

**HCC English Service: Jan 19, 2020**  
**Proverbs 2 – The Value of Wisdom**

**Introduction:** Whenever we have a Q&A in the youth group on the topic of dating, relationships, and sex – Can you guess what question is always asked? Is it okay to kiss? Or sometimes students will ask things like, can we hold hands. Or how far is too far. For questions like these, I will always respond: This is a wisdom issue. I'd follow with an example like: Sure, you can watch a movie with your boyfriend/girlfriend, but if you decide to watch it in a closed room with the lights off. That's not wrong but that's not smart. That's not wise. So, I always had this idea of like, Wisdom was about having the right knowledge of something, or being able to make the right decision. I always felt wisdom was a matter of making decisions, but today's passage, it will show us that wisdom is more than just about making decisions but it's a matter of relating to God. To help us see this, our outline will be: Seek the Value of Wisdom, Understand the Fear of the Lord, and Walk on the Path of Righteousness.

**Seek the value of wisdom**

- The first thing we read in this proverb is the call to seek wisdom and see wisdom as valuable. Two things are happening here as the author begins this Proverb.
- First, the exhortation to seek, pay attention, receive wisdom. On the one hand, this is very similar to the other proverbs around proverbs 2.
  - Proverbs 3 – do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments.
  - Proverbs 4 – Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive.
  - Proverbs 5 – My son, be attentive to my wisdom, incline our hear to my understanding
- You can observe some of the similarities but if you notice, each of the other proverbs, the writer only has one line about being attentive or listening. Proverbs 2 goes further in this one. He makes it a point to emphasize seeking.
  - Receive my words.
  - Treasure up my commandments.
  - Making your ear attentive to wisdom – I recently had to go to the ENT because I had an ear infection and the ENT told me I had a part of my ear drum missing. Which makes sense because I've been having a really hard time hearing people. So lately, I've had to ask people to repeat themselves and then lean in. This is the picture that this author is desiring. Leaning in to listen.
  - Inclining your heart
  - Call out for insight – Remember in Proverb 1:20-21 where “Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks.” This is a response to that verse. It's like the game Marco Polo. Respond to wisdom's call
  - Raise your voice for understanding, Seek it like silver, and search for it.
- Not only does the author emphasize by repeating himself but he also uses an active tone to his exhortation. Go out and look. Call for wisdom. We can't be passive when it comes to gaining wisdom.

- The second thing the author does is give value to wisdom. He says: “if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasure.” To help us understand better, if something was valuable, you’d hide it. You lock it away to a secret place to protect it from thieves. This is the picture he’s trying to paint here. Think about all the movies about people breaking into banks and vaults. It’s an elaborate scheme. Think of the movie Oceans 11. The whole movie is about assembling a team, planning, scouting, planning more, making a practice run, and finally going through it. All to get to the locked away treasure, the hidden treasure. This is what author is getting at when he says, “seek it like hidden treasure.
- We can’t be passive in gaining wisdom. We need to be active – be attentive, incline your heart, call for it, etc. Last Week Minister Henry mentioned a few ways to be trained up to gain wisdom. Let me remind you of three ways he mentioned: Join a community group, Read through Proverbs, Read through Proverbs with a devotion help: God’s Wisdom for Navigating Life by Tim Keller. Have you done any of these? Maybe this reminder can be the second nudge you need to give more effort to seek it out. Be active and seek it out. At the same time, maybe we haven’t sought it out because we haven’t valued wisdom. Maybe we haven’t applied Minister Henry’s message because we believe we don’t need wisdom. When the author tells us to be active in seeking wisdom and valuing wisdom. It is a challenge to our hearts. Do we value wisdom. We value something because we believe it will give us what we want. We believe it gives us something better. It has to power to satisfy. It has to power to make us happy.
- We seek good grades why? Because it promises us a secure future. Or it gives us a better chance. There’s a value that we give good grades or a high rank in school. As I was preparing for this, a friend in Boston had texted me. He was at the library in a town similar to that of Bellaire or Sugarland. He said it’s like Chinatown here. The library was full of Chinese kids studying. Why? In their hearts and mind, they’ve given value to their grades and rank. Maybe some of us value success at our jobs. We seek a higher status. Why? We believe that it gives us recognition. It’ll make us feel better when people think highly of us. It’ll make us feel more secure when we have more money. Do we value wisdom? Wisdom can do so much more than the things we seek in this world. We must value wisdom because, the author writes, when we value and seek wisdom, then we will understand the fear of the LORD.

### **Understand the fear of the LORD**

- Earlier in proverb, the author said to call out for insight, to call out for wisdom, in response to wisdom crying out in the streets in Proverbs 1. And throughout the proverbs, especially in the first 9 chapters, you will hear a lot of repeated phrases and themes. So here, we see the main theme of Proverbs repeated from chapter 1. Not only is he repeating it, but he expands on the meaning of fearing the LORD. To fear the LORD means to walk with God. There’s a relationship aspect. The author parallels the fear of the LORD with the Knowledge of God. Knowledge of God – Knowledge is not like theology. We study God and know things about Him. If I were to say, “I know Christine” you would not think, “oh, they’re just acquaintances.” So it is here with what the author is trying to describe, with wisdom comes a walk with God.

