

The 411
Week 2, Day 1

Proverbs 2:6-8

6 For the LORD gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
7 he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,
8 guarding the paths of justice
and watching over the way of his saints.



Everyone has a select group of people that they rely on for wisdom or for information. Some cultures and some backgrounds decide these groups and many times the person's own experiences decide who they trust for wisdom. Some call their parents and some call their peers. But we all seek out wisdom from different people for different situations.

No matter who you call on for your wisdom to live your life the best way possible, have you ever considered looking to God and just offering up a prayer asking Him what He thinks you should do? Of course, you would then have to have the faith to know that He's going to answer you. We know that God can use different people and different situations to speak into our lives. But we ignore the wisdom from God often.

God created this world. He created you and me. God knows what's best because He knows everything. When we don't ask Him what we should do, or how we should deal with a situation so that He is glorified and everyone involved is blessed by our ability to handle tough circumstances, God is left outside of our decision making process. He doesn't like that any more than the people that we usually depend on for wisdom in our life.

Since God is the source of all wisdom, and He knows us inside and out, we ought to give God at the very least an opportunity to speak wisdom into our lives. But that's not the only thing we need to do. We need to ask Him first. We offend God when we don't ask Him. If you think about it, that makes sense. We are in a relationship with God as believers, and if we don't ask Him about our life circumstances, we're saying we don't trust His counsel and we don't think He cares. But that's not it at all. Most of the time, we forget to put God first. And He has the best wisdom on the planet!

When you get involved in a sticky situation in life, remember to ask God first what to do. He is there for you and more consistent than any customer service. God cares deeply about

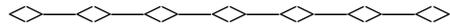
you and wants to be involved in everything you do and everything you're becoming. He wants to be an intimate and permanent part of your life. Take the time and courtesy to ask God what to do. You'd be surprised how much wisdom you will receive from the God who owns the monopoly on wisdom.

Wisdom's Friends

Week 2, Day 2

Proverbs 2:9-15

9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice
and equity, every good path;
10 for wisdom will come into your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;
11 discretion will watch over you,
understanding will guard you,
12 delivering you from the way of evil,
from men of perverted speech,
13 who forsake the paths of uprightness
to walk in the ways of darkness,
14 who rejoice in doing evil
and delight in the perverseness of evil,
15 men whose paths are crooked,
and who are devious in their ways.



When we make God our number one source for wisdom, all of these benefits come streaming into our lives. You know there are people who abhor wisdom, who find it less exciting than foolishness? This is just like people who like sin more than a relationship with God. But when you start to listen to the counsel of the Lord, the same principle acts in your favor. The principle states that the more you get involved, the more you enjoy something.

So the more you sin, the more you keep on sinning. It becomes a habit. But this principle works positively for us as well. The more we get plugged in to God's wisdom for our daily lives and decisions, the more we will make finding out His will and counsel first a habit. A very good habit. This desire to seek God's wisdom above all evil wisdom will lead us away from the grime and corruption of the fools of this world.

Look at the contrast, the products of both ways of wisdom. The evil fool produces more filth, more things that hurt people, more selfishness. But the one who seeks the wisdom the Lord gives for everyday life learns righteous living, equity, and justice. In our world today, these things are hard to come by. The way this world operates reminds us how out of place we are. We seek justice while fools commit atrocious acts. We seek righteousness while others violate God's ordained will. It's a different world that we seek to bring into the existing one. And all it takes is tuning into God's voice and listening to His practical help in our most challenging decisions.

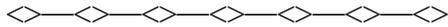
Lord, teach me Your wisdom, the kind of wisdom that brings justice not just in my life, but in the lives of those around me. In the lives of my family members, my co-workers, my friends, may Your wisdom keep me on the right track and help me make good decisions that glorify You and keep me living the righteous life You've blessed me with. Your counsel is awesome and just what I need!

Non Sequitor Week 2, Day 3

Psalm 2:1-6

1 Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,
3 “Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.”

4 He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.
5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,
6 “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”



Every time the political situation becomes tense, my mind flies to this psalm. I love it because it reminds me that God is always in control whether or not it seems He is at the time. From the standpoint of wisdom, this psalm has one thing to say: do it God's way. And He's speaking on a global scale, a worldwide stage. God's calling out the rulers of the world, the presidents, the prime ministers, the monarchs, the communists. You name the government head and He's talking to that person.

We all want the global political situation of our world a certain way. We vote hoping that the candidate we pick will do this for us. Many times we are disappointed in that person's ability to hear the people and respond. But in these times, we need to remember this very important fact. No matter what foolish wisdom a leader of a nation listens to, it won't hamper God's plans for this world.

