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# PROVERBS 1

## Proverbs Series

Today what we're going to do is look at the book of Proverbs. So I want to ask you to open to Proverbs 1. If you have a Bible open it up there to Proverbs 1.

I fell in love with the book of Proverbs as a young person. As a teenager, fourteen years old, my dad was doing devotions in our home. He had me and my twelve-year-old brother sitting around the dining room table and we were writing a commentary on the book of Proverbs. You know how about after chapter 10 in the book of Proverbs there's a lot of random proverbs. But my father had noticed there are a bunch of subjects represented kind of randomly throughout. So we were on a mission to reorganize for God the Bible, especially this book. So we had all these pages.

If I closed my eyes today I can still see all of the dining room table, all these pages. There was the anger page and the listening page and the wisdom page and the money page. There's also the immoral woman page. I was really interested in the immoral woman and what Proverbs had to say at age fourteen. So fascinated by that. But we had that page. My father actually used the book of Proverbs to teach me about moral purity. So I really appreciated that study.

That book was never published. I think it would have been a great book to publish – a commentary on the book of Proverbs by a dad and his sons. But it's published in my heart and I love the book of Proverbs. I'm going to take you on a path through the book of Proverbs to give you some ideas. But that was my first study.

When I went to seminary I really loved the Hebrew language that was being taught there. I took eleven classes in Hebrew. I just really liked it a lot. Obviously the Old Testament is written in Hebrew. So in the midst of my Old Testament studies I came across or I started to do my own study. This is my book from when I was back there in seminary days. I decided I would kind of organize and do some of the same study I had done with my dad and putting these Proverbs on paper. So I put the Hebrew word and such. That got me really excited because I saw a lot more in the book of Proverbs at that stage in my life and learned those things that were really helpful to me as I was moving forward.

The book of Proverbs is an amazing book. I don't know why I never in my over thirty years of pastoring preached through the book. I don't know how we're going to do with the random Proverbs as we go through there, but in the next several weeks we're going to go through the book of Proverbs. Today we're just going to look at Proverbs 1.

The first verse says this: *The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel.*

Let me introduce you to Solomon first of all so you know who he is. Solomon was the son of King David. Now King David was a man after God's own heart the Bible tells us. Not that he was perfect; he made a lot of mistakes.

In fact at one point he killed a guy, committed adultery with that guy's wife, and ended up marrying her. Her name was Bathsheba. The consequence of that sin was that that baby died that came from that union.

The Bible tells us that after the baby died David rededicated himself to the Lord. He went and cleaned himself up, he went in to his wife Bathsheba, he comforted her, made love to her, they had another baby now on the way. When this baby was about to be born, the same prophet who predicted judgment on David nine months ago now comes to David and says this. He says, "David, you can name this baby Jedidiah, which means 'loved of the Lord.'" David and Bathsheba, God is telling him you can name this baby 'loved of the Lord.'

What is God doing? What God is doing in that moment is He's giving forgiveness to David and Bathsheba. He's saying let's look forward, not look back. Let's look at where we're going. I have forgiven you.

David was repentant in his heart. In the midst of that he was to move forward and they named the baby Solomon. That is the person now whose father, David, likely shared that love for the Lord with his son. And Solomon grew up in that home.

I just want to point out that he had a rather challenging past. His parents had done some things that were wrong yet God was working in his heart and life. I want to say to you today that even if you come to a place where your parents have messed up or your heritage is somehow some rotten apples on the family tree or something, I want you to know that God can do a work in your heart.

When Solomon was just a teenager, he had a dream. In that dream God said to him, "Solomon, I'll give you whatever you want," because Solomon is now king. Just as a young man he's a king. God says, "I'll give you anything you want, Solomon. What do you want?"

Solomon says, "God, I don't know how to rule these people. I want to ask for wisdom for dealing with these kinds of things." When Solomon asked for that and asked for wisdom then God responded to him by giving these words. He said, *The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this (that is, wisdom) and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.*

Wow. That's amazing. Here this guy in his teen years chooses to ask for wisdom.

