



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

PROVERBS LESSON 2

This week we'll be studying both chapters two and three. Proverbs 2 is the second address from a father to his son, or the teacher to his students. The author seems to write with even more authority than he had in the previous chapter. We need to remind ourselves again that we, whoever we are, need to incline our ear to the voice of Wisdom, that is, God in Christ. Hibbard notes that no chapter in Proverbs is more tightly knit than this. It has 22 verses, which mirrors the completeness of the Hebrew alphabet, which has 22 letters. The phrase "My son" marks the beginning of the pattern set in chapter one. God is also given more attention in this chapter. Some call this chapter one of the most helpful in the Bible because it explains growth and renewal. It contrasts the feeling of complacency that was plaguing Israel at the time. As we mentioned before, this book talks about the path or road we choose to take. These two words are found almost 100 times in this book. Wiersbe wrote, "Wisdom is not only a person to love, but Wisdom is also a path to walk, and the emphasis in chapters 2, 3 and 4 is on the blessings God's people enjoy when they walk on Wisdom's path. The path of wisdom leads to life, but the way of folly leads to death." As she continues to point out, chapter 2 shows us how Wisdom protects our path, while chapter 3 demonstrates how Wisdom directs our path. Enjoy your studies, ladies!

First Day

1. Read Proverbs 2:1-22. How would you summarize this chapter in a sentence or two?

2. Do you notice any key words, phrases, or thoughts? What would you choose as the key verse?
3. Write all the "if" phrases in verses 1-4.
4. Write all the "then" phrases in 5-9.

The "ifs" are followed by "thens," which introduce the result. Seeking and treasuring wisdom leads to a person's understanding the fear of the Lord and knowing God. This is the truth of 1:7. As we fear Him, we gain wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

5. What two new voices do we meet in verses 10-22?
6. Write your thoughts after reading chapter 2. What impressed you, spoke to your heart, challenged you, or really made you think? 😊

Memory Verse of the Week: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6

Have a good time with your lesson, ladies! May He show you all the reasons you have to rejoice today!

Second Day

Work on your memory verse. It's a popular one!

1. Read Proverbs 2:1-22 again. Verses 1-4 contain 8 imperatives, or things for you to do. Can you list them?

2. What does this suggest about the search for wisdom? Is it active or passive? Does it just "happen" to believers? Is it automatic?
3. Have you personally become complacent in your search for God? In your search for truth and intimacy with your Savior? Have you given yourself over completely to Him?

God requires wholeheartedness. I love what C.S. Lewis said about this: "God cannot bless us, unless He has us. When we try to keep within us an area that is our own, we try to keep an area of death. Therefore, in love, God claims all. There's no bargaining with Him."

4. According to verses 5-8, what does God promise those who are truly seeking Him and are open to change?

Notice the two different names for God in verse 5. The name "Lord" translates the Hebrew Jehovah and appears 86 times in the book. It is the name that identified God as the Savior of Israel, the Covenant Maker, and the Covenant Fulfiler. The name "God" translates Elohim, a name of majesty and authority. This name only appears 8 times in Proverbs.

5. Although it's our responsibility to seek after wisdom, where does it ultimately come from according to verse 6? (James 1:5)

Waltke wrote, "Because the Lord alone has access to wisdom (Job 28:12-28) and gave it birth from His very being (Proverbs 8:22-24), He alone gives wisdom (Daniel 2:21-22). The Lord, not Solomon, is the fountainhead of wisdom."

6. There are many blessings from seeking wisdom and walking on the right road. What are some of them, according to verses 7-9?

7. How is God a shield for us? (Psalm 3:3) Are you in a situation today in which you need God to be your shield? Practically what does this mean?

8. If we need Him to be our shield, our guard, and the One who preserves us, we obviously need protecting. What do we need protection from?

We are tempted daily by all kinds of things, whether it be from the devil, the world, or our own flesh. I read once that a "tsunami of sin" is slamming us in our world today, and I thought that explained it pretty well. We need God's protection on our path. We suffer for all kinds of reasons. Sometimes from pain brought on by others, but sometimes our trials are a consequence of our own behavior. Whatever the case, it's so important to follow the right path to receive protection from the Lord.

This is a very interesting section, don't you think? When I evaluate the time I spend "pursuing" things, are wisdom and the things of the Lord on the top of the list? I am a pretty disciplined person by nature. I pursue staying in shape, I am diligent to keep my laundry done (usually). I do my best to keep things in order. But do I treasure His commands more than my necessary food? Do I search for the Lord like I'm searching for hidden treasure? (I know how hard I'd be looking if I knew there was gold hidden somewhere!) If I want the Lord to be my Shield, my Protector, and the One who gives me understanding, am I inclining my ear, lifting my voice, and applying my heart?

9. What are the things that you are pursuing in this life? Are you as diligent in your pursuit of the Lord?

Good night, dear ones. See you tomorrow.

