

Path to Wisdom

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: 29 December 2020

[0 : 0 0] All right, yes to that. Thank you, God, for saving me. Let's get to Proverbs chapter number 2 this morning. It said in the song, he heard our cry for salvation, and we're thankful.

Proverbs 2, without any commands or imperatives, it leads us to want to cry out to God for wisdom. We'll see the protection that's provided, that the path that's provided is pleasant for us, this path to wisdom.

Seven times in the chapter, it talks about the path. Five different times it says the way. And so that's why the title today is the path to wisdom. It's our third sermon in the book of Proverbs, and the first one in chapter number 2.

That isn't Luke Littlefield lost in the woods there. It may be Luke. I don't think it's Luke. But he's at a fork of the road, which is where we will be at today, at a fork of the road. Where do we turn to find the wisdom that we need?

And I pray that you'll resolve in your heart to pursue the wisdom and knowledge of God and the Bible as the only means that God will use to transform your life. And that is what God will do with His Word.

[1 : 0 1] I first want you to see, before we look at the first five verses, which tells us how to cry out to God and how to go to the Word and the treasure, which is so important. I want to show you some of the things that this path will provide for us, this path to wisdom.

Starting in verse number 12, it says, We're on the other side of it. If you will do this, then this will happen.

Well, one of the things that will happen as we go, we look to God for wisdom, is that we will find deliverance from the way of the evil man. First reading that, you know that you'll be delivered from evil people in life and the company that you keep.

But specifically here, it says that you'll be delivered from the way of the evil man. In verses 12 through 15, it tells us that these men, they speak perverse things, they walk in darkness, they rejoice in evil, they delight in the perverseness of the wicked.

We know that there's a group of people, a large group, a majority of men in this world today that live in this way, from the way of an evil man. The pornography industry brings in more than NBC or ABC or CBS, all combined.

[2 : 0 8] This perverseness contributes to child trafficking, it ruins homes. Obviously, there's many other ways that a man would be evil, but that's just one of them. And so we want to avoid the influence from these men, but God's wisdom keeps me from the way of these evil men.

You see, I could be that evil man. I could be a person without a moral compass. I could be a person that would call evil good. I could be enslaved to selfish desires. Romans 6, 12, Let no sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey the lust thereof.

That lust speaks, and we answer, I could be in the way of an evil man. But thanks to God for his wisdom that we have found, that I have been delivered from the way of these evil men.

If you're in here today and you've been delivered from the way of the evil men, we don't pat ourselves on the back, but we say thank you, God, for giving us biblical, sound wisdom. I could have been. Some of you look back on your families, you look around the way you're headed in life and say, why didn't I end up in this direction?

Why doesn't that describe me as it describes other people? Because you found godly wisdom. Not only that, in verse 16, it says, To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the strange which flattereth with her words.

[3 : 22] And so this brings the deliverance from a strange woman and her words that are there. It says, describing this woman in verse 18 and 19, it says, Her path will lead to death, for her house inclineth unto death, and her path unto the dead.

None that go unto her return again, neither take they the hold of the paths of life. Throughout Proverbs, you learn more about this strange woman, and you'll hear that she's on every street corner, and that she's there and calling you in, and that in her home there are dead corpses, and that she's seducing you.

But what we focus on here that we see is that she does so with her words, and that her words are what we're bringing people down, is those words that we'll be listening to. You know, David or Samson were brought down in the battlefield.

They were brought down in the bedroom, that we could be seduced with these words. There's so many paths that are foolish, but there's one path that you'd be led on by a strange woman, or if you're a lady, by a strange man, somebody that is not your spouse.

And what do they use? It would be the flattery of their words. So the very beginning of the wisdom, I want you to see here that there's a protection that is brought from the path of wisdom.

[4 : 34] God will protect you in your life. From what? From yourself. And from whom? From evil people. From that strange woman. You know, when I come into the Bible, and the Bible, when I study Proverbs 2, it comes into my life, and it always does something.

