

# Consider Diligently Part 2

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[ 0 : 00 ] Proverbs 23, we're there last Sunday night looking at verse number one, consider diligently, not considering the food on the table diligently, but consider your heart and your motive when you sit down at the table with people that have greater influence or more power, they have something you have, is that you don't give yourself over and become indulgent on the food because if you do that, then you may lose moderation in other areas and say things that you don't mean and to make commitments that you shouldn't be making.

And so we need to be careful when we have the invitation to sit with the powerful and that we're not giving over to our appetite. And so as we look at our motivation and we were talking about how do we know if we're having an ungodly ambition, what is wrong and what is right, we say that knowing that Jesus, the load that he gives us is not heavy and that Jesus is meek and mild and the yoke is easy and the burden is light, that one of the ways that we can look at our motivation when dealing with other people is, do I just have to have this?

Like is my identity tied into making this sale? Is my identity tied into getting this person to like me? Is my identity in getting these people to agree with me?

When you're feeling that at the table and you consider that, you need to realize you're not properly motivated. If you just want to glorify God, then you can rest in and say, God, whatever happens at the end of this meal or this encounter with this person, I can trust you.

And when you have this need to win or this make the sale or whatever, then you'll know that you're not finding your motivation in him. Then verses four and five told us to beware of the idol of wealth.

[ 1 : 38 ] And we say that not just the 1% of America, but all of us could fall into this temptation. We could all fall into the snares that people being rich, contrasting what it means the labor to be rich versus working to pay the bills.

And it really comes down to people that cease their own wisdom. If you can trust God, I'm going to do my job and I'm going to trust God. I'm going to provide for my family. That's where you should be at.

But when you're saying, it's all on me to get this done and I got to gain for myself, it really comes down to what your motive is. And trusting God's wisdom over your own is one of the ways that shows that you're doing the work properly.

There's probably a million different ways. I enjoyed a couple of weeks ago, I mentioned me and Matt Malcolm and Josh Chris went to dinner and I said, everybody always talks about whatever I want to talk about when I'm at a meal and I want to hear what you guys do.

After about 30 minutes of that, I'm like, well, never mind. I don't know what you do. Like it's too complicated. My brain hurts to think about all the decisions that you have to make in a day. But you're all faced with so many decisions throughout the week to trust God's wisdom or your own.

[ 2 : 43 ] If you're ever tempted to do something in an in-moral way or to do something to cut corners, to do something that would be against the business that you're working for, that's trusting your own wisdom. That's trusting in human wisdom.

But when you say, God, I'm going to do things the right way because I live out from your hand. You take care of me. Chance to glorify the Lord. And so we looked at the charge that was given along those areas.

And then the New Testament gives a relentless push towards what we could call an intentional simplicity. I took you through a series of verses how the pleasures of the world can choke out our joy even though it's making promises to give us more.

Laying up treasure for ourselves goes against the purpose of treasures. They are to be used with the purpose of bringing glory to God. The Bible gives a constant reminder of how little value earthly things have in the light of eternity.

That one day God would say, Thou fool, thou night, thy soul will be required of thee that it's all going to vanish. The Bible constantly is helping us not get entangled and tied up with the things of this earth by reminding us of how little value that they have in eternity if they're not used properly.

[ 3 : 55 ] Isn't it amazing the difference? I think I say that a lot, all right? Psych's kids who keep up with the weird things I say, isn't it amazing? Put that on top of your list, all right? You'll break me from that one real soon.

Isn't it amazing the difference of what you can do with an hour of your time? How much can be accomplished with an hour? And then also how little can be accomplished with an hour? The difference is just enormous.

It's just an hour. It's not that you are the same person. The length of time is the same, but the direction that hour is given is amazing. The Bible constantly teaches us that our money is the same way.

It can just do so little in bringing you happiness, and it can also do so much in providing for a real need and making a difference. And so we're warned.

Not just in one set of passages. It wasn't, hey, let me give you one solid chapter on how to handle finances, but all throughout the Bible, it's telling us to value the eternal things and to keep things in perspective.

[ 4 : 52 ] And so I ended last week in saying that we have to help our kids, not just know the practical financial aspects of how to handle their finances, but to really help them make sure they don't get entangled in this dangerous life we live in.

The gentleman that was visiting today, he was talking about how easy it is in America. I said, so many times I see men from India, they're out the park with their kids, and they just seem to be really involved in their lives.

