

Parish Teaching Day - session 3

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[0 : 00] We've got a few more questions to address. One is relating to this grab bag we were talking about. Are there little structures in it? So we're going to do something to see if that is the case and if we can find some.

We also want to talk about why the book of Proverbs contains so many warnings about seductive wayward women and not about their equally predatory and probably more predatory counterposes. So let's dive in. I've got a few more questions even than the ones I'm mentioning. But let's save a little time. I'm not going to write this one on the board. Well, it kind of still relates.

What I want us to do right now is look at Proverbs chapter 10 and ask ourselves the question. So this is the beginning of the major collection of Solomon's Proverbs.

His collection of these individual sayings that seem to hit us kind of out of the blue. Something about the tongue. Something about the fool.

[1 : 05] Something about the temper. Something about money. Something about generosity. And they just come like that. And we said earlier, and I think there's something to be said for the fact that we don't know what a day may hold.

So we need to be informed with all these nutrients or vitamins every day. That said, is the collection completely haphazard?

So I want us to test that a little bit. And just I'm going to read the first five verses in Proverbs. I thought we might do this as a group, but I'm really wanting to economize time.

So we'll do it again as a big group. And I want you to ask yourself the question, now that we're into the grab bag of individual Proverbs, do I see any relationship amongst some of these starting out? Okay, so let's just look at Proverbs 1, Proverbs of Solomon. A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother.

[2 : 05] And then it goes on.

So we'll just stop with what the screen shows. Do you spot any structure here? Family. Family. Okay, there's a family context and some of the principles in a family, right?

Father, mother, son. Mutatis mutandis, daughter. Okay, mutatis mutandis. That means necessary changes having been made.

We can apply the same thing to daughters as well. But, okay, so it's family. There's a general context. What else? Behavior. Behavior.

Work. Positive and negative. Remember we talked about this is the one that gets into the antithetic parallelism. A wise, but a foolish. Ill-gotten, but righteousness.

[3 : 22] The Lord, but he thwarts. He does this, but he thwarts. Lazy hands. Notice the but, but, but, but, but, but. Okay, so antithetic parallelism. Apart from behavior, in what specific area?

Work. Work. Agriculture. Agriculture. Values. Values. Values. Where do you see values?

The lasting, no lasting value? Okay. So it, it, it, it's sort of around the topic of, well, surely in a family context, the distinction between a wise and foolish son.

We see that in, in verse one. Do we see that anywhere else? Verse five. Okay. So here, um, we, you just had sort of a general description.

A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son brings grief to his mother. And then you get down to five. He who gathers crops in summer is a prudent son. So there you have action added to that conceptual description.

[4 : 28] But he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son. Okay. So that, you, you see, okay, those seem to relate. Um, what about number, verse two?

Ill-gotten treasures have no lasting value. Yeah. That, it could be a result of foolishness.

And certainly someone who tries to gain treasures in an ill-gotten way or in a wrongful way will bring grief to his mother and to his father. By the way, a wise son is also a joy to her mom, his mother. And a, you know, and a foolish son is, it brings grief to his father. But you're just getting both sides. Both partners are being mentioned there. Okay. Okay. So, yes. I see, I see it's all, all about choice. You know, are you going to be wise? You know, are you going to be wise to me? You know?
[5 : 32] Right. Yeah. Make a choice here. And there's just all different examples. Right. Okay. Which way are you going to go? Yeah. Yeah. I think that's true in the sense that the two paths of wisdom or folly have been traced out of the first nine chapters.

And now that you get into these actual wise sayings, again, you're invited to make a choice. But that, I think, will apply to all of them in one sense or another.

So, the real question here, is there anything that binds one to five together? Okay. Choosing to act rightly.

It's honest resourcefulness. Honest resourcefulness. Resourcefulness. Don't take shortcuts. Okay. So, do you, that's right.

Do you see a relationship between verses two and four? Yeah. In what sense? Treasures and wealth. Okay. It has to do with livelihood, doesn't it?

[6 : 33] And ill-gotten treasures, no lasting value. Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth. Okay. So, it's around the topic of gaining a living, making a living of some sort.

