

PROVERBS CHAPTER 2

1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;

3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;

11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:

¹² To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;

¹³ Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;

¹⁴ Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked;

¹⁵ Whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths:

¹⁶ To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;

¹⁷ Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

¹⁸ For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.

¹⁹ None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.

²⁰ That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.

²¹ For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.

²² But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

Much of this is clear without elaboration, but there are a few verses that stand out warranting our further consideration.

Generally speaking, we see in this chapter a discourse that outlines how to acquire godly wisdom and the protective benefits it provides. These

instructive words emphasize that wisdom and real understanding must be actively and intensely pursued and they serve as a shield against the traps of moral compromise.

4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

Solomon urges his auditors to seek understanding with the same zeal and intensity that a person employs when searching for hidden treasure and silver. There are people who make a life mission out of locating hidden treasures, often buried at ocean bottoms. Others pursue the “hobby” of trouncing around the country side with metal detectors hoping to find some type of silver or other valuable metal. To the person, these people have a passion rarely paralleled.

Christ employed this metaphor: **Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.** (Matthew 13:44).

Those who earnestly seek heavenly wisdom will never experience wasted labor. Jesus told his Capernaum audience: **Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.** (John 6:27).

Once you lay hand on this heavenly knowledge, you have something far more valuable than earthly treasure. As the Psalmist said: **The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.** (Psalm 119:72).

Consider Poole’s efforts to capture the essence of this verse: *With the same unwearied diligence, and earnest desire, and patient expectation under all delays, disappointments, and difficulties, which worldlings use in the purchase of riches, or in digging in mines of silver.*

5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

This text stresses that God alone is the ultimate source of all wisdom and understanding, and he acts a shield to those who walk therein.

It is the highest of all gifts to know God, the giver of all good things. **And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.** (John 17:3). Stated simply: The knowledge of God = Wisdom.

Again, it is clear that only God gives this desperately-needed wisdom, and we are assured: **If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.** (James 1:5, 6). God is not stingy in bestowing this wisdom on sincere, steadfast supplicants. **Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.** (James 4:8).

The buckler benefit: God protects and saves those who walk uprightly in this wisdom from that mischief and ruin which shall undoubtedly befall the wicked. God is their **shield** and **exceeding great reward**. (Genesis 15:1). **But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.** (Psalm 3:3). Dr. Gill's abridged comments are of help: *To these the Lord is a "buckler" or shield; he covers them with the "shield of faith", his own Son, his blood righteousness, and sacrifice; which faith lays hold on and uses as a shield against Satan's fiery darts; and gives them "the shield of salvation" which secures them from sin and wrath and every enemy; and encompasses them about with his "favour", as a "shield", which*

is immutable and invariable; and keeps them by his power through faith unto salvation[.]

12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; * * * * *

16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;

Wisdom from God delivers the sheep from two specific dangers addressed in these verses: (1) the deceitful and wicked man; and (2), the forbidden or wayward woman. These are not academic dangers or threats, but real life!

As to the former, this wisdom provides discernment to see through the twisting and underhanded tactics of corrupt people who delight in wrongdoing. This is a very real and very valuable deliverance. Humanity is saturated with these people, in all stations, places and times. They provide perverse counsel and engage in deeds of darkness; it's their lifestyle. They speak evil things, tending to debauch the mind and manners of others; **ravening wolves in sheep's clothing.** (Matthew 7:15).

This divine deliverance is from great danger posed by these people, and is a singular mercy. If they could, these folks would entice the very sheep to evil principles and practices. *[T]he Gospel, and a spiritual knowledge of it, are a means of preserving men from following the examples of such persons, and from walking with them in the ways of sin: or from "the evil way", from every evil way, from a vicious course of life; not from idolatry only, as some interpret it, though this may be included, and chiefly designed; but from all manner of sin, from everything that is contrary to the law of God and sound doctrine[.]* (Gill).

As to the second danger, Solomon warns against the seductive flattery of immoral women. God's wisdom guards against these destructive, adulterous relationships that lead to moral ruin.

Unfortunately, Solomon did not heed his own advice here. **But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter**

of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. (1 Kings 11:1-3). This text goes on to give vivid details of the sad impact all this had on Solomon and give pronouncements that his heart was not **perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.** (1 Kings 11:4; see also verse 6). The result: The Lord **was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice** specifically warning of this very danger. (1 Kings 11:9). A sad and bad place to be!

The concept of “strange” women seems to refer to women that are outside the Lord’s chosen, of a different metaphorical country or genre, as the foregoing passage suggests and as this from Ezra tells us: **We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land[.]** (Ezra 10:2). It’s this concept: **Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?** (2 Corinthians 6:14). Let’s keep this real simple: Don’t marry a heathen woman; don’t marry an ungodly woman; don’t marry a carnal woman. You will have nothing but misery.

²⁰ That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.

²¹ For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.

²² But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

Proverbs chapter 2 concludes with this contrast of the destinies of the righteous and the wicked. Those who seek and embrace wisdom will walk the good path, experiencing stability and flourishing, while the wicked will ultimately be cut off.

These verses present a dichotomy, a division or contrast between two things that are completely opposed, entirely distinct and mutually exclusive. We are talking about the paths of the just and the unjust. This dichotomy is presented consistently throughout the Bible from cover to cover.

One extensive and quite lengthy example of this dichotomy is found in Deuteronomy Chapter 28, which is essentially divided into two described conditions: Blessed/Cursed. The Chapter begins this way: **And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.** (Deuteronomy 28:1, 2). The text then proceeds to itemize in creative language the areas of those blessings, covering virtually every aspect of human existence: Children; grandchildren; property; land; commerce; travel; overcoming enemies; financial security and savings; good health; successful enterprises; nobility in rank; reputation; political success; strong and peaceful government; etc.

The Chapter then takes a dark turn: **But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee[.]** (Deuteronomy 28:15). As you might guess, the text then proceeds to a brutal overview of those many curses, sufferings, miseries and punishments, covering the very areas just addressed on the blessings side, and more. Every imaginable bad thing is presented in vivid and colorful detail, taking up verses 16 through 68. You are encouraged to read the chapter, after which you will be extremely disquieted and saddened

by the enumerated woeful things promised to the disobedient. Without reading the entire thing, here are but a few samples:

- Your carcass will be eaten by all fowls of the air;
- A wide array of physical and mental sicknesses and diseases;
- Marriage infidelities;
- Frequent and lengthy famine;
- Entire families sold into slavery and separated;
- Economic calamities;
- Business failures;
- Poverty;
- Instability in government and military conquest;
- Sieges;
- Cannibalism;
- Loss of natural affections (e.g., mother to child);
- Diaspora throughout the world; and,
- Constant stress, fear, worry and dread of what the next day will bring. (Deuteronomy 28:16-68)

Isaiah is a bit pithy: **If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.** (Isaiah 1:19, 20). You catch the drift.

Our original song *There's Nothing in the Middle* covers this concept nicely, including this verse: *You have to take a side, the spirit or the flesh; the wide or narrow path, will you be cursed or blessed? Christ's blood or Satan's lies, the middle's not a choice; those who love his law, in heaven will rejoice. Thank God and Amen!*

Finally, Poole on the results of obedience to God: *You [s]hall have a peaceable and comfortable abode in the land of Canaan, which also is a type of their everlasting felicity* (a state of intense happiness, joy or bliss).