

Proverbs 2:1-22

“My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; 2 so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; 3 yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; 4 if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, 5 then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. 6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. 8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. 9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. 10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; 11 discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: 12 to deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; 13 who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; 14 who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the forwardness of the wicked; 15 whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths: 16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; 17 which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. 18 For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. 19 None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life. 20 That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous. 21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. 22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.”

Introduction

“Proverbs 2 begins with “My son,” there are 23 verses through here that begin that way. Certainly Solomon had heard that many, many times from his father, David. In fact as we go through the Book of Proverbs you can hear many no doubt of David’s lessons, spoken to his son Solomon. Solomon by the Spirit and through his quill puts much of this to the page, and then transgresses most of what he wrote in this book of wisdom. You and I, as we listen to these things, no doubt can receive them from the LORD, “my son,” you can put “my daughter” there if it’s applicable. This begins by saying **“My son,”** now there’s some “if’s” here, **“if thou wilt receive my words,”** there’s a qualifier there, **‘if you will receive them, if you’ll take them into your heart,’** **“and hide my commandments with thee;”** (verse 1) you’ll guard them, keep them, **“so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart**

to understanding; (verse 2) the idea is for “incline” is “you stoop towards it,” **“yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;” (verse 3)** the vertical here put in front of us, crying out to the LORD, lifting up your voice, **“If”** again, **“thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;” (verse 4)** your translation might say “as gold”, **“Then”** it tells us **“shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD.” (verse 5)** So, he begins a challenge here, no doubt to our hearts, ***‘If you will receive.’*** We’re studying the Book of Proverbs, you can read through it and not let it have any impression on your life. He says ***‘But if you will, if you’ll receive it, if you will hide these things within, you’ll keep them to yourself, you’ll incline your ear, you’re listening for the sake of obeying, and apply your heart to understand these things, if you cry after them, if you lift up your voice...’*** Now, you’re gonna do that, it’s gonna happen. Any one of us that’s spent any number of years trying to live in our own wisdom, knows what it was like then to finally cry out to the Lord and say *‘Uncle, I got nothing, Lord, whatever I have, it ain’t bailing me out of this situation and out of this heartache,’* there comes a time when that regeneration takes place, you’re born-again, and you come to the place in regards to trusting his wisdom, you’ve had enough of your own, I’ve been there, you return once in a while, just to make sure, I’m sure you need to come back to his wisdom. But here’s the challenge, ***‘But if, so if, if, if you’ll do these things,’ Verse 4,*** look, **“If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;”** my wife and I were watching this show on TV for awhile, and it’s kind of like these treasure hunters, they’re up in Alaska, they’re up in Washington State, and they’re like looking for agates, they’re looking for different kind of precious stones, they’re looking for gold. You ever see that show? It’s pretty crazy, they stake out their territory, got their guns to make sure nobody else, you know, and they find one little strain of topaz or something, you know, this is worth \$200,000 or something. But when they find that, you hear them out there, ***YEEHAAAA!!!*** they yell, and they just found this, they find a vein of gold coming down by a slope and they dig a whole side of a hill, looks like grizzly bears, they dug everything up trying to find. And he’s saying here, ***‘silver and gold are really not going to produce a security that we look for in this world.’*** James says that in the last days we’re foolish, thinking if we store up Kugerands and silver, we’re not saying don’t be wise, it talks about wisdom, investing is wise. If you have a portfolio worth worrying about, I looked at mine yesterday, it’s still empty, but if you have a portfolio worth worrying about, and they say diversity is important, and maybe if you hang around with those people you’ll get some wisdom. But in the final analysis, there’s no security in it. Again, when we were in the Book of Genesis, archeologists in the area of Yemen found the tomb of a princess, royalty, who talked about the great famine that overtook the world, that there was a man named Joseph in Egypt that