What's in the middle? The Lord. The Lord. Yeah. Okay. So, the Lord does not let the righteous go hungry, but he borts the craving of the wicked. Any relationship of that to what's surrounding it? Yeah. I think there is. Okay. So, even though on the first reading it just seems like, well, you said one thing and now you're saying something else on an unrelated topic, there does seem to be a little bit of a structure here where you have a convergence of theme, basically, and principal characters, basically.

And interesting then, once we realize that, that the context may be significant to our interpretation, then we see in this little, what is in fact a chiasm of one to five, right in the middle, as indeed in the middle of a book, is a Yahweh saying, it's the Lord.

So, yes, the son is invited to be wise, not foolish. Don't grieve your parents. Bring joy to your parents. Don't be like someone who sleeps during harvest.

[7 : 58] Be a wise son who's gathering during harvest because there's no other way to operate properly and to earn a living. Ill-gotten treasures have no lasting value.

You don't want to do that. Lazy hands are going to make you poor. Diligent hands bring wealth. But overriding all of that and in the center is the emphasis on, actually, it's the Lord who does not let the righteous go hungry.

But he thwarts the craving of the wicked. The psalmist says, I've lived a long time and I've never seen the righteous begging bread.

I'd be very careful not to reverse that equation and say if someone's begging bread, they're not righteous. Okay? So, again, you have to be wise in how you apply a proverb.

Well, I was going to say, live a righteous life under the Lord God. It brings energy to God. It should not be good.

[9 : 03] Right. Okay. And there are a number of proverbs about these better than. Another kind of proverb is better this than that. So, better a little with contentment than much with great strife.

I just made that one up. Kind of. It's a little paraphrastic. But they're that kind of thing. And there are lots of those. What strikes me with this is the emphasis on worldly values of wealth, eating poverty, not living a righteous life.

Sometimes. And I don't necessarily think that's so. As you alluded to with your Mexican friend, who said, I've known many diligent people who are righteous and yet are poor.

So, the equation in the Proverbs equating wealth with being righteous sometimes bothers me. Right. Yeah.

Yeah. Indeed? Yeah. She was basically saying the seeming equation in the book of Proverbs of righteousness and wealth. You know, wealth suggesting righteousness is bothersome, is troublesome.

[10 : 16] Because that's not true to life. Now, let me, David asked a good question during the break. Given that we have this grab bag and we don't have a topical arrangement in this section, is it still okay for us to arrange them topically?

Would we do that? Yeah, I think so. I think as a reading plan, I think the wisdom teacher, knowing that the stresses of the day are unknown, says, I'm not sure when to hit you with this and when to hit you with that.

So, I'm going to hit you with a bit of everything all the time if you're reading through. But I think if we want to get a full picture of what the wisdom relating to a particular topic is, then by all means go through and collect all the Proverbs that deal with that topic.

And analyze them and see what you come up with. And books have done that. You know, you have topically arranged. Let me see if I can find this quickly. I'll show you an example.

Yes, you may. Yes. Okay. well to fiscal material natural so Yeah, that's right.

[11:50] Yeah. And like when you pray for... Oh, absolutely. Could that not be looked at as a...

If you look at it that way, it's on a different level. Right, yeah. I think that the book of Proverbs will reinforce the notion that there's true wealth and there's seeming wealth that will only disappoint. You know, and so godliness with contentment is great gain. It doesn't mean you're going to get wealthy, okay?

It just means that that's what really matters. One of the early church fathers said, and we need to hear sometimes in the West, he said, with everything we acquire, we impoverish ourselves further. I don't know exactly where this proverb is, but it's something to the effect that the rich man lies awake at night while the laborer hears no threat.

[12:59] So the rich man's got a lot to manage. He stands to lose a lot. You know, the poor man got nothing to lose, sleeping like a baby. Now, of course, grinding poverty is bad.

And we're to see to that. And wealth by itself is not bad by itself. So here's where I wanted to show you. This is... And I can't figure out how to make it.

Well, I could try making it bigger, but I think it's going to go way too big. You know? So I did a little... This was some years ago. I just thought, I'm going to do a survey of proverbs on personal property. So this would be doing what David was asking about. Can you collect them all together? And once having collected a whole array of proverbs, I then tried to organize and distill sort of big teachings that were coming out of the book.

