on those roads again this week. So I'm staying in the village. And so a translator and I stayed, and I stayed with this family from the church where the man had lost the use of his arm because of an injury in the genocide.

They had lost two children. They had seven children in the family. The gentleman was on his second wife because the mortality rate in childbearing was high.

And so his first wife died in childbearing. He had his second wife and again seven children. And they had this mud brick home, maybe 10 feet by maybe 12 feet.

Mud brick home with a thatch roof. And no electricity, no running water, no septic system.

Primitive. But one thing that was shocking is there was a lot of laughter. They laughed a lot. There was cheerfulness all over and especially in this home.

[13 : 40] And so at night we would lie down and they would put the snake rattle in front of the door. Not a big fan of snakes. And so it would wake them up to kill the snake at night should one come. And so they would put this thing on the door and they would have this little lantern that would barely put out enough light.

It gets dark at six o'clock every night in Rwanda. That's right on the equator. And so at six o'clock, so from about six to eight, they would have this family time.

And there was this little lamp and oil lamp that he would light. The father of the house would light. And he himself was illiterate, but he had his oldest daughter read the Bible.

And so she would read the Bible every night and they would share stories of what God was doing and had been doing in their life. And the man, you think, well, he hired himself out to hoe a field every day.

[14 : 44] And so with one arm he would hoe a field and the wife would stay home with the children and cultivate their little garden. So their life wasn't glamorous.

It was very hard. But there was light. There was laughter. There was cheerfulness despite their circumstances.

I learned a lot about cheerfulness. They had joy. They had joy in the Lord. They were grateful for one another.

They were grateful to the Lord. They were grateful to their church. And when they would run out of food, they would be highly insulted to be considered poor. He would, the father of the house would always say to me, I have family.

I have family. When I don't have food, my family has food. There was just this dependence on the Lord. He's given me family. I have enough.

[15 : 46] And then he took great joy in being able to be a part of a team that would take the gospel to these other villages around. Laughter, joy, cheer filled that house.

So the key principle of cheerfulness is this. Cheerfulness starts in the heart, not with one circumstance. A cheerful heart can transcend all sorts of painful external factors, but no amount of contrived enthusiasm can solace the heart that is pain.

God's word is speaking to both of the. So if that's the principle, that's the key principle here of cheerfulness that's kind of found in the book of Proverbs, then what is the process?

How do we have a cheerful heart? How do we grow in wisdom, skilled living to grow in cheerfulness?

I would first say that cheerfulness is the product of what one values. Cheerfulness is primarily the product of what one values specifically.

[16 : 58] I'll mention several things here that one values. So cheerfulness values emulating God's character. Look with me in Proverbs 21. Proverbs 21 says that verse 15, Proverbs 21 15 says, when justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous, but terror to evildoers.

Cheerfulness values emulating God's character. When justice is served, what did the righteous do? It is joy, it is cheerfulness, it is lightness to the righteous, but it is a terror to the evildoers.

And so those who mirror righteous character of God find joy in what is right, the wise value righteousness, both being wise and doing righteous acts, emulating God's character.

There is joy for the righteous. Second, what is another thing that the cheerful value, the cheerful value obedience to God's commands in Proverbs 29 verse 18, we read this.

Where there is no prophetic vision, the people cast off restraint, but blessed are those who keep God's law. Joyful are those who keep God's law.

[18 : 24] It's the obedience to God's command. There is joy in that. The cheerful value keeping God's commands. And it says, without a people hearing from a prophet, the one who heralds God's word, without there being someone who teaches authoritatively God's word, it says the people cast off restraint.

People fall into anarchy. People fall into everyone doing what is right in their own eyes. In Judges chapter 17 verse 6, we read this, that in those days there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in their own eyes.

This kind of thinking is witnessed in the people of Israel during Moses' time. When Moses had gone up to the mountain for a long time, he was communing with the Lord, receiving the commands of the Lord and the children of Israel.

What did they do down at the foot of the mountain? They made two golden calves. They are recording to have said, of those two golden calves, these are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

And upon calling a feast for these two gods, it says in Exodus 32, and they rose up early in the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings and the people sat down and ate and drank and rose up to play.

