

Sensibleness in ones Approach to Life |Proverbs 14

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- [0 : 00] Please take your Bibles and join me in Proverbs chapter number 14 tonight. We'll be in Proverbs chapter number 14. As you know, as we've been going through different Proverbs, we have been stopping as we're just going along the way at different ones individually.
- But tonight we are going to be looking at the whole chapter of Proverbs chapter number 14. I thought we'd only look at verse number 4 about the ox and the crib.
- But as I began to study the chapter more, I began to see how it was all connected together. And here in a moment I'm going to ask you to circle three different words that show up in this chapter. And it's a word that we're going to look at tonight.
- And I really enjoyed the special tonight about a coming day. And our kids' workers and our Juana workers, the most important thing that we will do is to prepare our kids for that coming day.
- But the Bible has a lot to say about the day in which we live in right now. And in Proverbs especially, right? It has instruction. Some of you, like the young ladies that sung tonight, may have had the blessing to grow up in Christian homes with Christian instructions, helping you.
- [1 : 07] Others in here maybe you didn't. But we're all blessed to have the Word of God that gives practical advice for everyday living. And Proverbs 14 really does that for us.
- And so it doesn't matter if you're too old in here to win the prizes that Greg's talking about in here, or how young you are, the Bible has a message for you tonight. And I want to communicate it in such a way that all of us will hear it and live according to it.
- I want to talk to the kids about Brother Greg here for a second, okay? Because as when you grow up, you begin to learn things. You know, you say, and the Bible will help you and change things. So when Brother Greg was in about 6th or 7th grade, he was already 6'2", probably, all right?
- And so he didn't realize how tall he was. He just thought, I'm a kid like everybody else. So sometimes he would be in the back seat of the car, and the person in the front seat of the car would get out.
- And Greg says, I'm going to get in the front, okay? And he was the other person in the back seat. He didn't want them to beat him. So Greg would always climb through the middle of the console, which isn't a problem with the little kid.
- [2 : 10] But when you're about 6'2", that's a problem, all right? And so I'd always say, Greg, you can't do this. I'd say, you have to put away childish things, all right? Climbing from the back seat to the front seat, that is a childish thing.
- People, you look like a grown man. You can't be climbing from the back seat to the front seat. And the Bible will give us instruction of how we ought to live life as a kid and as a teenager and as somebody that's been married for a year like Graham, somebody that's been married older.
- The Bible just lays it out in front of us. It's in Proverbs even more so. So the word that I'm going to give you, if you're writing it down, before I give you the definition of it, I want to get three kids up here that would try to define the word after I give it to you.

And then after you try to do that, I will read you some verses and we'll see how the Bible is the best way to learn a word because you'll see that. So I have three volunteers in here that want to try to get...

I'm going to give you a word and you're going to try to give me the definition of that word. Do we have three volunteers tonight? I don't have any candy to offer as Greg did. Who do we have over here? All right.

[3 : 14] Come on up here. All right. Karis is coming up. We got one. We need two more. Let's hear it for Karis. Come on up. Hamilton. Okay. All right. Don't be looking at the grandpa.

I'll get answers. Okay. I know he's got the wisdom, but you got answers. We need one more. Luther's coming up here. All right. We got three. And so this is a hard word. Mr. Greg said it's a big word. It's not really a big word.

It's just a word we don't use much, but we need to know it because it's in the Bible. Okay. So I'm going to give you this microphone and may God be with us. Okay. And Hamilton, you have the microphone. I'm going to read you the word and you just tell me what you think it means.

Then you give Karis the microphone and the Luther. And then I'm going to come back to the Bible. I'm going to read verses about the word and that might help you at your second time. All right. So you ready, Hamilton?

This is the word. This is the word. The word is prudence. Prudence. All right. What do you got for me, Hamilton? What do you think prudence means?

[4 : 14] You want to go last? Yeah. Good thinking. All right. Hand it to one of them. What do you think prudence means? Rude. Rude. Okay.