So the first was, and I won't go through this all slowly because we don't have time, but the first point was wealth properly earned, so not ill-gotten treasures, but wealth properly earned can be the Lord's blessing.

[14:06] You know, wealth can be the Lord's blessing. Point B, however, wealth does not prove the Lord's blessing. Just because you're wealthy doesn't mean it's a blessing.

You may have gotten it some other way. Wealth results from honest hard work, diligence, integrity, unjust gain, moderation, don't become a workaholic, seek faithfulness, not greed.

These are kind of my summaries of what some of these proverbs may be saying. So wealth can be the Lord's blessing. Wealth also brings responsibility. Generosity and fairness in the use of wealth are not a good idea or a laudable inclination.

They are required. It's one of the things I've learned from the book of Proverbs. Generosity is not something I decide to be. It's something God tells me to be. Okay, so generosity with what I've been given is a requirement.

And it's a requirement that pays. Generosity generates returns. One man gives generously and has even more.

[15:18] And many of you will have experienced that in your life, I think. As, you know, you give, often you, God continues to supply so that you can keep giving.

Not invariably, not all the time, but you get the point. Moreover, wealth, sorry, there's a jumping around, but wealth poses dangers.

Wealth can bring various problems. Threats. Maybe that 13.8 is the one I was looking for. Threats, false friends, false confidence, and can divert our attention from God.

In Proverbs 30, one of the little sections that Polly and I, my wife and I, prayed 44 plus years ago when we were about to get married was, Lord, give us neither poverty nor riches lest we become proud and forget you or lest we, I can't quote it anymore, but lest, or, or lest we become impoverished and be tempted to steal.

Give me neither poverty nor riches. Nor riches nor poverty. Now, I will say throughout our lifetime, he's kept us in the back, in the black, but usually only barely.

[16:33] I must say at this mature age, I feel like he's not watching the register quite as well as he should because I feel that I'm wealthy.

You know, and maybe, maybe I'll get a health bill or something, but I don't feel an exhort, you know, unusually wealthy, but living here in this place with these people and a family and ten grandchildren and one on the way, you know, there's all kinds of ways in which he has given me far more wealth than I was ever anticipating.

But I still think that that, that was the right prayer for us to pray. And then it left it in his court. You know, Lord, we're committing our, the family support to you. I once heard a Christian leader whom I admire in a lot of ways say, I'm leaving him unnamed, say, if I could, if someone took away my ability to provide for my family, that would crush me.

And I thought about it at the time and I thought, if I thought my chief responsibility to it was to provide for my family, I would have taken a different career path.

You know, my responsibility was to follow the call of God and Polly and I together discerning his call. Let's do what he calls us to do and it's his responsibility to provide for my family.

[17:56] No one can take away my ability to provide for my family because I don't have that responsibility. He does. So, just a different perspective. But wealth can divert our attention from God.

Wealth can be very deceptive. It offers security but it's a counterfeit security. It's ultimately worthless. It's not to be trusted. It's only temporary. It can take wings and fly away.

Any of you old enough to have lived through 2008 and 2002 know that wealth can take wings and fly away. And wealth is not to be our first priority.

Many things are more important than money. Fear of the Lord is more important. A prudent wife is more important. A good name is more important. And goodness versus perversity. Wealth should be a byproduct of higher ambitions.

Humility and the fear of the Lord. Moderation. All of these talk about wealth but they talk about it as reflecting higher ambitions. Seek faithfulness not greed.

[18:58] And finally our worth is not measured by wealth. Rich and poor have this in common. God is the maker of both. So, I think that's the end of the page.

So, this was just a quick example and I didn't spell out the Proverbs but by gathering them together and then thinking about them I thought, okay, what should be our perspective on personal property? So, yeah, there's a place for that but still, I think the way the Bible, you know, the way it's laid out in the text is meant to give us a bit of each vitamin, a multivitamin for every day.

