

2022 Graduation Night

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 June 2022

- [0 : 0 0] For time remaining, I'd like to look at Proverbs chapter number four, look at three verses with all of you. Tonight, they've heard hundreds, if not thousands, of Bible lessons from different people in this church and in different formats around campfires and church services at camp.
- And there's so many different ways. But before we end the night, I really want to give you a strong challenge and look at each one of you. If I have one last statement to make to you, and I love that we should, Lord willing, continue to get to serve together.
- I know you're not disappearing after tonight. Every one of you are involved. A statement I've said many times is that young people don't leave churches when they graduate. They just simply, typically get out of the way.
- And if we are a church that sees young people as a nuisance, then they will leave as soon as they have a chance. But you guys can't leave because we rely upon you already too much, all right? You're already serving in so many different ways inside of the church, and you have since a young age.
- And I'm grateful for that. I'm grateful for all the adults in here and the different ministries, as mentioned, in the comfortable seats in the nerd boat or allowing for somebody to serve alongside them at a piano or the Spanish ministry.
- [1 : 1 0] You've served alongside of these teenagers, and that's been pretty incredible. Proverbs 4, verse 5, it says, Graduation from high school in America is very symbolic and very significant.
- It's a big deal, not just academically, but in the eyes of all your peers, in the eyes of other adults. It's really a transitional time. It is the mark that we are working towards to help you be prepared for this next stage of life.
- I remember in college they told me, Until you develop your own standards, you can live, you can borrow ours, right? Until you develop some sense about yourself, you can just borrow ours.
- In many ways, you have had a borrowed faith until it became your own faith, until you took ownership of it. What you've been thinking about, your dreams for your future, is now the great opportunity that you get to live it out.
- It's a new season of ownership, a new season of responsibility, a new season for opportunities. Many things are ahead of you. We live in such a blessed nation. We're such blessed people.
- [2 : 3 6] I can honestly tell you, whatever you desire to do in your heart, you can go after them. And with the work, you can really see so much accomplished in the world we live in. We are really blessed.
- That's why it's so important that you have the right things in your heart. Because what it is you want to accomplish is very likely the things that you will accomplish with your life. And within this new opportunity, and all the new things that you're getting, responsibilities and ownership, and all that getting, you need to get wisdom.
- You need to get understanding. And you should bend all the efforts of your life to becoming wiser every day. You're entering into a world that's very difficult to navigate.

You guys face and make decisions in your workplace, and in your home, and areas of society that before, in previous generations, we didn't even have to question. There's a new way of life out there, and you're going to need wisdom.

And all you're getting, you need to make sure that you don't pass up getting wisdom from God's Word. So by this point in your life, I have given you tens of thousands of words.

[3 : 46] Some of you have needed more words than others, right? And I've given tens of thousands of words. Evans, normally we start our conversations with this. You say, I have two ideas, and I'm going to need your help, okay?

How many of you all know about Evans? Evans never has one idea at a time. They always come in pairs, and he's always brainstorming. And Evans, I pray that we get a lifetime of working together, hatching your ideas as they come to you, two at a time.

Lewis, I've never had a conversation about Duke's mayonnaise until I met you. I'm serious. There's so many areas that I just never even thought about until I met you.

You look at the world differently, and I love it. And you have been such a challenge to all of us in a beautiful way, that you enjoy simple things in life, and that you bring out the best in everybody around you.

Seeing you serve here with your skills and talents, interning at the VBM office, it just brings such great pride to me, and no doubt your parents, but we are very blessed to have you.

[4 : 47] So from singing Lewis and the Baptistry, y'all want to sing that song? From seeing you come week after week, you have brought so much joy to this church, and seeing that.

And as you mentioned, and Brian, to see a teenager. Church tonight, these testimonies we heard from those two men came because of a teenager, believed that the gospel is powerful even when you're young, and you share it with your friends.

Brian, we've talked about fireworks, drums, life in North Forsyth, had a lot of great meals together. Anytime we're at the Swervers, we're going to have a great meal together.

And even though our friendship is not as long as some of them, I have real confidence that it will continue with many more conversations. Great love and respect for you, and look forward to seeing what God has for you next.