And he said, well, wait two or three generations and see if that's still the case. And I said, well, maybe it won't be the case because things will just start to get lazy. And he said, this is a very easy country to get lazy in.

Everything just comes so much easier. And we have to fight against that. We have to fight constantly against that, that our kids and ourselves become very entitled.

No matter what you have, there's always somebody that has something nicer. There's always something that tells you that you deserve something nicer. And this is a dangerous place to raise our kids. I could show you a place on Amazon that wouldn't be as a, it'd be a dangerous place because of the anacondas, but it would be a less dangerous place when it comes to raising our kids to be soft and not able to make decisions based on principle and conviction.

[ 6 : 12 ] And so we're reminded to be generous is not only a matter of our resources, but it's a matter of abounding in our understanding of God. That's where we'll pick up.

2 Corinthians 8, 1 and 2. Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit, which means the witness, of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction, abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

Just a strong verse to show us that two things that are very much opposed to each other come together. There's a group of people and they're generous, but they're also poor. They have trials and afflictions.

They don't have a lot of resources. So what is this thing that's abounding, that's overflowing in them, that allows them to be generous? It's this witnessing of the grace of God in their lives. That is what allows people to be generous.

And you know this from life experiences. The people in your life that are generous, that have helped out in different things, it's not connected to how much money they make. It has to do with how little of this world that they need for contentment.

[ 7 : 16 ] Because if you need the things of this earth to be content, there isn't going to be enough resources that you can get and you'll never have anything extra. But you can have very little and when you're just content with the things God's given you, you realize you have margin and you can share.

And so the antidote for greed is not to stop, but to behold. To not just stop being selfish and consuming things for yourself, but to behold something greater.

Ephesians 4, 28, let him that still stole, still no more, but rather let him labor working with his hands the thing that is good that he might have to him, might give to him that needeth.

And so there's two steps from stealing. Now you're not just stealing, you're not just being selfish, you're just not being greedy, you're not just consuming things for yourself, which is what the purpose of stealing is, is to take it because you want it for yourself.

And you're not just stopping to do that, but it is now to give and to be generous, is to behold and to look at life differently. And so the bare minimal needed for contentment is far lower than we like to believe, especially today and here.

[ 8 : 24 ] 1 Timothy 6, 7, and 8, for we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out, and having food and raiment let us be there with content.

My father-in-law, Pastor Cofield, he was always famous for saying as many other preachers that you won't have it, you can't take a U-Haul with you to heaven. Or I've never seen a U-Haul truck on a hearse or at a funeral home.

So I guess it was about a year ago, Stephen might remember, one of the men that was in his church for many years had a U-Haul truck scheduled to be at his funeral because he just wanted to prove the Pastor Cofield wrong that that doesn't happen.

What a weird sense of humor, isn't it? If you're scheduling a U-Haul truck for your funeral, then you've got a Jonathan Sykes sense of humor. I'm thinking about you a lot, Jonathan. I'm watching you, okay? I'm watching you.

I want you to know that, all right? I can see you over there. And so the bare minimal that is needed and we believe the lie that we need so much. In training to be foster parents, Stephanie and I, and I tried to find the picture.

[ 9 : 27 ] Jackie, you might have seen it, but it was a picture that showed a house. And when you looked at the house, you thought, man, that's a bad situation to be in. There's food all over the place, the kids sitting right in front of the television, and it just looked like you're like, that's not a good setup.

And you look that from one perspective and then the person doing the training says, what you don't see is, look, the electricity is on. There's food at the table. There's a grandparent at the table. There was like an abundance of resources that were there.

Even though they might be mismanaged, they are there. And I realize, a trip like something where you go out to a little village in the Amazon and you see people living, average person there in that country making \$12.50 a day and to see what they're living on and to see the, it just wakes you up to the fact that I don't have to have all the things that I have to be happy.

And so if God was to take some of those from me, circumstances in life were to take them from me, I should be able to let those go. And covetousness does only affect our check accounts and our daily planners but affects our conversations.

Hebrews 13.5 Let your conversation, and that doesn't just have to do with speaking with each other but that is part of a conversation. Let your lifestyle be without covetousness and be content with such things as you have.

[ 10 : 50 ] For he has said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. And so I would encourage you to be careful when you're around covetousness people. If you're talking to people and they might be sinful in one area, you would want to avoid like profanity or if a person spoke in a perverted kind of manner, you'd say, I need to stay away from that.