had grain. And she sent her servants with gold, and Joseph wouldn't for the gold give her the grain that she needed, she sent her servant back with rubies, with gems, and the rest of her treasure, and Joseph wasn't yielding, and remarkably of course verifying the Scripture, but her saying *'All of the gold, all of the silver, everything she had, her jewels produced in her life no security, it produced nothing.'* You know, you can chew on your Kugerands all day long, you're still going to be hungry. [Comment: I grew up watching a program titled "Death Valley Days" and there was this one episode where a miner, prospector, this old wizened guy, was traveling with this rich guy from the East, who was carrying a bar of gold. The prospector had a canteen and a can of beans. About halfway across Death Valley, the rich guy tried to buy the can of beans off the old guy for the bar of gold. He wouldn't sell him the can of beans. The ending showed the prospector making it across Death Valley, and then a camera panned back and you saw this skeleton in a suit laying on the side of the dirt road, with a bar of gold in it's hand or something like that. I've never forgotten that image or it's lesson, the same one Pastor Joe is relating here. Obviously, that princess starved to death, after testifying of this wisdom in writing before she died.] The idea is here, that God's wisdom, God's guidance, God's care produces something in the inner part of a human being that's walking with him, that there is no other thing in this world that can produce. ***'If you seek her as silver, you search for her as for hidden treasure,'*** "then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God." (verse 5) What you realize is, this is all about reverencing my Creator, my Redeemer. Verse 6 says, "For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." He's not playing Marco Polo, he's not holding out, he wants to impart. "He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth" or he guards "the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints." (verses 7-8) it isn't just holding truth, it's truth holding you, being held by truth, and he's talking here about the security that a believer has in his relationship with the LORD. He lays up sound wisdom for the righteous, he's a buckler to them, like a shield to them, he guards their pathway. It's wonderful to have our pathway guarded by the Father in heaven. ***'And he preserves the way of his saints.'*** how wonderful, "Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path." (verse 9) In other words, understanding, and righteousness, judgment and equity are not just cerebral exercises, they have to do with living out our lives, so you'll understand every good path. Of course, verses worldly wisdom, you know, the people and what they think in this world now needs to happen.

If You Lack Wisdom, Ask God For It

He says **“When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion”** being able to decide, to be discrete, to understand, to discern, **“discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:” (verses 10-11)** so, he says here the LORD wants to give wisdom, he wants to give knowledge, it is something he will guard your life with, he’ll guard your path with. And when you have that, discretion will preserve you, and understanding will keep you, but it’s if you will receive it, if you will look for it, if you incline yourself to apply it, if you cry after it, if you lift up your voice. God’s not holding out. **James**, of course, would say **‘If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not.’** Here’s Old Camel-knees, the Lord Jesus’ half-brother, same Mom, different Dad, Jesus again the oldest of seven, Jesus, James, Joses, Jude, sisters, you go through the names, the Lord didn’t ask to be an only child, *‘send me into a nice home where I can have my own bedroom, I’ve got a lot of studying to do before I start my public ministry,’* no, he was the oldest of his other siblings, of seven. There in the 3rd century there was a bishop, in Salamis, that said that the other brothers were from a previous marriage that Joseph had, Church fathers know nothing about it, Tertulian said they are all the uterine siblings of Christ. And James, his older brother, had thought he’d lost his mind, he thought his older brother was mad, they went after him to try to get him, he’d started saying he was the LORD of hosts and all this. And then of course, after Christ’s death and resurrection, it says he appears to James, appears to James. And you find out that your older brother is God, your older brother wasn’t just a goody-two-sandals, and James then becomes, they called him old camel knees, because he would spend 8 to 10 hours a day on his knees, with his Brother. Because James knew what his favorite color was, James knew what made him laugh. James knew what his favorite smells were. James knew what it was like to play with him when they were children. James is the one that would say to us **‘Look, if you lack wisdom, ask, he gives to all men liberally, he doesn’t scold you, he upbraideth not, or say ‘oh yea, now you want to know, now you’re in a mess.’** He says **‘he gives to all men liberally, he upbraideth not, but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, a man who lacks faith is like the waves of the sea, driven and tossed, let not that man think he’s gonna receive anything.’** He says **‘you need to believe this is who he is, he gives if you ask, he’ll lavish it upon you.’** You know, they said when they buried James, they almost had to break his legs to straighten him out, to get him in his sarcophagus, because his knees were deformed from praying all those hours. Of course, there wasn’t anybody he would rather have been with than his older brother. It says here, if you seek wisdom, if you want it, if you ask

God, he's the same yesterday, today and forever. He gives, he'll bestow. It's never *'Oh man, what should I do?'*...look, the Shepherd's never dependant on the IQ of the sheep. If you're a sheep and your heart is willing to be led, the ball's in his court, and he leads. Too often we ask *'Lord, what's your will?'* so we can decide whether we want to cooperate. He says here, ***'Wisdom will preserve you, understanding will keep you, will guard you.'***

Wisdom Is Going To Deliver You From Something

And then he's gonna tell us two things here, in verse 12, it says "to deliver thee" and in verse 16 it says "to deliver thee." So, wisdom is going to deliver you from the wicked man, and from the strange woman. There's none of those that go here. And ladies, you can flip that, "the strange man," ok, it draws a picture of immorality, the idea is, it is something our culture is infected with. So, he says here, here's the first thing, wisdom, it preserves you, it guards you, it keeps you. For this reason, and it's the reason God gives, ***"to deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;"*** (verse 12) "proud things" wicked people are salesmen, they're good, they've got a spiel, but he says ***'Wisdom, understanding, it'll preserve you, it'll keep you from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaks proud things,'*** "who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the forwardness" or "the proudness" or "the arrogancy" ***"of the wicked; whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths:"*** (verses 13-15) They're twisted, iniquity, they're froward in their paths. It says they love to walk in darkness. In John's Gospel, Jesus says this, he said, ***'Look, God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him, Jesus, is not condemned, that he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.'*** It said back in here in Proverbs, it says ***'they leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness, they rejoice to do evil,'*** (verse 13) Jesus said here, the condemnation is that Light is come into the world, and men love darkness, it's "agape" darkness, it's speaking of unbelievers, godless men and women, and it says they "agape" darkness more than light. The idea is they're devoted to it, they're not just fond of it, they're devoted to it. Because if they turn, then their own deeds have to come into the light, and they have to admit their own deeds are evil, so they are devoted to a path that goes away from God. And they rejoice in it, it says, remarkably in the Book of Proverbs. So, he says ***'Wisdom,***