It's a good place to start. Okay. Luther? Pride. Pride? Okay. Let's see. Now I'm going to read some verses. Y'all listen real close. Okay. I'm going to have to read kind of fast, but I'm going to read you some verses.

Y'all listening? I'm going to read you verses. And then, you know, in a spelling bee, you can say, use that word in a sentence. I'm going to use that word in Bible verses. And then after I've read you the verses, let's see if you might have a better definition for the word.

You with me, Hamilton? All right. Here we go. I think I know it. Okay. Wait one second. Don't give it away yet. Okay. Proverbs 8.12. It says, I, wisdom, dwell with prudence and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

Prudence dwells with wisdom. 1 Samuel 16.18. So you get about David. You know David. This is before he kills the giant. It says, 1 Samuel 16.18. Then answered one of the servants said, behold, I have seen a son of Jesse of the Bethlehemite that is cunning and playing, a mighty violent man, and the man of war prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him.

[5 : 26] So David, as a shepherd boy, was prudent. All right. Proverbs. And this is if you're circling in the Bible. It's interactive. You're all playing along today. Okay. So you're going to circle in Proverbs 14.18.

The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, but the folly of fools is the seat. I've got two more verses. I'm going to come to you, Hamilton. Proverbs 14.15.

The simple believeth every word, but the prudent man looketh well to his going. And then lastly, Proverbs 14.18. The simple inherit folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

All right. Did those help you? Going back to you, Hamilton. What do you think you got? Okay. So I think prudent means like they look weak, but in the eyes of the Lord, they are strong, and they have a kind heart.

Because when David, when he fought. Oh, come on, Hamilton. I know about you and your preaching. All right. When he fought Goliath. All right. Okay. That's good. When he fought Goliath.

[6 : 28] That's right. That inner strength. All right. That's good. Karis, you're next. That was good. Everything you said was wonderful. All right. All right. Go ahead. Yes.

Sit, ma'am. A wise man. A wise man. Very. That's a very good word. If you're describing prudence, you caught that. Because they hang out together. They dwell together.

Very good. And Luther. I think prudence means that it's the word of the Lord's scripture and you use it as the knowledge of the word.

Man, I like all three of those answers. Let's give them a round of applause. You know, a effect that I didn't even consider the night is our kids can learn Bible words when they hear it read in the scripture, right?

Their understanding grew. And the more times that they would hear verses, the better their understanding. Because my definition of prudence wasn't near as good as it is the more I read about it and study about it.

[7 : 26] The best way to define the word would be to give Bible verses that have it. And so I liked all their answers. This knowledge that God would give like King David, right? Or also to a person that would have wisdom, as Karis said.

Or a person that lives according to the Bible. All of those were right down the track. And so it's a showing, a care for the future. And this is how I titled it tonight.

It's a sensibleness in one's approach to life. Being sensible when it comes to approaching life. Having common sense. Knowing how to act. How to handle yourself. Proverbs 14, 1 through 3.

Every wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands. He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord. But he that is perverse in his ways despises him.

And the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride. But the lips of the wise shall preserve them. So first off, we see the lips of a wise person is going to preserve them.

[8 : 23] A wise woman, she builds her house. And she takes a responsibility for it. And ladies, I'm not going to stay here very long, okay?

Because what we find here in the example given is that a lady is given a responsibility of something. And she does it with all of her strength and all of her might. As contrasted to a woman of folly who lives in such a way where there is a neglect about it.

And so the foolish plucketh it down. And the wise woman, she would build it up. And so maybe there's a direct application to you. But every one of you in here need to ask yourself tonight, what are the areas in which I have been given responsibility?

It's a picture of a woman who has a responsibility of a household that she cares for. If you've ever seen that before, it's a wonderful thing. They've got a million things going on. Picking up one kid, doing this. The meal is going on in the oven.