So it's not my job to teach you about the Chronicles of Trent and the Bible. But when it comes into my life, it always seems to speak about a certain time. Every time I take my kids back to Hardin, Kentucky, we pass this one intersection, and my kids know when we get to it.

My wife knows when we get to it. You probably have heard me talk about it often. It's the place where my dad passed away of a drug overdose. And I look there at that same spot where I stood at 18 years old, and I say, God, how did you take me from that place to where I'm at today, married to a godly wife with great kids, at a wonderful church, serving God.

I avoided the strange woman. You saved me from myself. It was the wisdom of God. The wisdom that the world needs, but they avoid. The wisdom they go looking for, but they never look to the book that God has provided for us.

So this path of wisdom, it provides protection for us. And not only that, but it is a place. How does he do this? Let's look at this. Verse number seven, it says, He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous.

[5 : 50] He is a buckler for them that walk uprightly. That means that he is a shield for us. God is protecting us with this wisdom in our lives. It says that he layeth up sound wisdom.

He has it as a storehouse. He has it in abundance. That's why in James, he says he can give it to us liberally when he asks for it, which means that in every area of life, God has wisdom.

My friend Chris Fee, he has facts about every area of life, all right? And because of studying the Bible, he also has wisdom. But you know, you have the friend that just seems to know a little bit about everything around our home.

If I don't know something, I'll say, I'll call Chris. And Stephanie says, why would Chris know about this? I'll say, because he's Chris. And he just knows a lot of stuff, right? And so in the many areas of different life, you have areas of life that you say, I can go to God and he knows about this kind of stuff.

But God doesn't know about this other kind of stuff. I'll just look to the worldly wisdom. I'll just handle this on my own. I want you to know that he has laid up sound wisdom. He has storehouses of it.

[6 : 49] He has it in abundance. And he has it on every category of your life. And that you can come to him and he will provide protection for you. Verse 8, he keepeth the paths of judgment and he preserveth the way of saints.

God is providing protection to us through the wisdom. 1 Corinthians 10, 13 says, Here hath no temptation taken you, but such as common the man. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted.

Above that you are able, but you will run, but will with the temptation make a way to escape that you may be able to bear it. That God will give you wisdom and know in every situation that there is a way of escape.

Which means that you're never in a position where there isn't a decision where you can choose what's right. It may mean that your path is going to be lonely. It may mean that your path is going to lead you to a martyr's death.

But God always provides a greater alternative to sin. And if we will look to him, he will give us the wisdom to make the decisions. And that's how he protects us in this life.

[7 : 52] Is that he gives us wisdom along the way. We're not walking alone. So in this wisdom, as we said, it's a battle of words. Sexual sin is most enticing when God's words have lost its sweetness in our ears.

The flattery of this strange woman, her words are sweeter when the words of God are not as sweet. Proverbs 35, every word of God is pure. He has a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

God is providing protection to us by us treasuring and loving his word. It makes all the wisdom of this world and all the follow of this world seem not as sweet, not as appealing to us.

God's word will give us discernment. Verse 11, discretion shall preserve thee. Understanding shall keep thee. Discernment. If that's something you could bottle up and package, you could do very well this day.

Discernment's hard to find, isn't it? It's always, it's in, nobody seems to have it anymore. It seems to not be there. There seems to be a lack of common sense. When we don't recognize that there is a God and that we fear him, that everything's left for grabs.

[8 : 54] There seems to be just no discernment these days. But how do we have discernment? How will you preserve us? He'll give us understanding. We cry and we ask God for it here. Discernment between the way of life and the way of death is the effect of gaining the fear of the Lord.

We should be asking ourselves. This should be part of our common vocabulary. Is this wise? Which leads to the question, is this honoring the God? These are the type of questions that people that fear the Lord should be asking all the time.

Is this wise? Is this honoring to the Lord? That type of question brings an acknowledgement of God into the situation, which is what we're supposed to be doing when we pursue wisdom.