discretion, understanding, if you seek God, it'll guard you, it'll keep you from the kind of people that will lure you into those things.' And let me tell you, those are not the minority in this world and in this culture, they're the majority, they're the majority. Broad is the way that leads to destruction, many there be that go therein, narrow is the way that leads to eternal life, few there be that find it. So, to preserve you from those kind of influences, wicked men, then look at **verse 16**, it says **"to deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger [foreigner] which flattereth with her words;"** I saw her last week, look in **verse 17**, **"which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God."** So it says that she's foreign, and the idea is, she knew the Truth, but she has become foreign to the goodness of God, it's a foreign thing to her now, it calls her a foreign woman because she forsook the guide of her youth, and she had forgotten the covenant of her God. Isn't that interesting? And it's warning, and look, the same thing goes, ladies, a guy in the church, he's after you, he's flattering you with his lips, he's trying to get you to do something. You know what the Scripture says, again, what you shouldn't do. He's trying to get you into bed, trying to lure you into sexual a relationship. You have my permission to say *'Sweetheart, close your eyes,'* and when his eyes are closed, you can punch him in the nose as hard as you can. Because he has no respect for you as a woman, he cares about one thing, and it isn't you. Someone will take me literally, I know, and I'll get sued, but you get the point, so we'll get back to the men again. **"to deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;" (verse 16)** look, **"which flattereth with her words;"** men need to be delivered from women that are sweet-talkers, because they're suckers. All through the Scripture God warns men about women. There's nowhere where he warns women about men, women are just smarter, they know what's going on. Men need to be warned. She flatters you with her lips, you know *'You're five-foot-four, you're so tall'* [laughter] I used to be 6-6 when I was younger, ah, *'You're so smart,'* and you're thinking *'I can't believe you would realize that,' 'you're so handsome.'* And the reason no one else has said that, because none of it's true, you're short and stupid, and ugly [loud laughter]. But men, *'I am? I am?'* look, I'm making a joke here, in one sense. But in the sense that, that flattery, that bait that's laid out there, can be taken into the heart so easily. Unfortunately, wives are much more honest than that. You know, *'I can't believe you did that,'* instead of *'Honey, I know you tried,'* I'll tell you this, wives, you can learn a lesson from these women, because as we go through the Book of Proverbs, we're gonna hear over and over, of men warned of that honey-dripping woman, ***'her lips are sweet, her words entice, she leads him like an ox to the slaughter.'*** You can't get your husband to cooperate on anything. You need to learn a lesson from these women, because it

says ***'a wise woman builds her house, and a foolish woman tears it down over and over and over,'*** and a man can be encouraged, led by a complimentary spouse. Man is so foolish, he needs to be warned about the wrong kind of woman whose gonna lay a trip on him for a different reason. It says here, ***'Wisdom will deliver you from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words,'*** ***"which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God."*** (verse 17) she's turned away from those things. ***"For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead."*** don't go into her house, guys, do not go into her house, ***"her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead."*** (verse 18) Now, this immoral woman, her house inclineth unto death, that's not just talking about sexually transmitted diseases. I think amongst teenagers in America right now, 6,000 teenagers a day are inflected with sexually transmitted diseases, those are the current statistics in this country [I think this sermon was given in 2016]. They say now, and I don't know if these statistics are true in the Church, but men between 15 and 39, over 90 percent are watching pornography. One out of three new pornography users is a woman in this country. Largest pornography users in the world, China, number two, South Korea, number 3, Japan, I think America's 4 or 5. We produce more pornography than any country, but we're number 4th or 5th. It's a global infection. Nothing new in a sense, if you read about the Canaanites, their sexual practices, their killing of their own children, bestiality, the things they did, if you go back, even Ezekiel is challenging the priests because they had pornography on the walls of the Temple, constantly imagining things the wrong way. Paul's ministering in Ephesus and in Corinth where there's a thousand temple prostitutes come down into the city every night, they didn't need pornography, they had live women to do whatever they want. It isn't a new problem. It's a new problem in this sense, everybody's got their own screen they carry around in their pocket. Everybody's got a mobile device. It's like an alcoholic having Vodka coming through his kitchen faucet. [see the old and hilariously funny movie titled *Tight Little Island*] If you're a heroine addict you at least go out and score somewhere on the street. If you're a porn addict, nobody's watching, nobody's around, you have your anonymity, nobody's there. You can convince yourself *'I ain't hurting anybody else, Lord I'll get through this.'* The truth is, it gets worse and worse and worse, it's an infection. Wisdom and discretion will protect you, if you want it, if you incline your heart to it, if you give yourself to it, it will keep you from wicked men, and it will keep you from immorality. It says ***"her house inclineth unto death,"*** look, Paul says this ***"Know ye not"*** this is not just an Old Testament thing in Proverbs, ***"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor***

drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you...” wonderfully God changes our lives through the power of his Word, through the new birth, the Gospel, **“such were some of you, but you are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God.”** That’s a wonderful thing, we’ve been set free. *‘In whom the Son sets free is free indeed.’* My encouragement to you is, if you’re caught up in any of those things, you run to him. It says if you cry to him for wisdom, if you lift up your voice, if you look to him, he imparts, he wants to clean, he wants to, he’s in the process of sanctification with his own children, he wants to put our feet on solid ground, he wants to so he can deliver us from wicked men, from immorality. It’s just clear, it’s what he says he wants. You don’t have to beg it of him. **“For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.” (verses 18-19)** but he’s saying, that we would be delivered, **verse 20, “That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.”** here’s the reason, **“For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.” (verse 21)** but in contrast, **“But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.” (verse 22)** Look, this is a generality, certainly spoken to the nation of Israel in regards to the land. There, sadly, are many today who stand up for Christ, we see their heads cut off, we see them put in piles and burned alive, we see them imprisoned, we see them martyred, those things are going on. But even in those circumstances, there’s a way to die. If that comes our way, you know, I don’t think I’d mind a guillotine, I don’t want a dull butter knife. But you know, when that blade’s coming down, I just want to be able to say *‘Lord, here I come! Here I come!’* I don’t want to be saying *‘Sorry about this, sorry about that...here we go.’* I just want to be able to say *‘Here I come Lord, I’m washed, I’m regenerated, I’m yours, this world was driving me nuts anyhow. Here I come to the next.’* He says **“the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.” (verse 21)** As we go through the Book of Proverbs, here’s the generality, *‘When life is lived wisely, it is lived more easily, life is lived more easily when it’s lived wisely.’* If you live stupidly, life is harder. If you live sinfully, God can’t endorse that and bless that, because he loves you. Chapter 3,

Proverbs 3:1-20

“My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: 2 for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. 3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: 4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and

man. 5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. 7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. 8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. 9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: 10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. 11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: 12 for whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son *in whom* he delighteth. 13 Happy is the man *that* findeth wisdom, and the man *that* getteth understanding. 14 For the merchandise of it *is* better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. 15 She *is* more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. 16 Length of days *is* in her right hand; *and* in her left hand riches and honour. 17 Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness, and all her paths *are* peace. 18 She *is* a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy *is every one* that retaineth her. 19 The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. 20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.”

“Blessings of wisdom now, it tells us. Here’s again, **“My son,”** now look at the things he says, “forget not,” “let,” he says “bind them,” “write them,” we’re going to hear what he says here. **“My son, forget not my law;”** don’t forget the Word of God, don’t forget, **“but let thine heart keep my commandments:” (verse 1)** so he’s appealing both to the heart and the mind here. Forget not your mental facility, let not your heart, but let thine heart, the inner part of the man that drives more deeply, let that keep thy commandments, guard your heart with all diligence, from it flow the issues of life. Not from the intellect, from the heart. Hard even to define, the seat of desire, desire is a way more powerful influential force than thought. I meet the smartest people that do the stupidest things. Because if you let something sit in your heart, the heart in the long run always makes a convert of the mind. And you always then begin to justify the thing that you long for. So here, it’s appealing to both, **“My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:”** here’s what he says, **“for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.” (verses 1-2)** I like the idea of long life and peace put together there, I don’t like long life and misery put together [which you can get being married to the wrong gal], I like the idea of length of days and peace, that’s a good thing. I enjoy that idea. Another appeal, **“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:” (verse 3)** the idea is like a necklace, mercy and truth, wear it openly. Some Christians are ashamed. Mercy and truth, wear that, **“write them**

upon the table of thine heart” you keep them internally, written on the table of your heart, and you wear them openly, you’re not ashamed, mercy and truth. Look, you run into other people, they’re struggling, they’re having a hard time, that’s not time to go on facebook and talk about them, that’s a time to pray for them [or help bail them out, if it’s within your ability], tell them you love them, see what you can do to help. Let mercy and truth be something you wear, openly and outwardly, compassion for other people. Write them deeply on your own heart, so you keep that testimony, so that they’re there. **“So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.” (verse 4)** So look, he’s not saying *‘Get your Bible, put it under your pillow, sleep on it, by osmosis you’ll get all this stuff in your mind.’* What he says is, ***‘forget not, let your heart keep, guard, these things, because it’s good, you’re gonna have a longer life, it’s going to be more peaceful, so don’t let mercy and truth out of your life, bind them about thee, about your neck, write them upon the table of your heart,’*** and he says, **“So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.” (verse 4)**