There's like a million different things going on. But they say this right here is my responsibility. Proverbs 31 would talk about a woman that did all that. Then so much more, right? But she would say this is in my realm of responsibility.

[9 : 31] And the way we say it today is I own this, right? This is my area. I own this. And so I'd like to ask you as we move forward here to do a little inventory and say what is the areas of your life that you would say this is my area of responsibility?

And what is your attitude towards it? He that walketh in uprightness feareth the Lord, but he that is perverse in a way despises us. Our attitude towards God will show our behavior towards the work that he has given us.

A person that fears the Lord says, all this is my responsibility and I'm going to go about it and I'm going to build it up. A person that despises the Lord says, I don't fear the Lord and they're going to pull it down.

What's interesting is both of them are busy, but only one of them is building and one of them is pulling it down. And work shouldn't be avoided nor should it be idolized. When we think about work, we should be thinking about stewardship and not identity.

God, you have given me this talent. You've given me this job. You've given me this responsibility. I fear the Lord and so I'm going to do my job this way. That may be a place of income for you or kids, that may be your math class.

[10 : 33] But whatever you've been given, God gave it to you and your way of looking at it, if you don't want to do it, if you're lazy about it, if you want to cut corners, it isn't about the math class. It's about saying that I don't recognize that this is an area of responsibility that God has given you.

And so some people find their identity, but it's an area of stewardship. Also, we should see it as a blessing and not a burden as we look at it. All these things that are upon you, you ought to say, this comes to me.

This is my area of responsibility given to me from God. And as I said, both women were busy in the story, but they had totally different effects. One of them is building up and one of them is tearing down.

And so there's this busyness of life that can rob us of our joy. And often there's a busyness that is a result of working with the wrong motivation. Have you ever been told that there's enough time in your day to do all the things that God has called you to do?

Like we're not always good with math, but God is. And so when we say that I don't have enough time to do all the things that God has given me to do, then apparently we haven't decided what our area of responsibility is.

[11 : 38] Because you have enough time in the day to do what God has given you to do. So why is it that we find ourselves always too busy to do the things that we know that God's given us to do? And I think often it's our motivation in our work.

And so this is for you, Greg, here, okay? Alliterating with the letter P. I don't like alliteration. Greg likes alliteration. I think alliteration is precious in poetry, pointless in personal application, and perturbing in personal teaching.

I don't know, all right? But here, all the letter P here. A lot of times the busyness in my life, and I read this years ago and saved it. Anytime the word I get to talking about busyness is in people-pleasing.

I'll do a work that doesn't belong to me. It's not my house that was given to me. But I want to be pleasing to you. I need pats on the back. A performance evaluation. I need people to say I'm doing a good job.

Possessions. I need to work a little harder because there's something that I think I need to possess. Proving myself or pity. Poor planning or power or perfectionism or position or prestige or posting where people would see me.

[12 : 43] All those wrong motivations cause me to do an amount of work that doesn't allow me to take care of the responsibilities that I've been given. So there's one woman who's working to build up her house. She knows the job that's been given to her.

She knows all that God has for her. But there's another one that is foolish where she is pulling things down. And so I'd ask you, do you know your area of responsibility? Do you know what belongs to you and what doesn't? And then hard work pays off, the Bible teaches.

And all that labor, Proverbs 14, 23, there is profit. But the talks of the lips tendeth only the penury. And so there's labor and work. There's a benefit to working hard. And there is a poverty that comes to people who don't.

Diligent hands make rich. And we'll talk about what riches are in Proverbs 10 later. He becomes poor that deals with a slack hand. But the hand of the diligent maketh rich. Proverbs 12, 11 says, If you work hard, then there will be the blessings that come with that.

And if you just talk about it, there's poverty. If you follow other people that are void of understanding, you're going to find yourself missing out on those blessings. The lazy will always be indebted to others. Proverbs 12, 24, And so we know in the Bible that work was present before the fall.

[14 : 07] That before man fell in the sin, God gave him work. So it's part of what God has created us to do. Which means that it's not evil and it shouldn't be avoided.

