

# The Christian Arsenal

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## PROVERBS 1:20-3:8

Last week we began a nine-week study in the book of **Proverbs**. And we said last week that the major theme of this book is **wisdom**. We know this book was written by Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived.

God had endowed Solomon with wisdom when he succeeded his father, David, as king over Israel. And the Bible tells us that **there was not a man before Solomon nor later than Solomon who had the wisdom that Solomon had. And if we had no other reason than that, these proverbs would be well worth studying.**

But what makes these proverbs not just **worthy** to study but **essential** to study is not the fact that the wisest man who ever lived wrote them, but the fact that the Holy Spirit used Solomon to write these proverbs so that our walk with the Lord can be pleasing to Him.

On a wall near the main entrance to the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas is a portrait. The following words are written under this portrait.

“James Butler Bonham...no picture of him exists. this portrait is of his nephew, Major James Bonham, deceased, who greatly resembled his uncle. It is placed here by the family that people may know the appearance of the man who died for freedom.”

There is no literal portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, the likeness of His Son who makes us free can be seen in the lives of his true believers.

And I believe this is why the book of **Proverbs** was given to you and me. If we pattern our lives by these proverbs and if we seek to live by the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, we will portray to others what He looks like.

The Holy Spirit continues in our lesson today to teach us what godly wisdom is... And the outline I'm going to use today came from Dr. John Phillips.

### 1) **Wisdom's Plea**

#### **Verses 20-23...**

The first thing I want us to notice is that “wisdom” is called a “she.” 😊

#### **Three classes of people seem to be singled out here in verse 22...**

First, he addresses the **simple**.

Secondly, he addresses the **scoffer**.

Thirdly, he addresses the **fool who hates knowledge**.

This is the problem...some folks are **simple-minded and naïve**, some folks are folks who **openly scoff at God's truth** and some **folks just hate knowledge**.

But, the Holy Spirit doesn't simply give us the problem...He also gives us the **solution**:

**Verse 23** tells us that if any of the folks who fall into these groups would simply turn to the **reproof** of wisdom, the **spirit** of wisdom would be poured out on him and the words of wisdom would be made known to him.

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**What (or who) does this make you think of? This reminds us of the Holy Spirit. And true wisdom has a spiritual quality to it. True wisdom turns away from the wisdom of this world to the wisdom of God.**

All we have to do is watch the news on TV or read the newspaper to find that the wisdom of the world cares nothing for the wisdom of God.

We have never lived in an age when knowledge was more available to us. Think of the Internet alone! But, the knowledge found on the Internet is more often than not the wisdom of this world... of Satan's world!

Television keeps us so informed. I heard the other day that 20 billion years ago there was probably life on Mars. **Now, how do they know that?**

God says folks find true and godly wisdom only when we turn to Him! Well, do they? Do folks really want true wisdom?

## **Verses 24-25...**

John Phillips:

"We are all on a brief and hurried journey from the womb to the tomb. Apart from divine wisdom, we have no satisfying answers to all the important questions of life:

Where did we come from?

Why are we here?

Where are we going?

What is life all about?

Why is evil so prevalent and triumphant?

Is there life beyond death?

Is there a God?

How can God be known?"

## **Dr. Phillips goes on...**

"Only the wisdom contained in the Bible can answer questions such as these. Foolish answers to these questions are plentiful, but they are all wrong to a greater or lesser degree. Wisdom stands, calls, and is disregarded, so she warns."

## **What happens when man disregards and despises godly wisdom?**

### **Verses 26-32...**

Is there anyone who comes to your mind when you read these words?

Perhaps you've had **a friend** who falls into the category of the man described here. Perhaps you've had **a child** who did not choose the fear of the Lord. Perhaps **you yourself** at some point in your own life did not accept the counsel and the reproof of godly wisdom.

We don't have to read too long in the Word of God to see someone like this.

Cain fit into this category, didn't he? It's really not a big mystery to see Cain do this, after all, his mom and dad had set the pattern for him, hadn't they?

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Another man who comes to my mind is Samson. Samson was an Old Testament man who was consecrated to God from before birth. He was a Nazirite, which meant he had taken certain vows and there were certain things he could not do and still follow those promises he had made to God!

What a foolish man Samson turned out to be! He turned his back on every-thing he knew about God until at the end of his life, he turned back to Him...but **think of the years he wasted and the lives he could have touched for Jehovah!**

There are more examples of this in God's Word than we care to think about or have the time to mention... **Balaam...the prodigal son...Judas...and the entire nation of Israel!**

**Verse 31** says the unwise shall eat of the fruit of their own way...and we have such a plain example of that in the life of the nation of Israel. God allowed an ungodly nation to take them into exile because they refused to follow God's commandment to let their land lay fallow every seven years.

Added to that, they continued going after the gods of the nations around them.

They refused to worship God as the true God and to be a light to the nations around them. They were greedy. They didn't trust God for their provision, and the Lord had to show them that they would eat of the fruit of their own way and be satiated with their own devices.