[19 : 55] They are committing idolatry. They are casting off really restraint. But then the verse though continues and says, but blessed is the one who keeps the law.

Joyful is the one who keeps the law. Happy, blessed. Cheerful is the one who keeps the law. He is the one who earnestly and willingly subordinates himself to the word of God, which they possess and have the opportunity of hearing.

Do you and I earnestly and willingly obey the word of the Lord? Are we happy to do that? Happiness is and will be found by those who do because of the cheerful value obedience to God's commands.

I read in the book of Psalm 119, these verses, look how the cheerful value his commands. Look what the Psalmist says in Psalm 119, verse 32 through 47.

It says this, I run into the path of your commands for you have broadened my understanding. Teach me, O Lord, the ways of your decrees that I will follow to the end.

[21 : 08] Give me understanding so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Direct me in the path of your commands for there I find delight.

Turn my heart away from your, toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things. Preserve my life according to your word.

Fulfill your promise to your servants so that you may be feared. Take away the disgrace I dread for your laws are good. Verse 40, how long for your, how I long for your precepts in your righteousness.

Preserve my life. May your unfailing love come to me, Lord, your salvation according to your promise. Then I can answer anyone who taunts me for I trust in your word.

Never take your word of truth from my mouth for I have put my hope in your laws. I will always obey your law forever and ever. I will walk about in freedom for I have sought out your precepts.

[22 : 13] I will speak of your statutes before kings and I will not be put to shame for I delight in your commands because I love them. Do we long to obey God's command?

Cheerful are those who do. Cheerful are those who do. So we find that the cheerful value emulating God's character. They can't help but do that.

The cheerful value obedience to God's commands. They value lastly doing what is wise. Look with me in Proverbs chapter 10 verse 23.

The cheerful value doing what is wise. For the fool doing wrong, it says this.

Proverbs 10 verse 23. Doing wrong is like a joke to the fool, but wisdom is pleasure to a man of understanding. For the fool doing wrong and wickedness is like sport to them.

[23 : 15] But for the man of understanding, it is pleasurable. It brings cheer. It is to simply doing what is wise, there is cheer and it is pleasurable just to do what is wise to the man of understanding.

Approximately one year ago, the Spokane SWAT team raided a house that is right next door to us that was for seven years plus a drug house.

So I had purchased security cameras to record damage and illegal activity and submit many reports.

I felt like a part time job there for a while of recording video footage and submitting that video footage and writing a little blib. I could have hired someone to do that.

It took much time. Regardless, at the height of the raid, there were 17 adults living on the property. There was a camper in the backyard, tents in the backyard.

[24 : 20] There was a motor home in the front driveway and there were multiple people living in the home and people coming and going and it was a well-oiled machine. I have to give it to them.

In the morning, they would walk off the property with empty backpacks and they would return with full backpacks of stolen goods. And I would watch on my video camera when I would get home at night how they would rejoice and make a joke of doing evil.

They would take out of their backpack a stolen drill or DeWalt construction tools were a common thing. And so they would take these out and they would hold it up and everyone would like, yeah, and you could see them.

And I'm like, you're making a sport of sin. But that's what the Psalm says. Doing wrong or the Proverbs says, doing wrong is like a joke to a fool.

But just as much of doing wrong is a joke to a fool. For the wise, it is pleasurable to a man to do what is wise. It should bring that much joy to us just to do that which is wise.

[25 : 26] So doing wise brings cheerfulness to a person. Instead of making sport over other people's losses or making sport over harming others, over sport over doing wrong, over making a sport of sinning.

And let's not just think that those who make sport of sinning are just for those kinds of people that I mentioned. I myself am guilty and I imagine so are you.

I imagine there are many in this room who have deleted their search engine or search history from their computer or cell phone. I imagine you've deleted photos from a computer or a cell phone.

And are we not making sport of doing wrong when we do? Perhaps we are not fool. Perhaps we are the fools. My question is this.

Do you long to do wrong? Do you long to do what is wise? Cheerfulness finds itself with those who long to do wise.

