

Wisdom & Life OR Folly & Death??? Elder Ron Gannon brings this timely message.

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Date: 06 December 2009

Preacher: Ron Gannon

[0 : 00] Well, before we do our message this morning, let's have a word of prayer. Our Heavenly Father, we just thank you this morning, Father, for all the accomplishments that's already experienced in the life of Jennifer and Joshua and their lives today.

And we also know that you have many for them in the future. And we just are thankful for that. Father, this morning we also pray for Marv and for his family. We are so thankful for this surgery, Father, that it went well, that there was no permanent damage to Marv's heart. Father, this congregation owes Marv so much for his love and for his teaching over the last 40 years. Father, we just look forward to that teaching. And we just look forward to more and more to come of the same.

Father, we also pray for Susan Fugger this morning, Father, for the surgery that she has gone through. And we just pray that you'll bless her during this recovery and guide her and be able to recover very quickly.

And for Marv this morning, we also pray for a fast recovery, but not too quick. He does need that body to rest after all it's gone through. This morning, Father, I also ask that you'll be with me as I give the message this morning.

[1 : 12] And I just pray that no words spoken are not blessed by you. And, Father, this morning, we just thank you for your amazing love and grace that you give to us through your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And what he did at the cross for his all wisdom, Father, that he gives to us just by asking. We thank you for that, Father. And we just pray your blessings upon this congregation today.

And we thank you for them. We thank you for the word that's taught here. So, Father, we just praise you this morning. And we ask these things in the name of Christ Jesus.

Amen. Well, this morning, I want to continue in Proverbs where I've been, when I have come to the pulpit, that's where I've been talking from.

So, I'd like to get back to Proverbs. And this morning, I want to talk about the path. The path or the way. The way we walk. The path.

[2 : 11] The wisdom of life. Or folly and death. Which way will we go? So, that's what I'll be talking about. The path of life this morning. Some time back, Marv gave a man's number one rules list for women to understand.

And on the top of that list was this. Men do not need directions. Christopher Columbus didn't need directions to get here to the United States.

Men also do not need directions. Now, I, for one, am never lost. So, this message starts out this morning with this image.

Picture an automobile dangling on a cliff. And there's a meek smile that comes on the man's face. And he says to his wife, honey, do you think there's a lesson that might be learned from this? The lesson is this. The only way to end up at the right destination is to choose the right road.

[3 : 24] Choose that right road. If you've ever made a wrong turn and ended up in a strange place, you know what I'm talking about. Well, I worked for Wright-Patt. And I did a lot of traveling for Wright-Patt.

And when I go on these TDY trips to these cities like San Antonio and Sacramento and Utah, I would end up in these large cities. And when you're traveling, if you're going out for a week or two weeks, the majority of the men like to go out for supper.

And then they like to go out to the bars and have a good time. Well, I'm for all going out, but I wasn't for going out and going to the bars and things after the evening meal. So I usually rented a car of my own.

And after the meal, I'd say goodbye to the guys and I'd take off. And being in a strange city, I would just start driving. Just to see where all the things to see in like San Antonio.

A great city to visit. There's a lot of good things to see there. A lot of good tourist attractions. The Alamo. And the river. And all those things. The river walk. It's a great place.

[4 : 30] But I'd take off and I'd be driving and all of a sudden I'd end up, whoo, here I am right in the middle of a bad neighborhood. With people walking around and you don't know what's happening. And usually the times I was doing that, there was usually a lot of headlines about the gang wars and stuff that was going on.

So several times this happened to me. I'd take the wrong way or go the wrong way and I'd end up somewhere where I didn't want to be. Another example is Joyce and I was on vacation here a couple years ago going to Florida.

And we stopped at Carolyn and Roy's Hayes' house on the way down, which is Marv's sister. And we had a good time with them. And then we were going to head for Florida and we were going to stop in Savannah, Georgia.

Well, as you know, Savannah, Georgia is south, right? Well, we took off from Roy and Carol's and we were just moseying along and enjoying the countryside and talking.

And all of a sudden I looked up and I noticed there was a sign saying that I was getting very close to Charleston, West Virginia. Well, guess what?

[5 : 35] Charleston, West Virginia is not south either, is it? I was heading directly east. So again, although I've never been lost, I have strayed away from the path just a little bit.

So the story of life as a journey is a familiar one. It's found in the Bible as well as the classical literature such as the Odyssey, the Pilgrim's Progress, and a new book that I read recently which was called The Shack.

The Bible extorts us to choose the right path. Put up the present day world. But the present day world thinks there are many, many other paths that we can get and go through to get to the Lord Jesus Christ or to our Father.

And the world today is going through every path that they can think of. And the Christian community is sometimes being laughed at. You guys say that this is the only way.

Well, how hypocritical of you. But God has given us a path, hasn't he? He has showed us the direction. And we find that in his word. And that's what we're going to continue to find out here today.

