**Proverbs Sermon II**

**Theme: Practical Christian Living Instructions for Godly living**

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon deals with the big questions of life. (Purpose, meaning, value, goal)

In Proverbs, he deals with the small questions of life. How should I live? How should I handle this situation? What should I say to this person?

These are smaller questions, but these small questions and how we answer them are what makes us who we are. Proverbs are important for our day-to-day life.

What kind of person do you want to be?

Areas covered by Solomon:

I. Wisdom, generally.

II. Self-Discipline.

III. Closely related: Laziness, Finances

IV Pride vs. Humility

V. Closely related: Taking advice from the wise.

VI. Relationships:

1. Peace-Making
2. The tongue
3. Wives
4. Relationships generally

VII The Poor

A request/assignment: Choose 5 memory passages and memorize them!

I. Wisdom, Generally

A. Fear of God Prov 1:7 The fear (deep, reverent respect) of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge/wisdom

God wants us to, at the same time, feel safe, secure, nurtured, believed in, but also in awe and reverent “fear” of the Holy God of Creation.

B. Heart

Prov 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

C. Wisdom Seek wisdom as a treasure. Prov 10:14 The wise store up knowledge but the mouth of a fool invites ruin.

Pay attention. Why did that happen? What caused that?

D. Wisdom in planning. Prov 14:12 There is a way which seems right, but in the end it leads to death.

Prov 16:9 In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.

A wise person puts the things of God at the forefront of every decision, especially the big ones of life.

II. Self-Discipline.

Prov 16:32 Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.

III. Closely related: Laziness, Finances

Def: A sluggard is a “habitually lazy person.”

Prov 6:6-11 Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in the summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.

Q: What does Solomon/God want us to learn from the ant?

Laziness leads to poverty. God cannot bless the lazy person, even though he wants to. God says: I want to bless this person, but if I do, what will I be saying? No! I will not bless what she/he does.

By being lazy you are forcing God to withhold blessings in your life.

My college buddy Tom would spend hours scheming ways to be lazy—to get around doing work.

Prov 10:4 Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth.

Q: Is wealth a Christian value?

A: Not really. Look at Jesus!!! but that is not the point.

There is no virtue in poverty!

Having a certain level of financial security frees us to serve.

Q: Are you a hard worker? Would your friends describe you this way?

On our hikes, when we play BBall we find out who is a hard worker.

Do you habitually look for the easy way out. Might you be a sluggard?

Prov 12:11, Prov 28:19 Those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies have no sense.

Q: What are these fantasies?

A friend who successfully ran a DQ, and for the next 30 years, wanted to be an entrepreneur.

I am going to start a business.

I am going to take this program, this major…

We need to be faithful!!!! But we also need to be realistic.

What will I do with my life? Make a choice and go for it.

Prov 14:23 All hard work brings profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

Talk is cheap.

Prov 18:9 One who is slack in his work is brother to the one who destroys.

The takers are not just taking, they are destroying.

Q: Are you a taker?

Prov 20:4 Sluggards do not plow in season; so at harvest time they look but find nothing.

Relates somewhat to Ecclesiastes. A time for everything, but we need to know when we need to buckle down and flat out work our butts off, knowing that a time of relative rest lays ahead.

I have no money! I have no car!

I had a paper route at 13 and a job at 15.

Prov 22:13 The sluggard says, “There is a lion outside! I’ll be killed in the public square.” Excuses!

Finances

Prov 13:11 Dishonest money dwindles away, but whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow.

Again, physical wealth is not a significant goal of the Christian, but financial freedom is of significant value to the servant of God.

So, how do we achieve this?

Stay away from multi-level marketing.

If greed is appealed to in a job interview, walk out!

Act wisely, spend carefully, stay out of debt, and build wealth slowly over time.

Compound wealth is a good thing!

IV Pride vs. Humility

Prov 11:2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

(by the way, James 3: tells us that with wisdom comes humility)

Prov 13:10 Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.

Has there been strife in your life recently?

If so, then pride is involved. I hope it is not on your part.

Prov 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Pride does not listen, so pride is going down, both practically...

Prov 21:4 Haughty eyes and a proud heart—the unplowed field of the wicked—produces sin.

And spiritually….

Prov 26:12 Do you see a person wise in their own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for them.

Do you think you know better than others? Are you overconfident in your own opinions and judgments?

Oh my gosh… That is me!

There is not much hope for you!

Prov 27:21 The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but people are tested by their praise.

It is like the guy who goes to the sideline after making a great football play. Why? To get a larger helmet.

