



CHRIST COMMUNITY
CHURCH
Changed Hearts. Changed Lives. Changed Community.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

To Be Forged and Rooted in Wisdom

INTRODUCTION

A frequent question that we as God's people wrestle with is how to live out the glorious transcendent theology of God's love and redemption in Christ amidst our ordinary, everyday lives that seem to lack glory most days. Fortunately for us, we have the book of Proverbs to help form and root us in God's wisdom for the life of the world in every riven thing entrusted to us. Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr. encourages us to remember, "As we come to the book of Proverbs, God does not intend to crush us with layer upon layer of demands. He intends to help us. The book of Proverbs is practical help from God for weak people like us stumbling through daily life."¹ As Kenneth T. Aitken further observes, the Teacher in Proverbs "concerns himself with people as plain, ordinary individuals who live in the world, and with the wisdom and folly of their attitudes and actions in the common things of life."² God's wisdom in Proverbs addresses where heaven meets earth and daily tasks make their frequent demands in the tyranny of the urgent. Ours is lived theology that has been entrusted to us to steward for God's glory, our joy, and the blessing of our neighbors in wisdom.

The wisdom contained in the book of Proverbs is gloriously arrayed in various poetic forms to give a greater rhythm and cast to the ordinary subject matter addressed. Given its purpose to train up the present and coming generations, poetry made the offered wisdom easier to remember and live out.³ Ernest C. Lucas succinctly defines an individual poetic proverb as "a reflection on life crystallized in a brief, memorable sentence."⁴ These poetic axioms describe general, relative norms, not an exhaustive treatment of inevitable cause-effect relationships.⁵ Most often, they depend on the proper context and require wise consideration

¹ Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., *Proverbs: Wisdom That Works* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2012), 15.

² Kenneth T. Aitken, *Proverbs* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), 4.

³ Ernest C. Lucas, *Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Psalms & Wisdom Literature, Vol. 3* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 92.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

before acting.⁶ The book of Proverbs doesn't contain mechanistic ready-made rules for living (i.e. what to simplistically think) but how to wisely live based on observations throughout all of life based on the fear of the Lord (i.e. how to dynamically think and act to the glory of God). As Graeme Goldsworthy observes, "The word wisdom suggests a concern for the way we think, the way we use our minds or intellects. If that is what wisdom in the Bible is all about then we have established an important point: God gave us minds and he expects us to use them."⁷ The book of Proverbs serves to help poetically form our minds and actions as image bearers of our Heavenly Father to wisely display His characteristics in our daily lives.

The book itself is intentionally structured into two main parts, chapters 1-9 and chapters 10-31, to help us grow in wisdom. Within the introductory chapters 1-9, the preamble in 1:1-7 serves as a critical entrance and guide to all that follows. As Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart note, "The preamble (1:1-7) prepares you for reading the book as a whole, setting forth its theme (v. 2, attaining wisdom), its purpose (vv. 3-5), the basic contrasts between wisdom and folly (v. 7), and its theological foundation (v. 7). At the same time verse 6 offers an outline of the book, according to its main "authors" (proverbs belonging to Solomon and the sayings of the wise)."⁸ The rest of Chapters 1-9 serve as the introduction to and formative context for reading and understanding the wisdom offered in chapters 10-31. Richard P. Belcher, Jr. aptly describes the relationship between the two main parts in this way: "These chapters (1-9) establish the religious foundation from which the proverbs should be understood and interpreted. This means that none of the proverbs should be understood as secular in nature but should be interpreted from the religious perspective of life laid out in Proverbs 1-9."⁹ Chapters 1-9, following the Preamble, unfold as a series of lectures by the Teacher and interludes by Lady Wisdom.¹⁰ Chapters 10 through 22:16 contain simplistic proverbs

⁶ Tremper Longman III, *How to Read Proverbs* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2002), 47.

⁷ Graeme Goldsworthy, *The Goldsworthy Trilogy: Gospel & Wisdom* (United Kingdom: Paternoster Press, Gospel & Wisdom, 1987; reprinted in the current volume, 2019), 339.

⁸ Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 145.