God said, "You won't allow My land to lay fallow have its Sabbath rest? Then, I'll take you from it so that it can. You love the idols of the heathen nations around you? Then, I'll put you in one of those heathen lands and you will finally get a belly full of idols!"

And for 70 years over in the land of Babylon, they had gods all around them. They had no temple in which to worship Jehovah.

They were satiated with their own devices.

The wisdom of God pleads for you and me to seek God! God longs to pour out His wisdom on you and me today. God doesn't want His children running to and fro like the heathen of this world do.

## **Verse 33...**

I believe Noah is the best example of this verse. Noah listened to God! Noah went against public opinion. Noah was not a man-pleaser. Noah cared more about what God told him than what the world thought of him. Oh, that you and I could learn to be like Noah!

And when the floods came, only Noah and his family "dwelled securely and were at ease from the dread of evil."

Well, we've thought about wisdom's plea and the fact that wisdom is offered to all of us who know God, let's think about wisdom's protection from many of life's ills...

## **2) Wisdom's Protection**

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## **Proverbs 2:1-22...**

There are a number of things we need to see about the way we can be protected by godly wisdom!

First of all

**Verse 5** tells us we will **discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of the Lord...**

Think about that! This is **preventive protection!**

We can almost liken godly wisdom to the flu vaccine. Why do we get the flu vaccine, or any other vaccination? So we won't get the flu, or smallpox or diphtheria or whatever... **we will be protected against those bad things because we have a good thing in us!**

And if we have the ability to discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of the Lord, there are a lot of things we won't fall prey to!

But God also tells us in this chapter that the Lord is a shield to us...

that He will **guard our paths**,  
that He will **preserve our way**,  
that we will be **watched over**  
and **delivered**  
and **kept** and  
**be allowed to live in the land and remain in it.**

Now, I don't know about you, but this sounds real good to me!

Does this mean that if we have godly wisdom that **nothing bad will ever happen to us?** Of course not! We know too many folks to whom things have happened. We think of folks like Ron Dunn and his precious family. If ever there was a wise man, it was Ron Dunn. We think of Ronnie Tullos and we could name so many others...

I believe this means that if you and I set ourselves to know wisdom...that **whatever** comes our way,  
we can **still** say God is our shield.  
He is **still** our guard.  
He **still** preserves our way.  
He **still** watches over us and **delivers**  
and **keeps**  
**we will indeed live in the land and remain in it!**

The key to this is found back up in the **first several verses** of this chapter.

**"Receive my sayings and treasure His commandments"...**

We've all read and studied and heard preached and taught the parable of the sower. The sower went out and sowed seed. Most of the seed fell on bad soil and a little of the seed fell on good soil.

There was nothing wrong with the sower.  
There was nothing wrong with the seed.

**But, the seed the sower sowed was not received but by a few!**

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The first step to having the protection of this godly wisdom is to **receive God's words**. The Word was made flesh...and behold, He stands at the door of hearts and He knocks.

And to as many as receive Him into their hearts, to them He gives the power to be the sons and daughters of His Father!

The second step to receiving the protection of godly wisdom is in **verse 2...**  
“...**make your ear attentive to wisdom and incline your heart for understanding...**”

## **What does this mean?**

Well, even those who have received Jesus as Lord can have a heart that doesn't listen to His truth. What I mean is this...

God doesn't, the moment we are saved, just take our ears and our heart and turn them toward Him. **We don't become little spiritual robot Christians.**

I mean, it is a moment by moment, day by day act of the will. Every day must be spent in an attitude of submission to the dear Holy Spirit.

We have the power to decide what our ears hear and we have the power to decide what our heart leans toward. We must deliberately tune our ears to God's wisdom and we must deliberately incline our heart to God's understanding.

To receive the protection of this godly wisdom, not only must we receive His Word and treasure His commandments and make sure our ears and hearts are listening for His wisdom and understanding, in **verse 3** we see we also must

“**cry for discernment and lift our voice for understanding**”

At first glance, this seems so repetitious...but I believe this is **a definite progression** here...

I believe we see in **verse 3** a person who is saved...who has definitely **received God's Word** and is attempting as best he or she knows how to **follow God's commandments**. We see that same person making certain daily that **his ears and his heart aren't being distracted by other things**.

They are attentive to God's wisdom and are inclined to God's understanding.

And then that person longs so for spiritual discernment that he is crying out to God for it and lifting his voice to God for spiritual understanding. What does this bring to your mind...**the crying out and the lifting of one's voice?**

**This is a picture of prayer! This is a picture of gut-wrenching longing.**  
**This is a picture of someone who is actively seeking God's will in his life.**

The closer a person tries to walk with God, the more he's aware when he doesn't. And the more a person has ears that are listening for wisdom and a heart that is longing for God's understanding, the more he's aware that he needs to cry out to God for it.

Do you see the progression? Well, what if he prays once and doesn't receive it? Is he to quit to praying? Is he to quit crying out to God for it? Is he to stop lifting his voice? NO!

