

Two Very Different Paths
Proverbs 2:1-22; 4:18-19
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Sunday, July 19, 2009

Main Idea: We travel safely on the pathway of wisdom when we fear the LORD and treasure His words.

Key Points:

1. **We must seek wisdom diligently in order to receive it, i.e. do you want it? (Proverbs 2:1-4)**
 - a. Pursuing wisdom takes effort and work. It requires a choice on our part to pay attention to God's words - to not only listen but to hear.
 - b. Not only do we need to be attentive to God's word in private devotions, but we also need to be attentive to hear the preached word with the gathered church.
 - c. Consider the verbs used in the first two verses: treasure up God's commandments; make your ear attentive; incline your heart; incline your ear.
 - d. The result of diligently seeking wisdom is recorded in verse 5: "*then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.*" There is no wisdom apart from a right understanding, a right knowledge and a right relationship with the Lord.
 - e. Verse 6 tells us that in response to our diligent pursuit, the Lord will give us the gift of wisdom. He gives it to those who really want it along with knowledge and understanding.
2. **Those who receive God's wisdom will be protected by it, i.e. you really need it! (Proverbs 2:6-21; 4:18-19)**
 - a. There are 2 paths described in these verses – the path of wisdom (also called "the way of the saints", "the paths of life", "the way of the good", etc.) and the path of evil (also called "crooked paths", "devious ways", "the ways of darkness", etc.)
 - b. Wisdom and the God of wisdom afford protection from the pathways of evil. Specifically, we need to be protected from the "evil man" and the "forbidden woman", i.e. easy money and easy sex. They come to us with perverted speech or smooth words to try and persuade us to forsake the pathways of righteousness.
 - c. These two wicked people are competing voices; they compete with God's words and God's wisdom.
 - i. These voices can come through entertainment media. Movies and television can make sin look appealing.

- ii. These voices can come from a worldly culture that uses “smooth words” to soften sin by using euphemisms to describe sin. Adultery is an “affair”. Perversions are termed “alternative lifestyles”. Teens are “sexually active” instead of fornicating.
 - iii. These competing voices can also come from friends who are themselves foolish.
- d. There are choices that we make that will determine which path we proceed along – choices about what we watch, what we listen to, who we hang out with, where we go, the kind of job atmosphere we choose, whether we’re going to participate in fellowship, whether we’re going to confess that sin that has a grip on us, or whether we’ll continue living in the shadow, playing at Christianity. These are usually little choices that when added up have a profound effect on whether we are numbered among the wise or the fools.
- e. God stores up sound wisdom for us all along our journey through life. He makes provision for us. We can develop a habit of seeking wisdom that will bring glory to Him and blessing to us. All we have to do is really want it.

Fellowship Starters:

1. Is wisdom something you desire? Is your heart diligently seeking after wisdom? How would those who are closest to you evaluate your pursuit of wisdom? (see Prov. 2:3-5)
2. Is your heart inclined to God’s word? Is your heart attentive to treasure and to hear God’s word – privately and publically? What is one way you grow in acquiring a taste for God’s word? (see Prov. 2:1-2)
3. What voices in your life compete with God’s word and God’s wisdom (e.g. the voices from TV, movies, music, the popular culture or friends)? (See Prov. 2:12-10)
4. Robin taught us, “there are choices that we can make that will determine which path we proceed along...these are usually little choices that when added up have a profound effect on whether we are numbered among the wise or the fools.” What kind of choices are you making – wise or foolish? How can you grow in honoring the Lord by choosing the path of wisdom instead of the path of the wicked? (See Prov. 4:18-19)