[6 : 45] There are basically only two roads in life. There's a right road and a wrong road. There's a straight road and a crooked road. There's a road of life and there's a road of death.

There's a road that is wise to be traveled on. And there is a road that fools travel on. And we don't want to be the fool, do we? There is a road that seems light.

But it leads to death. We see that in Proverbs 14, 12. And then there is a road that is right in its pathway. There is no death. And we see that in Proverbs 12, 26.

Matthew chapter 7, 13 reads, Who is it that's going to get to heaven? That's not the exact word. But Matthew 7, 13 reads, Enter ye the narrow gate.

For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction. And many are there that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate and straight is the way that leads into life.

[7 : 48] And a few are they that find it. This is talking about salvation. This is talking about heaven. This is talking about the path that man follows in his life.

And what we can see here is we can see this super highway. Of many, many people going down and veering right down this highway. And where are they veering to? They're veering into eternal death.

Spiritual death. And the Lord says, There's another highway. It's a smaller highway. But my people will go down this highway.

And very few of those will enter. And that's what we have with the Christian community today.

That's what salvation is all about. The path that you travel. The path that you choose. In Proverbs, the word path or way are found over 60 times.

So the Proverbs talks a lot about the way or the path. And one of the things that Marv has always said. If something is mentioned many, many times in the Bible.

[8 : 57] It's probably good that we pay attention to it. And that's what we need to do about the path and the way. God has given us a path to run. And we should be on that path. Walking it and running it every day.

So pay attention. Yes, wisdom is a path to walk. And the emphasis in chapters 2, 3, and 4 that we're going to be getting into today. It is on the blessing God gives people to enjoy when they walk on the path.

The right path or the path of wisdom. The path of wisdom leads to life. But the path of folly leads to death. The book of Proverbs. The word way is used to describe a road.

We do the same thing today in our language. We might ask for directions. But when we ask for directions, what are we asking for? We're asking, which way should I go?

Which way? Or which road should I follow? Which path should I follow? But this may mean which road should I take.

[10 : 00] In reading the following verses, what kind of a road or way is being described when we read these verses from the book of Proverbs? Proverbs 2, 20.

Proverbs 4, 21. But they continue in them. Or other words, it's a continuous living out this path of life. This is walking the right road.

Proverbs 4, verses 11 and 12. I have directed you in the way of wisdom. I have led you in the upright paths. When you walk, your steps will not be impeded.

And when you run, you will not stumble. Here are the two sides of right teaching. Instruction first. And then example.

He's telling us that we need to be directed. And he's teaching us. Then he says that I will lead you. That's action. That's example. Both are necessary.

[11 : 28] Many people teach without setting an example, don't they? Do as I say, not as I do. But this is hypocritical. And produces a worse generation of hypocrites.

Because it just keeps generating and generating when we do this. This is what was wrong with the Pharisees, wasn't it? When we get into Matthew chapters 23.

And we read verses 1 and 4. It says, You scribes. You Pharisees. You hypocrites. You tie up heavy burdens on the people.

But you as yourself do not do them. You will not even move a finger to do them. You're unwilling to do what you tell the people to do. Again, this is the right road of what I was teaching.

I have directed you in the way of wisdom. That is the right road. What the Pharisees were doing. That was the wrong road. Do not walk the way of the Pharisees. Proverbs 4.

[12 : 29] Verse 14. Enter not into the path of the wicked. And walk not in the way of evil men. Enter not into the path of the wicked.

Which leads to eternal death. Join not with them in their wicked ways and practices. Have no fellowship. Keep no company with them. And do not set one foot in the path they tread.

At least you should be tempted. To proceed to more ungodliness. And walk not away. Not in the way of evil men. But if tempted and prevailed upon.

Do not proceed. Other words, temptation. Everybody gets temptations, don't they? We're all tempted. And some of the lessons I've done before on temptation.

Is that when you're tempted. You need to ask yourself some questions. And those questions are about Jesus. What would Jesus do? Would you do this if Jesus was in front of you? What would Jesus say?

[13 : 26] How will this look to other Christians? What kind of a witness will I be? So my advice is. Don't walk away from these people.

Put on your tennis shoes and run. As fast as you can. Run away from temptation. Run away from evil. These people in Proverbs 4.14. Proverbs 14.12 Salvation for example.

In reality. This is really spiritual death. Because somebody is working for their salvation. They're never going to receive that salvation.

Because works is no part of it. As we see in Ephesians chapter 2. It's not only by the grace of God. That you are saved. And not of works. So what do we do?

We study God's word. And let him lead you. Again. If we're dependent upon our own thinking. Something seems right to me. Usually somewhere down the road.

[14 : 58] We'll find out that this was not the case. And if we'd had God's teaching. If we've had God's word. If we'd had advice from other Christians. As we're going down this road.

