Wise Proverbs for the Simple

Let us turn to our Bibles to Proverbs chapter 1. I'm stopping with my letter of Paul, the epistles there to the pastors Timothy and Titus, and we'll come back to Titus a little bit later. Here we have Proverbs chapter 1 verses 1 through 6. I'm not going to go chapter by chapter through Proverbs, just so you know ahead of time. Proverbs chapter 1 verses 1, 1 through 6. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God.

The Proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel. To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity, to give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.

To understand a proverb and an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles. Let us pray. Here in God Almighty, may your spirit help us to be wise, Lord, and not foolish.

To be men and women of understanding, to attain the wise counsel of the Word of God in your spirit. To understand, Lord, some of the hard things in life and in your scriptures here, Proverbs, enigmas, and the like, and even the riddles therein. In a edifying way, God, not out of pride, not out of arrogance, but Lord, out of a desire to know more of you as we heard this morning in Paul's prayer to the churches of Ephesus.

And chapter one, that they would grow in their knowledge and understanding of the greatness of your work through Jesus Christ. And then through all our lives, may we learn such things as well through the book of Proverbs. Amen.

I'm sure you all want to grow in grace, that is to become more holy, more sanctified, more like Christ. And you know, part of that means avoiding foolish decisions, fighting sin, and what's behind that. The desire, therefore, to have wisdom so that we know what a foolish decision is.

We know how to fight or sometimes when to run, in fact. We desire to have such understanding so we can be wise and to grow in the grace of our Lord and Savior. And of course, we don't want the kind of wisdom that you get merely and only on Google, although there's a time and place to Google things to be sure.

If you want to learn how to fix a sprinkler head, for example, or something in your house, the door jam and the like, you can use Google or whatever search engine you prefer. That's fine. If you want to learn such things and fix them on yourself, you might need, of course, in such cases, such as a sprinkler system, a little bit of financial wisdom.

And the Bible may help you therein if you don't already know the importance of being wise with your finances. But if the question is more precisely about the morality of buying a sprinkler system, the Bible can also help therein because it teaches us that we have freedom in Christ, as long as, of course, we understand by wisdom that if we don't have the money, we shouldn't spend it. But the greatest question about wisdom and prudence and the like is answered by the Word of God most definitely.

These other things are answered, as it were, more broadly, more generally. Should I spend money? Do I have the money? But here, especially the question of eternal salvation, of who Christ Jesus is in the gospel, the greatest wisdom is the wisdom of knowing and following our Lord and Savior. So let's unpack the Proverbs in the perspective of both of those, the morality of living the Christian life in the light of the great wisdom of our Lord and Savior in his gospel for us.

The opening verses here give us the author of the book, the son of King David, Solomon, right? The Bible tells us he wrote thousands of Proverbs. We read in 1 Kings 4, he spoke 3,000 Proverbs and his songs were 1,005. So I misspoke.

It says he spoke 3,000 Proverbs, not that he wrote 3,000 Proverbs, okay? That's significant because a number of the Proverbs, many of the Proverbs are actually common. You've heard this before, right? A lot of unbelievers will be like, well, sure, that proverb makes sense. They don't have to believe in Jesus to understand some of the financial wisdom and other wisdom here in the book of Proverbs to recognize how intelligent it is and how wise it is to exercise such things because God has given even unbelievers a modicum of understanding of how to get through life.

And Proverbs is about that, but it's more clear, of course, than the world would have it because the unbeliever suppresses the truth and unrighteousness and it affects them therein. Let's start at the beginning here in verses 1 through 6. What we have is an opening description of the book of Proverbs. What's the book about? These six verses tell us what the book is about.

And the thesis of what true wisdom is, is verse 7, which I will cover later, the fear of the Lord. It's the beginning of knowledge. Knowledge there being used as a synonym for wisdom.

Proverbs Defined and Explained

So first of all, the Proverbs defined and explained. It's a literary form. We mentioned that this morning a little bit, right? It's good to know the Bible in general.