Now, I want to move to another question and I think I'm going to well, I'll just make one quick comment that I mentioned earlier since I said I would the 30 sayings the book of 30 sayings I can handle this pretty quickly I think Proverbs 22 2220 this is this is at the end 2216 it begins but or 2217 it begins Solomon's main collection goes to 2216 and then this picks up and he's encouraging you to hear more wisdom and he says have I not written 30 sayings for you because the Hebrew is a little funny there it's been if you look at other translations older translations they would often say have I not written excellent things to you but it can kind of sound like excellent but then archaeologists began to discover instruction manuals such as the instruction of Amenemope an Egyptian instruction manual which has 30 chapters and it refers to it as a book of 30 sayings so from that comparative evidence we think oh ok then reading that Hebrew that little bit odd Hebrew as 30 sayings was correct and you count them up and there are actually 30 sayings moreover they are quite similar in places to the instruction of Amenemope which leads people to wonder well did the

Bible draw that from this extra biblical text well remember we said earlier that Solomon was gathering and sharing wisdom so he could have he might have known of this instruction it dates about the same time as Solomon no one knows exactly who came first maybe it was derivative maybe Solomon spoke and this Amenemope went off and wrote something similar what's distinctive though about this one even though there's some overlap probably in about maybe I'm just guessing two thirds of the sayings there's some overlap or half some overlap between the two what's distinctive is the first saying the last saying and approximately the middle saying is a Yahweh saying in the Proverbs now you're not going to get that in Amenemope so whatever else you say about whether it was adapted it was sanctified by the one who collected it okay so with that move I wanted to make a comment about Amenemope just because it's so much fun to say that when someone next time someone says can I hear an Amen you say you can hear an Amenemope back

[22 : 20] I think you've spoken in tongues all of a sudden so we're moving toward a few final questions why does the book of Proverbs contain warnings about seductive wayward women but not men why is that I'm going to put a couple of words here okay just to illustrate the point okay right on early on it says for the waywardness of the simple will kill them okay so simple can be wayward and by the way wayward is translating several different Hebrew words at times 216 wisdom will save you from the adulterous woman from the wayward woman with her seductive words 5.3 for the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey and her speech is smoother than oil 5.20 why my son be intoxicated with another man's wife why embrace the bosom of a wayward woman he goes on to talk about being intoxicated by your own wife which is a nice image

I think 6.24 keeping you from your neighbor's wife from the smooth talk of a wayward woman that a man who commits adultery has no sense whoever does so destroys himself 7.5 they will keep you from the adulterous woman you get the picture okay adulterous women throughout the book why is that and why we didn't hit an adulterous man once other than a man who commits adultery has no sense but you get the impression that there are a lot of or some predatory women around that we need to be wary of why no men sorry I don't think so yeah the question is is it because Eve tempted Adam in other words they really are worse women are really more dangerous it's a good try okay that does yes yes that's that's right the wisdom is a woman and you've got and so it's not entirely negative about all women okay no we'll see some of that yes

I wonder if it has something to do with yeah yeah several you know often in certain translations it will talk about the foreign wife as if being a foreigner is necessarily a bad thing if you think about someone who is foreign who is an outlander okay outlander so out of land from which we get the term outlandish okay so it's possible to be a foreigner and nevertheless come in and be a true Yahwist we've got Rahab we've got others we've got Ruth for example the only other woman of noble character mentioned in the Bible okay I mean there's lots of women noble character the term is used to occur so you can be a foreigner but so you're exactly right the point is if foreign wives bring their foreign ways particularly their foreign religions then that's going to be a snare as it was for Solomon of all people he did not who said that he didn't follow his own advice there's a I think it's Proverbs 25 26 or 26 25 that says like a muddied spring is a righteous man who gives way to evil or something like that and that may be a bit of a self-confession Solomon saying I know that I know that experience I've given way to evil and he did you know so he was wise but he didn't live wisely to the end something sobering about that okay well historical perspective so you brought that up historical perspective you'll notice that this is listen my sons to your father's instruction and to your mother's teaching okay we need to learn something right there this was familial wisdom and but it does say sons now that's I think simply a reflection of the fact that in that society which was patriarchal the sons were to grow up to be head of household and to take responsibility being elders in the gate and such there are wise women crucially in Israel so it's kind of a technical term a wise woman a woman of stature a woman of influence a woman who influenced the course of history but for the most part this was a patriarchal society where positions of leadership would largely be occupied by men so again using that fancy word mutatis mutandis which is other things making all the necessary adjustments