We may have changed. So this is the wrong road. We're talking about here in Proverbs 14.12. Proverbs 21.16 A man who wanders away from the understanding.

Will rest in the assembly. Of the dead. That he wanders. So that he is not physically dead. If he's wandering. He's not physically dead. So what kind of dead is he?

Well he must be spiritually dead. So that's what we see here. He is spiritually dead. This language speaks of religious people. Who have heard and know the truth.

But have not submitted to it. Except. Externally. Or outwardly. And we have many, many people today. Who fit this. This characterization.

[15 : 57] You know when we're talking about. When we're talking about religious beliefs. There are people with religious beliefs. Where we're really not talking about Christianity. Are we? You know.

Christianity and religion. I see as two different things. Religion is man made. This is what we do. These are things that we've been taught. As we go to church.

And sometimes these churches. That we've been taught in. They are not teaching. God's word. The way that God would have them to do it. Going down the right path. So we have to be careful.

Of what we're being taught. We have to be careful. Of the things that we know. That may be right.

But in actuality. They are not right. So we need to get into God's word again.

We need to listen. So this again. The wrong road to walk. If you're relying on your own thinking. And not putting your requests before God.

[16 : 52] To see if they fit in. To what his plan is. Proverbs 23.19. Listen my son. And be wise. And direct your path. In the way. Well you first must hear.

And after hearing comes saving faith. And after saving faith. Comes living faith. It's not enough just to have faith. You've got to have two types of faith.

You've got to have the faith. That you believe. And the belief that you're saved from. But you also have to have action with this belief. So faith. And faith itself.

Is not enough. We've got to do something with this faith. Don't we? We've got to put it into action.

And that's what faith is really all about. Isn't it? Faith is really about. Believing the word.

Knowing it's true. And once we know that it's true. What? We don't do anything? No. We do something about it. Don't we?

[17 : 51] We do something about it. When you find out something is true. You take action. You do something. That's what truth faith is all about. And that's what the faith of the Bible is. Once we know the truth about Jesus Christ.

And what he did at the cross. That he died on that cross. To die for all the sins of the world. And he died on that cross for you and for me.

What are we to do? Well. Thank you Jesus. That's good news. Go on your way. No. You're to contemplate. You believe God's word.

What does he say now in Romans chapter 10? Confess thy sins and come to Jesus Christ. Admit that you have sin in your life. And ask him to come into your heart.

And that's what salvation is all about. Many people out there today think that this is. What you're talking about is something that can't be done. I'm too bad or whatever. I can't do this.

[18 : 49] You don't know what my life has been like. It doesn't matter does it? Jesus says all you need is faith. And the fact that I am the son of God.

I came to be your mediator. And as your mediator. You can now walk that gap. That's between you and God. And that gap was established because of man's sinful nature.

God cannot stand sin. He will not have sin. So I cannot come in fellowship with God. Because of that sin that's in my life. There's a gap. Jesus Christ.

On that cross. Built a bridge. Through that gap. And there's many testimonies. There's many. What do I want to say out there in Iraq? The tracks.

Out there that show this same story. Or they show this story about. Your relationship with God. And the gap that's there. And that Jesus Christ. That cross. Is the road that we walk across.

[19 : 56] And that's the message we need to get out to all the world. And to all these people that think. On their own terms. That hey I'm okay. And you're okay. Well we're not okay are we?

Not if we don't go down the right path. We need to get down that right path. So listen my sons. And be wise. And direct your heart. In the way. What is the way? God's word.

The path that you're going to take in your life. That's the way. So we must first hear it. And believe it. And do something about it. And start living your life that way.

Again. This is a right road. To walk. So we've seen. Here in Proverbs. Many sayings. And some of them are the right way. Some of them are the wrong way.

Some lead to life. Some leads to folly. Some leads to death. So we need to be careful. We need to choose. The right one. We could also describe these two ways.

[20 : 54] As the way of wisdom. And the way of the world. Sometimes these two roads. Run parallel with each other. Now that seems kind of like a strange statement.

Doesn't it? But there comes a point. When the two worlds deviate. And when it deviates. Then we have to turn off. The way of wisdom.

Because when we're traveling down. We're running parallel. With an unbeliever. And our beliefs. And there's a deviation. Then we have to follow. That right path. And we have to be sure.

That we're following. The right path. How come then. The ways of the world. And run parallel. With the way of wisdom. You ask. The wise man. Follows the way. That is right. The worldly man.

Follows the way. That seems to pay off. In other words. The way. Which promises to make one. Healthy. Wealthy. Happy. Famous.

[21 : 52] So you say. How can these two paths. Run parallel. Consider someone. Who is in your class. He is a good student. He or she is a good student.

But who does not know. The Lord is Savior. And does not really care. What the book of Proverbs says. Or any other book in the Bible says. This person's goal. Is to get good grades in school.