Daniel, I don't know what we will do when we don't have a Mize in the youth group. I know we have one more following behind you, but I'm glad of that. And there's been several, but no two of you have been exactly alike.

[5 : 50] That's a testimony to your parents just letting you grow. And you are a man in your own rights, and you have been for some time. We're very proud of you. God is providing you. You're a strong, godly man for the next generation.

I pray that this church always has young men like you. I know that you have associate's degree and certificate and apprenticeship and program, and there's words I can't even read, all right, that you have already accomplished because you have not wasted your youth, and I just love that.

You found what there was to do, and you've just done it. By helping your dad and having a fire always going on Monday nights, it has changed this church by doing that, and I thank you.

Alan, I can't count the many times I've seen you on the Sunday morning, and I've told you that you were looking sharp, and you always tell me, you too, Brother Trent. I know you're not telling the truth, but I am telling the truth. You're always looking sharp.

You're always involved. You're always helping Pastor Jimmy. You're always doing something. So grateful. We have a Spanish ministry that is always doing something, always together, always serving, and Alan and his family is right in the middle of it, and we are just so blessed by that.

[6 : 57] Hannah, we love hearing you laugh from the VBM office these last few months. You have just such a wonderful laugh. God's moved your parents' heart to move to Indonesia, and we have seen God move in your heart over the last couple of months, especially, and it's been beautiful.

Hannah, the way God has grown you and matured you, it's just incredible, and with full confidence, you looked at that camera, and you knew at 4.33 that your parents were watching, and there's not a single one of us in here that has any doubt that they're watching right now as they've been cheering you on and as a church, we've had one of the greatest privileges and honor, and so many people around here have got to be involved in that, and we're just so thankful that we got to be here with this night with you, Hannah, and that you got to finish your education here with the church.

Charlotte, people might wonder why the handshaking time takes so much longer now on Sunday nights. It's because I really enjoy my conversations with you and Jonathan during the handshaking time and giving you both a hard time.

God has gifted every member of this church to be a blessing to all of us, and if you've recognized that at a young age, if you've recognized that, where's Charlotte, okay?

This would really, that would help things, okay? Come on, Johnny, what's going on, man? Jonathan, you can have my seat behind me. Go, no, get up. Come on. She's not going to keep going back there, all right?

[8 : 25] I was like, we were like, I was having a moment, and she wasn't even there, all right? All right. So, Charlotte, you, there you are, okay?

You want me to be okay a minute? And you have just used your talents for the Lord, and you've been an example in your youth. All these young people have been an example in their youth. What is it can I do? What has gifted me to do?

What can I do to minister to other people? And I've just been so blessed, so blessed that God gave this church a song in a difficult season, and He handed it to you. That was so very special.

It's a very important transition in your life, and I want to give you so many words, but if you'll allow me the opportunity, I will give you so many of my own words as we continue to grow together in His Word.

But the time remaining, I want to give you just a lot of verses of Scripture and follow along about wisdom. First, I want you to know that if you pursue happiness but not wisdom, you're headed in the wrong direction.

[9 : 24] There is no true happiness in this world outside of Jesus Christ. There is no true happiness that is not living according to the wisdom of God's Word. So if you pursue happiness and you're not also pursuing wisdom, you're headed in the wrong direction.

Proverbs 3.13, Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and the man that getteth understanding. The whole world were designed to pursue happiness. And as Christians, we're not told not to.

We're not told that we're going to change about that. But we're told where to direct our energy. And I want to ask you, will you believe the lie that God wants to rob you from experiencing the good things of life?

Genesis 3 leads us to the very first lie that was told and that was believed where a woman saw that, here on earth, a woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasant to the eyes.

Because independence is attractive and it's alluring. And you will go on and you will learn many things that your parents may or may not already know. And you will grow and you will grow but you will never outgrow the wisdom of God.

[10 : 25] You need it in every aspect of your life. When it comes time for marriage, when it comes time for parenting, when it comes for the next step of education, there's going to be so many things offered to you but there's only one place you're going to find the wisdom that God provides.