I think it stands to reason if you're going to have mothers who are wise and able to teach then they will have been taught so just because the way the book is set is listen my son doesn't mean that the daughter and daughters stop your ears I think women would have been involved in this train but it is a patriarchal setting back then does the book demean women well some hear it that way and how you know I just mentioned one eight listen my son to your father's instruction do not forsake your mother's teaching woman wisdom lady wisdom as brought out that's a personification of wisdom now why was she personified as a woman well again the main addressees of the book are the young men that's why it ends with the woman of noble character rather than the man of noble character but mutatis mutandis women should be looking for a man like that men should be looking for a wife like that a woman like that now because modern translators understand that it's it is to a specific context and they're not wishing to neglect women they often will gender neutralize the language

[29 : 25] I'm looking for my note I had a verse I wanted to show okay yeah go back to this actually I'm going to go over to another screen and by the way I oh wow that's going to be I'll read these out to you but because this has a lot of different I don't want to take the time to enlarge all of those but if I look at one eight and five one oh five one in these various ones sorry about how small that is I'll

pull this one up you can see this one notice what the NRSV does ESV begs to differ it doesn't always you know ESV is often the same as RSV but RSV says hear my child your father's instruction and do not reject your mother's teaching okay so okay well that's fine because it really is the the children the sons the sons of

Israel included women and children the sons of Israel not just males okay so you could argue that this is a better translation however having done that then when you get to something like chapter five be attentive to my child be attentive to my wisdom incline your ear to my understanding put a few more verses on five that you may hold on to prudence and your lips may guard knowledge for the lips of a loose woman drip with honey okay so child boy or girl you need to hear about bad women see how you kind of solve one problem and create another because you still have warnings just about wayward women in the book if you neutralize it and make it child now what do do well you could compose out of whole cloth parallel passages and thus add things to scripture I think there's a warning about that somewhere so

I'm not sure that's the solution either in the NIV so this is the NIV 211 no actually NIV is not the one I want I want NLT New Living Translation there you'll see that the New Living Translation begins my child listen when your father corrects you don't neglect your mother's instruction my child they go with child in 1.8 but in 5.1 they revert back to son my son pay attention to my wisdom and then he goes on to warn about wayward women so that gives the impression that the instruction is generally to children but now and again the father needs to say hey boys come here a woman's a two face a trouble something she can make you sing blues in the night so you need to know that but are we to assume that the father is not warning his daughters about predatory men surely he is surely he is so

I think it's probably easiest in an educational context to say let the words stand as they are and explain the context and explain that surely this was meant to be wisdom imparted to both men and women boys and girls and so whatever the instruction to a son about a wayward woman women girls be alert to the dangers of the wayward man and it would be interesting to do some demographic study I dare say the latter probably out number the former but there are probably more predatory men around than predatory women but in any case that so so that's the that's about all I think we can do with this is to recognize it was given in a particular context and it has implications for boys and for girls for the training for the installation of wisdom in both any this is that's a difficult topic um trimmer has a nice chapter on that in this book here but any comments or questions or

I'm not sure if I'm wrong but you know in Revelation you were talking about the women in direct yes is that at all do you think to make a direct connection would be a bit of a stretch not direct but do you think it's kind of somehow somehow yeah I'd want to think about it I think in general the a lot of time the feminine it stands is used in scripture for both positive and negative allurements because again in that patriarchal society it was very important that heads of household that fathers be rightly oriented and the allurements to a male tend to be feminine okay so it's perfect in the book of [34 : 47] Proverbs because you have woman wisdom and woman folly both vying for the attention of the simple or the learning the one learning they meant yeah I think I think here they do actually mean human beings yeah it would have largely it would largely have been yeah but I don't think it's who wrote it so much as who is being addressed in the first instance yeah we might wish it were otherwise I was just trying to kind of show what some of the compensating you know compensating moves that have been attempted like let's gender neutralize sons so that we say child but then you end up with other problems okay so I you know I don't care I mean I'm happy for it to for people to deal with it any way they want but I do want to insist that this wisdom is not just for sons this is wisdom for all of us sons and daughters and I think that would be the implication of the text otherwise we wouldn't have wise mothers or women of noble character if they were untrained and by the way that woman of noble character in 32 26 or 31 26 in that section it says she opens her mouth with wisdom and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue she's a wisdom teacher so she's obviously learned wisdom so I would say let's not get bogged down so much by the nature of the address or the exemplification of waywardness in terms of wayward women when wayward men are also implicated psalm 12 will describe a man who is similar in some respects to the woman of noble character at the end of the book so that kind of thing goes both ways things all right we're going to have to move on