Or in his class. This person believes. That one of the ways. To reach this goal. Is by hard. Work. And diligent study. Is there anything wrong.

With hard work. And diligent study. Well of course not. Not only does it pay. To be diligent. And study hard. But it also.

Is the way. That God instructs us. We see in Proverbs. In 6. Where it talks about the ant. That we should be diligent. As the ant is diligent. To work.

[22 : 52] Always working hard. So there is nothing wrong there. What we see in there. Is a parallel. Of the path. Between an unbeliever. And a believer.

In Jesus Christ. We have the same goal. We're doing the same things. Now suppose. This Christian student. Adds another dimension.

To getting better grades. Not only is this person. Diligent in study. But this student. Has also decided. To cheat. On the final exam. This person might think.

Well this is. This is. The way to do it. This is the way. To ensure. That I get a good grade. So I will cheat.

And I will get this good grade. What do we see here? We see a deviation. Don't we? There's a deviation. Between what the Christian. Has been brought up in. What the God's word says. We can walk in the way.

[23 : 51] With it. With. Parallel. With the unbeliever. Until we come to a deviation. And when we see a deviation. We got to. We got to. We got to realize it. And we got to do something about it. And we got to change the path.

That we're going. And be sure. That we don't go down. The same path. That they're going down. We want to continue on the same path. That God has given us. Another example might be.

Is. I'm a non-Christian. Or I am a non-Christian friend. Is going to a grocery store. And we're both shopping. We look at all the prices. And we compare the prices. We have coupons.

What is our goal? Our goal is to do the best shopping we can do. And save money for our friend. For our family. There's nothing wrong with those goals. Is there? A non-Christian.

A Christian. Same goal. Running in parallel. Now my friend. It's added another dimension. We go up to the checkout counter. Now remember.

[24 : 48] Our goal is to save money. To get money back. Or whatever. From coupons. He said. Now. Now. The sales clerk. Made a mistake. When she handed me chains back.

Hmm. What do you do in that situation? That ever happen to you? You're sitting there. And the chain. And the clerk. Sometimes you're waiting in line. You're aggravated to begin with.

Then the clerk. You're sitting there. And she's fumbling with the. The keypad. Or whatever. And then she hands you the chains. And you look at it. And you say. Well. That's not right. Well.

This person said. Hey. That's not my fault. That was her fault. I'm going to take the money. And I'm going to run. There.

The parallel ceases. Doesn't it? There no longer is a parallel there. Between what the non-Christian is doing. And the Christian. They've changed their path. They've changed their way. They've deviated from the path.

[25 : 45] That God has established. So. We have to watch. We have to be careful. Of running parallel. One of the things that we.

See when we look at chapters. Two through seven of Proverbs. Is the importance God puts on a father. To teach his children. Wisdom. This book records. A loving father's wise counsel. To his family. We see this through repetition. Of the phrase. My son. And you're going to see this. In chapters two. Chapter three. Chapter four.

Chapter five. Chapter six. And chapter seven. I believe they all start out. With my son. I give you this. And we need to read these verses.

In the New Testament. Paul tells Ephesians. Fathers. To train your children up. In the discipline. And instruction of the Lord. To get a better understanding. Of this verse. And we need to go back. To Deuteronomy.

[26 : 42] And read chapter six. And we see that through Moses. God commanded the Jewish father. To teach their children wisdom. And if the children were smart.

They paid attention. And they obeyed. Life is dangerous. It's wise to listen. To the godly counsel. People. Who have walked the path. Before you. And we see that.

It says. Read some of these verses. And Proverbs. Remember. This is a father. Talking to a son. Somebody with already. That has some wisdom. Talking.

To somebody. That may not have the wisdom. You know. As I was growing up. I assume. I was like. Just about every. Other man here. I didn't listen to my father. As I became a teenager.

As I got up. He's 16. 17. Started driving my own car. Dad is out of it. Where is this. Where is his thinking. What is all this stuff. But after a few years.

[27 : 44] You begin to think. Wow. When did he grow up. When did he grow up. When did he get all this information from. Because it was right. It was right. And. I was wrong.

So listen. I will read some verses from Proverbs. Proverbs 1.8. My son. Hear the instruction of thy father. And forsake not the law of thy mother. Proverbs 2.

1. My son. If thou wilt receive my words. And lay up my commandments with thee. Proverbs 3. My son. Forget. Not my law. But let thy heart. Keep my commandments.

Proverbs 3.11. My son. Despise not the chiding of Jehovah. Neither be weary of his reproof.

Proverbs 3.21. My son. Let them not depart from thy eyes.

Keep sound wisdom and discretion. What's not to depart. The word. The things his father is teaching him. Proverbs 4.10. Hear. Oh my son. And receive my sayings.

[28 : 41] And the years of thy life may be many. Here he's promising prosperity. Long life. If you go down that right path. My son. Proverbs 4.20. My son.