I remember when I was a kid I used to imagine knocking over the genie's jar and the genie coming up and saying, "You can have three wishes." What would I ask for? I would imagine I would ask for this and that, but my third wish was always that same thing— three more wishes. Because I wanted to keep going on and on and over and over again.

Solomon was given the opportunity to have one thing. What would he choose? He chose wisdom and that wisdom helped him to rise above, helped him to be rather skillful in life.

In 1 Kings 4:29 we have a report of him. It said that *God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.*

They didn't have the internet in those days. They would send people to Solomon. We google it; they would Solomon it to find out what's going on in life. Because here's a guy who knew a lot about what was happening and he was a king.

Solomon became the king in David's place and he was a ruler. He was a guy who ruled over the people. He ruled with justice. But this book that he's writing is a book about ruling not just over his land, it's talking about ruling in his own heart many times. Handling personal issues inside of his own life – ruling over his temper, ruling over his tongue, ruling over work and money, ruling over physical appetites that he would have.

We need to be wise in relationships, not just with parents, as we'll see in this passage. With friends, with children, even looking toward our own future. Solomon was that kind of guy. We look at him as the author of this book and we see what he's describing here.

The goal of this first verse – if you look back at verse 1 again it's talking about *the proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel*. A proverb is a succinct little statement about some wisdom.

There are some common proverbs that we hear. These are English proverbs that you've heard. Here's one that "too many cooks spoil the broth." I put two of them that contradict each other because I want you to see that sometimes proverbs contradict each other. On the one hand you want to have as few people in the cooking of broth as possible because they spoil it, but on the other hand "many hands make light work." That means get as many people involved in what's going on.

So sometimes we have proverbs that are more drawing attention to one aspect of wisdom and another another aspect of wisdom. We're going to see that as we go through the book of

Proverbs. We're going to see that proverbs are designed to spark us in this area of wisdom. What does that mean?

I read you verse 1 - *The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel*. Verse 2 says, *for gaining wisdom*. That's the purpose of these proverbs. For gaining wisdom. *For gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight*.

I want you to know what the word 'wisdom' means. In the Hebrew language the word is *hakam* (that's wise) or *hokma* from the same word which means wisdom. I won't share a lot of Hebrew with you, but there are a few Hebrew words that I think are really valuable to know. And this is one of them because wisdom is so strategic all through the Old Testament. So *hakam* is the word that we're using in this particular instance. It means wisdom.

You're going to find that in the Bible (some of you already know this, I'm just going to remind you of this) when you come to mental activities in Hebrew verbs then often they imply more than just a mental activity; they imply action.

There's a word, for example, in the Old Testament for 'remember.' It says in Genesis 8:1 about Noah. It says *God remembered Noah* and dried up the flood waters. It doesn't mean there that God one day woke up and says "Oh I forgot about Noah. Oh I remember that guy." It's not mental activity. What He means is I'm going to do something about it. I'm going to come to his rescue. So when we use the word 'remember' in Hebrew, although it sounds just like mental activity, it's actually action that's put into practice there.

Here's another one I know you know already. The word 'know' has more than just a getting to know someone, but often in the Hebrew language it has to do with an intimate relationship. Adam 'knew' his wife, Eve, and they were born a child Cain. So the word 'to know' is not just mental activity, it's actually doing something and there's a practical application.

The same thing is going to be true about the word 'wisdom.' Because it's more than just having some insight in your mind. It's actually putting into practice in some specific ways. Now as you look at the word 'wisdom' in the Bible you're going to see it used three different ways. I want to share this with you because it will help you know how to apply this to your own life.

The first way we see it used is just a skill, a skill in life. Now if I were to ask some of you what are you skilled at, some of you might say, "I'm skilled at gardening," or "I'm skilled at computer programming," or "I'm skilled at software development," "I'm skilled at leadership." What that means is you're wise in that particular way. That's what we're talking about here. So one of the ways that the word 'wisdom' is used, is skill in any area of life.