Third Day

Review your verse!

1. Read Proverbs 2:1-22. Focus on 10-22. According to these verses, what will wisdom, discretion, and understanding protect you from?

The word "perverse" comes from the verb "to turn, turn from, overturn," and suggests something that is turned away from the normal. This word occurs 8 times in Proverbs. This refers to those who turn away from the straight path, to dark and evil ways. Some suggest that these words don't just include dirty jokes and bad words. It includes words that turn things upside down; gossip that separates friends or the way words like "family" are being changed and redefined.

2. How would you relate verses 12-15 to today's world and our society? What are some examples that fit this description?
3. The evil man uses perverse words to draw the godly off the path. What kind of words does the strange, or immoral woman use? What is her ultimate goal?
4. Who is the "companion of her youth"? And what is the "covenant of her God"? And where does her path ultimately lead?

Adultery is not a grey area in the Bible, it is forbidden (Exodus 20:14). Jesus Himself warns against it in Matthew 5:28-32. There are numerous verses in Proverbs about it. It makes one poor (29:3), produces moral insensibility (30:20), brings death (2:18-19), and ends in hell (7:27). Yes, Christ can forgive this sin, but this particular chapter is focusing on the danger of it and where it leads. Our marriage vows are sacred. Marriage was instituted by God in Genesis 2:18-24 and it's honorable (Hebrews 13:4). God's

design is for it to be a permanent bond (Matthew 19:6). Ladies, if you are considering entering an adulterous relationship, please take this to heart. That road leads nowhere except destruction.

5. Since this is discussed so often in Proverbs, it's obviously a big temptation. How can we guard ourselves from the temptation of committing adultery? What kind of boundaries can we set up to protect ourselves? Also, are we taking on the characteristics of the immoral woman by what we say, what we wear, or how we act?

Wisdom is more than just avoiding sin. Wisdom is not only saying no to sin, but saying yes to Christ. It reminds me of the "put off" and "put on" in the New Testament.

6. Read Colossians 3:5-17. Explain what we are told to "put off" and "put on." Evaluate that list and ask the Holy Spirit to show you if there are some things you are still "wearing" that you need to remove.
7. If you "put on" Christ, what will you be able to enjoy, according to Colossians 3:15?
8. Proverbs 2:20 refocuses our attention. What contrast do we find in Verses 20-22?

In verse 21, Solomon says the upright will "dwell in the land." Dwelling in the land for an Israelite was a sign of God's favor. The land was the place of God's blessing. For us, the safest place is also to remain in the land, God's land. In New Testament terms, that means to remain "in Christ." "Inhabiting the land" is Old Testament phrasing for what Jesus said in John 15:4, "Abide in Me and I in you." The path of this wisdom will lead to the path of life.

9. For you personally, what is the biggest "take away" from Proverbs 2?

Tomorrow we'll go right into Proverbs 3, which will show us how wisdom directs our path. From protection to direction ... good stuff.

Fourth Day

Work on your memory verse today. Can you apply it as well?

This chapter outlines the blessings and benefits of following the path of wisdom, showing us how to live well in various areas of our life. It's one of my favorites! We move from the warning of chapter two to the encouragement in chapter three.

1. Read Proverbs 3:1-35. How many "My Son" phrases do you find? As you read, mark any key words, thoughts, or phrases you come across.

2. Reread verses 1-12. These verses follow an alternating pattern of commands and rewards, or incentives. List the command, followed by its reward.

It's important to remember that this Proverb is not teaching the popular prosperity gospel. "If" you do all this, "then" God will make you healthy and wealthy. That isn't found anywhere in Scripture. Ortlund calls the prosperity doctrine a "coldhearted materialism in religious disguise." If you read all of the Bible, you can tell it is clearly a heresy. Just read Philippians 3:7-11 for proof of that. Again, these are principles to live by, insight into where wisdom will lead you if you make right choices. Verses 11

and 12 are pretty clear that we also receive discipline from the Lord, so it's not like life promises to be all "happiness." But, if we keep His Word, we are told we can experience "shalom," His peace, both with God and in the sight of man (vs 4).

We not only are called to keep His commands, we are to live in a way that reflects the Lord. "Mercy and truth" in verse 3 can also be translated as love and faithfulness, which should accompany our commitment to Him.

3. What do you think Solomon means in verse 3 when he says, "bind them around your neck and write them on the tablet of your heart"?

4. Following wisdom affects not only our own life, but our relationships. What does verse 4 say about that? Is this a promise of popularity?

5. Read verses 5-8. What contrast do you find?

6. Why should we totally trust God rather than ourselves? (Read Isaiah 55:8-9 and Romans 11:33-34 for help.) What does humility, surrender, and submission have to do with it?