An Anchor For The Soul

Now, verses 5 and 6 are probably two of the most famous verses in the Scripture. A lot of people have them memorized. **“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” (verses 5-6)** Notice it’s conditional. The first three responsibilities are yours, **“Trust in the LORD with all of your heart”** number one. Number two, **“lean not unto thine own understanding,”** number three, **“In all your ways acknowledge him,”** THEN **“he shall direct your paths.”** And it’s a good thing to know in this world, that the LORD is directing our paths. It’s interesting, my son, who is a voracious reader, stuck this testimony in front of me, F.W. Borem had recorded it. Enoch and Hannah Stapleton came to the country in like the 1740s, from England, and Hannah was terrified, newly married, because they then went into the Virginia forest, and the trees then, you read in Ohio and so forth, that Lincoln cut down, five foot across, huge forests, Native Americans everywhere, she was terrified. She said *“I thought the Atlantic Ocean was fearful, coming across in a sailing ship.”* She said *“When I got into the forest, I,’* every day she just longed for England, longed to be back home again, she was terrified. She said *‘My husband’s out there, we kind of got to this area we were going in, and there were these other folk, we realized, familiar faces from the ship, it felt so good, and there already were a few homes there,’* and she said, *“people tended to build homes in communities where there was water, but because for safety also.”* *“Here’s my husband every day, cutting down trees, sawing, working, I’m kind of*

watching," she said, "I went out and sat down, and he noticed that I had the Bible, and I was reading a verse, and he came over, he said 'What are your reading?' she said, "Trust in the LORD with all of your heart, and lean not to your own understanding," she said "It's all highlighted, it's underlined, how did that happen?" he said, "Well, his father gave him the Bible before he left England," he said "I was still praying about whether we should go, and I sat down and I read those verses, and the Lord put them on my heart, and I underlined them, and those are the verses I keep in my heart, and hear them, that if I trust with all my heart, that he's going to direct our paths, we're going to be at the right place," so 1756, all these things were going on [French and Indian wars] the French and the British were fighting, and they kind of, the British got hold of on the Canadian side of the border, that area, and they were drawn, the Shawnee and the Iroquois, different tribes of Indians began to fight on different sides. And the whole thing, around 1756 fell into the hands of the British, and four of the tribes of the Indians got together and said 'Now the British are going to rule everything if we don't deal with them, drive them out, they're going to deal with us,' so they decided to drive them back on the other side of the Appalachian Mountains, from the Ohio side back towards the ocean. And they were coming in, slaughtering, killing, and then they realized, they started kidnapping the children, because they realized this would put fear in them. And Hannah Stapleton said she heard a scream out back, and she ran around the back of the house, and thought 'Oh no,' and what it was, it was a diversion, and when she got back there the Indians took, they had by then four small children, and they took three of her children. And she just said, "My life fell apart," she said "I was bitter at God," she said "I'll never trust in the Lord with all my heart, he failed me, that's not real, you know, trust in the Lord with all your heart. You failed me, that's not real, I don't believe it." Of course, her husband, Enoch, struggling, trying to encourage her, the kids were gone. And then a number of colonies, including the Quakers in Pennsylvania contributed a thousand men, they made a militia to go after the Indians and try to retrieve children. And finally they met up with some of the chiefs of the tribes on the river, who had brought some of the children back. And they had a bundle of sticks, I don't know how many hundreds, which represented a child for each stick in the bundle, and they said "We're going to bring them back tomorrow." And they said, when they brought the children back, the children, some of them couldn't speak English, they had learned to speak the Indian dialects, and they got reunited with the families, some of them were so confused because they were so young when they were taken away. Some of them, the Indians had to identify, this one was from your home. But they said the strangest thing was, the kids had won the hearts of the Indians, the Indians had taken them into their homes, and they said, the Indians sobbed, they convulsed, they wept, they wanted us