It's something that God had given us to do. When Stephanie was delivering Thatcher, I've probably told this before. And when she was delivering Thatcher, she was yelling and that's what women do, you know.

It's just so dramatic about this whole process, all right. And so she's doing that. And so I'm the loving husband, you know, there beside her. And I just say, Isn't it just beautiful to see the promises of God lived out?

God said you would have pain and childbearing. And the word of God is true. And all you ladies are near, so I'm so glad I'm not married to that lunatic up there. And she broke out of her pain for a moment and said, Well, for some reason, I've never seen you sweating by your brow in a field.

And so, yeah. And she's like, Somehow you have circumvented the whole process. So get me an epidural because I need some help circumventing the process in my life.

[15 : 11] And so we know that. In Genesis 2.19, Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, every fowl of the air, and brought then Adam that he would call them, whosoever Adam called a living creature.

And then in Proverbs 3.19, The sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground. For out of it thou was taken, for thus thou art, and to the death shall thou return. So before the fall, work was created, and God said, saw all the things and it was good.

So work's not bad. After the fall, it says, work is going to be hard, and there's times you're going to have to work hard, and I'm not calling that evil, and I'm not telling you to avoid it. I'm just telling you that's how it is.

And so in life, there's going to be times where we need to work hard. And so we're not told to avoid the difficulty of work, but to embrace it. Someday the antidote for this cursed world will return, and we will rest from the ruler of rest.

And that's what we'll see on Sunday morning, the Sabbath that we find our rest in, which is Jesus. But until that time, we live in a cursed world where it's hard to get farming. Caleb was a carrot farmer. I'm telling the truth about that, okay?

[16 : 16] He was a farmer of carrots, all right? Don't even know how to talk about it. And he did it, all right? Right? No? I'm making this up? Good, okay. And so Caleb did that, and it wasn't easy. It took work to plow the fields and to do it.

So our attitude towards God will show itself in our attitude towards our work. A person's attitude towards the Lord, either fearing Him or despising Him, shows up in our behavior, and it shows up in the responsibilities that God has given us.

And the work vocationally you're to do, the work that you're doing inside of the home, the work you're supposed to do inside of your family, we should love it, and we should thank God for it, and we should despise it. And we should wake up in the morning and say, God, I don't only thank you for the blessings that I have today, for the work that you gave me yesterday, but I thank you that you gave me a purpose and a work that I should do today.

Proverbs 14, 4. I'm going to speak about an animal, if you're taking notes, all right?

Proverbs 14, 4. Where no oxen are, the crib is clean, but much increases by the strength of the ox.

So I listed in sermons on this, and I'm supposed to tell you at this time how you guys are supposed to take care of the church building, because kids here mess up everything. And so, Micah, we're going to need you to paint the walls again in three more months.

[17 : 27] And that's most certainly a true application that we need to take care of the things around the church, and because having people in it is going to cause a problem. But why is this place so important, and why is the work here so important?

It's because the work that God's doing in and through you is so important, and that you have a work to do on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday that is worth all the mess that may come along with it, being challenged here.

Those who will plan well can expect an abundance. It's not just talking about the mess that an ox brings, which there will be plenty to talk about, but it's talking about planning will provide an abundance, that there's things that you can bring into your life that are worth it because they provide an abundance.

The president of the college I went to said, many people did not make great effort because they did not want to deal with great mess. That's what he would say when he would speak about this. Many people did not make great effort in life because they did not want to deal with a great mess.

So there has to be a balance or a completeness to this idea that we got to be busy, but we need to be effective because farmers aren't just busy, they're effective, but we also got to be willing to do the work regardless of the problems that may come from that.

[18 : 40] Proverbs 21.5, The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness, but of everyone that is hasty only to want. And we have to be diligent in the work.

2 Timothy 2, 6 and 7, The husband that laboreth must first be a partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say, the Lord giveth understanding in all things.