I fear and I want to ask some more kind of a couple of really practical questions as we come toward the close of our time here and that is how might biblical wisdom biblical proverbs speak to unbelievers I think that the wisdom books are all three of them Job Ecclesiastes and Proverbs are probably some of the best books for evangelism that there are in the bible now obviously the gospels story of Jesus you've got to have that because that's where it all happens but in terms of attracting people I think that the wisdom books because they're dealing with life with the practical everyday affairs of life and with the great mysteries the greatest challenges of life suffering not knowing epistemological limitation book of Job or meaning you know midlife crisis I've got everything done I meant to get done by the time I was 35 and I'm empty okay read the book of Ecclesiastes he's been there and done that and by the way if you'd read it earlier you would have realized that building things and gaining wealth and power prestige would never give you real meaning I think they're very practical book of proverbs if you're living out this wisdom in your family in your community people may notice and they may say things like you heard what she said why didn't you defend yourself why didn't you defend yourself great proverb an undeserved curse does not alight you know there's a time to take up and defend but if it's totally undeserved the best defense is no defense at all it's undeserved it's not going to alight I'm not worried about it why because I fear the Lord I don't need to fear her comment or his comment why do you discipline your children why do you do that we're not talking about methods of discipline there's all kinds of manners and methods why do you do that well because the book of proverbs says you know say a book of ancient wisdom

I learned it from a book of ancient wisdom that said discipline your child while there's still time why be a willing party to his death and that sobers me it lets me see that if I don't if I'm a if I'm a you know an absentee parent and don't muster the courage to help form my child in appropriate ways I may unwittingly become a willing participant in his death or her death you know I don't have time to expand on that so I'm being a little melodramatic there but there's that proverb there's another proverb that says I'll leave that one out for now too much got too much time here what about what about your attitude to money how is it that you can lose so much money you just lost you know half your net worth through whatever means how can you be so relaxed about that well because I know that it's God that provides keeps me from going hungry it's not my it's not by dint of my effort well why are you generous well I'm told to be generous not because I'm particularly good but I'm told to be generous proverbs 11 25 proverbs 22 9 or why aren't you telling that person off for what they said to you I thought that was terrible I would have bitten their head off well you know a gentle answer turns away wrath I think that I think that's a better approach I'd rather I'd rather win the person than win the battle and lose the person now there's a time to speak up and so forth and so on so the wisdom books I think can be an entree because if you're living them out people will see that and as they see they may say what you know you're not living the same way as the world around you you're not doing what everyone else in the neighborhood is doing you need to have an answer and you need to have a reason for doing it so it can open doors because whether they're interested in

[41 : 29] Christianity much less in religion whether they're interested in that at all they're interested in having a good life and if they see you doing things that kind of begin to make sense to them they're going to want to know why so I think there's that and then a final question I want to pose for us today is how do we live by Proverbs how do we live by Proverbs by wisdom I was teaching a class at Regent and I asked the students Proverbs was a small part of the class and I said what have you learned from the book of Proverbs and one of the young women in the class said I have learned that we need to internalize them we need to listen and learn they need to become part of who we are and she said my generation doesn't do that because we can google anything anytime and we're just we're not you know we don't latch on to things we don't tend to want to memorize things because we can google it information is right there in my smartphone smarter than I am okay well you know you've all heard of