Trusting in the Lord wholeheartedly means to completely rely on Him, knowing that our human insights are never enough. He is trustworthy. He never fails. All the wisdom we can attain can never supersede the One who is the actual definition of wisdom. It's not important that we understand what's happening in our life, but it's important to understand that He does! It's not important that WE can't control what's happening, but it's important to know that HE does! (2 Corinthians 5:7) And when we do, He will direct our path. And it's always the right one!

7. Are there areas of your life where you are still leaning on your own understanding? Do you ever try to manipulate your life to go the way you think it should go? What are the dangers of this? According to this verse, how many of our ways should we trust Him with?

8. Do you find it difficult to "walk by faith"? In what ways?

We need wisdom in all seasons of our lives. In verses 9-12, Solomon reminds us to trust Him when we are in plenty, and when we are in pain. Verses 9-10 are well balanced by 11-12.

9. What's Solomon's counsel in verse 9-10? How are we to do it?

All through the Proverbs, Solomon is admonishing us to honor the Lord in all areas of our life. Money is no different. We often honor ourselves rather than God in how we use our funds. And Solomon reminds us to honor Him by giving Him of our first and our best, not out of our leftovers. In Israel, honoring the Lord with the first fruits of a crop was a way of expressing gratitude to Him for His provisions (Deut. 26:1-3, 9-11). It was a way of acknowledging God and His help (Proverbs 3:6). In addition, they gave tithes or tenths of everything else that came their way. This was used to maintain the temple, sustain the priests and Levites, and to help the poor. Those who did this faithfully were promised they would gain rather than lose it. It was those who withheld their dues that lost out (Hag. 1:3-11, Malachi 3:8-12).

10. Well, you knew I was going to ask you this. Do you honor God or yourself with your money and possessions? How would you describe your stewardship over the things you have? Do you acknowledge Him for His provision? Do you give from your first fruits or what's left over? Are you a generous person?

We'll talk more about money, generosity, and tithing in another chapter, but now we'll move on to honoring the Lord when things are rough.

11. In your own words, summarize verses 11-12.

The same God who supplies our needs demonstrates His love by disciplining us when we aren't following His commands or following the path of wisdom. When you correct your own child, you do it because you love him and want the best for him. Same with our Heavenly Father. He loves us enough to guide us on the right path by whatever it takes. The word "despise" means to "reject or take lightly" and "detest" means "loathe, abhor, or resent."

12. With the help of the definitions above, how are we supposed to react to God's discipline? What happens if we under-react or over-react?

13. Interesting question ... how do we know when we are being disciplined?

Something interesting to think about was that under the Old Covenant, for a believer to be afflicted was more of an exception, because they lived under the law of "if" you do this, "then" blessings will come. Under the New Covenant, we are actually promised affliction and trials. (Philippians 1:29 and 1 Peter 4:12-16). Perhaps this is why Job's friends really had no answer to what was happening to Job.

We'll finish up chapter three tomorrow. I pray that we learn to trust Him with our whole heart more completely and entirely as we study the blessings and benefits of following the way of wisdom!

Fifth Day

Write out your memory verse.

1. Please read Proverbs 3:13-35. From 13-18, list the additional blessings of wisdom. How is verse 18 the climax?

In verses 19-20, Solomon reminds us that God used wisdom, understanding, and knowledge as He created the world. He will expound more on this in chapter 8.

2. What other blessings come from following wisdom in verses 21-26? Which verse encourages you in something you're facing right now?

Solomon now discusses the value of wisdom in building relationships with others. He begins with his familiar phrase, "My Son," and we will do well to heed his instruction.

3. Read verses 27-35. List the 5 "Do Not's" that are found in this section.

In verse 27, "those whom it is due" is translated more literally, "the owners." This could apply to personal debt, payment of wages, fees and bills, and taxes. Giving to those in need seems to come under this heading as well.

4. Why should we help others when we can? Because we're "nice" people? (Read Romans 13:8 and James 2:15)

5. How quick are you to help those in need? Are you quick to "meet urgent needs" like it says in Titus 3:14? What can often hinder us from helping others?

6. Verses 29-30 really speak about living peaceably, similar to what Paul says in Romans 12:18. According to these verses, how do we do this?

7. Verse 31 tells us not to "envy the oppressor." Why would we envy an oppressor, or a perverse and violent person? Why does Solomon say that?

8. How do verses 33-35 contrast the wicked and the wise?

Some say that Proverbs doesn't talk much about our afterlife, but in this chapter, he alludes to it in verse 18 and again here in 35. The wise will inherit glory and the fools will be ashamed.

9. What will God give those who are humble, according to verse 34? According to James 4:6-7, what can "block" the giving of grace?

10. What resides more often in your heart; humility or pride? Want more grace? What should you do?

That's all for today. Solomon certainly had a lot to say, didn't he? I pray that our hearts are soaking up all the nuggets of wisdom we find in these chapters, and that we will become wiser women because of this study!