I'm told that at the Battle of the Bulge, Hitler's forces attempted to use deceptive navigational techniques to misdirect the allied forces. As General Patton and his forces were charging towards a pivotal engagement with Hitler, they would change the course of World War II.

The German army was mixing up road signs, altering landmarks, and planting bad directions among informants. What a difficult place to be in, right? When all the signs are pointing in one direction, but your map says, no, that doesn't seem to be the direction you should go, but everything's pointing in that direction.

[10 : 04] You know, the world does the same thing to us. It tries to redefine things. It changes the sign. Proverbs chapter number 9, verse 17 says, It says that that strange woman would be pleasant.

The stealing of these things would be pleasant. But the Bible tells me that the path of obedience, that the path of wisdom is pleasant. And who am I going to listen to? What signs are we going to look to? I'm going to look down at the map and I'm going to say, even though the directional sign says, this is good and this is bad, I'm going to have to go back to the Word of God and say, no, actually, that is good and this is bad.

We look to God's Word. We look for correction from our selfish desires and protection in His Word. And sometimes this type of navigation just seems embarrassingly simple to us, doesn't it?

It says that we are fools for Christ's sake in 1 Corinthians 4.10, but we are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are honorable, but we are despised. This type of living where we say that God's wisdom is what we want, where we say, God, what is wise when we make decisions?

It makes us seem like simple people, doesn't it? It says that the Bible says that we are fools. And you know what? We are. We have no wisdom without God. We come to Him and say, God, we need Your wisdom because we know that we don't know how to make these decisions.

[11 : 19] We want You to lead and guide us. You know, I feel that pressure, but I know many of you feel it so much more in the line of work that you're in, in the places that you go throughout the week. Back in early, around 2000, 2004, me and my friend, Jake, we went to college campuses and we would record people.

We would share the gospel and we would record people. And we'd go to many different places. You know, sometimes we'd even go to Christian colleges and they would ask us, do you really believe this? Do you really think this is true?

And we'd say, yeah, we believe it's true because the Bible said that. And you know, we have all these people parading as academics that are just telling us that we were foolish. Do you really believe such a simple faith? Do you really believe all these things?

And most certainly, why do I believe that Jonah was in the belly of the whale? I believe Jesus believed that Jonah was in the belly of a whale because the Bible says so. And so we have to be willing to be fools compared to this world because we have wisdom that is from God.

We have something that's greater. But there's such a temptation. There's such a pressure that is there. There's such a pressure upon our teenagers to say, yes, but not exactly, right? Yes, God has said this, but not exactly, which is what we find back in the garden.

[12 : 27] And so we're going to be simple people. We'll be fools for Christ's sake because we're wise in Christ. It's what we look for. Believers, I encourage you, look back on your life. Look at the protection that God provided you through wisdom.

Or maybe you look down the path where you see that you ignored Him and you see all the problems that came from it when you're at that crossroads. God has provided protection in your life and He's brought you here.

And we should be so thankful for the wisdom that God has given us. And as we said, not only does it bring protection, but it says in verse number 10, when wisdom entereth into thine heart and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul.

This path, it's a pleasant path. It is wisdom that has entered into our hearts. I would encourage you to underline it. Entered into our hearts. I have a slide I would ask Brother Brett to put up here.

It's of a reading plan. Something that pastor spoke about earlier this week in Jeremiah chapter number 33, verse 3, when he talked about praying to God and believing that God would answer.

[13 : 28] And he said that we would have that on a knowledge up in our heads, but we don't have that in our heart. And we all knew that that's true. But the question is, how do we internalize this?

And so a friend and I were reading on anxiety. And this is a reading plan. If you want to read the Bible with somebody, YouVersion does a good job with that. And so I was reading about anxiety and it was around March the 10th.

And so we did a seven-day reading plan about anxiety. And so each day we had different portions to read Psalms 55, 22. If any of you are very much aware what was going on in our church and the world around March and all that, can I say, well, all through the spring and all through this time, I had no issue with anxiety.

Why? Because I had a seven-day reading plan in YouVersion on anxiety, right? And I checked all the boxes and I read this. And so when any time anybody thought, are you anxious about something? No, I checked those boxes off, all right?