Sully Sullenberger I don't have I'm not going to take time to read it but N.T. Wright in his book now that you believe has a wonderful couple of pages that describe the story of this airlines pilot who took off New York Hudson River took off in New York and immediately knocked far off the ground took in a flock of geese can't be geese by the way lame can't it anyway they say one goose in the engine in the engine in the engine is bad enough geese in both engines that the plane was crippled and so what Sully didn't do Sullenberger is his name what he didn't do is say to his co-pilot hey

would you google ditch operations because we need to ditch this plane no he had developed muscle memory he had practiced with flight simulators he and his co-pilot they knew exactly what to do and there was a lot they needed to do they needed to shut down things they need to open up things they need to check their possibilities they need to realize we can't land on a freeway without further deaths there's a small airport over there but we may not make it our glide ratio is such that we may not make that if we don't we're going to land in a highly populated area and cause a lot of people to die and so in very short order they had to make a decision to try to ditch in the Hudson River they had to get the turn angle just right they knew that if they nosed in it would tumble tear to bits everybody would be killed they had to just skim in very nicely now none of that was learned then that was learned long ago through habitual practice and training and simulation that's the way the proverbs are to work don't think oh this is a treasure trove of wisdom and so now I know when I'm under pressure I'll just take fancy accordance and start googling proverbs doesn't work that way memorize them and you can you know my dad I love my dad he was a fantastic man a man of the bible a pastor and he he said I don't do a lot of memory work but he sure knew a lot of bible and so I think what he meant was I don't sit he would just say I don't do a lot of memory work but he spent his life immersed in the biblical text and it began to fill him it became the way he acted the way he reacted the book of proverbs to choose another image and this is not exactly fitting but the book of proverbs is kind of like a personal trainer it wants to train you in fitness in agility in avoiding injury so as a personal trainer he doesn't just take you out and say now run you know 10k he builds you up to it he makes you stronger and makes you stronger and then when the marathon comes then you're fit because you've been training now this is all well and good

I mean this that's the main point I want to make we should internalize the book of proverbs but in the end we dare not forget key proverbs like one that's probably best known proverbs 3 5 and 6 anyone know trust in the Lord with all your heart do not lean on your own understanding in all your ways know him and he will make your path straight okay acknowledges often but know him I think it's more active than just I acknowledge God but no I'm actually concerned to know what he thinks so in all your ways know him and he will make your path straight so I find it fascinating in a book like the book of proverbs that's meant to give us understanding and discernment and wisdom it stops and says you know what don't trust yours don't just trust yours because you can learn a lot but you really need to trust the Lord 22 19 that your trust may be in the Lord I teach you today even you that your trust may be in the Lord that's the end game learn as much as we can but in the end remember fear of the Lord is the starting point trust in the Lord is the way we move ahead now one other thing that I want to suggest to you a lot of people talk about praying the Psalms and that's a great thing because the

Psalms are prayers so a lot of times you can use the Psalms as a model for your prayer several years ago I started and I've done a little bit but haven't continued I might someday continue a little project on praying the Proverbs so look at your last sheet the handout on the last sheet and what I'm thinking here and the way this works for me is if the wisdom teacher is wanting us to learn and embrace wisdom if we are to embrace woman wisdom then it doesn't just happen it's not just a matter of head knowledge so I think we should find out what our calling is and then pray that calling pray that God will do that for us so here's a prayer we've read the one to seven and here's a prayer that I composed in relation to one to seven which is that first few verses in the book and maybe we could pray this together and then

[48 : 30] I'm going to we're not quite done I'll give a little chance for some further questions but we're almost done and we're going to sing a hymn at the end but let's pray this together right now God of all wisdom one of our deepest human desires is to live well in our better moments we want to be fair and just we want to know how to navigate life in ways that bring happiness to us and to those around us but we are far from adept at the skill of living some of us are young inexperienced others of us have long many years but still seem unprepared for many of life's challenges we need the kind of wisdom that only an all knowing God can offer and only a relentlessly loving God would offer you are such God and so we ask you to teach us the fear of the Lord that loving devoted respect that cares most about what you think and acts accordingly we don't want to be fools amen okay any final questions and then I'll call

Perry's around here somewhere I think or I think you are yes yes oh yeah yeah the personal property yeah yeah yeah I'll send that via Bree I'll send that to Bree Terrace is that okay and then you can bother Bree for it or to or Donna or Jan or something Kimberly Kimberly I know Bree I have

Bree's email so I'll send it to her and say Bree people may ask you for this okay people know who Bree Terrace is Jerry sometimes when I read Proverbs I get a people get my own inadequate because I remember from my life story that line up with the wrong side yeah yeah