There's 66 books, who the authors are, what kinds of genre are they? This is a particular genre, a way of writing, that we expect certain unwritten rules. We do this in everyday life with poetry. We understand poetic language to be interpreted differently than more straightforward language of school, for example, or in your everyday life.

And here, the literary form is a proverb. It is used, it uses, as a proverb, it uses Hebraic way of putting things together. It's still poetry in the sense of synonymous parallelisms.

You've heard me say this before, as I go through the Psalms once a month, right? You see lots of lines that seem very similar. One talks about wisdom, another one talks about knowledge, one right after the other, growing wisdom and growing knowledge and understanding and saying the same thing twice. That's the parallelism.

It's similar and synonymous because they're overlapping that way. So this is what's happening in Proverbs as well, pretty much often is the case, as we'll see. Now, the word proverb here, the Proverbs of Solomon, is the Hebrew word mashal.

Just so you know, it's a separate and distinct word here because these other words sometimes overlap and are translated differently, like justice or judgment, for example, depending on where they are in the Bible. But here, this is pretty much always translated proverb, as I recall. Not always a short and indirect, of course.

When we hear the word proverb, at least in English, at least I do, I think of some short proverbial we say, saying something to the point and catchy. But not always. You have verses 8 through 19, for example, more of a didactic discourse in the opening parts here.

My son, hear the instruction of your father and do not forsake the law of your mother. Verse 8, he continues on with the same theme to verse 19 of encouraging his reader here, the son or any child, of course, to listen to the truth of these words. There's not a lot of Proverbs in the way we typically think of some catchy way of saying something or a riddle.

So don't think of the word proverb here as strictly only that way of doing things. It can be used very broadly here, as we'll see through the Book of Proverbs, in fact. Most of them, of course, are pithy and lots of figurative language and very dense.

So the bulk of Hebraic poetry, excuse me, Proverbs, is that pithy and figurative and dense. We have that. That's how we typically think of a proverb, right? An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

Yeah, that's a proverb. A penny saved is a penny earned, right? And don't count your chickens before they hatch. Those are all Proverbs.

They're figurative language. Chickens, what are you talking about, Dad? What are you talking about? Renee's like, what are these chickens? I don't have chickens at home. What are you talking about? It's a figure of speech for a broader idea of what you possess, right? Anything you possess.

So don't assume success before it actually happens. Frugality and thrifty pay off, and so does taking care of your diet, right? That's the point of those pithy sayings. Now, again, other parts are longer.

Proverbs 8 is even longer. There we have personification, where you take something that's not a person and you treat it as though it were a person. We all do this with animals, right? We have our favorite dog or cat at home.

We treat them like a person, we personify. Oh, look at them, they love me. And look, what are they thinking? You kind of imagine what they're thinking and doing.

And you have this about wisdom. Does not wisdom cry out? An understanding lift up her voice. She takes her stand at the top of the high hill beside the way where the paths meet.

Verse 3 of Proverbs 8. She cries out by the gates at the entry of the city, at the entrance of the doors. To you, oh man, I call. And my voice is to the sons of men.

Oh, you simple ones, understand prudence. And you fools, be of understanding and heart. And he continues on with this discourse, a personification of wisdom.

Wisdom isn't a woman. And we shouldn't read it that way and understand. It's emphasizing through a beautiful, figurative way, metaphorical way of describing the importance, significance, and even the urging.

So he's urging his audience to take wisdom so seriously, like a woman crying out into the streets. You need this stuff. You need to grow.

You need to be protected by what I have to tell you. And so there we have, again, other ways and longer forms, as I mentioned before, verses 8 through 19. Here in Proverbs 8, a personification.

That's also called a proverb, although it's not pithy, dense, right? And full of metaphorical language, although it is full of metaphorical language in this case. So it is an instructional form, mostly. That's the primary purpose, to grab your attention and therefore change your course of action.