to have our kids back, but they were so heartbroken, they had fallen in love with them, and they made us agree to let them come and visit the kids in our settlements, and they came regularly. It said, when fall came they brought corn, they brought venison, they brought food. *'If it wasn't for the fact that the kids were stolen, the Indians fell in love with them, returned them, we'd have never survived those early winters, but because of the friendship between them,'* and she said, *"She would look at her husband, and weep, and say 'I didn't trust in the Lord with all my heart, I threw this verse out the window, I trusted in the Lord with a little bit of my heart, you trusted with all of yours. The only reason I trusted with a little, was because you taught me to trust him a little, I want to learn to trust in him with all."* I just tell this remarkable story, how they got their kids back again. And it doesn't always pan out that way. But it's just a remarkable story, because, for you and I it's trust in the Lord with all your heart, because you have a flat tire, trust in the Lord with all your heart, because your favorite flavour of Dunkin Donuts was sold out when you got there, and you're really depressed, trust in the Lord with all of your heart, because you didn't get the raise that you wanted. But you hear something like that, and you think, this is remarkable that someone was able to take hold of a verse, and have it be an anchor in their soul, better man than me, better man than me. You know, if somebody stole my little kids I'd be out with them, *'I'm signing up, I got my gun, let's go, let's get the kids back.'* So for us, first thing, ok, **"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart;"** are we ready to do that? **Jeremiah** says **"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps, so O LORD, correct me, but with judgment, not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing."** Here it says if we want to have our steps directed, **number 1, 'Trust in the LORD with all of your heart,'** these things are tough, these are not easy, to trust, to lean upon, to put your full weight on him. **Secondly,** it says **'and lean not to your own understanding,'** I don't know about you, that's a tough one. You know, he tells us in Isaiah, he says **"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, my thoughts are higher than your thoughts,"** so he says here, **'lean not to your own understanding.'** He doesn't say *'Check your mind in at the door.'* *'Those people sit up there in that old meter factory, that guy's a cult leader, they leave their brain out in the car.'* I'm not saying do that. The mind is a terrible thing to waste. Right? Intellect is incredible, God's given it to us, and we have the mind of Christ, and he hasn't given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind, we have the mind of Christ. We're to use our minds, but the idea here is, there are circumstances where he says, look, our own understanding can be the greatest threat to divine guidance. Our own understanding is what led us before we were saved. All the years we

spent in the world, it was our own understanding, and we learned to think in certain patterns and to operate a certain way. And then we come to the Lord, he's saying things like **'Turn the other cheek, go the extra mile,'** you know, you're thinking *'Wait a minute, you do that and people are gonna walk on top of you, people are going to use you,'* and the Lord's given us a whole different set of directives. He doesn't anywhere say be stupid and don't use your mind. He says, **'Look, first thing you need to do is trust him with all your heart.'** Secondly, **'Don't depend on, don't lean on your own understanding, but rather'** he says, **'do this,'** #3 **"in all your ways acknowledge him, in the supermarket, the way you drive, what you watch on TV when no one's around, in your marriage, your home, with your children, with your grandchildren, where you work, in school, in all your ways, whatever ways you have, whatever he's left to you, whatever your ways are, in all your ways acknowledge him, and then, ok, then he does his work,"** **"he shall direct thy paths."** (verse 6b) way less obstacles that way. So, you know, you read that and think *'Alright Lord, if I do these things, you will direct, Lord. That's what I want to do in my life.'*

"Be Not Wise In Thine Own Eyes: Fear The LORD, And Depart From Evil"

Verse 7 says, **"Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil."** he kind of just told us that. Without fearing, there's no departing, there's only being a smarty-pants. Don't be wise in your own eyes, don't be a smarty-pants. He says **'Fear the LORD,'** he's Almighty God, if you're not holding him in awe and reverence, you don't know him. It's not cowardly fear, it says in **Psalm 19, the fear of the LORD is clean, it's a healthy fear.** **"fear the LORD,"** and part of that, what that looks like is **'depart from evil.'** If you're living in immorality, you're given to the person, you're playing games, and you're sitting in church, saying *'I'm a Christian,'* look, it happens all the time, *'Ya, we're sleeping together, we love church, we love Bible study, we love singing the songs.'* But wait a minute, you're just wise in your own eyes, you're a smarty-pants. It says here **'Don't be wise in your own eyes, fear the LORD, depart from evil.'** You want his blessing, you want his guidance, you want those things, this is his Word, it's what it says. **"It shall be"** to do these things, **"health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones."** (verse 8) and everybody wants a healthy bellybutton, I know that. [how about what's under it? I was just diagnosed with a 3cm aneurism of the aortic artery] **"It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones."** **"It shall be medicine,"** is the Hebrew idea **"to thy navel,"** **"to your gut, the deepest part of your being, it's medicinal to walk with him, to know that you're in his leading, that you can trust**

him. You might not understand everything that's going on, but you're trusting in that he's directing your path. He says that's medicine to the deepest part of your being, and it's marrow to thy bones, it's moisture, it's life. Look, scientists tell us all kinds of things, there's aroma therapy, there's all kinds of things that effect our, you know, one day out of seven if you rest, your immune system functions better. Scientists are telling us about the epigenome now, not just about DNA, but epigenetics, the markers that ride above it, that you inherit from grandma, some of them, now they're realizing they're effected by nutrition and environment, and can flip things on and off in your DNA. That's just the design in the throwaway container. The truth is, above all of that, there's something else if we yield to him, if we depart from evil, if we let him lead us, it is medicine to the deepest part of our being, it's healthy for us. And it is moisture to our bones.