- [26 : 40] And put their joy in doing what is wise. So genuine cheerfulness then is derived from what one values. Valuing justice by doing what is right, valuing one who is committed to the truth and obeying God's law, valuing the doing what is simply right by living out God's norms.

There are other things though the book of Proverbs putting that which we value aside that also the book of Proverbs says these two these things also are encouraging to person bring joy to a person.

What are they? Let me say it this way that cheerfulness comes from a reassuring and encouraging word. Proverbs chapter 12 verse 25 says a good word is like I'm sorry Proverbs 12 25 says an anxious heart weighs a man down but a kind word cheers him up.

A good word is like a cold drink on a scorching day because it lifts one out of the some of the anxiety they may feel. The word here for anxious heart and anxious heart weighs a man down the word for anxious heart in Psalm 44 and Lamentations 3 it refers to someone who has hitting the bottom of their emotional despair.

So this anxious heart is actually a very weighty term someone who has hit the bottom of their emotional despair that weighs a man down.

- [28 : 14] The depth of that emotional despair is often comes from the loss of a loved one especially prematurely this imagine a persistent discouraging circumstance or relationship where there is no relief in sight.

There is a loss of a meaningful relationship some friendship of some kind that has ended and the loss of something where you have placed your identity like a career or a job over perhaps anyway.

Fifthly there's a loss of a reputation. I met a man who who is a fellow pastor he's in the San Diego area and he said Scott one of the hardest things I've ever endured is the loss of my reputation.

This persistent depth of discouragement it says that kind of anxiety that anxious heart that depth of despair it weighs a man down.

But then notice that a kind word cheers him up a kind word aids him brings some measure of joy brings joy to his life.

- [29 : 28] So it says what is what is that kind word do it counteracts the depth of despair that someone may feel it's a word of reassurance it's a word of encouragement.

Even though the cause of the anxiety is not removed the good word provides a needed encouragement in the midst of the emotional despair.

The good reassuring encouraging word may bolster courage and one to face the emotional despair. Similarly in Proverbs chapter 15 verse 23 we read a man finds joy in giving an apt reply how good and timely the word.

The focus on this verse is not just the good word but it's the right at the right time the timing of this word. This makes all the difference to bring cheer that one may need to this despair they may feel.

So it is not just the content of the words but it also is in the timing of the words and those who have reverence for the Lord who are growing in wisdom have this ability to do that.

- [30 : 39] There is a time to speak there is a time to hold the tongue. So what is my word of encouragement here with regard to this?

Especially when you're we are visiting with folks and emotional despair that that deep emotional despair that someone may feel.

Again state your observation you seem down should you be willing to share I'm eager to listen and you can choose the time.

And then whatever they share ask 10 to 30 more questions because the heart is like a deep well and a man of understanding draws it out.

It's not likely to come out in their first response so imagine I'm in emotional despair I'm hurting and you were to ask and I say I just I just feel at a loss as to know what to do and that's let's assume that's all I said so far and you say oh yeah I was like that one time what I did was do you see the depth of the well of my heart that didn't scratch it.

[31 : 58] But we often do that because we make it about me all too quickly and I have done this to others for which I am sorry.

So ask another 10 to 30 questions emphasis maybe on the 30 than the 10 and then consider the gospel implications of how you might bring hope of Jesus Christ into that situation and the last I will say is this.

I was sitting I went to school in Pullman and the church I was attending it was my senior year. I'm about to graduate in the church I was attending went to a river one spring day upon nearing graduation just go swimming and so we were at the lake and some adults of the children were getting ready setting up the barbecue and things like this to host the rest of the church and so I said hey I'll watch the kids I'll go down to the river and watch the kids.

Well meanwhile I'm about to graduate I have no earthly clue what I'm supposed to do I'm troubled by that I'm troubled by some other things in my life and I'm sitting on the bench just watching the kids and but I'm not doing well and this young man I also taught the fifth grade class at the church Sunday school hour taught them God's word and one of the fifth graders sat next to me and he happened to have Down syndrome his name was Chad I love this man and Chad sat next to me and he says hi Scott hi and I was like Chad it's good to see you thanks for coming and I'm trying to be cheerful and he says and he says to me is there something bothering you?