That's the purpose of the proverb. Not just to point something out and say, isn't that interesting? Isn't that pretty? But if you need it, to grab it, to use it, and to avoid error or to embrace righteousness. That's what it's there for.

That's why God gave it to us and collected here. I think it's roughly a thousand, depending on how you divide up, how you count a proverb, right, through the book of Proverbs. So we only have at best one third of the proverb Solomon spoke.

And apparently wrote down some of it here himself. And so there, it is not an intellectual exercise is the point. Again, it's the instrument in the hands of the Spirit to change us from the inside out.

And of course, instruction is only the beginning, as we heard this morning. Paul's urging is that we would grow in knowledge of God in Christ, but it can't be no less. You must have this knowledge.

You can't just shrink back. The Christian life is a life of being a disciple or a tutor, a student of Jesus Christ. And that includes the book of Proverbs here for us.

And so as he's given it to us, the common form here, as I mentioned before, is similar in many of the societies around Israel at the time, that anyone paying attention could see many moral truths here in the book of Proverbs without reading the book of Proverbs, which is to say God has so designed the universe that moral truth is still there so that, what, man is morally culpable without me even having to speak to him. Romans 1 is very clear about that, isn't it? And so when we see these evidences, the liberals, right, 100 years ago,

and even today, I'm sure, I don't read current liberal or progressive readers anymore, people who deny the Bible and things like that, but I'm sure they believe this. Hey, we found this stuff that looks like the law of Moses, right, the Hittite law treaties and all that.

And here we find a lot of Proverbs that seem very similar. So clearly, they would argue, Israel was copying their neighbors, when actually the argument is they're all copying each other, as it were. They see the light of nature.

God has so designed the universe. You know, you gotta avoid danger. You don't hang around with snakes and things like that.

You avoid financial stupidity as well, if you can. All these other Proverbs here, these nations saw because that's how God designed the universe. Now, they suppress it and they make excuses to be sure, but nevertheless, they see it.

And so it contains, many of the Proverbs contain instruction on many of the practical matters of daily life, one way or the other. They are practical matters of daily life. This isn't theology, per se, in the sense of this is a teaching about God or a teaching about Christ, although Proverbs 8 is probably an allusion to Christ or 7, as we'll see later.

But the bulk of it here, what? My son, hear the instruction of your father and do not forsake the law of your mother. It's pretty straightforward. Listen to your parents.

The assumption being, of course, if and when your parents aren't telling you to do wicked things. But often, even the unbelievers tell them good things. Look both ways across the street.

Don't trust strangers, things like that. These are good instructions. It's straightforward.

You don't have to make it more godly or holy somehow by saying somehow I'm gonna explain to you that father and mother is a spiritual reality of the church and anything beyond that is insignificant, as we've heard other interpreters do of Genesis 3 and 1 Peter 3, for example. It's really about the church. It's not.

It's about living an everyday life. This is literally a father and mother. Now, the application is clear because it fits under the rubric of the fifth commandment.

That's true. And you have the church fathers, and you should listen to them. That's under the more broader rubric of the fifth commandment, not necessarily verse 8, per se.

Verse 8 fits under the fifth commandment. You make the connection through the commandments. Every law fits under one or more of the commandments.

So the Proverbs, as one commentary says, was a familiar literary form in all ancient cultures, and it was a very suitable device for collecting and summarizing wisdom of the centuries. And that's what we have. We do it today as I gave you those Proverbs.

And let's go back to those Proverbs. An apple a day keeps the doctor away. Does not mean you have to eat an apple a day.

Nobody hears the Proverbs and says, I have to eat an apple a day, or I have to count my chickens, or anything like that. Because it's not meant to be taken at face value that way. It's teaching a broader principle of instruction.

Everyone knows this. And so it uses concrete, particular imagery or events to point to a larger abstract truth. Eat healthy foods in moderation to increase your odds of avoiding being sick and needing to see a doctor.

It's not a very memorable way of remembering something. But when you say an apple a day keeps the doctor away, then you get the point much quicker. That's all it is.