I had a similar experience once when I was reading the Psalms and had always identified myself as the righteous and then I realized you know actually I've been the description of the wicked in this a little more than I like well I you know obviously our standing our position our security is as children of God through Christ not by our works not by the fact that we live wisely certainly not by the fact that we haven't made blunders foolish sinful choices in the past okay so I think our only security in life and in death is found in Jesus and if I you know if I take a hard look at myself and measure myself I'm undeserving okay have been likely always will be so

I'm not sure what to say beyond that other than when Jesus sorry when Yahweh almost a distinction without a difference I might argue but when God brought the Israelites out of Egypt and redeemed them he said I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt I am your redeemer now let me tell you how to live he didn't say I got some conditions if you do these ten things and do them well and everything else they imply and the rest of the law I'm going to give you in a moment if you do all that I'll be your God he said I am the God who redeemed you I brought you out but because I love you I want to instruct you I had some good friends in St.

Louis who went to Russia to adopt a girl she didn't apply she didn't make applications she did nothing to deserve it she had ill health in fact so she didn't candidate for adoption it was an absolutely unilateral loving action on the part of this couple who bestowed their love on her and brought her home and then they began to train her their love was constant unconditional love but the training required was to some measure dependent on her behaviors because they wanted as they say to train her heart that's a good image for me in terms of what God is wanting to do with us he came to us brought us home now he wants to train us and how foolish if we rebuff the training of such a loving God you know and we do you know we continue to struggle I don't want to pretend it's otherwise but how but then we are acting foolishly so we pray that the wisdom quotient will be gradually increasing okay all right

[53 : 51] I think we're right on time it's oh sorry Joel yeah if you have a moment still I do no one else does but yeah I was just wondering if you could comment on Christ's presence in the book of Proverbs and the role of the king can you point that question a little more directly so Proverbs frequently speaks about a king and he's idealized and because all scripture points to Christ I'm just wondering how you see that connection in the book of Proverbs yeah I you know all scripture does point to Christ it culminates in Christ so that's the final that's the climactic chapter that's where it's all headed headed that doesn't mean in the same way that you know I do I take a teleological approach so anytime you have something in the Old

Testament that represent that that kind of prefigures God incarnate like the angel of the Lord who appears to Joshua for example so the Lord but in the shape form of a human in that sense that anticipates the flesh and blood incarnation of Christ in as much as in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge he is the incarnate wisdom of God that's led some people in the past to think of Proverbs 8 for example where it talks about I wisdom was with God at creation you know I was his craftsman at his side or companion at his side as to make as to speak of a mediatrix okay so a kind of divine being that had some kind of I'm sorry I used big words at the end of the afternoon but had some kind of ontological sort of real substantial being

I think that's I think frankly in the light of that context not only biblical but extra biblical I think that's a misreading of a personification because wisdom is regularly personified not simply in the Bible but in other ancient texts and often personified as a woman in these other texts as well so I would want to take figures in their proper sense of personification is a personification not necessarily already the person but every personification of divine being in human form is an anticipation of the actual incarnation I've said enough words to confuse everyone including myself yes I just a practical comment on your experience you said that Duncan yeah yeah

I think there's a good question I think there's a place we want to engage scripture in every possible way so I wouldn't engage it always in only the same way I think there's a time to read quickly to get the big picture I think there are times to slow down and just meditate on one saying one proverb one passage of scripture it's the way I appreciate you know a work of art a painting I want to get the big picture I want to see it but then if it's a master artist I want to get up close and watch and look at the brush strokes and really focus on how did he or she do that so I think that you hear sometimes

Lectio Divina that involves the meditative we should always be meditating on scripture so I would say large and small doses that's where I disagree with Alden a little bit that he says the proverb shouldn't be read in large doses I think well at times yeah I like to read a whole chapter and I'm getting hit with all kinds of things and maybe only one or two remain with me but maybe those are the one or two I needed that day but then on the other hand there are obscure sayings and there are things that we ponder and we you know we don't see them today the way we may see them in ten years after we've had a few more life experiences and suddenly they spring to life for us because now I have the background to understand it okay alright alright I maybe the depth the back a second hour to see