I read the verses that I was supposed to. I'm done. Well, all of you know that's not true, right? Because this pastor talked about prayer on Thursday night. We all said, yes, that's true. But we want to internalize that.

[14 : 33] We want that to be true in our hearts. We want it to enter into our hearts, as it says here, these areas about anxiety or prayer or whatever it is. So how does it enter into your heart and not just your head?

And it's this. You ask for it. You cry out for it. You want it. You value it. You treasure it. You listen as if your life depends on it.

You choose it above anything else. You know, today if we were to play Deal or No Deal where I said, would you like to continue this service where we study the Bible or would you like to walk out today for \$20?

Many of you would take my \$20 and listen to it on live stream on your way home. And I would buy you lunch. Well, obviously, that would be a pretty easy decision maybe for you. But in life, we have to say we value God's wisdom above the pursuit of anything else.

So just like we would systematically pursue any goals in our lives, we say we're going to do the same thing at pursuing wisdom from God because we need it. And even though you don't have, you pull up your app and you see where you're at financially, you have all these things in your life, you have a ledger and you say, you know what, I do not have enough money to make it through the month, so I must pursue the gain of wealth.

[15 : 46] You might also find, if we were to be honest, that you may not have the wisdom to be doing what you're doing right now, but you don't keep a ledger. And because of that, you don't pursue it. Because I assure you that every one of you in here is in need of wisdom from God.

You know, our hearts were broken last week with Brother Ashley. God used them in a special way. If you weren't here, you need to go back and listen to it. Our hearts are hurting because people we love are hurting. We've lost loved ones.

And he talked about what the Bible has to say about it. And there's times in our lives that we go through difficult times because of the loss and we need God's word and comfort. But if we'd be honest in here, sometimes our way is hard because we don't live like wise people.

We live foolishly. We ignore the wisdom of God and we do things on our own and we bring upon ourselves hardships in our lives. And what do we need? We need the wisdom of God to move forward.

It's pleasant. Let's talk about some ways in which it's pleasant. Chapter number 2, verse 20 that we're reading, it says, That thou mayest walk in the way of good men and keep the paths of righteousness.

[16 : 54] You know, this path of pursuing wisdom, it's wonderful. It's a path of other good men. Other people have walked down it. And you know what you find when you're trying to live a wise life? But you meet some other good men.

You meet some other good ladies. You get Christian fellowship that's unlike anything else in this world when you pursue God. Though you may be considered by fools by other people, you may seem ostracized by those people, but you find that in following Jesus, there's other disciples that are with Him on that.

And when you said that when your family may turn their back on you, you know that you're walking the path of other good men, people that He has made righteous. And so I believe that the path of wisdom is pleasant because of the people that I've met along the way, the people that have walked in before, and I love it.

Not only that, wisdom provides for a pleasant marriage because it's seen as a covenant. 2.17, Which forsaketh the guide of her youth and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

We know that marriage is a covenant because the wisdom of God tells us that. We learn that, that we get to enjoy the pleasantness of marriage because we did not go to the world trying to find how that we should live our lives.

[18 : 04] So many different people will give you so many different models of how you could be happy as a young man, of what you should do. But the Word of God says, you know, it's pleasant. It's a wonderful thing. Wisdom says that you should have a wife, the wife of my youth, and it calls her, what's it called her here?

It calls her the guide of her youth, this companion, a friend, somebody that God would use in our lives. And those of you in here, you just take it for granted that you knew that.

You know, when I go through that intersection in Kentucky, I don't take for granted that I knew that I should marry a wife of my youth and stay with her until my beard is gray. All right? Her hair will never be gray.

I don't know how it happens, but it won't be. All right? And so I wouldn't have known that. All right? I would not have known that that was what was supposed to happen, but somebody took the Word of God and showed me from their lives.

And so I didn't waste decades trying to figure out what was the most pleasant and what was the best. And I didn't take the world's definition of stolen bread and said that this is pleasant. I trusted that God was right.