Farming takes planning. We had a girl at our camp a few years ago from my hometown of Harding, Kentucky, and her parents have a huge watermelon farm. And it's really big. You don't usually grow, have farms this big of watermelons in Kentucky, mostly in Florida, but they have a lot of watermelons.

Well, she said at a prayer request at the camp, she said, pray that we either get rain by Wednesday afternoon, and if we don't get rain by Wednesday afternoon, pray that we don't get it for four more days. Because we either need it to rain, or we need the crop to bust, so that we can get help with the busted crops.

And I remember looking at the teenagers saying, wow, there's a whole lot more to farming than I ever thought, right? Farming isn't just having something in your backyard, but people do this. Combines have computers.

[19 : 45] There's a lot of planning. People go to college for farming. There's so much to be done. There's a planning that needs to be done, and they go about it in a diligent manner. Just like a diligent soldier gains the approval as a commanding officer, or a diligent athlete wins a victory, the diligent farmer wins first his share of the crops that are given to him.

And so having an ox is worth it. Because what's the other option? You're running around in a field by yourself with a plow, and you're pulling it, okay? So a guy with an ox can have multiple acre farm.

A guy without an ox doesn't. He has 500 square feet. I don't even know. I don't know what you would do if you didn't have an ox, right? He would have to pull it to himself, and he couldn't do it.

And so there's effort in life that is worth it. But the effort that you're putting out doesn't mean just because there's mess that comes along with it, and there's hardship, it's not worth it. There's a real push for minimalism, and I really like that.

My wife said she loves things that are minimal and simple, but it's a whole lot of work to be simple these days, right? It's so hard to make things look like the simple. We're remodeling her kitchen, and she says, I just wanted to have this simple, simple farmhouse look.

[20 : 55] I'm like, I've been in farmhouses. I know what simple looks like. Let's not paint the walls. That's simple, all right? Let's not have a door. That's a farmhouse. But she's thinking of a different version of simple that costs more money and time, all right?

And so the effort is worth it because we put effort into it, and now we enjoy it. The labor, the farmer puts the work in, but he gets to eat the first. He gives to the Lord, and he gets to eat of that first of his fruit.

That the effort is worth it. When you recognize what your responsibility is in this world, and that God has called you to do it, the effort is worth it. And so don't sell off your ox just because it's easier.

Don't just say, I'm going to do everything so minimal so I don't have to do it. Put in the work, and I know it will put in more work, but do it as unto the Lord. Ecclesiastes 11, 4. We are farmers.

I was going to see if anybody responded with the jingle, all right? Let me try one more time. Some of you know what I'm talking about. We are farmers. Unbelievable, all right? And so we are farmers, and 1 Corinthians 3, 6 says, I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

[22 : 02] Caleb has alluded to it already, but we're farmers. We plant, we water, God gives the increase. We don't observe the wind, or we would never sow. We don't regard the clouds. We won't reap. Ecclesiastes 11, 4.

We say that I know what I'll do the day, maybe wash the way tomorrow. I know the work that I'm doing is going to create more work. I know if I sign up for Awanas, I'm going to have to be there every Thursday night, but that's going to be a lot of work, and I'm going to get home a little bit tired, but it's worth it because it's worth having an ox on the farm because it gives an increase.

The effort is worth it when you're committed to the work that you're doing. When you decide, this is where my energy should go, it's worth doing the work. We're the body of Christ.

I encourage training center students when they come here to find a farm. That's how I say it, is find a farm, something that when you're driving down the road, you can say, this is my area of responsibility, and I can pray about it, and I can think about it.

It might be as small as the potted plant outside of the church here. It's my job. How can I make it better? How can I replace it? How can I make it grow better?

[23 : 04] How can I add water to it? Just something that you, when you're driving down the road, and your mind is beginning to wonder, say, I have a farm. I have something that I can work on all the time. That's what you need, and we need that.