The Principle Of Giving

He says, **“Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” (verses 9-10)** the idea is just, look, it doesn't say here *‘Give, ‘Here we go again, I knew this sermon was coming again.’* No, no, no, no, we're just going through the Bible, it's not my fault. The New Testament, the principle is that you get to give, God blesses you, you receive, and part of your stewardship then is giving. [Your whole nature, with the indwelling Holy Spirit, changes to that of wanting to give to others in need, giving so others can hear the Gospel, just a general motive of giving takes over if God's Holy Spirit is dwelling inside of you. You shine with God's attitude of giving to others.] People in the Church that are covetous, that want to get in your wallet, teach that backwards, that you give to get, and they mess with your motives, and they turn them backwards so the only reason you're giving a tenth is because you want a hundredfold. Jesus doesn't know anything about that, you don't give to get, you get to give, the blessings in your life are so you can share, so you can give. [Comment: and when you find yourself living by that motive, you can be sure it's God whose indwelling you with his Holy Spirit. You may always be wondering where all your money's going, but you will also be wondering why it keeps coming back into your wallet and bank account. This is the God-miracle about money which neither the world nor some of those greedy misguided preachers understand, nor will they ever.] And it says here, **‘To honour the LORD,’** it doesn't say *‘Dig deep,’* none of that going on here, *‘Dig deep, it's triple tithe Sunday.’* No, no, it's to honour him, honour him, he's your LORD, honour him. Because when you are too tight, when you hold onto it, what you're saying is *‘I trust my money more than I trust the LORD.’* It says in giving, there's something in giving, and

I'm not, look, I'm learning here, I'm not saying I got all this nailed down. But there's something in giving, it says here, that honours him. **"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase"** not with leftovers, with the firstfruits of your increase, just to give, **"so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."** (verses 9-10) I know, you don't have barns or wine-presses, I'm glad about that for most of you.

Don't Despise God's Correction In Your Life

Again, **"My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: for whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."** (verses 11-12) it says here that chastening is a sign of God's love and his approval. It says in Hebrews no one likes chastening, you know, for the present it's not pleasant, but it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness. I had a good Dad, and a good Dad is one that you love and fear. He was more interested in being my Dad than my buddy. And what I hated to hear my Mom say is *'I'm telling your father.'* I loved him, but I didn't want to hear that. And then they *give you that 'This hurts me more than it hurts you speech,' I'm thinking 'you can save yourself some pain then, I can take the night off, I don't want to see the supper, put the belt away if it's gonna hurt ya.'* Kids never believe that, till you have your own and you understand. The LORD's saying **'My son, my daughter, don't despise the chastening of the LORD,'** if God deals with you about something, it's because he cares more about your direction and your life than evidently you do at that moment, you've messed up, got yourself involved in something you shouldn't be involved in, he removes his blessing, brings down the paddle, whatever that is. And it says **'Don't be weary of his correction, don't be resentful'** is the idea...you're out sleeping around, smokin' dope, acting like an idiot, and now something happens in your life, and you can't believe he's doing that? I don't think he can believe what you were doing, what you were doing the whole time. It's like we can live in rebellion and sin, and then when we reach out asking for a blessing, it doesn't work that way. Even when you were raised as kids, it didn't work that way in your home. You warn your children, you instruct them, you do all the things here, because you want them to flourish, you want them to prosper, emotionally, physically, spiritually, monetarily, you want good for them. He says here **"My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary"** don't be resentful **"of his correction: for whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."** (verses 11-12) Look, **"even as"** God wants us to know this, **"even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."** Not the son who drives him nuts, **"the son in whom he delighteth."** And look, we don't do these thing perfectly, and I raised