[19 : 05] And I remember that. I remember the conversation the other day that has brought up to me. The thing that was so clear to me at 18 years old is that in all the complicated things of life and all the foolishness of life and all the decisions I had to make, following the wisdom of God was the right decision and it was the simple decision and I loved it.

Is that, and I went off immediately from that time and I went and worked at a Christian camp and you know what I loved about it? They told me when to wake up. They told me when to go to bed. They told me what to eat. And you would think you would hate that, right?

You would think most teenagers would hate such a structure that, but I'll tell you in comparison to the world that was always pushing me to make decisions, to make wrong decisions and get me to conform to them, I loved going to a place that said, this is structure.

And they would say, camp, a controlled atmosphere for the ministry of preaching. C-A-M-P. And that's what happened at camp that summer. God gave me structure and He gave me discipline.

And I thought, this is pleasant. This brings protection from me. God, I want to live on this path all my life and love me enough and He loves me enough that when I wander away from it, He brings me back to it.

[20 : 15] And so we enjoy the security as being planted people. We know it says, there are trees planted by water. At the end of this chapter in verse 21, it says, for the upright shall dwell in the land and the perfect shall remain in it.

And it says, the wicked shall be cut off. So the upright are blameless and they dwell in the land. Our feet are planted. That's what this pleasant path will do for us. And wisdom provides understanding in the difficult areas of life.

Verse 9, Then shalt thou understand righteousness and judgment and equity, yea, every good path. Righteousness, we know what is pleasing to the Lord. Judgment, we know what is right.

Equity, we know how to treat one another. And direction, we know what the right path is. Decisions to make in life. Nobody's ever going to find any of those things. Nobody's going to find proper judgment.

Nobody's going to find justice. Nobody's going to find equality. Nobody's going to find any of those things that this world talks about and pursues if they do not find the fear of God. Which means that's the beginning of knowledge.

[21 : 11] That's the beginning of wisdom. Which means if it's the beginning, then you can't get to those things by skipping it. There's no way to ever get to those things unless you find the fear of the Lord.

So pursuing wisdom provides us such a wonderful life. There's so many benefits in this life from receiving wisdom from God. John Pearson over here, sometimes if a person of a different religion will come to his door or they meet him and they try to convince him of what they are selling or whatever they're peddling.

The question that he always asks is this, what are you offering that is better than what I already have? All right? What is it that you're offering that is better than what I already have?

It probably really throws them off because that's not what they're expecting for you to ask, right? And so what do we have in Christianity? We most certainly have eternal life with the Father. We most certainly have an eternal destination.

But even now, we have the Comforter and the Holy Spirit. We have the wisdom from God provided to us. Nobody can offer any path in this world that is better than the one that God has offered to us.

[22 : 19] This path is made as a pursuit of knowing God. So much more is available to us than just the right choices in making life. If you only read Proverbs and you didn't read the other books of the Bible that's given to us, you might come across believing, if I check this box when I read my seven days on anxiety, then things will turn out this way.

But then you'll read the story of Job or maybe in Ecclesiastes, and you realize that the pursuit is not just checking off boxes of knowing what to do, but the pursuit is knowing somebody. That Job could be righteous and he could still go through all these things.

That the pursuit of wisdom is about knowing our God and who He is. I have a picture of a man that I met in India, and by no means does he portray the average person in India, but he is a guru.

And if Brother Brett wouldn't mind showing that, some of you have seen this man in the documentary that we made. And so this man, he told me, he says, you know, there's many different ways to get to God. He says, just like there's many different ways.

You can go by boat or you can go by plane or you can go by bicycle. There's every path that is available to you. And that's what this man here is telling me. And he says that he has given his life to searching after ancient wisdom.

[23 : 32] That he travels all over India looking for wisdom as if it's going to be something that he finds underneath a stone or if it's something that he's going to eventually find in a telescope hidden behind the Big Dipper or something.

And it's out there and he's in the great pursuit of it. You know, we're able to tell this man that wisdom has been found and he has a name and his name is Jesus.