- You see here, you don't just find the wisdom. You don't dig a hole and find it. You can't just read a book and obtain wisdom. It's not just what you do, but what do we see here: God gives. *Proverbs 2:6: For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.* You hear it. You receive it directly from God. If God does not give wisdom, you don't have wisdom. You can ask for Wisdom, you can seek it out all you want but if God doesn't move, then you're not getting anything. Understanding the fear of the LORD and knowledge of God comes from God himself. There is communion with the Holy God. There's something important that we must catch here – When you walk with God, it forms a foundation for us to stand upon.
  - *Proverbs 2:9-10 – Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path; for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.*
- This is what I mean by a foundation to stand upon. Our hearts, our minds, our desires, our wills...all of them are grounded in who God is and what He gives. Wisdom comes in and transforms us from the inside out. Do you live like God is good or is that phrase just a cliché you believe on a surface level like a Sunday School answer? I think it's easy to agree with what I am saying here. Easy to throw out Sunday school answers. It's easy to say God is good when it's easy. When things are going right. But what about when something tragic happens to you in your life? Is the phrase, "God is good" pleasant to your soul? Do you believe in your heart that God is good? Has wisdom come into your heart to create a peace within you?
- 3 Saturdays ago, my dad was admitted into the hospital. At first everything seemed okay. We all didn't think it was anything serious. My dad would stay in the hospital overnight and be released. That was the plan. He seemed to be fine. When I was there, they had a machine there to help him breathe and it seemed like he just going to go to sleep and I'd see him the next day. I left so that my mom could stay with him in the room since only one person was allowed. Moments later, she comes running out of the ICU area and said 10-15 people went into my dad's room. I hear on the PA system: Code Blue room 208. In that moment, what foundation do I stand upon. The moment my dad's heart has stopped 3 times and doctors say that this is probably it...What I really believe about God comes out. Where my hope is really placed is revealed. As I stood there after my dad had passed, my mind went, "Where is he now." Is he with Jesus? Does he just cease to exist? I left my dad's room that night saying to him, "I'll see you later." My foundation is found in the promise of God through Jesus Christ. God sent His son to die on the cross so that my dad could continue living after his last breath here on earth. I stood the foundation of God is a good God because He sacrificed His son.
- The kind of relationship you have with God will affect the foundation you have for your life. Wisdom comes in and transforms us from the inside out. What kind of foundation are you building? This leads us to our third point. The foundation we have helps us walk on a path of righteousness.

### **Walk on the path of righteousness**

- The idea of walking on the path of righteousness is not necessarily a choice we have right now that's in front of us. This isn't a command to walk rightly. But rather, the author describes what happens when you do receive wisdom, when you do walk with God.

When you walk with God, you walk in righteousness. The author goes even further and makes the point that if you're not walking in with God, in fear of the LORD, then you will walk apart from him like the apostate men described in this passage. One of the main repeated words in Proverbs 2 is the word: Path. He also uses the word: Way. From these you can see the author describe two different kinds of paths.

- On one side, you see
  - 2:7 Walk in integrity
  - 2:8 Paths of justice
  - 2:12 delivering from way of evil
  - 2:20 In the way of the good and keep to the paths of righteousness
- On the other side you see the opposite being described:
  - 2:13 Ways of darkness
  - 2:15 paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways
  - 2:18 her house sinks down to death and her paths to the departed
  - 2:19 those seduced by the forbidden woman never regain the path of life.
- When we talked about receiving wisdom, there was our responsibility to seek it and ultimately, God has to give it in order for us to obtain it. In the same way, here is a similar picture painted here. Our responsibility of course is to stay away from the crooked path, but it is Wisdom that protects, guards and delivers us from the crooked path and keeps us on the path of righteousness. When you and I fight sin, it is not about our ability to fight. You can't muster up enough will power to fight sin. You're not strong enough. You and I won't always choose what is right. We're going to sing a song later where the words are "Prone to wander Lord I feel it." Wandering is in our bones. It's a part of us. We have a natural bent towards wandering away from God and drifting towards sin.
- Sometimes when I read a passage like this, I don't know about you, but I kind of put myself in the middle. It's like, here's the bad people. The men of perverted speech. On this side is the forbidden woman. And here's poor little me in the middle being pulled back and forth. We need to see what has happened if we walk with God now. 2:12 and 2:16 – We have been delivered from them. This was us. We once delighted in the perverseness of evil. We were devious people. We either walk in the way of the good or bad. Ultimately, without the knowledge, without a relationship with God, we don't, as 2:19 says, "regain the paths of life." Without wisdom, without understanding the Fear of the LORD, we perish.
- If you're in here today and you have not trust Jesus to bring you into a relationship with God, the text describes you as someone who is currently walking on a path that leads to death. There has only been one person who has walked the upright and righteous path perfectly and that was Jesus Christ. Because of his perfect life and resurrection, He is able to deliver you from the men of perverted speech and the adulteress with smooth words. Jesus saves you from buying into the lie that "you will find life outside of God". Ultimately, He saves you from the eternal death that comes for each and every one of us. Jesus can deliver you if you seek after Him. Value who He is and value what He has done.

**Conclusion:** The way you live must come from your foundation in knowing who God is and what He has done. Seek wisdom, then you will understand the Fear of the LORD, so you will be delivered, so you will walk in the way of the good and keep to the paths of righteousness. God is

not testing you and watching how good you do, but He desires for you to know His goodness and His love. Once you do, then and only then will your wandering heart be turned back to Him.