That's all it is. So the theme of Proverbs is wisdom, right? The Proverbs of David, to know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment. Verses two and three, unpacking this theme.

The fountainhead of wisdom, as I mentioned before, is verse seven, the fear of the Lord. And I hope you see here the poetic form of parallel wisdom instruction. So to know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity.

It's saying overlapping similar ideas. They are parallel and they are overlapping. That is, they're synonymous.

And in this case, it's three lines clearly together. And this is important so that we don't get bogged down in saying, what exactly is the difference between wisdom, instruction, understanding, justice, judgment, and equity? There can be a difference, to be sure, in everyday life. I want equity from the judge, not necessarily wisdom.

He may not be too bright, but as long as he applies the law of God, that's good enough for me. But here in the Proverbs, I want to highlight, he's not being precise in a systematic theology sense. There's a lot of overlap of the words and the ideas.

So, but more broadly, you could, I think you could say wisdom as we typically take it, and you'll see that in the New Testament as well, Sophia, is knowledge applied. You may think of the way of thinking, to have the facts or the knowledge of what's out there, and then understanding of the connection between the knowledge, and then how to apply all that called wisdom, the crown of knowledge, in the broadest sense. And the school systems used to be set up that way.

You have the grammar stage, and then you had the rhetorical, I don't remember the second stage now. Grammar stage at the beginning, that was the basic facts. Then you were taught some of how they interconnected with logic and the like when you're about age 12 or 13.

We still do that with algebra, where it's more abstract. And you take these things together, and you do something with it. And then the stage of rhetoric, and instruction, and teaching

at the higher levels, where you put it all together, and you make something practical, or speech, or some application of it, wisdom.

And that was the old system of doing things. Today, I don't know what's going on in the schools. But it kind of fits the general understanding of facts, understanding of the facts, relationship to each other, and then applying that to your life somehow, or to whatever needs to be applied, and what you have before you, wisdom.

Again, it's not always used that precisely through the Book of Proverbs, but I think it's a helpful rubric for us in general as believers anyways, living in this world. So, the Bible, again, is not interested in teaching you the mechanics of life. The Book of Proverbs is about moral questions and actions in life.

Not how to saddle your horse, fix your car, and take care of your yard. If you want that, go find somebody who's really good at that, and they can take care of things in your life. That's not what you're going to find in Proverbs.

It's there for these specific things of relationships and the like they're in. So, wisdom here in God's Word is given to us by a spirit here in Proverbs and elsewhere. There's a number of places, of course, in the Word of God we can learn more about the things of life and how to live in our sanctification.

So, Proverbs, in other words, covers the domain of Christian holiness and living. What does it mean to live as a believer? Proverbs helps you. It helps the kids.

It's good for them to learn when they're younger. And so, they grow up with things that I think a number of us didn't have growing up. If you weren't raised in a Christian home, then Book of Proverbs is a good place to go to for your children.

Proverbs Applied for Life

So, Proverbs applies for life verses 1 through 6. We already mentioned 2 to 3. So, it is now moving into 4 through 6, the goal of Proverbs there. To know and to perceive what? Verse 2. To know wisdom, to perceive, and to receive the instructions I said. Those are all very similar ideas.

So, he's emphasizing these things by repetition. So that they would what? Have wisdom and instruction and discipline to perceive understanding, to perceive things of justice and judgment and equity, to be useful, to have moral truth in our life. That's what's important here.

Now, one of the words we have here is wisdom and instruction. The word instruction is used twice in verse 3. So, I'm drilling in more into the particular words here. Wisdom and instruction.

I talked about wisdom already. Instruction here is actually a particular and precise word used twice here and elsewhere in the Bible. And it's the equivalent to the Greek word padeia, right? Which is chastening or discipline or instruction.

And the ideas all overlap. You instruct through chastening and discipline to the end that they would learn something. The two go hand in hand.