That's not what I need to be thinking about. But you also need to stay away from people that are constantly covetousness, that are always trying to stir that up in you, that's always talking about gaining more because it also will fight against your contentment and living content, simple lives is a way that we can bring honor and glory to God.

So simply, a love for things that can come in direct conflict with a love for God. And so when you get something, you need to ask yourself, am I going to love this thing more than I would love my time with God?

Am I going to enjoy this new hobby the more that I'm going to love time with God? Am I going to enjoy this more than I do the things of God? And so, no matter how neutral that thing may be, it needs to be avoided at all costs.

It needs to be put into its rightful place. 1 John 3, 17, But whoso hath these world's goods and seeth the brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

[ 12 : 09 ] So if a person has the world's good and you see your brother in need, but you're not able to help meet it, then you're shutting up your bowels of compassion. And what is the result of that?

You are a person who isn't understanding and receiving the love of God. And so all of it really matters. It all matters in life. And so then verse 6 and 8, it says, Eat thou not the bread of him that has an evil eye, neither the desire thou his dainty meets.

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he. Eat and drink, saith he to thee, but his heart is not with thee. The morsel which thou hast eaten shall thou vomit up and lose thy sweet words.

So here we're being told to not fellowship with people that have a wrong view of God's provision for their life. The same imagery that we had in the book of Luke, it speaks about an evil eye, a person that doesn't have the ability.

And Luke, it was a person who couldn't recognize the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter how much light was with that person. Their eye was not single. It was not one. They couldn't receive that. Here in this is a person who has an evil eye that all they can see in this life is evil and they can't see things from God's perspective.

[ 13 : 20 ] And it says that if we were to sit and we were to eat with this person with the evil eye, Proverbs 28, 22, he that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

So a person who's always seeking to be rich, that's a person with an evil eye. Matthew 20, verse 15, it is not lawful for me to do what I will with my own. Is thine eye evil because I am good?

A person who believes that they can just play by their own rules is a person with an evil eye. But Proverbs 22, 9 will tell us what a bountiful eye is. He that has a bountiful eye shall be blessed for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

And so it's a different world views that people would have looking for an opportunity to take and another person is looking to give and we should be careful when somebody would say, well, let's just have a meal together.

You ever have an old friend maybe from high school that reaches out to you and you're like, oh, I haven't heard from them in a while. This is going to be nice. And the next thing you know, they're like, hey, I found this new product and I want to tell you all about it.

[ 14 : 23 ] I was naive about many things when I moved to Alpharetta, but I was living at Amelie Apartments not far from where I live now and I met this couple Indian guys and they said, hey, we want to come over to your house and we said, well, it'll be great.

We'd love to talk to you and tell you what we're up to and they kept talking about this person and I thought it was a friend of theirs named Amway and I thought, okay, bring Amway with you. We'll talk about Amway if you want and if you don't know about that, it's kind of, you know, a sales plan.

You get more people involved. Amway's not a person, all right? And I didn't know that, but they had a purpose in their meal and you got to be careful when you sit down with people that have an agenda in their conversations with you that they're not looking at what is best.

And so it says that you'll regret the invitation. The more so that you ate, you shall vomit it up and you shall and lose thy sweet words. The pleasant words spoken at the table will seem to be wasted.

And so we need, gratitude will help protect us in those moments. Gratitude is like glasses as it helps us see the glory of God's mercy more clearly.

[ 15 : 27 ] And we can discover the greatest joy of gratitude by noticing how often God's word links Thanksgiving with praise. Psalm 35, 18, I will give thanks in the great congregation.

I will praise thee among much people. Psalm 69, 30, I will praise the name of God with a song and I will magnify him with thanksgiving. Luke 17, 15, 16, and one of them when he saw that he was healed, turned back and with a loud voice glorified God and fell down at his face giving him thanks and he was a Samaritan.

Thanksgiving does more, does focuses us more on what God does and praise helps us think about who God is. And so this grateful attitude is going to protect you in life from the people that would have a covetous eye, that would have an evil eye.

When you sit down with people, you need to make sure they know, hey, I am not discontent with the life God's given me. I want to work hard, I want to listen, you know, we need to be wise, you need to be good about the work you're doing, but I want to make sure that you know that the God of heaven has met my needs, that I am content, I want to give praise, that I am not going to, I'm not a person who is going to be easily sold on something who is going to be reaching for something that is easy to gain wealth.

And so don't waste your words in these environments. Proverbs 23, 9, speak not in the ears of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of thy words. It seems harsh, but this experience, we should see the value that is there.