Even when their decisions go against God's principles, His wisdom, and His plan, they are not even putting a dent in His will! I love verse four because right after the whole world says, “Hey, let's get together and tell God where to go!” God responds by...laughing! I love it. God's not even remotely phased by their stupid and foolish demands. Not only that, but check it out. He has sent His Anointed One. That's Jesus. Jesus will rescue even the worst political situation in our world! Jesus is the true King! He's the true ruler and we have nothing to fear because we know His ruling is righteous, peaceful and good (Isaiah 9:1-7)!

No matter how bleak and dim the world seems to get politically, don't forget that God's on the throne and Jesus is ruling it all. We don't have to fear authorities' unbiblical decisions or stances because Jesus is in control. God knows what's going on and He knows how to take care of everything.

Father, thank You that you have this world and these political situations in the palm of Your hand. Thank You that You sent Jesus as the Anointed King who will rescue us from evil politics. I know that Jesus is the true King and I thank You for such a wise Ruler in this world. May I be a part of bringing His Kingdom to this earth with my actions and my words. Make me an ambassador for the true King today.

The Best Path

Week 2, Day 4

Psalm 2:7-12

7 I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me,
“You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.

8 Ask of me,
and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.

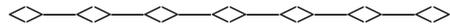
9 You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry,
and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.



Now in this section Jesus speaks of God’s putting Him on the throne. And God promises that Jesus can have the nations. And because the rulers of the world are so violently opposed to Jesus’ rule, God gives Him permission to punish them. The lesson here is for those who are in leadership of countries. But anyone can accept the wisdom of verses 11-12.

When fools decide against the wisdom of the Lord, there is only one course of action and it is found here for these rulers. They must serve the Lord, but the fear here is not speaking of reverence, but of the emotion fear. They will tremble and they will show adoration to the Son, Jesus. Jesus protects us from the fools of this world. That title of fool is reserved for those who do not choose the Lord’s wisdom.

The last sentence of this psalm brings it home to us. We are blessed, happy, because we take our refuge in Jesus. When troubling times come because of deteriorating political decisions and situations, we put our trust in the Lord and He rescues us. He truly is our fortress and strong tower to whom we can run to. He is the Rock of salvation!

When you see the world getting worse around you because of bad political decisions, pray for your leaders, that they will learn to fear the Lord and turn to Him and begin to ask wisdom from God. Ask God to intervene in whatever way He deems just and righteous. God is our refuge, our great help in times of political, economic, and world crisis. But rarely do we turn to God first in our trials. Make that your priority today.

The Wisdom Life

Week 2, Day 5

Proverbs 3:1-8

1 My son, do not forget my teaching,
but let your heart keep my commandments,
2 for length of days and years of life and peace
they will add to you.
3 Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you;
bind them around your neck;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
4 So you will find favor and good success
in the sight of God and man.
5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.
6 In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.
7 Be not wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD,
and turn away from evil.
8 It will be healing to your flesh
and refreshment to your bones.



There are people, though few on this earth, that live a life unmatched by their surroundings. I refer to those who live on a different plane, those who live in a fallen and tainted world that do not bend or break in their character. Look at the kind of character traits this type of person goes through life with: remembering and living by God's commands, maintaining faithfulness, favor and success with both God and people, reliance upon and reverence for the Lord, and a choice to not do evil deeds.

This kind of life is rare. Many people search for it all their lives and never find the kind of wisdom that brings a life of bliss in which all relationships are at peace, a selfless life. However, this father gives his son the key character traits that he needs to cultivate to find such a life, and the wisdom goes beyond this son to each one of us. Truly and wholeheartedly embracing all that God has for you will guarantee a life well lived, a wise life that seeks with a faithful heart the very will of God in all things. It will not be an easy life, but a fulfilled one.

In the last verse, the father promises that these traits will be healing and refreshing. If the

wisdom life would be so easy and carefree, without trials and hard decisions, then there would be no need for healing or refreshment. But life hurts. People hurt. Life makes each of us tired. So these character traits do not keep a rough life from happening or hard decisions and circumstances away from us. But it does provide everything we need to wisely deal in each situation. Wisdom is not merely information or knowledge. It is not merely assistance on a practical level. Wisdom is a relationship with God, a God who seeks your best even in the midst of the worst. Wisdom is a Person that knows you better than you know yourself. And even though you're not perfect or completely wise, Wisdom still seeks you faithfully.

Father, I cannot understand the depths of your faithfulness and long-lasting love toward me. I know what I am, how unwise I have been with my rash decisions, my speaking without thinking, my hate and despair. And yet you still seek me and want to know me? You give me wisdom from above, the kind of wisdom that heals all my wounds and refreshes my soul. I want to learn to be the son or daughter upon whom You lavish such godly wisdom. Make me realize who You are chasing in this relationship. And thank you for clothing me in these character traits that bring Your wisdom into my chaotic life.