Colossians 2, 3, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. You know, knowing Christ would be the beginning of wisdom for him on that day. And knowing Christ, he would learn of the sinful state.

He would learn of the unconditional love. He would learn that Jesus is the rightful king to this world and to follow him as Lord. He would learn for forgiveness of sins. He would have learned about the afterlife that he was so obsessed about and he would stop trying to communicate with the dead through demonic activity.

He would have learned of God in the pursuit of true wisdom and it was available to him. More wisdom than this man will ever find in his life was given to him when I gave him one passage of Scripture.

[24 : 38] Because this is where wisdom is going to be found. And so we should cry out. You'll understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. When we cry out for wisdom, in verse 5, it says, Thou shalt understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

In chapter number 1, it said that it cries out for us, meaning that it isn't hidden from us. God wants us to have it. It is available. That wisdom cries out. In chapter number 2, it says that we should cry out and we should be looking for it.

In chapter, in verse 6, it says, For the Lord giveth wisdom out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. That the wisdom that we're crying out and looking for and searching for, it's given to us.

And who is it given to? From the only one that can give it, we receive it from our Lord. Some of you have probably ordered a lot of Amazon or Uber Eats or pizza lately or over this year.

And when you go to have something delivered, you have this option, right? Contactless delivery. It means they don't even have to see you and you don't even have to see them, all right? It's actually a button some of you probably hope they keep, right?

[25 : 38] And so they'll leave it on the door and they ring your doorbell and you've already taken care of everything. Contactless delivery. Can I tell you that wisdom doesn't come like that? When you cry out for wisdom, you gain a greater knowledge of the God that you love and it comes from Him because that intimate relationship that you have comes from crying out for wisdom and receiving it from Him.

You know, Solomon talks to his son in verse 6. He says, The Lord give us wisdom. He says, Listen to my words, but he makes it evidently clear that the words that he is listening to are the words that would come from God.

He doesn't appeal to just the fact that he is the Father, which you can say sometimes as Dad, right? Listen to me. Why? Because I'm Dad and you have to. And that's enough reason that any kid should need, right?

But Solomon here said, Listen to me because these are the words of the Lord that we will have wisdom. In our conversations with our kids, we should be constantly referring to the One, to the giver of wisdom, to our Heavenly Father.

Son, is this pleasing to the Lord? Son, is this a wise decision? Son, would this be honoring to God? And in doing that, we do as it says in chapter 3, verse 6, in all the ways we acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy path.

[26 : 51] And so Solomon tells his son that he needs wisdom and he says, How should you get it? You should hear, you should cry out for it, you should treasure it. 1 Corinthians 1.30, But as of him are you in Christ Jesus who is God has made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

You know, there's many people in the world that will reject the wisdom. It tells the story in Matthew chapter 11, verse 19. They rejected John the Baptist and they said that John the Baptist was somebody who didn't need and didn't do things right and then they said that Jesus, He hung out with those that would eat and drink and no matter what kind of wisdom came their way, they would reject it.

But it says, But wisdom is justified of her children. Those of us that see Jesus for who He is, we want wisdom from God. We are amazed at what He had did in sending His Son to die in our place.

We know that He is the fork in the road. Matthew 7.14, Because straight is the gate and narrow is the way which lead us in the life and few there be. So on this path of wisdom, Jesus stands right there at the gate and if you reject Him, you reject all God's wisdom.

You don't get to pick and choose. It's not a buffet line. Jesus is standing at the fork of the road and you're not going to find wisdom. Where would wisdom have started for that guru? It's going to start with Jesus and if it doesn't start there, it's never going to be found.

[28 : 14] Because in the fear of the Lord, you know that Jesus is His Son and that He died in our place. It's been revealed to us. And so we find that there's a connection between hearing the Word and knowing Him. 1 Samuel 3.7, Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the Word of the Lord yet revealed unto him.