[ 17 : 00 ] The Bible tells us later in Matthew 6, 7, 6 that we shouldn't put our pearls before swine. On July the 4th, like many years ago, I was with a group of college students and we went out to give out tracts and we very quickly realized that this big parade that we were at, that everybody was just so drunk that there were just no conversations that were being had, you know.

We would talk to people, we'd give out a tract, but nobody was thinking about anything except that moment in it. Well, there's times that people are so drunk with the greed of this life that you just need to be careful that your conversation may be wasted and their conversations having more effect on you than you realize.

And then verses 10 and 11, remove not the old landmark and enter not into the fields of the fatherless, for the Redeemer is mighty, he shall plead their cause with thee. Removing the old landmark has to do with stealing somebody's property.

There was a case not far from here down near Mathis Airport where a man was moving tombstones at night and they found them in his garage because by moving the tombstones, he was able to have more property that he could sell.

Same thing here with these landmarks is that if you were to move it, I actually do the opposite. I try to mow a little bit less in my yard every time, convincing my neighbor that's his yard, all right? And I'm trying to give over land instead of take it.

[ 18 : 19 ] But moving that landmark tells us about by stealing and by being deceptive and so we're not, we're told to remove it and then it says enter into the fields of the fatherless and so orphan kids or the widow person that would have property but they didn't have the ability to protect it.

You're taking advantage of a situation and a person and so you're like, I took advantage of this person, they can't defend themselves or I was real slick and I was deceptive. What you forget is that those people have a Redeemer and he is mighty and he will please their cause.

So you might have been smarter than that person and you might have taken from the defenseless but don't forget that there is a Redeemer, there is a God of heaven that's watching and that he is not pleased with that and we should live for his honor.

If nobody else is around we should do what is right. And then verse 12, apply that heart unto instruction and not ears to the words of knowledge. And so we need to be people that live according to conviction, be believing people, fully persuaded people in our lives.

So I'll end with this. Verse 1 says, When thou sittest thee with the ruler, consider diligently what is before you. And so it's not lost on me that many of you often have to make hard choices because of your convictions.

[ 19 : 33 ] And before you go into work each day, would you consider what's before you? I know testimonies in here of many of you have made hard decisions to miss out on opportunities because you just said you're going to do what's right.

But your motives really matter. You can trust God with your life. And that desire to gain of your own wisdom, it's going to be dangerous. You can speak to some other brothers in here when you get to that place and ask them, Do you regret doing what was right?

Do you regret trusting God with those decisions? And for many positions and situations that you are put in. And Brother Austin and I and Jacob Elsey and so many, I forget who was on his first trip, the India brother, Brother John.

In India, we asked the several missionaries, What is cultural and what is pagan? What's wrong? You know, like for example, one woman said she had like seven different things that showed that she was married.

There is no way you wouldn't know if a woman was married if she has seven different things, you know, and there's a toe ring, there's this, this and that. And so the question we would say is how would you know what things are just cultural and then what things are not right?

[ 20 : 48 ] And the answer was given is that if a person just gets so full of the Bible, what is Christian will stay, what is cultural will stay, but what is pagan will disappear.

And all of you have different jobs and occupations in here. I can't tell you exactly how to live out what God, where He has placed you, but if you'll fill yourself with the Word of God, when those decisions come, you'll say, I know this is a good choice that I should make for my family, this is an honorable decision I should make, this is a promotion I should take, this is an opportunity I should take, and this isn't me being greedy, but this is me taking a God-given opportunity, and this is something that I need to avoid.

But you're only going to know that if you're living filled with the Word of God and in the principles that He has given us. Because even though He hasn't outlined everything for us day by day, the Word of God relates to every decision that you will ever make.

There's a principle that is there that the Holy Spirit can use to guide you in that decision making. All right, since it's 6:04, we won't sing together. I'll just sing one verse and then we'll go tonight.

Just kidding. I'll pray and then we will be dismissed and I'll see you all on Thursday night. If you would like to order something on Amazon and send it in, that would be great.

[ 22 : 04 ] We will make the presentation of those things on that night. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you for your Word. Lord, I thank you for how practical it is, how clear it is, helps us, guides us in life.

I thank you for brothers and sisters in here that trust you, that we look to your Word, Lord. We don't need how-to books. We don't need the wisdom of this world. We just need you to lead and guide us.

And I thank you so much for the comforter and the guide we have in the Holy Spirit and in the Word of God that we have been given, Lord, even in our own language, to read and understand. In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.