Words of affirmation is my love language.

For me at church banquets when we would give out awards for the year: Will I be mentioned?

V. Closely related: Accepting discipline/correction and taking advice from the wise.

Prov 12:1 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid.

Do you hate having your mistakes and deficiencies pointed out?

Prov 15:32 Those who disregard discipline despise themselves, but the one who heeds correction gains understanding.

Just this week, I got “correction” from a brother about my pride. I had been fasting Wednesday, and, apparently, I mentioned that I was fasting that day. He corrected me, using Matthew 6:16-18 “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do… when they are fasting… so that it will not be obvious to others that you were fasting.

He told me that I should have kept that private.

My thoughts: I was not boasting, but simply sharing a piece of information.

Then I asked myself:

Do I want brothers who are close to me to give me correction?

Answer: Yes!!!

I responded: Thanks for calling me to a biblical standard.

Prov 12:15 The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice.

A couple of points:

As a general rule, we should wait to be asked for advice.

As a general rule, let us avoid, if possible, giving “unsolicited advice.”

For two reasons:

1. All of us want to be autonomous on some level. We want to protect our personal freedom in Christ.

2. Solicited advice is far more likely to be accepted and taken.

2. Bad unsolicited advice is potentially harmful (because it feels more like correction than advice), but “bad” solicited advice is not.

What we need as a church is a culture in which it is normal to seek advice.

Areas we need advice:

Major financial decisions,

Employment

Living situations

Moving

Dating

Marriage, parenting.

These areas are off limits acc to our society’s standards.

Note:

Not GIVE advice, but seek and ask for advice.

Do you seek advice from spiritual advisers?

Q: Why do we not seek advice?

Answer:

Not in the habit. Not taught by example.

Pride.

Aware that the potential decision is not wise, so not wanting to hear advice.

Also note this proverb:

Prov 15:22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with ***many advisers*** they succeed.

Prov 11:14 For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers.

Also note:

Prov 19:20 ***Listen*** to advice and ***accept*** discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise.

A recent situation:

A brother was making a significant life decision. He got advice from three brothers. He did not “take” that advice.

How should we feel about this?

1. Good. He got advice.

2. Advice is advice. It is not a sin that he did not “take” the advice.

3. If my advice was best, then that brother or sister will learn through the experience, but I will trust God and respect their autonomy.

3. But, did he listen to the advice?

I asked him: Did you consider alternative possibilities?

Even if not, he would be a “fool,” not a sinner.

Prov. 27:5-6 Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

We need one another, both to make wise decisions, to seek God’s will, and in order for us to grow in Christ.

Prov 27:17 As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

Accepting and giving correction and even advice can produce sparks. Right????

But God uses this to sharpen one another?

Summary:

Advice to sluggards: Do not give in to laziness.

Advice to those who are seeking to become financially secure:

Avoid get-rich-quick schemes and build wealth slowly and gradually over time.

Flee pride. Seek Humility

Accept instruction

Seek and listen to (and take?) advice from one another.

Part III

. Relationships:

1. Peace-Making

Prov 12:16 Fools show their annoyance at once, but the prudent overlook and insult.

Prov 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Prov 17:14 Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.

Prov 25:21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you.

1. The tongue

Prov 17:18 Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.

Prov 18:2 Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions.

Prov 18:13 To answer before listening—that is folly and shame.

Prov 25:15 Through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break bone.

Prov 29:20 Do you see someone who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for them.

Prov 29:22 An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins.

Prov 18:8 The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts.

Prov 20:19 A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid anyone who talks too much.

Prov 26:18-19 Like a maniac shooting flaming arrows of deat is one who deceives their neighbor and says, “I was only joking!”

1. Wives

Prov 19:13 A foolish child is a father’s ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like the constant dripping of a leaky roof.

Prov 21:29 Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and nagging wife.

Prov 25:24 Better to live on a corner of the roof than to share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

1. Relationships generally

Prov 18:24 One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Prov 20:6 Many claim to have unfailing love, but a faithful person, who can find?

Prov 18:17 In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right, until someone comes forward and cross-examines.

Prov 20:5 The purposes of a person’s heart are deep waters, but the one who has insight draws them out.

VII The Poor

Prov 14:31 Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

Prov 28:27 Those who give to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close their eyes to them receive many curses.

Prov 29:7 The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.

Prov 31:9 Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Summary: What kind of person do you want to be? Want wisdom?

Fear God

Trust God

Seek wisdom and pay attention

Ask what God’s will is likely to be on a decision

Walk with the wise

Live a self-disciplined life

Work hard