Every one of you needs something that you can addict yourself to the ministry. There's something in your life and discipline making to a group of people that when you're driving down the road, say, God, I know it's worth the effort.

I know it's not easy, but it's worth the effort. So I'm not going to take this ministry out of my barn because it's messy for me or hard for me. God, it's worth having this in my life.

And then, and so I thought about planting a tree outside of my house when I got to become the pastor here, and I thought the great thing about that tree would be I would be able to water it, and I wasn't going to get a Bradford pear because they grow too fast and splinter.

That's not what we're looking for here, okay? I put a lot of thought in this, okay? I wanted an oak tree, and then it would just remind me that nothing worth having grows overnight, that I have a job to care for it and to water it.

[24 : 06] And I haven't had enough time to plant a tree since I've started, and that's symbolic in of itself, isn't it? And so when I see where the tree should go, it reminds me of that. But it's worth it.

And I won't get to the third point because I get invited back to preach here again, and so I will save it about being prudent in our speech. But there's just such blessing in your life when you know the lane in which God has given you the doom.

And then you say, God, I know that this is what I have. Remember the woman? She has the job inside of her home that she's doing, and she's doing it with all of her heart. She's putting forth effort, and God says she's building a home.

Another person's being busy, but they're pulling it down. One of them took it as stewardship. This is what God gave me. And you can't just say, I want to make everything easy because everything in life isn't easy.

Sometimes we have to do hard things. We're going to make hard decisions because we say, I know this is what's needed. You know, speaking about Iwana, God gave the church this responsibility to help parents raise their kids in the word of the Lord.

[25 : 05] It's a responsibility given to us. As a member of the church, you're signing up for it. It's going to be hard work starting next Thursday. Kids, you're in math class, and you don't understand why you need it because you think, won't my phone that I get someday have a calculator on it?

But you're learning things. You're learning logic. You're learning how to think. God gave that to you. Yes, sir, he did. All right? He gave that to you, and so you need to do it as unto the Lord. You need to say, this has now been put into my circle.

This is my responsibility, and I'm going to do that with everything that is in me. And so this is what I'd like to challenge you with the prayer as we leave the night is first just ask God, say, God, what is in my home?

What is my responsibility? Looking at the example of the lady in verse number one who knew what her responsibilities were given to her. Every wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish plucketh it down.

Every wise woman buildeth her house. Every wise woman does the job in which God has given her to do at that time in life. Every wise man takes what God gives, and you can't get rid of it.

[26 : 08] If you have this circle in your life and you say, I know these things belong to me, but I got a few things upon the kind of the perimeters, and I don't know if they really belong to me as a responsibility or if they belong to somebody else, go to God and say, God, show me what my responsibilities are in life and write them down and say, I want to do them with everything that's in me.

And if it's in your circle of responsibility, regardless of how hard it is, like owning an ox, know that it has great reward because God has given that to you.

Hope that will encourage you. God's doing a great work through many of you in here, and I pray all of you in here. I know many of your stories, and it's a great blessing to get to serve our Lord.

And so would you ask him tonight, say, God, what's supposed to be in my circle? What goes outside of my circle? And then recommit yourself to saying, I'm going to give my all to the responsibilities that you have given me.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, I pray tonight for all my brothers and sisters in Christ, Lord. I pray that you would help us identify what it is that you would have us to do.

[27 : 09] What are the areas of responsibility that are given to us that we cannot give off to anybody else, but they are directly in our circle. And so, Lord, I would pray that my brothers and sisters tonight would recognize these things in their life and in their heart.

With every head bowed, every eye closed, I want to give you a moment to respond. Stephen, I won't ask that you sing tonight. I just want to give a little bit more time for people to pray there in their seats.

And then, if you'd like to pray at the altar. And then after we've taken a moment, I'll ask you to stand with us and we'll sing a couple verses of a song before we leave. which is the one where we miss the thirsty and see the Mary and that there are generations of course again.

I hope that by White I just like to end up