That connection, he did not know the Lord and why did he not? Because the Word of the Lord was not yet revealed to him. John 17.3, and this is life eternal that you may know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

So on this path of wisdom, we want to gain knowledge, we learn about our God. And so to reject pursuing the wisdom of God is to pursue this intimate relationship that you can have with Him.

We're not just saying we want to be able to check off all the boxes and answer the multiple questions in the right manner, that we want to know Him. My son Thatcher loves multiple choice. It's like, Dad, they put the answer there.

I mean, they put some other answers around it, but the answer is always there. But unfortunately, life is not always multiple choice. Sometimes it's short essay and sometimes it's long essay and sometimes you've got to know somebody.

[29 : 18] And so Proverbs provides more force than just multiple choice answers, but it's the pursuit of knowing somebody. And so the man looking for wisdom in India most certainly would start with Jesus. But the young man struggling with sexual sin, for him he should look to God as well.

A good counselor would tell him to run away from the strange woman and that would be partially true. But the Bible tells us here that if we will hear, if we will treasure, it's the fear of the Lord that provides protection for the young man that would be seduced in this world.

Verses 1 through 5 says, If you receive, you will seek, search, and you will cry out. The protection in this world is found in not just avoiding the things of sin, but it's that intimate relationship with knowing God and pursuing Him alone for wisdom.

So we've seen protection, we've seen that it's pleasant, we've seen the knowledge the Lord has gained through the pursuit of wisdom, and now we must ask, how do we get this? How do we take this path?

Verse 1, If thou wilt receive my words, thou shalt understand. You know, this path is possible even though we live in a foolish world. This path is possible even though few people seem to want to take it.

[30 : 28] So here's some qualities of a diligent search. Verse 1, If thou wilt receive my words. So there has to be a willingness there. You have to be receptive to the words of God. You have to treasure the words of God and hold them in its place.

And so, what's the difference between hearing a message of God's word and it just going into our minds and not hidden in our hearts as it says here in this proverb?

It's that you came looking for it. That you're crying out for it. That you know you need it. Those who came knowing they needed wisdom from God will leave knowing they found wisdom from God.

Those that know they need to cry out to God in prayer will be people that pray to God. And so there has to be an engagement. It says, Thine ear unto wisdom. So they incline thine ear unto wisdom.

Apply that heart to understanding. Yea, if thou cry step to knowledge and lifteth up the voice of understanding. You've got to be all in. Your ear is willing to hear wisdom. Your heart is willing to understand it.

[31 : 28] In your mouth it cries out and asks God for discernment and understanding. You pursue it and you want it. You've heard it said before, a moderated religion is good for us to the devil speaking or demons as no religion at all and is more amusing.

You know, we live in, if you're not wanting the wisdom of God, we just live lives that are just amusing. They're just not fully given to Him. Where else are you finding wisdom? And if you're not looking for wisdom, how do you think that you were born with all that you need?

I can promise you the Bible provides more. He has it stored up for you. You give it a high estimation. Verse 4, If thou seekest her as silver and searchest for her as for hid treasures.

You know, it takes work to find silver. You dig for it and you go for it. You know what you're looking for. We should pursue wisdom. It was told of a man that moved from San Francisco all the way out to California in 1849 for the gold rush.

And this is what he said when he left everything. He says, I have left those that I've loved as my own life behind and risked everything and endured many hardships to get here. And I want to make enough to live easier and do some good with it before I return.

[32 : 37] A man heard that in California that there was some gold that was available to him. So he leaves everything behind in New York and travels many months across the country for the chance that he might be able to find some gold.

Why? Because he treasured it. He valued it. It was at high esteem. It would alter his life. He had to have it and he changed everything about his life to have it. You know that there's people in this room that are in a worse situation than you are but they have more joy than you because they have wisdom.

There are people in here that are going through greater obstacles but they will come out and they will have success in the areas of life. Why? Because they have wisdom. If we truly vowed wisdom as we should, it would change the way that we want about our days.

We would be like the man that would just be willing just to go after it with everything that is in us. You know, as I said, many of us face struggles as were mentioned last week but many of us also face struggles that come from a lack of wisdom.