Yeah I said Chad Chad I'm kind of something is bothering me thanks for asking I was like do things ever bother you Chad and yeah and well what do you do Chad when things bother you?

[33 : 58] He was quiet and then he says to me well I remind myself that Jesus loves me and he died for me and then he says I think I'm going to go swimming now okay but I sat there and I reflected on Chad's words and I thought that was the most fitting word that could be spoken at the right time and I loved that the Lord gifted me Chad to sit there that day with me just for like three minutes and enjoy a conversation.

I say that for a couple of reasons if you are the recipient of someone speaking into your life I would say listen as if that person is sent to you from the Lord you don't know.

Second I would say this receive their words with charity we all have been hurtful with our words we all have been in despair and we all have heard things that were not all that helpful but I would say this when you listen with charity here's what you can ascribe to the person who is attempting to encourage you what did they do they express their concern for you you can give them that second they risked saying something it would have been easier to remain silent perhaps but they risked saying something and haven't we all been in situations we've been in a hospital room we've been with a loved one we have been with folks where we had to admit I have no earthly clue what I'm supposed to say so receive words with charity and receive someone as if they've been sent by the Lord last I want to say cheerfulness is also established by fulfilled hope let's look at this last word of Proverbs 13 verse 12 hope deferred makes a heart sick but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life hope deferred makes a heart sick but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life there's only one word that

I like for the word deferred to be preceding and that is loan I like deferred loans I am the recipient of a deferred loan I was in school and accrued some debt going to college and and I was grateful that my loan did not have to be paid until I graduated so the loan was deferred the loan was postponed the loan was postponed until I had graduated it was delayed but it's one thing for a loan to be deferred but it's all together different when it's hope when hope is postponed when hope is delayed that's something altogether different this brings a certain discouragement to the heart that saps one strength over time it makes the heart sick hope deferred makes the heart sick we're told imagine being family of someone who has been held hostage or taken hostage of a family member who have a missing person year after year one hopes and desires for the release of that person to be found year after year no word nothing Christmas passes birthdays pass nothing it makes the heart sick we are both sickened by frustration and vitalized by the fulfillment of a desire but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life there's that cheer and joy so but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life a hope fulfilled is this longing fulfilled brings cheerfulness when a longing and desires fulfilled oh how sweet oh the joy oh the goodness we feel alive when that occurs many of you have prayed for a child to repent and return to the Lord and you know both the heartache of hope that hope being deferred and postponed for years and you await or perhaps it has been fulfilled to see the sweetness of when that child is repented perhaps many of you have longed for a child to place their faith in Christ and a dear friend a close family member and you have had the longing for that deferred and you longed to see that full hope fulfilled many of you who are older yet still single desire one day to be married and that hope is perhaps deferred and I pray but when that hope is fulfilled it is like a cheer of life a tree of life it brings cheer and joy many of you are married and longed to have children but struggle with infertility hope has been deferred but when that hope is desires fulfilled there is joy it brings joy and cheerfulness last there's another verse I'm going to read and then we'll conclude here for Proverbs 27 it also Proverbs teaches us that cheerfulness comes through the people who enrich and affect our lives Proverbs 27 verse 9 says this perfume in incense brings joy to the heart and pleasantness of one's friends brings from his earnest counsel 27 verse 9 the author is comparing two tangible things oil and perfume and the lightness and the pleasant and the beauty that it brings to the tangiblyness of the in equally beneficial godly counsel that a friend brings notice what this sweet friend brings it is not that sweet friend because they have shared interests it is not the sweet friend because they have spent time together it is not a sweet friend for how close they feel together this verse says that they are indeed a friend because they spoke godly counsel into one's life and they are a true friend indeed I am and you are good friends based on the counsel that we give to one another is it godly counsel and if it is it brings pleasantness cheerfulness joy to another's life Proverbs also speaks