Wise Sacrifice

Week 2, Day 6

Proverbs 3:9-10

9 Honor the LORD with your wealth
and with the firstfruits of all your produce;
10 then your barns will be filled with plenty,
and your vats will be bursting with wine.



It's tough to earn money. Sometimes in our culture, it's so easy to give it away. We work hard and we spend light. We forget what goes into gaining wealth, and we tend to squander it. But check out this economic principle. What does it mean to honor the Lord with your wealth? It means something different for each person. Perhaps it means giving alms to the poor because you live in such a rich nation. Perhaps it means giving to missions so that others can hear the gospel. Perhaps it's as simple as giving a few bucks to a homeless person so he can eat a hot meal in the debt of winter.

Honoring the Lord with your wealth means asking God what to do with what you don't need and then obeying His leading. God will make you wise to spend your money honoring Him. And giving to Him first is the second part of the principle. When we acknowledge the Lord with the first of our wealth, it shows that we first of all adore our Master. But it also shows that we are grateful for His blessing in our lives.

It shows even that we are not so tied to our wealth that we hold it higher than Him. We hold on to what we cherish. Doing this helps us remember that God owns it all and it is a discipline of godly stewardship for us. But that doesn't make it easy to do at all. Wisdom is sometimes profound and sometimes obvious. But wisdom does not just help us decide. It helps us do. We do not fail for lack of wisdom or understanding of what must be done. We fail for lack of accomplishing what we know must be done.

We are blessed by God because we hold him tighter than anything else. It becomes less and less about being blessed and more and more about holding on to what matters, not blessing but the Blesser. When you let wealth go in your heart, God knows it will not come between you and Him. Then it simply becomes white noise.

God, challenge me in the area of my finances. Am I giving enough of my wealth away to the people that you care about the most? Am I selfish with it? Do I hold it so tightly I'm missing you and letting it slip through my fingers like sand? When you tell me what to do

with what you've entrusted to me, I commit to doing it. I will not ask questions or raise a reply. Teach me to do what you have told me to , what your wise counsel has laid out for my heart and my hands.

God's Sole Delight

Week 2, Day 7

Proverbs 3:11-12

11 My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline
or be weary of his reproof,
12 for the LORD reproves him whom he loves,
as a father the son in whom he delights.



Every parent says it when they discipline their kids. "This will hurt me more than it will hurt you." I remember my parents saying things like that. Did I believe it? Of course not. I very much doubted that my parents were in half as much pain as I was when I was disciplined. But looking back on it now, I'm so glad they did.

My parents' discipline formed my very person, my character, my desires, my goals. All of that came from the discipline of my youth because my parents really did love me enough to guide me toward what is good and moral and honorable. Without my parents' loving hand of disciplined guidance, I would still be learning those lessons today, and possibly from someone who wished my demise instead of people who loved me and cared about me. My parents set me up for success in this life through discipline, another form of wisdom!

Did you know God does the same thing for the same reason? Godly and loving parents who discipline their children are an almost completely pure image of God's disciplining wisdom in each of our lives. Sometimes when we face trials, they are of someone else's doing. Sometimes when we face hardship, it is because of our own doing. Have you ever sat down in the midst of a horrible situation and realized that you and your character are the reason you are in this mess? I have. It's not the greatest feeling. Maybe you're there now.

It's sad to say, but sometimes we don't realize how much we can get ourselves into troubles that are not persecutions from the enemy or Jesus-haters. But these things happen to us because we're getting an F in the school of hard knocks. God wants to lead us into wise decisions and that wisdom life we've talked about, but we're so stubborn in our character that we're causing our own trouble. And then we see that as God's fault. "God, why are You putting me through this?"

So we blame God for our character maladies and their consequences. But you know what? He's big enough to except that from us, because eventually we'll realize that this is happening so that we will grow into the wisdom life. God is allowing the consequences so that we grow and become stronger in the kind of character that changes the situations we find ourselves in.

When you run into problems, find out if you're the common denominator, if you're the reason for the not-so-awesome consequences headed your way. Could it be that God's working on you? There are times of persecution and sometimes things happen to us that aren't our fault. But if God's wanting you to grow, and if He's disciplining you by teaching you what you get with that characteristic in your life, then don't despise God. Thank Him for loving you enough to teach you how to live a wise and purposeful life and for strengthening the kind of character that brings deep relationship with God and others, a blessing that far surpasses any wealth we could amass ourselves.