It's here in His Word. I ask you this, Will you trust that the one who made you knows best and His way leads to the greatest happiness? Psalm 16:11, Thou wilt show me the path of life and Thy presence is fullness of joy and Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

Thy presence there is fullness of joy. It's an indicator in our life. When that depression comes, when the times in your life where you become to feel separated, when the weight of this world becomes so heavy, when the joy is gone, when the smile is departed, then you know where you need to run.

You know that you need to run to the presence of God that is not going to be found outside of that. Trust God, the Creator. He knows what is best. You have been taught to always ask what is the next step?

What is the next step that I'm supposed to be taking in my Christian life? God knows what that is for you and at every step, big or small, you need to be looking to Him. If you want to live a sweet life, it's one that pursues wisdom.

[11 : 43] Proverbs 24, My son, eat thou honey because it is good and the honeycomb which is sweet to thy taste. So shall the knowledge and wisdom be unto thy soul when thou hast found it. Then there shall be a reward and that expectation shall not be cut off.

It is good. If you want a good life, get understanding. Proverbs 19, 8. He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul. He that keepeth understanding shall find good.

In the next few months, as you make decisions about the rest of your life and you're finding places, you're trying to figure out what building blocks fit and which ones don't, what you need in your education, what are the next steps, I want to remind you that if you want to live a life that is good, that is full of joy, that is full of happiness, you need to look to your Creator for that wisdom.

Let me give you a testimony of an account. Somebody's speaking here and this person that's speaking today is wisdom and here's the message from wisdom in Proverbs 8, 32. Now therefore, hearken unto me, wisdom, O you children, for blessed are they that keep my ways.

Hear instruction and be wise and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the post of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life and shall obtain favor of the Lord.

[13 : 02] But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul and they that hate me love death. Nothing in the world can speak like that, but God's wisdom can.

To love it is to find happiness, to hate it is to pursue death. And I want you to beware of the imitation wisdom that this world has to offer. One of the unique aspects about your generation is that the world knows exactly what it is you're interested in.

It knows your desires. There are companies that have created a profile on each one of you. They know everything about you from social media, what you search and what you think about and they have become a multi-billion dollar industry that wants to take everything that they can from you and as this world has built a profile on you and will actively send you information to guide your decisions, you are going to have to weigh it.

Is this wisdom ascending from above or is this earthly? Is this earthly wisdom that is being given here? Our thirst for happiness is insatiable from this world but if you'll find the wisdom that you seek in God you'll be able to build that life that Brother John speaks about.

Building a life and having a career they're not always one and the same. You need to ask God what is this life that he would have for you? Proverbs 15, 21 Folly is joy of the hymn that is destitute of wisdom but a man of understanding walketh uprightly.

[14 : 29] There is a folly of this world that is sold to you and you need to make sure that you're buying what is real. You ever purchase anything at a store and they take your hundred dollar bill and they look up at the light and they see if it's real?

Whenever they do that to me I take their product and I hold it up in light and I try to see if it's real it only seems fair. But everything that comes into your life you need to take it and you need to hold it up to the light and you're going to say is this wisdom that comes from God or is that the cheap imitation that the world gives to me and packages me and tells me that I should follow?

There is wisdom that comes from above and the wisdom that descends from above. James. And then lastly all the treasures of wisdom are hidden in one place.

Isn't that wonderful to know? It's all been hid in one place. You know where it is and you have met him by your testimony. Colossians 2-3 In whom are hid all treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Speaking of Jesus. So in Proverbs 4, 5, and 7 get wisdom get understanding forget it not neither decline from the words of my mouth forsake her not she shall preserve thee love her and she shall keep thee wisdom is the principal thing therefore get wisdom and with all thy getting get understanding do not forget the words of Jesus forsake him not he will preserve you love him and he will keep you he is the principal one in your life and all you're getting do not forsake him.

[15 : 53] There's so many things available for you but don't leave behind the most the thing that's most important the thing that's most ready and available for you the thing that everybody else is not going to be pursuing after the things that they're going to be chasing after that they're going to miss out on the wisdom.