Let me say it differently. I struggle in life because I ignore godly wisdom that is provided to me. See, I would ask God to give me wisdom on which home to buy, on which house to buy but I might ignore his wisdom on how to lead a home because I know enough and I don't need to pursue it anymore.

[33 : 50] I know enough to do and that's a real shame that we'd ever live like that. We ask God for wisdom on what house to buy but we ignore the wisdom of how to build a home. We're making life harder for ourselves.

Proverbs 13, 15, good understanding giveth favor but the way of the transgressors is hard. The way of foolish people is hard. People that rebel against the things of God.

So I want to remind you of this path to wisdom. Especially teenagers in here, young men, there's a lot of different paths that are laid out to you but I can tell you there's only one of them that's going to provide protection. Someone that's searching this word to know God better and to find his wisdom and obey it.

Many paths, as you get up on a tunnel, the signs may say that they're more enjoyable. They may have every light in the world that tells you that they're a pleasant path. There's only one pleasant path. It's going to be found in God's wisdom.

Everything else is going to lead you astray. It's just going to go in circles until you get back to where you should have been at the very beginning. But to choose wisdom today, submit your whole mind to the scripture.

[34 : 54] Don't think you know better than God's word. Bring it to bear on every area of your life. Before we pray, and if you're not a believer in here today, you've never met Jesus, let me introduce you to wisdom.

You will be amazed that when you recognize that what he says about his son, and you accept the truth of God's word, how the reality of so many things are going to fall into place. Because the Bible tells us, seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you.

You may not think that you have place for him in your life, but I tell you that nothing is going to fit until you recognize his rightful place in your life. So what we do here at our church is in a moment, I'm going to pray for the believers in here, brothers and sisters in Christ.

I'm going to pray for you. And what I'm going to pray is that thou mayest walk in the way of good men, that you will follow after God, pursuing him, and that you won't reject the wisdom that he has.

And as I have my brothers and sisters have an opportunity to respond, come down to an altar, or pray there in their seats, and say, God, I cry out for wisdom. I need it. I'm going to ask you, would you make the greatest decision of your life today?

[35 : 54] Would you allow us the opportunity to take this book of wisdom, and to show you who Jesus is, and to let you meet God today from his word? We'll take you to another room, we'll let you ask any of the questions that you have, show you what the Bible says about salvation.

Brothers and sisters in here, some of you like me, when you read through this, you know exactly the areas of your life that says, God, I need wisdom. God, if I do not have your wisdom, then I will be avoiding the protection that you have for me.

I will be avoiding the pleasant life that you have for me, God. I need wisdom in this area. Would you lead and guide me? And what does God say? I have it stored up for you. I'm ready to give it to you.

And not only that, I will deliver it to you and we'll get to know each other better through it because he is the source of it and we can know God. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this proverb, Lord, in our lives.

Lord, I pray right now, Lord, I pray for the person or the people in this room that have never met your son, that they do not know the fear of the Lord, where they have never seen why that Jesus needed to go to a cross and they've never been introduced to the story about you.

[37 : 06] I pray that today they'll recognize that they are sinners that are in need of a Savior, that they have sinned against you. In life, they have chosen to do things that are contrary to your word as we all have, Lord, and they'll recognize that they are now sinners and they need you.

With every head bowed and every eye closed, is that your story in here today? Today, you need wisdom, but your wisdom has to do about where will you spend eternity? How do you get forgiveness of sins? God's word has answers for that.

If that's you in here today, would you just look up this way to me so I could speak to you and give you some instruction on what can be done? If that's not your story in here today, you say you know Jesus and you know where wisdom is found.

I just want you to ask God today, have you been pursuing Him? Have you been living a life going down that path of wisdom? Do you ask yourself throughout your days and weeks, is what I'm doing wise?

And if that's not the case today, would you talk to Him? As you pray there in your seat or as others will come here to the altar, talk to the Lord, cry out to Him for wisdom, and when you're done, you'll stand and sing with David.