Attend to my words. Incline thy ear to all my sayings. These are the sayings of the father. And what we have here is. King David. Basically talking to Solomon.

Giving him instruction. And we can take that today. Be God giving us instruction. Proverbs is a book that. Just as. Popular. Just as.

Instructional. Today. As it was back when. When. This. These proverbs were written. It's a way of life. A lot of times when I. If I go to the jail.

And Roger. He's gone down to the jail many times. A lot of the guys. They'll. They'll. Say. No you know. There's just so many things out there. I get in trouble.

[29 : 36] I can't handle it. I can't do this. This is the problem. That was the problem. And one of the things I always tell them. Is hey guys. There is nothing. In. The world. That you've gotten into.

Or that you're going to get into. In your future. It's not already covered. It's covered in the. Bible. So. You know. These excuses don't matter.

Because God has already given us. Everything that we need. What's he say in Romans chapter 1 verse 18. You're without excuse.

You're without excuse. Because everything has been laid out. There in Romans. It's about creation. You know. How can you go outside today.

And look at the trees. Look at the sky. We've had a lot of thunderstorms here lately. And have you seen some of the skies. That's developed from that. Beautiful.

[30 : 31] Beautiful. And what we see there. Is the great sky. And the blue sky. And it's balancing with the thunder. And the lightning. And the big clouds come in. It turns to pink. Or turns to bright orange.

Beautiful. Beautiful. So they were without excuse. Also in Deuteronomy chapter 6. God instructs the Israelites.

And these words which I command thee this day. Shall be upon thy heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto the children. And talk with them when you sit. And when you walk. And when you dig down. And when you rise up. Other words. Our teaching is never done. Is it? We have graduation day today. And that is a great day.

That is a day we say. Welcome to adult life. I told my granddaughter last week. My granddaughter graduated from Northwestern. I said. Today.

[31 : 26] Or Joyce told her I think. Today you are a responsible person. Just like that. Graduate. And now you are a responsible person.

An adult. So we need to instruct. We need to instruct. It is a lifelong thing. Right up until they graduate. And of course. Then they go off. And they get their own instruction.

But. Mother and father's instruction never ceases. It happens all the way through life. It is a great thing too. Paul also instructs the church. In Ephesians 6. 4. And you fathers provoke not your children to wrath.

But bring them up. In the nature of admonition of the Lord. In other words. Instruct. Discipline. Teach. These are the things that. That give young people.

And gets them on the right road. Or the right path. As we read these verses. We see God has ordained the family. And the responsibilities he gives the father. Too many are trying to usurp these responsibilities.

[32 : 24] Away from the family today. We see that. In the television programs that's on. In some of the magazines we read. The newscasts you see. Sometimes. These sitcoms.

I mean they put a father in such a bad light. It's just ridiculous. The way they portray. The father. Of a family. It's like he's some. Laughing baboon.

Instead of portraying the father. As the head of the home. He's the one that instructs. So there are people out there today. Trying to do away at the family. Trying to do away at the father.

And the. The respect that he should gain from the children. So there's many people out there. That's trying to change that. So they're trying to change the role of the family.

And if we don't stand up. It may be too late. Just look how far Canada has gone. In the homosexuality movement. And other movements. Of the day. The U.S. may not be far behind.

[33 : 26] In these movements. I read recently something very disturbing about Canada. A 12 year old girl. Went to court. To force her dad.

To overturn his decision. Not to allow her to go on a school trip. Now can you imagine. But what had he done.

That was so terrible. He grounded her for. Putting her picture on Facebook. Or dating website.

That was it. And he. She took him to court. Took him to court. And the magistrate.

Ruled against the father. And ruled for the daughter. And said that is cruel. And unusual punishment. To put on your daughter. Hey.

[34 : 22] That father's. Discipline. His instruction. And everything. Had just been. Usurped. Hadn't it. And no father had. No longer had any control. Of that daughter.

Because she went. The wrong path. The court. Went the wrong path. The law. Went the wrong path. Everybody took the wrong path. To allow such a thing.

To happen in our society. Today. That a father. Could be taken to court. Just for not letting. The child. Go on a field trip. Or some. Prom. Or whatever.

It's amazing. But these things. Are going on. And we got to stop it. We have to take action. We have to speak up. Or it can happen here. In the United States. Just as easy. Because today.

We're seeing all kinds of things. Coming out. About the court system. About the new. Supreme Court justices. And some of the people. That's going to be going on there.

[35 : 18] And some of the decisions. They make. Some of the decisions. They shouldn't even be trying to make. Because it's not their job to make. It's a constitutional thing. And they shouldn't have

any part. Of changing the constitution.

They should just be. Out there. Judging. The things of the constitution. Not trying to amend it. Or change it. So these things. Are out there today. And are happening. All over the place.

So how do we get this. Wisdom. How do we get on the right path. God instructs us here. In Proverbs chapter 2. On the things. Some of the things. That we should do. He gives 10.