We're going to end this night with a prayer for wisdom for you all. Solomon was not born a wise man he prayed for wisdom and God gave it to him. 1 Kings 3-11 And God said unto him because thou hast asked this thing and has not asked for thyself a long life neither have asked for riches for thyself nor has asked the life of thine enemies but has asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment.

A long life one of riches one of that would overcome your enemies that's what everybody else is looking for. That is the rat race that the whole world is going after but as God's children you know what you can ask for the night when we pray?

You can say God I want your wisdom I want to be able to discern I want to live the life that you have created me to make that's what Solomon asked for and with given one opportunity and you have an opportunity to pray at this point in your life what is it that you would ask for and it should be wisdom and so this is going to be our prayer for you Colossians 1-9 Paul so Paul speaking about the church this is what he said and this should be our church's prayer for you and we'll leave it up on the screen as we pray the night it says for this cause we also since the day we heard it do not cease to pray for you to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will and all wisdom and spiritual understanding that is our prayer for you tonight that you would be filled with the knowledge of his will that has been taught to you from God's word and that you would have spiritual understanding when you have to make a decision in life in which direction you could go we will pray that you allow the Holy Spirit to take the word of God that has been taught to you and to guide your steps and I mean this with all of my heart

I am so excited to see what God is doing with your life what he's currently doing and what he's going to do you have this great opportunity that was given to you through God from God but from your families and from this church to be where you're at right now to have the understanding that you do to have the resources that you should have to have the clarity about your life it's such a gift that you have there's so many things that are available in front of you and of all the things that you can get make sure that you get wisdom because it's the principle thing I'd like to ask our graduates if they will to come up here and line up beside each other and as they come up here I'm going to ask some people in this room to gather around them and a few guys will just stand right here because your parents and family and friends are going to join us in here I'd like to ask the youth workers middle school and high school that you would come up here and also mom dad any of those you would like grandma if you would like to come up here and join us as well as we gather around them

[19:10] Brian I'm going to ask that you also come up here Ben I'm going ask that you come up here as well and be around them Pastor Jimmy and Miss Joy if you would join us just a representation of the church a family coming together and as a church family and as we end the night we are going to have a prayer for them which comes from Colossians chapter number one verse number nine we are going to pray that God gives them wisdom and then graduates let me encourage you in this moment we don't come to church just to gain information we didn't come here the night just for cake well maybe we came here for cake alright and we are going to have cake but when we come here we want the word of God to transform our lives and you get brought to a decision and you are getting brought to a decision right now and I want to ask you when we take a moment and pray there are so many things this world has for you and you are going to get them and it is going to be wonderful and I look forward to being there that day with you when those happen Lord willing there is going to be time for marriage there is time for new jobs and new careers and all those different things but in all those things you are thinking about getting in this moment would you make a decision that you are going to pray and you are going to say God in all of my getting

I want wisdom more than anything that is in my heart I want to live a life that pleases God I want the God of heaven to order my steps I don't want anybody else to have greater claim to my life than Jesus Christ and I want to say a word of prayer for you as you are surrounded by your friends and your family here and then as we are done we are going to leave and go out to a time of reception and have a great time of fellowship with all of you and we are just so very proud of you and church family before I pray would you write this down would you write their names down and would you pray that for them that they would have wisdom that they would have understanding is the principle thing Heavenly Father we come here tonight wanting to pray the words of scripture to you Lord following an example of all the things that I could ask tonight for these graduates there's so much that I would want for them there's so many things Lord that I believe that you have in store for them but all of their getting Lord we want them to get wisdom you have all rights and claims you are the owners of their lives

Lord it was your son that died in their place it was you that has prepared a place for them in heaven and you have a path that is laid out before them and I'm praying that Lord right now that every one of them is making a commitment in their heart that they want the principle thing that they want wisdom above all else and that they will let you lead and guide them into this next season of their lives and so Father I pray that they will be given they will be filled with the knowledge of your will and that they will have all wisdom and spiritual understanding from the small decisions to the big decisions Father I pray that they will stop pause and reflect they will consider what your word has to say then form the decision in the areas Lord where it's not so clear I pray that they will look for godly counsel that they will look for principles in your word and until they know Lord they will wait until the

Holy Spirit will guide them and make the decision clear for them in Jesus name I pray
amen right