Let me show you an example. When they were building the tabernacle in the Old Testament they chose a number of different people from all over the place who were skilled. Skilled in working with fabric, skilled with working with bronze. It uses the word 'wise,' the same word *hakam* to describe that. So in Exodus 36:1 it says, *So Bezalel, Oholiab and every skilled (that's the word 'wise') person to whom the Lord has given skill (that's 'wise') and ability to know how to carry*

*out all the work of constructing the sanctuary are to do the work just as the Lord has commanded.*

One of the things we're going to see is that the idea of wisdom is skill in life. Being able to do the right thing at the right time and to strategically maneuver in a particular situation. That's one of the ways that we see wisdom used. Skill in life.

A second way that we see wisdom used is insight, greater insight. "Oh I get it." The ability to see consequences in advance. If I do this, this is what's going to happen. We call that person a wise person. That's the second use of wisdom here.

The third one has to do with moral living, a moral sound living. How to apply faith to life. How are we going to take our faith and apply it to life in a strategic way so that we are living a moral life? You're going to see even in our passage today there's a contrast between an evil life and a wise life. Wise having the implication that there's some moral benefits here.

Proverbs are practical. You're going to love this book because it's going to give you specific ideas about how to deal with each situation.

Now I'm going to read to you verses 3-6 which is a collage of words, each one having to do with mental activity. I want you to see them as I'm reading them and recognize having said some of the things that I already told you about its practical emphasis, what happens in this.

Starting at verse 3 it says these proverbs are *for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair*. Wouldn't you like it each time if you were able to do the right thing? How many times do we mess up and say, "Man, I wish I would have done it differently." Proverbs help us do that, or wisdom helps us do that.

Verse 4: *for giving prudence*. The word *prudence* is craftiness. The ability to be crafty or someone who is good at art or craftiness is someone who is wise in that particular way. How are we going to move forward in the midst of that? Craftiness *to those who are simple*. Now the word *simple* is naïve. When we say naïve that's the person that just don't realize what they're doing. That's the naïve person.

*Knowledge and discretion to the young*. Let me just point out that the book of Proverbs is an excellent book for young people. I took it on when I was just fourteen years old. I really wanted to learn more about the book of Proverbs and it formed much of who I am today because I was really interested in this concept of wisdom. This is a book written to young people.

Verse 5: *let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance*. One of the things we're going to see throughout this passage is that one of the characteristics of a wise person is that they get advice. We'll see that all the way through the book of Proverbs. They listen to other people. Verse 6: *for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise*.

If we look at that passage, this is the passage that I just read, Proverbs 1:1-6, you're going to see all of these different words. What I've done is I went through and I noticed as I've been reading this book over and over again that there are seven different characters represented. I just want to highlight a few of them here.

There's the simple person, the wise man, the man of understanding, and the fools. Those are four of them, four of the characters. We're going to see what characterizes each one as we go through the book of Proverbs. It's really instructive for me as I do that. The ones that aren't represented here in this particular passage but we see as we continue on are the wicked person (that's on the evil side), the person who's prudent is not mentioned there, and the mocker. The mocker is a person who laughs at sin. So we'll be looking at each one of those as we continue on through the study and we'll see those things.

But I want you to look at the seventh verse. That's the one at the bottom there. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

So where do we start on this path? It doesn't say there that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but in Proverbs 10:9 it does. So that's just the beginning. I want to create a treasure map. A treasure map for discovering wisdom to be able to use for the rest of our lives. The first step in the treasure map is to fear the Lord.

Next week we're just going to amplify what does that mean to fear the Lord. But I'll tell you today it's not being afraid of Him. That's not what it's talking about here. It's respecting the power that He has and actually letting Him control your life. That's what we're talking about. When you fear the Lord you recognize that He's the one that's in control of our world and you personally allow that to take place in your life. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

Solomon is going to take us through three different ideas as we continue on through chapter 1 in this passage. The first idea is represented in verses 8 and 9 and it's the importance of listening to mom and dad. Listening to parents. I want to point out here that it's not limiting us to a particular age. All of us have parents and we can all listen to those parents. Let me read the verses and then I'll describe to you what I think they're saying here.