Imperities. There in verse 2. Or chapter 2. Verses 1 and 5. If you want to turn to that. Concerning our responsibilities. Toward God's truth. And wisdom.

Verse 1 says. Receive God's word. And hide his commandments. Within you. This means. We accept God's word. We store them up. In our mind.

[36:13] In our heart. Let the word be like the seed. Cast into the ground. Like the Bereans. The Bereans. They received the word. Wholeheartedly. And once they received it.

They started taking action upon it. They were eager. Like the Thessalonians. That received God's word. They were. Fervent in their faith. They acknowledged God's word.

And they started taking action. There in Thessalonica. So carry out. The word about. Or carry the word with you. For your greater security.

God's word gives you security. Let your heart be the hiding place. Of these commandments. And when we do that. And our heart is filled up. With God's commandments. Satan cannot take control. It's only when we start.

Getting off that path. Getting away from God's word. That Satan. Can come in. And take control. So that's two of the. Imperities. Chapter 2 says.

[37:11] Incline your ear unto wisdom. And apply your heart. To understanding. The ear is something important to God. You know. I've never thought about it like that before.

You know. These two things sticking out. Some of them look funny on people. Some of them stick out farther than others. But the ear. Is very important to God. God. The ear is.

Is how we listen to God. So it's very important. So. He has mentioned it over 11 times. Here in just the book of Proverbs. He has given us a tool for understanding.

But we must first do something. What do we have to do? We have to hear. We have to listen. In Isaiah 55.3. God says. Incline your ear. And come to me.

Listen. That you may live. Live. Listen. To the God. To the word of God. Here's some other proverb quotes. That talks about the ear. Proverbs 2.20. So as to incline thy ear unto wisdom.

[38:08] And apply thy heart to understanding. Proverbs 4.20. My son. Again the son. Attend to my words. Incline thy ear. Unto my sayings. Proverbs 15.31.

The ear that harketh. To the reproof of life. Shall abide among the wise. Hey. It's okay to be scolded. It's okay to be corrected. 17.4.

And evil doers. Heed to wicked lips. And a liar gives ear. To the mischievous tongue. Proverbs 18.15. The heart of the prudent. Giveth knowledge.

And the ear of the wise. Seeketh knowledge. 28.9. And he that turneth away his ear. From hearing the law. Even his prayer. Is an abomination. James 1.19.

You know this my beloved brethren. That every man be swift to hear. Slow to speak. And slow to wrath. Friends if we just obeyed that one command today.

[39:12] Our married life would be much better. Our job life would probably be much better. Anything we do with a relationship with another person would be better.

If we just listen to this one thing. That James tells us. And what's he say? He says. Be swift to hear. Slow to speak. And slow to wrath. You know God gave me one of these. He gave me two of these. So evidently he had a priority in mind didn't he? He didn't give me two mouths.

Sometimes you think that's what people have. Just by the way they chatter at you. Don't you? How many mouths do you have? I tell them something. They don't listen. The first thing you want to do is.

Start yakking. I know that's a problem with me. Many times Joyce has said. Wait a minute. Let me finish what I'm saying. You just.

[40:10] You started chattering right away. Stop. Listen. Listen. I've got something to say. We don't do that. We get into trouble. So that's. That's why God has given us two ears.

And so many problems we have today. If people would just stop. And listen. When you're in a confirmation with somebody. Listen. Hear them out.

Because probably if you just took the time to hear what they were saying. You would probably understand. Now. I see where they're coming from. Okay. I did this. I didn't mean to do it that way. But I did do it. Now I can see. Instead of start giving out excuses. Well now. You're not perfect yourself. And da da da da. Da da da. Stop. Listen. God gave us two ears to hear. Let's use them. And hear. The phrase incline your ear. Pictures a person choking. Or cocking his head. And coupling his ear. In other words.

[41 : 09] He's a. What did you say? There's something important coming. So he. Uh. Cocks his head. And then couples his ear with his hand.

While straining to hear. And to understand. More distinctly. What the other person is saying. And that's what we need to do. It. Picks. Exerting physical effort. It takes effort to listen. Doesn't it? It takes real effort. Because sometimes. I just want to. Take off. Okay. I've heard enough. I'm going. But.

He wants us to take physical effort. And the word heart. Shows that we must. Apply strenuous mental effort. As well. So. When we're hearing these things. We need to let the heart speak. We need the heart to. Hear what the other person is saying. And then respond. From the heart. Not from the. Not from your mind. Not from your mouth. But from the heart. And if we listen to the heart.

[42 : 03] We'll probably come up with the right thing. An inclination of the ear. Without an application of the heart. Signifies nothing. So. If we're just saying things. To get somebody off our back.

That's not good enough. We're hearing it. But we're not doing something about it. That's what. Hypocrites do. Isn't it? That's what a lot of people say about church. Isn't it? That church is full of hypocrites.