From the usage of parallels in the Old Testament, one must conclude, the theological workbook of the Old Testament tells us that the word here denotes correction, which results in education or instruction. That word padeia is used in Galatians 3, where Paul explains that the law of God was used as a teacher or instructor. One who comes along, the Greek padeia, who comes along and instructs the kids, including disciplining them with a stick because he takes them to school.

He's not actually the school teacher per se. He uses that word in the word schoolmaster. That's what's used here.

It's used negatively, of course, that God disciplined Egypt and the army in the wilderness in Deuteronomy 11.2. Positively, the same word is used in Deuteronomy 8.5 for instruction, that is, the Lord God clothed us for instruction that as a man chastens his son, that's the word here, instruct or chastens his son, so the Lord thy God chastens thee. Contextually, it depends on what it's emphasizing here, the discipline part or the instruction part. Clearly, the Book of Proverbs is mostly about instruction, but behind this word is always some idea of a little bit of teeth behind that instruction, chastening and discipline is important as a father disciplines and instructs his children.

This is, of course, covenantal instruction and covenantal discipline. This is for the people of God in particular. Yes, the world can see these things in Proverbs and find some of it on their own by God's common grace, but the Proverbs are especially for us and for his people.

That's why he wrote it down, gave it to us in the Bible so that we can be a people of wisdom and understanding, that the world may see that we take seriously what it means to be followers of knowledge and prudence and instruction and not to be foolish. And so it's for his people in the covenant. And the goal, therefore, is to get wisdom, to know it, that is to get it, to perceive the words of understanding, get more of it, to receive the instruction of wisdom, to the end of justice, judgment, and equity.

This is what we want. Wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity. Justice, judgment, and equity are pretty straightforward how they're overlapping of similar ideas.

It reminds us that justice, therefore, and equity, and judgment meaning clearly good judgment as opposed to bad judgment, are Christian concerns. They're concerns of the world, yes, but they're Christian concerns as well. We saw that in the book of Micah and elsewhere about socioeconomic considerations and matters in the church of the Old Testament in Israel.

And so we ought to have such proper concerns as well in life today. And it should be our desire that justice would be exercised and that equity would be maintained in society and in our own relationships, of course, as we are able. It is a concern of ours.

And it's all of life, of course, family, church, and state. The Proverbs covers, it talks about kings, doesn't it? The end of the book, family, church, and state. It's all there because life is completely covered by God's law.

Wisdom is taking God's law and applying it to your life. When it comes to the question of sanctification, wisdom is taking God's law and applying it to your life. And of course, there's a wisdom with respect to the gospel as well and applying it to your life.

And we'll talk about that at the end. And so here, to the end, and to give prudence to the simple and knowledge and discretion to the young, verse four. Who am I supposed to give this to? Who are the objects? We know what we're talking about.

It's all kinds of instruction and understanding of everyday life, even to the point of justice and family, church, and state. Whatever's covered in the book of Proverbs and in life in general, of course. And to give prudence to the simple and to the young man, knowledge and discretion.

These are the people who need to have such prudence and such instruction, such understanding, such things. The object of wisdom is those who should receive it. The young or the youth, of course, the naive.

They're parallel ideas. The word here, verse four, for the simple, okay, sometimes we translate it fool. There are three Hebrew words for fool.

I mentioned this before. And this is the nicer one. It's like a child, they act foolish.

And we don't mean that in a derogatory sense. We're just like, they're kind of foolish. They don't know what they're talking about.

They're just going through life and shooting off at the mouth. What do they know? That's the idea here. And it parallels, of course, with the young man, young man's knowledge.

It translates young man, you might think, well, a 20-year-old, it's a very broad word. It could be a 10-year-old, 12-year-old. They need wisdom.

They need prudence. They need to understand what justice and equity is and what it means to live as a believer in this world. That's who needs it.

And it's not just kids, of course. Anybody who needs maturity. Sometimes adults are like little children.