In verse 8 it says, *Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They are a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.* What it's saying there is that parents have some wisdom. They've been around a little longer than you have and often they have insight into you that you might not have for yourself. So especially when you're young you want to be paying attention to parents.

It's really interesting that something that happens often in a young person's life is they start devaluing their parents. They start thinking their parents don't know very much. So here's a reminder to young people, but not just young people, to all of us to be considering our parents and valuing them because they know us. They have ideas. That doesn't mean you always as you're getting older do everything they say. But listening to them and their insight is a valuable



thing because they've been around a little bit of time. Often the length of time they've been around contributes to their ability to have wisdom and life.

This particular lesson – remember I've been studying this when I was younger and so I had counselors. I tried when I was a teenager to find people who would be my counselors in life.

When I went to college I moved up to Portland, Oregon. When I moved up to Portland, Oregon where my parents were, I lived in their home. I'd been away for a year going to college in southern California, but I moved up to Oregon and I didn't have a job. And so I prayed. I loved the Lord at eighteen years old and I prayed, "God, would you provide me with a job? I don't have a job. I had a job back there in California. I don't have a job now. Would you just provide me with a job? I really would like to work, earn some money. I'm living in my folk's house. I need some money. Would you help give me a job?"

So I'm walking across campus on that very day and a guy steps out on the sidewalk and he says, "Hey, you looking for a job?" I'm going, "Thank you, Lord. My prayers are answered." God has just done something amazing in my life and He's given me an answer to my prayer. I said, "Yes. I'm interested in a job." And he told me about the job.

The job was selling knives, Cutco knives, which by the way are the best knives in the whole world. I'm convinced of it. He said, "Come on Friday night and we'll interview you. You can come for an interview." So I said, "Great. I'll be there. That's tomorrow night. I'll be there Friday night for my interview."

I went back and I thanked the Lord in my prayer time. I said, "God, I'm just so grateful for you answering my prayers in this miraculous way, having this guy step out and just offer me a job. Lord, I want to pray now that if this is the right job for me that you would have me be accepted at the interview."

Well, I got to the interview and I'm there with a bunch of other students and they accept all of us. I'm saying, "Oh this is God. He's amazing. Look. He didn't just accept me; he accepted everybody here. This has got to be God in my life."

I go home and tell my mom and dad, "I got a job."

My mom and dad said, "Well tell us about it."

"I'm going to sell Cutco knives."

"Uh I don't think that might work for you," they said to me. "We don't really see you as a salesman."

You have to understand my father was a pastor. He was teaching in a seminary at the time and I'm saying to myself, "I cannot believe my parents can't hear from God. God obviously spoke to me and they're telling me that this is not something for me. I'm going to my other counselors."

So I go to Dr. Clark and his wife Judy and I explained to them that God has worked in my life. I've got this job. I'm going to sell knives. They go, "I don't think so. This does not sound like you. We know you. You're not going to do well as selling knives." I cannot believe here are

these other people, godly people I really value. I said, “Forget them. They don’t know what God is doing in my life. I’m not going to listen to them.”

So I went and I started selling knives. I sold two sets in my career. One was to myself (because I had to buy it as samples) and the other was to my loving parents who decided to buy a set from me. That was it. I was not cut out to sell knives.

Now the interesting thing about this story is that when I left seminary and graduated, I went to pastorate church with my father. So he had started the church the year before. I went to pastor with him and we started working together as a team co-pastoring a church. Every once in a while when we disagreed on something, my father would say, “Remember the knives.”

The important thing I think we need to remember here is that sometimes we think we know something. We think that we’re closer to God than maybe we are and it might be wise for us to listen to our parents. That truth was brought back to me in this particular event. It illustrates this particular principle that Solomon is trying to teach us.

*Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. They are a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.* So that’s the first thing that Solomon is telling us here.

The second thing that he brings us to in this chapter is be careful of bad guys. That’s what he’s going to talk about. It’s easy to get sucked into bad guys. The friends that you have can get you into trouble. The people you hang around with can be dangerous. That’s the warning.

Let me read it to you starting in verse 10. *My son, if sinful men entice you, do not give in to them.*

There’s a particular kind of description of the sinful acts they’re going to do – murder and stealing things from people. But think about your own life. There are people around us that are trying to suck us into bad things. Maybe it happens on the computer, that you’re sucked into something bad. Maybe it happens in some other ways. Someone says, “Hey, come on. Let’s go get drunk,” and you know that’s the wrong thing to do.

Let me read the passage here and you can put whatever you want in the bad things here, but he says don’t let sinners entice you or draw you away. *If they say, “Come along with us; let’s lie in wait for innocent blood, let’s ambush some harmless soul; let’s swallow them alive, like the grave, and whole, like those who go down to the pit; we will get all sorts of valuable things and fill our houses with plunder; cast lots with us; we will all share the loot.”*

Now here’s the warning. *My son, do not go along with them.* This is the original “just say no” passage. *My son, do not go along with them; do not set foot on their paths; for their feet rush into evil, they are swift to shed blood. How useless to spread a net where every bird can see it! In other words, they put these traps out. They’re the ones who are going to fall into it. They’re foolish.*



*These men lie in wait for their own blood; they ambush only themselves! Such are the paths of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the life of those who get it.*

As Solomon's starting this book, he's going to introduce all these proverbs, he starts with some very important things. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge he says. He's talking about the importance of listening to parents, and he's talking about the importance of avoiding bad friends. If you're hanging around with the wrong people you're going to get into trouble. That's what he's saying here. Very important warning for us to listen to.

The words that started this particular passage in verse 10 – *My son, if sinful men entice you* – that's a description of the wicked person. As we develop this idea and understand more about the wicked person we're going to see that the wicked person is characterized by promoting sin. It's like a drug dealer who's trying to sell. It's like the prostitute who's trying to sell. They're promoting evil. That's what he's talking about here. Be careful of the people you hang around with. Don't get enticed, don't get sucked into those. It's dangerous. It's going to ruin your wisdom. It's going to ruin your moving forward.

Let's go on. The next thing he wants to share, the third thing that I want to point out to you in this passage, is that wisdom is personified. So wisdom is this woman calling out in the city square or in the gates of the city where business was transacted or on the wall. She's calling out to everybody as people are passing by. She's going to call out to them, "Come and be wise! Come and get some understanding. Come and learn what it means to be wise."

I think this same call is going out to you and me today, that God is saying, "Come on, learn about wisdom." But let's read it in the passage and see what it's saying there as Solomon is personifying wisdom as this woman here.

*Verse 20: Out in the open wisdom calls aloud, she raises her voice in the public square; on top of the wall she cries out, at the city gate she makes her speech.*

Here's her speech. "*How long will you who are simple love your simple ways?*" The simple person in Proverbs is the person who's naïve. They just can't see what's going on. They go this way, that way; they have no idea what's going on. They're just so weak in their ability to see or perceive what's happening that they're sucked into all kinds of trouble, calamity that happens to them.

So first one of the people that's walking by as she's calling out from the walls or the city gate is the simple person walking by. "You simple person!" she calls out to that person.

The second person she calls out is the mocker. Notice it says in the next part of verse 22 – *How long will mockers delight in mockery.* We're going to see that the mocker is characterized by laughing at sin. Oh they think it's funny when someone gets hurt. They think it's funny when someone mistreats another person. So they're the person who laughs at sin. Be careful.

I like to tell young people, "You'll see this. You'll see the mocker at school. You'll see the wicked person at school. And when you see the person who thinks it's really funny that that

other person mistreated that other person, that's a mocker. Know that person when you see them." The mocker is characterized by laughing at sin.