He's right. We are full of hypocrites. Because we all follow that path. Don't we? So. We need to get people's attention. That's what hearing is all about. And then.

We need to go by the heart. And. Listen to what's being said. Verse 3 says. Cry for discernment. Lift your voice for understanding. There's two more. Things that we need to do.

We need to go to prayer. The word first comes into the ears. Then it enters the heart. There it is. It's safely hid. And from there rises the cry.

[43 : 01] The lifting up of thy voice. You know. You can pick it up a book. Such as the Bible. You can read it. And you can read it. And you can read it some more.

And I've done this time and time again. Picked up a book of the Bible. And read it. And read it. And read it. But what was I doing? I was just reading. And. If I just read.

When I'm done. If you ask me what I just read. I would probably say. Hmm. Let me go back. I don't know what I just read. Reading is not enough. Okay.

We need to. Cry for discernment. Lift your voice for understanding. Earthly wisdom is gained by study. However. Heavenly wisdom comes through study. Along with prayer.

So we need that prayer. Along with our study. God will illumine. He will give light. To the things that we're studying. He's the one that makes sense of this thing. It's very difficult for me to understand.

[44 : 01] Unless I let God. Let me. Let me understand. Because it's very difficult. So we need to. Cry for discernment. Lift up your voice.

Praying over the word. The word puts God perspective on it. Light from above. Puts a clearer and fuller understanding. On what God is trying to tell us. Verse 4 says. Seek her as silver.

And search for her as for hidden treasures. So after prayer. We need to work hard. And we start. Need to start searching for the meaning.

Of what God is telling us. To read instruction. To read. Instead of searching the scriptures. Only to skim the surface. So again. We need to read and study. In Colossians 2.3.

It states that. In Christ himself. Are hidden all the treasures. Of wisdom and knowledge. All. The treasures. Of his. Hidden from. For wisdom and knowledge. If you're a geologist.

[44 : 57] And you're going out. Looking for ore. For some kind of a gem out there. You don't just dig down. Do you find the first one. That's not enough. Is it? You need to keep digging.

Archaeologists.

When they find bones. Of. Of ancient times. Over there in Israel. Or wherever. They don't stop. With the first one. My goodness. They keep digging. Don't they? And they dig. And they dig.

Until they found. The last one of them. That's how God wants us. To study the Bible. To not just read it. But do a thorough study. To dig. And dig. And that's what he wants us to do.

Verse five. Then you will discern the fear of the Lord. And discover the knowledge of God. After you've done these things. You will discern the fear of the Lord. And discover the knowledge of God. That's awesome. Now folks. What is the fear of God? For non-believers. It's the fear of what's going to happen to them.

[45 : 55] What is God going to do to me? Judgment. The things that's coming. What does happen. When I leave this earth.

No understanding. I think I'd be fearful. You know. The fear of God. That what Bible is talking about. It's not this type fear. The fear we're talking about.

Is. Is a. Respect for God. There's no other word I want to use. I can't come up with it right now. Hmm.

It's going to come to me. Oh well. But anyway. It's respect for God. It's knowing God.

And who he is. It's knowing God. And knowing his word. And knowing. That the judgments he's talking about. And what they're there for. They're there for the ones who do not.

[46 : 55] Know him. Who. Or those who do not come to him. We're all going to be judged. We're all going to be judged at the judgment seat. But we don't have anything to fear.

Do we. We do not have the fear that they have. The non-believer has. Because we've already been known. We've already been told. We've already been instructed. By the Bible. By Paul. By Jesus. And all the apostles. That through faith. In Christ. You will have eternal life. That has already been decided. We already know the outcome.

We know the end of the story. So we don't have anything to fear. To be fearful about. You can see that example. If you go to a funeral. Can't you? Have you ever been to a funeral.

Where you know there's unbelievers there. Or the family is unbelievers. It's a very different story. From that. When you go to a funeral. Or what you know as a Christian.

[47 : 52] And the family are Christians. The atmosphere is completely different. You can see the fear. In these other funerals. What is happening to this person.

And what is going to happen to me. There's so much uncertainty. But going down the right path. Knowing God's word. That is the key. So attaining spiritual wisdom.

Is not just a once a week hobby. Is a daily discipline of lifetime. But in this age of fast food.

Microwave ovens. And easy read books. Many people are out of the habit.

Of investing time for reading the word of God. And we are. We're all busy. This is a busy world.

Automation is just taken over. And everything is very fast.

It's go, go, go, go. Your kids. They take you everywhere. Sports. Every kind of sport you can think of. You're here. You're there. It's very difficult.

[48 : 52] You go to work. Thanks to television and internet. Our attention span is brief. We don't have the attention span we used to have. You know.

In the olden days. You didn't have television. You didn't have radio. You didn't have internet. What did you do in the evening? You said. You talked. You read. You were gaining information. You had time to talk.