to the friend but also the value of family members with regard to cheerfulness two more verses my son if you're Proverbs 23 verses 15 and 16 and 24 through 25 read this my son if your heart is wise if your heart is wise my heart too will be glad my inmost being will exalt when my lips speak of what is right and then it says father the father of the righteous will greatly rejoice he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him let your father and mother be glad she who bore you rejoice wise children bring joy to their parents there's probably nothing more that brings heartache to a parent than than children who are wayward and away from the Lord my parents recently celebrated their 50th anniversary and my parents my my wife and I and my brother and his wife and their children we took my parents out to a nice dinner and I just had the opportunity to express my gratitude to them thank you for raising me the way you did thank you for introducing the Lord into my life and thank you for saturating the home with God's word that I grew up in and my parents are joyful over where my brother and I are at it brings warmth to their heart and cheerfulness and joy all that to say if you are here and you know that you have brought heartache you are a child and you could be a young child or an adult child and you have brought heartache to your parents and they are still living I encourage you to return to the Lord and confess that to your parents and say I want to honor you I want to honor the Lord chiefly in my life but I want to bring joy to your life I want to change last I want to conclude with one last slide and just kind of review what we have learned today to see where does cheerfulness come how does the book of Proverbs who says this person is skilled at living and one of the things that a person skilled at living exhibits is cheerfulness and they offer cheerfulness to others how does it say it in quick review cheerfulness the one who is wise the one who is skilled at life cultivates cheerfulness through good God honoring choices one who is cheerful finds joy in choosing to value God's way and it's demonstrated in one doing what is right it is in demonstrated in one who obeys God's law it is demonstrated by living in his norms rather than being self-indulgent joy is inspired by the substance of good works the the good words rather the the godly counsel that someone might give joy is found in and fulfilled hopes with not superficial thrills but but fulfilled hope joy is gladdened by friends and family over seeking joy through possessions as that is common that is too common sixly cheerfulness is not passive response but to favorable circumstances it is not just passive response to favorable circumstances joy then is the consequence of active personal choices that focus on the values inspiration and commitments to honor the Lord let me conclude with this none of this is possible well without the Lord in your life none of this is possible without a reverence for the Lord the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord none of

[44 : 31] this is possible and I pray as we grow in our fear of the Lord that fourth memorial church one dynamic one aspect one virtue of fourth memorial church would be that we would be known for being a cheerful people that there is a there is a joy about us and we offer hope and joy in our friendship and in our words and in our deeds we ourselves are cheerful as my hope in my prayer last I want to conclude with this story there was a woman whose name is Kathleen who lost her husband of I think it was around 46 years she visited me in my office at a previous church and and all she had ever really known in her memory was being married and she lost someone who is dear to her her husband she ends up in my office and people had said to her things that were not necessarily wise counsel they they said to her basically they gave her permission to excuse herself indulgence just live for yourself now it's your time if you're more but she knew this these truths about cheerfulness and joy found in the book of Proverbs and so she said to me Scott I don't want to just sit down and not do anything I want to teach children so she began to teach children and and she she had this morning that she had this sorrow she had all of this in her life and yet she was offering the very truth of life to others and she was teaching children in the children's wing and and she would write parents she was our best teacher she would write parents I love your son I love your daughter I love teaching them God's ways she would she would greet every child with a hug as they entered her class and she they would be dismissed with a hug from her and I love that she had every reason to be self-consumed self all about self in the season of her loss and she knew enough to say I'm not going to be happy staying here just wallowing in my sorrow I want to serve I want to bless others I want to communicate God's word and truth to others and as she did I saw her turn from her sorrow turn to joy she was not selfish but she was selfless and she was one of the most beautiful people she exuded cheerfulness she exuded joy in her life I want to be like Kathleen I want to be like Kathleen let's pray father thank you for this word and cheerfulness for what your word has to say in this book of wisdom I pray that we would be a joyful people I pray that we would value the things that you value and we would do the things that would honor you thank you for your son Jesus Christ who paid who made all this possible for dying for sin for for taking our sin and giving us your righteousness in its dead thank you for the empowerment of your Holy Spirit to live a life pleasing to you may we grow in our joy and in our cheerfulness that is derived from you we love you Lord and it's in your name Jesus we pray amen.