Then he says this other person that's walking by is the fool. So she's crying out and she makes this statement about the fool – how long will you *fools hate knowledge*? The fool is the one who is selfish, thinking about self all the time. They're into self-gratification. They want themselves to feel good. They don't think about other people. They're the ones who drop out of school because they just don't want to do the work. They're the ones who are sloughing off in life. He's saying don't be a fool; don't hate knowledge.

I'm going to read the whole sentence again because he's appealing to those three people. I want you to see he's personifying each one. That's why I'm going to take those seven characters and personify them as we go through the book of Proverbs. But he says to them, "*How long will you who are simple love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?*" And here's what he says. If you find yourself in that place, and we all do at times, we find ourselves in that situation where we're playing the fool, we're being a mocker.

Here's the advice, verse 23. *Repent at my rebuke!* Repent is a 180 degree turn, making a change. *Then I will pour out my thoughts to you, I will make known to you my teachings.* This is wisdom still speaking.

*But since you refuse to listen when I call and no one pays attention when I stretch out my hand, since you disregard all my advice and do not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh when disaster strikes you; I will mock when calamity overtakes you.* In other words when you find yourself being the fool and it's all discovered, you are the laughing stock of other people.

Verse 27: *when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you. "Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me, since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord. Since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes."*

*For the waywardness of the simple will kill them.* There's another characteristic of the simple person. He's wayward. That means he just kind of goes wherever. He just leaves the path, goes here and there, does whatever he feels like doing.

*The waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them.* Complacency means I don't care. I'm not motivated to do anything. The complacency of fools is going to destroy them. *But whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.*

So you're going to see continually in the book of Proverbs a contrast being made between the person who is wise and the person who's being foolish or a mocker or wicked or the simple person. We're going to see that contrast continually and it's a call to us. It's a personal call to me. Choose wisdom. Learn what wisdom means in practical ways.

Let me illustrate this for you in a way I think is helpful as I'm trying to just understand what this wisdom looks like. I think that the first thing we have is we're looking at information out there. We see a lot of noise. You probably live a noisy life, just like I do. Lots of noise going on around you. Noise that's challenging, sometimes overwhelming because of all the noise. It's just confusing. I would say the key word associated with noise is confusion. It's just all there. It's challenging because of how overwhelming it is, all the noise that's out there.

But out of the noise then comes some knowledge. Maybe you learn that by listening to your parents or listening to advice or going to school or something. You get this knowledge and that knowledge starts putting some of the noise in order so now you have information. What happens then once you start getting that knowledge is that it starts to build this understanding. You go, "Whoa. It makes sense." Those are the key words for understanding – it makes sense. I'm getting it.

When we get this understanding then that's going to help us move to a new level in our lives and some of you have done that. You've said, "Whoa. I understand." Once you have the understanding, that moves you more toward this area of wisdom.

Wisdom is wise action based on the other things that are there. Being able to wisely move in a situation in order to handle it well. To be able to choose the right words or the right timing – that's wisdom. To be able to know when to confront and when to be quiet – that's wisdom. To know how to deal with a particular situation – that's wisdom. And that's applying all the things that we've talked about together here.

I was working with a married woman and she was at this place with all of the noise and she just got so much noise, especially coming from her husband. He does all these things that indicate that he doesn't love her. He leaves the underwear on the floor. Obviously he doesn't love me because he leaves his underwear on the floor. Or he doesn't call when he's going to be late. Or he doesn't help around the house. He must not love me. If he loved me he would do these things. So she's got all this noise going on and she's really frustrated with all of that.

So I say, "Okay, let's do this. Let's study your husband a bit. Let's try to understand a little bit more of who he is. Let's try to gain some knowledge out of all the noise." As she does, she starts to study him and ask him questions.

At one point he must have been receptive to some of her new approaches and he says to her, "Honey, I'm sorry for not calling when I'm going to be late. I'm going to work on that a little bit more. I don't mean to belittle you, I just get sidetracked."