four kids. You know, I'd have one of them driving Cathy crazy, Cathy would say *'You need to talk to them! You need to get spanked!'* and then sometimes, he's made her so crazy, that she's putting so much pressure on you, that you want to kill him because he's ruined your life making mom crazy, you know. And then you go after him to spank him, and she's yelling *'Don't kill him, don't kill him!'* *'You told me to beat him, now you're trying to preserve his life,'* it's not that we do this perfectly, ok, any of us. Chastening is discipline, it is not punishment. We do not punish our children, our discipline is never punitive. As Christians all the punishment took place 2,000 years ago on the cross. There is no punishment, God chastens, he does not punish us, he disciplines us. With your kids at home, you discipline them. You **never say** *'I wish you were never born. You make me sick, I wish you weren't here.'* That will cut them deeper than anything you paddle them with. You never hit them in the face. God has put a large piece of meat at the proper place for paddling. You never humiliate them in front of their friends, that's not what it's for. You take them aside. Look, and your children will help you make the rules. ok? You chasten your children for breaking the rules, for disobedience. You **don't** discipline them for doing something crazy, because that's what they do, that's what they do. Again, we were moving into one of our houses, people were moving furniture up and down, and one of my sons decided to see if his head would fit between the new rungs on the railing on the stairs, and he pushed his head inbetween the rungs, and we couldn't get his head out, and everybody who wants to move furniture is all upset, we tried oil, and asked him *'How did you get your head in there,'* and finally we have to bend a new railing to get his head out, well you don't discipline him for that, because you didn't have a rule saying *'Don't put your head in the new railing.'* He didn't break any rules. You have a talk after that, *'The **next** time you put your head in the railing, I'm leaving it there. We're gonna have your 22nd birthday on the stairs. The **next** time you do that, then you're gonna get chastened because you're breaking the rules.'* Your kids will help you make the rules. They will think up things that you never thought of, you just pay attention, you'll have rules. But you never chasten them for just being crazy, they're kids. It's disobedience, that's a lesson they've gotta learn. Let me tell you something, they get out there, they rob a bank or a convenience store, the police are going to spank them. If they don't do that, and end up in the army, the drill instructor is gonna spank them. When they get out there and go to work, their boss is going to spank them. Everywhere in life, if you can help their will, which is stubborn and infected by sin, come under control, you will help them be successful in a thousand things in life. So here when the LORD talks about it, he says ***'Look, I love you, and my correction comes even as a father in the son in whom he delights.'*** And as we go through he's going to talk

about the son that brings shame to the home, the other kind of son. This is the son in whom he delights.

The Value Of Wisdom And Understanding

Can we get to the happy man here? **Verse 13, “Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.”** It’s been telling us that all along. Here’s why, **“For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.” (verse 14)** What it produces, what wisdom and understanding produce is better than the merchandise, it’s better than what silver and gold produce. Look, I shouldn’t have to tell you that, you see the world we live in, pornography, billion dollars, pharmaceuticals, sadly money drives so much of what goes on, oil, more important than blood in most parts of the world, money. It says here that “happy” there’s a fulfillment in the man, the woman that finds wisdom, that gets understanding, because what that produces, the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver and of gold. **“She” wisdom “is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.” (verse 15)** here’s why, because **“Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.” (verse 16)** look, without a quality of life, life can be a curse. How many of us have taken care of our parents in hospice, you know, and you sometimes see the doctors give up on them, they say *‘There’s nothing else you can do.’* You can help them be comfortable for two more weeks. They may not have quantity of life, but you’re sure gonna help them have quality of life. Because when there’s quality of life, life is worth living. He says here, **“Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” (verses 16-17)** that’s the kind of life that we want to live. **“and all her paths are peace”** I don’t know about you, that sounds awful good to me. Wisdom **“She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.” (verse 18)** “Happy is everyone that retaineth her,” here’s the proof of it, **“The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.” (verses 19-20)** You think wisdom doesn’t work? You think it doesn’t produce, you think it’s not better than silver and gold? **“The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.”** prepared them, **“By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.” (verses 19-20)** The LORD is, in his own preparation, in the demonstration of his genius, in the Creation, he used wisdom, knowledge, understanding. It says here it’s more to be desired, in what it will produce in your life, if it worked for him and that’s what he used, he

didn't use gold or silver to do any of those things, wisdom, knowledge and understanding, great things to take hold of. Look, we see homes, million-dollar homes, folks have million-dollar homes, where there's divorce, where there's alcoholism, Betty Ford Clinic is full. We see homes that are small, homes, homey, feel good, there's love. Proverbs is going to say **'it's better to have a dinner of herbs with peace than a fatted calf in a crazy house.'** Wisdom, knowledge and understanding, it's great for all of us, it's good for us, and it's available to us. No one is entitled to more wisdom than anyone else in this room. No one here is entitled to understanding God's heart or God's leading more than anyone else in this room. I have no greater approach to the Lord than anybody in this room. My approach to Jesus Christ is through his blood, I don't have an access other than the access that everybody else in this room has, I'm as dependent on those things as everyone. You know, Jesus said they loved darkness more than light, and they didn't believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God, you know, that's the approach all of us has. It's interesting, it's going to say this, as we move on in Proverbs, it's going to say **'Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?'** isn't that interesting, in Proverbs? Jesus said, **'they are condemned because they didn't believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God.'** **'What is his name, and what is his Son's name?'** his challenge is right there. So, we have Jesus Christ, we have access to wisdom, to knowledge, to understanding, his instruction...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Proverbs 2:1-22 and Proverbs 3:1-20, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]