Sometimes adults are like the simple fool who walk into trouble. And part of that simplicity is this. A friend of mine likes to describe the three worst characteristics of Christians in America.

And this is important to do. He's not just trying to make names. And you guys have this problem.

His concern and my concern and your concern should be the same. We know we sin. The question is, what are, if we are leaders in the church, because we deal with masses of people, what are the collective sins that stick out the most? And he said one of them was vanity.

I thought that was quite interesting. Very selfish-oriented. What about me? The other one is credulity.

We're credulous. We're too easy to believe people. And I think that's true.

There's lots of grifters in Christian circles, even in Reformed circles, unfortunately. And that, I think, is a helpful description here of the simple. They're credulous.

They're naive. It's another similar idea. That was the third description he has.

Lots of American Christians are very naive about how the world works. They just kind of take things on the surface and how what people say. Well, they say they're not liberal, so it must be the case.

Why? People say all kinds of things all the time. And so we are to seek out the kind of prudence and wisdom that we're no longer simple-minded. Right? Simple-minded.

This is the goal. These are the people, and that includes us, of course, to the extent that part of our life, it may not characterize us. We've been around for 20, 30, 40 years.

In general, we may have a fair amount of wisdom, but there may still be some parts of life that we are naive about, that we are simple-minded about, and we finally get a rude awakening. So don't think it doesn't cover you. I'm sure it probably covers you in certain parts of your life.

At the same time, it doesn't always mean it covers the entirety of your life. Well, I'm just a simple fool. Everything I do is just terrible.

That's not what I'm saying. There's different degrees of maturity. There's different degrees of naivety, as well, in different contexts, to be sure.

Sometimes we don't even know until it happens, unfortunately. And this means, therefore, those who need to hear this, especially, of course, are children and uninstructed adults. And if you can help them, you should.

It's not mentioned here, but they need wisdom. And if someone's in need of something, and you're immediately there for them, if they're on the side of the road, bleeding out, you just drive by. We already know a parable about that, don't we? It's the same thing with respect to morality and truth, of how to live as a believer.

If they're a part of your life, they might not be on the side of the road, but they're living with you, or their family member is there with you, or the co-worker you see every day, and you see they need help, and if they're willing to have help, that's a grant, they don't always, are always willing, and you can somehow talk to them, do it. It takes patience. It takes humility.

But it also takes bravery to say, look, maybe you thought of it this way. Let me give you some advice, which is a nice way of saying, let me give you some wisdom and prudence in these matters. How to apply, again, as I'm defining it more narrowly here in Proverbs, applying God's law to our sanctified life, to our particular circumstances.

And who learns? Who listens to these things? Well, the wise man, the man of understanding, verses five and six, a wise man will hear and increase. These people need it, the simple and the young, and the immature, of course, broadly speaking, but the wise will hear it and increase in learning. A man of understanding will attain wise counseling.

I hope you see there the parallel ideas a wise man hears, a man of understanding, and they're synonymous. They're very similar. They're overlapping.

Saying the same thing twice, basically, to get your attention, that if you want to be a wise man, you will listen to wisdom, and you will act upon it, of course. It doesn't mean just, well, that's kind of an interesting thing to hear. Wow, I'll put that in my book and just walk away with it.

I think James talks about that. The man who beholds himself in the mirror and says, that's kind of interesting, and walks off and does nothing about it. Of course not.

It's a proverb, so it's dense. The implication being not just hearing with the ear, but believing in it, acting it out, and they want to increase in this learning. He says, increase in learning, not just always learning and never going anywhere with it, but learning and applying it and living it in their life is the implication here.

To obtain wise counsel, we read here as well, an increase in understanding, to attain wise counsel, 5B. Fred watches a commercial. He wants to invest in a market.

He calls, he gets his money. He gives him his money, excuse me, at the midnight commercial, and loses his shirt, as we say. I think we still say that.

Tim watches the same commercial, but asks a friend who has market knowledge, and he gains a little bit of wisdom, avoids this problem, and therefore he obtained wise counsel. That's it. That's a very basic rudimentary thing.