She goes, "Whoa." Now she's getting some knowledge about her husband. She's studying him and she's learning about him and that knowledge is really helpful because now she comes to a new realization about herself and understanding. An understanding that says maybe all those things he's doing are not him saying he doesn't love me. Maybe that's my issue. Maybe I'm saying he must not love me because of these things. Maybe he's not trying to communicate those things. Maybe he's not really practicing to be an idiot. Maybe there are other things going on in

his life. So she comes to this understanding now that becomes really important for her because now she can approach him with some wisdom.

She comes and she says to him, “Honey, I really like the way you did this for me. I know you’re trying to show me love over here and you’re trying to show me. Can I just share with you something that would really mean a lot to me, that would really communicate to me. I would feel loved anyway. I’m not demanding it; I’m just telling you that if you did this I would feel loved. If you would just clean up for yourself in the bedroom when you leave. I’m often picking up your underwear and other things, but if you would pick up after yourself, I would feel loved.”

He’s going, “That would make you feel loved?” And so now she’s going, “Yeah.”

Now she’s used an approach that’s different than what she’s done before that’s been critical and hostile and angry. Now the approach she’s using is she’s demonstrating some wisdom and the relationship is growing closer together. She’s getting some of the things that she wished she would have had earlier. Why is she doing that? Because she’s learning how to be wise.

I’m convinced that wisdom is a valuable thing for every one of us and we’re all on a path to move in that direction. I don’t know whether you’re represented by the simple or the fool or the mocker or the prudent or the understanding or the wise – whatever you are – but we’re all moving forward. So the wise person grows in his wisdom we’re going to see. Just because you arrive somewhere doesn’t mean you’re there. We’re continuing to grow and move forward.

I want to go back to the first words of the passage that I read to you earlier. The very first words of this passage are these. I’m going to take now the introduction or the first seven verses of the book of Proverbs and I want you to take all of the information we’ve talked about here, import them into the introduction. So now when you come back and start reading the book of Proverbs the next time, you’ll have some of this. I just want to remind you of where we are.

*Proverbs 1. The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young—let the wise listen and add to their learning,, and let the discerning get guidance—for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.*

*Verse 7: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.* That last verse is really important because it gives us the first step.

So if you’re here today and you’re saying okay I’m sold, I want to work on wisdom, I just want to remind you of what the first step is. The first step is to fear the Lord. Fearing the Lord that I recognize that God is there and He wants to have a significant influence in my life. He wants to control me. He wants to work in my life.

If you’re here today and you’ve never accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior then I want to invite you to do that today. I want you to make that first step toward wisdom which is to say I want to fear the Lord. I want to invite Christ to come into my life, to run my

life, to control me, and to help me in my own personal relationship with life. God comes to live inside your heart and he does those very things inside your life.

The beginning of knowledge is the fear of the Lord. That's what God would have for every one of us. In this next song we're going to see we're just going to worship the Lord and it's going to talk about being thirsty in our relationship with life and how Jesus comes in and He quenches that thirst.

But if God is speaking to your heart and you're saying, "You know what, I need this. This makes sense. I want to embrace what God has for me," then I want to invite you during that time to go to the side where we'll have prayer counselors available to pray for you. They'll pray with you and just talk to God on your behalf and introduce you to God in a personal way and help you to know Him very personally.

The study that we're doing today comes from this study, the power of wisdom, because being right isn't good enough. There are a lot of right people in the world. There are a lot of right people who get themselves into a lot of trouble. We're going to learn more about wisdom. I'm on a pilgrimage these next several weeks to learn wisdom myself. I invite you on the path, on the treasure map as we learn wisdom together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, I do thank you for your love for us and for the way you work in our hearts. Right now in this moment we ask that you would speak to our hearts. Reveal to us what you want us to do next in our lives. Show us what it means to be wise. Teach us what it means to follow you with our whole hearts. In Jesus' name, amen.