You could develop a conversation. Today, conversations are very short. Because, hey. What's on television? Short sitcoms. Very short phrases. They call them funny.

But I don't call them funny. That's what we have today. So it's very difficult. We're very serious when we go to work. Because we get paid for that. We need to be as serious when we're reading God's word.

Get it into our hearts. Get on that right path. So we're willing to work diligently on our jobs. Also work diligently at reading the words. Proverbs 16.16 says.

[49 : 50] How much better it is to get wisdom than gold. And to get understanding. Is to be chosen. Above silver. Well, that's hard for us to get our hands around, isn't it?

We like the gold. We like the silver. God says. My word is more important. And we see that again. To go back to the gospels. You see the Pharisees. And the Sadducees.

What were they doing? They were doing all these religious things. But they were doing it for the wrong reason. They were doing it for the wrong reason. They were doing it for what they could get.

There's a price to pay if we gain spiritual wisdom. But there is an even greater price to pay if we don't gain it. We must walk with God through the study of his word. He holds victory in store for the upright.

He is a shield to those who walk in integrity. If we do our part, God will keep his promise and protect us from the enemy. As we see in Proverbs 2. In verses 7 through 11.

[50 : 51] And it says, He stores up sound wisdom for the upright. He is a shield to them who walk with integrity. That he may guard the paths of justice. And preserve the way of the saints. Then shall you understand righteousness and justice and inequity.

Yea, every good path. For wisdom shall enter into the heart. And knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy soul. Discretion shall watch over thee. Understanding shall keep thee.

To deliver you from the way of evil. From the men who speak perverse things. Proverbs chapter 3, 5 and 6.

Gives us a blueprint of how to be led by God. It says there, Trust in the Lord with all your heart. And lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him.

And he will make your paths straight. He's given us a blueprint. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him.

[51 : 53] And he will make your paths straight. What a great God we have, huh? In conclusion.

The question before us is not will God give us wisdom. That's a given. All we have to do is ask. And God will give it to us. God will open up this word like you've never seen it before.

If you just ask. So it's not a question of will he give us wisdom. It is. That's a given. If any of you lacks wisdom. You should ask God who gives generously to all.

For us the question is how does God impart his wisdom? How does a God give us the wisdom? Give us on the right path? We've just covered it all right here today.

First, God reveals his wisdom through scriptures as we've seen here in the Proverbs. It was filled with practical truths. Warning against many pitfalls in life. Again, there is nothing in life that's not been covered.

[53 : 02] It's there. When it happens to you, go back and read. It's there. If it's not in the Proverbs. If it's not in the Old Testament. The Kings and the Chronicles.

Of what the nation of Israel did. If it's not in the New Testament. If it's not in the New Testament.

The instructions of Paul and Timothy and Peter and all the other apostles. They've given us instruction for every situation that's ever going to come into our life.

So go to the scriptures. Second. God imparts his wisdom through others. Proverbs 13.20 declares. He who walks with the wise grows wise.

But a companion of fools suffers him. What's that saying? Listen to your Christian friends. Hey. You can gain many, many wise things.

Just from the fellowship they have with our fellow Christians. As we're going to dinner. If we're sitting around the table. All kinds of wisdom comes out. We need to listen.

[54 : 00] To what other people are saying. Especially the Christians. That's in our life. The third way that God imparts his wisdom. Is just through the Holy Spirit. God has said.

When you believe upon my name. My spirit will come. I. To this day. I don't know how that works. How's it get from there into here? I have no idea.

But my friends. I know he's there. I know for over 40 years. He's been in my heart. I don't know how he got there. But he got there. By just me saying those words.

And he promised. That he would never leave. Once he's there. So I don't have that worry either. So God imparts his word to us. In many different ways.

Through reading of the scripture. Through other people. And the other people we've got. Has just been amazing. Huh? Pastor Marv. For 40 years.

[55 : 00] He's set up here. Giving us to the word. Lord. And we're looking forward. When he comes back. The third way.

Is it the Holy Spirit? Just ask the Lord. Pray. And he will give us. The knowledge. And the wisdom. That we need. So. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father. Father. We do thank you this morning. Father. We thank you for your word. Your precious word. Father. You have instructed us. How to live our lives. You have given us the road to follow.

The path to follow. The way to follow. Father. Help us. Help us to hear. Help us to do.

Help us to be on the right path. Father. And when. That path gets deviated. Help us to understand why. And help us to correct that. And help us to get back on the right path.

[55 : 59] Oh. We know we fall. Father. We know we still have that old nature. And we know that we're still open to temptations that come about. Help us to defeat that.

Help us to run from these temptations. Help us to get into your word. And know what to do. And you've said that you will lead us. That you will be our rock. And we thank you for that Lord. Father. I ask these things today in Jesus name. Amen. Thank you. You are dismissed. Yes.