Ask the right person to get help on a matter you don't understand. And to do that, of course, one of the first things you have to realize is I don't know enough about finances to invest. What am I doing here? And then lastly, what do you gain from seeking out wisdom and receiving it and attaining wise counsel? To understand a proverb thereby, and an enigma, and words of the wise in their riddles, saying the same thing four different times,

right? Things that seem confusing to us, perhaps, but certainly have much depth and wisdom in them.

That's what we gain when we hear and submit to God's wisdom in the Word of God and the Proverbs, specifically in our life of sanctification.

Proverbs for You

And the third point here, Proverbs for you today, the American premium is on finances, is on money and the like, sports and entertainment, comfort and prosperity, they all kind of overlap in many ways. And again, people have their places.

These things have their place in life. Money is good because, well, last I checked it, helps take care of budgets and feeding you and putting a roof over your head. That's true.

But the Bible's premium is on a moral wisdom, specifically here in Proverbs, of living out God's law and applying our life, more broadly, the wisdom of salvation. Brothers and sisters, on how to be holy in everyday life, assumes behind it that we are holy, that we are sanctified. And in fact, that we are justified by faith and faith alone.

The wisdom here, therefore, in the Christian life is twofold. One, about the law of God, and two, about the gospels. We're back to law and gospel again, right? The law, which is clearly what most of Proverbs is about, brings conviction.

Some of these Proverbs may bring conviction upon you, and that's fine. Embrace it because you need it. You're still sinning, whatever that is.

I don't know who you, I don't know. I'm not picking them because I'm thinking of somebody in particular. I just think it may be helpful in general, given our society and our culture where we are right now.

And of course, beyond conviction, it should bring guidance and to warn and to encourage into the right direction. And of course, lastly here, gospel wisdom is about the gospel, the source of eternal life and the source of works pleasing to God in Christ. 1 Timothy 3.15, and that from childhood, you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

We should not get those two confused because as you recall, at 1 Corinthians, Paul talks about the wisdom of the world and the Greeks and the like and the Jews in contrast to the gospel preaching. He's talking about the wrong kind of wisdom. I'm talking about godly wisdom of one, sanctification, law, and applying it to our life, and two, and more importantly, the gospel embracing him and Jesus Christ and not our own righteousness, not even our own Proverbs to save our souls.

Now, Solomon was a great king indeed. I mean, he knew a thousand Proverbs. I don't know.

I mean, I can't quote them. That's crazy. He had quite a memory, quite a man in many ways.

But there's one greater than Solomon, isn't there? Matthew 12.42, the queen of the south will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And indeed, a greater than Solomon is here. And that is Jesus Christ, our Lord and believer.

Brothers and sisters, continue to grow in wisdom by learning God's law and God's gospel. Remember that your wisdom is, of course, still immature compared to heaven. We have a whole lifetime to grow.

And always remember that Christ is our wisdom and finding the only way to deliver us from the sinful world of foolishness. That was a wise path of prudence we read there. In Ephesians 1. Now, Paul's great doxology there in verses 3 to 14.

In wisdom and prudence through Jesus Christ, he found a way that we could never find. 1 Corinthians 1.30, I will leave us with. But of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

That as it is written, he who glories, let him glory in the Lord. Let us not glory in how well we know the Proverbs, how well we exercise them, but rather how God in Christ Jesus has given us wisdom of Christ and the wisdom of the Proverbs. Let us pray.

Lord God Almighty, we thank you for these words. And we live in a day of rampant license in which men wish to do and desire their own things and get away with it. From the powerful to the very weak God, we live in a moral chaos in many ways in our society.

And the book of Proverbs is therefore a shield for us to protect us from the lies of the world. Help us, dear Lord God Almighty, we pray with your spirit to live a life of holiness, but in all things to trust in Jesus, who is our holiness. By your name alone we pray.

Amen. Let us arise.