Because **verse 4** tells us we are “**to seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasure.**” Anything worth having is worth a diligent attempt to get! And if we want the protection

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of godly wisdom, we must look **beneath the surface**...we must **seek it and search for it** as we would for silver or hidden treasure.

I believe with all my heart that if you and I would follow these principles, we would receive the protection of godly wisdom.

God longs to give us His riches. But, He wants a real heart commitment from you and me.

Well, in the time we have left, let's look at **chapter 3** and one of the most loved verses in all Scripture. We've seen **Wisdom's Plea, Wisdom's Protection**...let's look at

### 3) Wisdom's Path

#### **Proverbs 3:1-4...**

There's a big difference in knowing God's Word...even in memorizing God's Word, having it all in our head...and in having God's Word in our hearts.

The Jewish people of that day bound God's Word around their neck...they wore it in little boxes called phylacteries on their arm or forehead...they even placed it in little boxes called Mezuzas which were attached to their doorposts.

Why? Because God knows man so well. God knows our mind forgets. God knows our intentions may be good, but we get sidetracked.

I like what Dr. John Phillips said about Scripture being attached to a person's doorpost...

Dr. Phillips said when the Jewish man went **out** of his house it served as a reminder to him:

"Where are you going? With whom will you be? What business are you transacting? Be mindful of your conduct. Guard your conversation. Watch out for your character. Listen to your conscience. God never sleeps."

When he returned home, the texts on his doorposts cross-examined him again:

"Where have you been? What have you been doing? Examine yourself. You cannot get away from God."

See, we can remind ourselves of God's Word, but the affairs of this world, the demands of the day, the very temptations we face day by day, can join forces to crowd God's precious Word from our heart and keep it from doing its work in our lives!

We can, like the men of the Old Testament and even like the Pharisees, wear God's Word on our neck or our foreheads or our forearms...we can have it needlepointed or crosstitched or calligraphed all over our walls...**but let me tell you where God wants His Word to be in our lives...**

God wants His Word to be in our heart! **"Thy Word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against Thee."**

Scripture memorization is wonderful and I must confess that I fall woefully short of this noble goal. Having said that, to get God's Word into my **head** only involves a **learning** process, but to get God's Word into my **heart** involves a **loving** process!

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God always looks on the heart!

When the **mind** is engaged in an issue the motive is “**I ought to.**”

When the **will** is engaged in an issue the motive is “**I have to.**”

But, when the **heart** is engaged in an issue the motive is “**I want to.**”

**Let's take this one step further...and then we'll be through.**

**We must not only hear the Word of God. We must not only receive it. We must not only memorize it. We must live it!**

**Verses 5-6...**

How many of you have memorized these verses? How many of you would say, “These are my ‘life verses?’”

I heard a very interesting sermon this past week. I still get the “sermon of the month” from LifeStyle Ministries, Dr. Ron Dunn’s ministry. I had heard this sermon years ago...but it spoke to my heart anew and afresh this week. His text was **Romans 8:28-30**.

He said the Christian life is like a triangle. The first point of the triangle is God’s **purpose**. His purpose is to conform you and me to the image of His dear Son.

The second point of the triangle Dr. Dunn said is God’s **predestination**... “For whom He foreknew, He also **predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son...” And he said God will conform you and me to the image of His dear Son because in **Romans 8**, the verbs are in the **past tense**. **It’s already been done!**

And he said the third point of the triangle is God’s **providence**... The word providence means “seeing before”... “pro” “video.”

See, God sees our path before we see it. All we can see is today. And really not all of today. All we can really see is this moment. We don’t know what this afternoon will bring, do we?

God wants us to **trust Him with all our heart**.

God wants us to **lean on His understanding**.

God wants us to **acknowledge Him in all our ways**.

God has a path for you and me to walk. God has a way for you and me to walk that path! And God will direct our path to one goal...**that we might be conformed to the image of His dear Son**.

God sees all the bends and the curves and the bumps in the road. God knows the beginning and the end and everything in between. God knows the times our paths have taken a wrong turn because we haven’t sought His direction.

God knows our sins and our failures and our shortcomings. But, God can use even those things in our lives to achieve the purpose of our being conformed to the image of Jesus.

And I believe this is what the book of **Proverbs** is all about. James said if any of us lack wisdom all we have to do is ask and God would give it to us liberally! Godly wisdom leads us to do godly things and to live godly lives and to be godly influences in our families.

Paul said in **1 Corinthians** that **eye hasn’t seen nor has ear heard nor has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love Him**. Now, we hear that

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quoted most often in connection with Heaven...and all that is true, but if you'll check the context of this passage, you'll find that it has to do with wisdom...

**Godly wisdom leads us to being like Jesus.**

**Trust in the Lord with all your heart...  
Lean not to your own understanding...  
In all your ways, acknowledge Him...  
And He will direct your paths!**

**He promised us that!**