⁹ Richard P. Belcher, Jr., *Finding Favour in the Sight of God: A Theology of Wisdom Literature* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018), 45.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 23-4. See **The Structure of Proverbs 1-9** on pages 14-15 to see the specific breakdown.

attributed to Solomon. The next grouping in 22:17-24:34 are generally attributed to the Wise without specific identification or origin. Solomon receives the credit for 25:1-29:27 followed by Agur, the son of Jakeh of Massa, for 30:1-33 and Lemuel, king of Massa, for 31:1-9.¹¹ Proverbs closes with the acrostic poem of the Virtuous Wife who fears the Lord receives the fruit of living out His wisdom as gift and calling in 31:10-31. This closing proves a fitting inclusio to the opening admonition that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom in Proverbs 1:7 encouraging us to take seriously all that is written inbetween.

Proverbs' lack of theological treatises and historical information make it unique in the canon of Scripture. However, it would prove devastating to the understanding and the application of the book to fails to recognize its foundational theological perspective as expressed in the call to fear the Lord. This begins with an acknowledgement of God as active and purposeful Creator. Daniel J. Estes declares this when he writes, "The most fundamental assumption of the worldview represented in Proverbs 1-9 is that the universe is Yahweh's creation....Because the entire universe has its source in the creative activity of Yahweh, there is a common ethical system that applies to all humans."¹² This leads to the humble recognition of the Creator-creature distinction. Estes further points out that, "Implicit in the assumption that the universe is Yahweh's creation is the conviction that human meaning is found only in relationship to the creator. Because Yahweh created the world in a purposeful way, the world is not random and meaningless. The order that God established when he made the world provides the ground for human significance in the cosmos."¹³ Even though the created order and its inhabitants have suffered the curse of the Fall and its associated curses, God has not abandoned His Creation. Goldsworthy professes, "All of the collections, lists and comparisons in Proverbs are saying to us that it is certainly complex out there in the world, but it is not chaos. God has not withdrawn all his creative cohesion from the universe. Everywhere in the

¹¹ The information on Agur and Lemuel is scant. Their affiliation with Massa would make them Gentiles evidencing that Solomon believed all truth to be God's truth making it worthy of inclusion as evidence of God fearing folk among the Gentiles (cf. Belcher, 17-8).

¹² Daniel J. Estes, *Hear, My Son: Teaching and Learning in Proverbs 1-9* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1997), 22.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 25.

world around us are the evidences of God’s maintenance of order if we would only see them.”¹⁴

Out of this covenant relationship with God as Creator and Sustainer, we’re also confronted by His Holiness and Otherness that calls for us to steward the gifts we’ve been given. Estes humbly confesses, “Awe before Yahweh precludes arrogant defiance of the creator or flippant disregard of his moral demands...Instead, the fear of Yahweh is profound respect which causes the human to acknowledge creaturely dependence upon him. The one who fears Yahweh admits that the Lord alone possesses total knowledge and control of the universe he has made. Rather than questioning or rejecting the dictates of Yahweh, the reverential worshipper adopts the position of the submissive servant before him.”¹⁵ However, Proverbs isn’t a summons to salvation by works but a call to evidence our fear of the Lord in wise living as we love Him and our neighbors as ourselves. Charles Bridges points this out when he writes, “The purpose of this priceless book is not to teach secular or political wisdom, although many examples of which are included (6:1-11; 27:23-27), but the knowledge of God (1:7) that makes us wise about salvation and enables us to live godly lives (2 Timothy 3:15-17; Titus 2:11-12).”¹⁶ It is only by a fear of the Lord as evidenced by our humble relationship to Him as Creator and Redeemer that grants us the eyes to see and ears to hear the wisdom as to how we should live for His glory and our delight for the life of the world.

From the foundation of our fear of the Lord, He offers us wisdom as both a gift and a calling. As Goldsworthy asserts, “Two inseparable but distinct characteristics of wisdom are to be seen: it is both the gift of God and a responsible task for us. The gift comes not merely as an implanted ability present in some people, but objective as the self-revelation of God’s wisdom, to which the Israelite responded with ‘the fear of the Lord’. Our task involves a response to this gracious revelation, and our use of the gift in order to pursue the knowledge of order in the universe. Proverbial wisdom is an expression of this affirmation of humanity.”¹⁷ Again, it

¹⁴ Goldsworthy, 426.

¹⁵ Estes, 37.

¹⁶ Charles Bridges, *Proverbs* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2001), 15.

¹⁷Goldsworthy, 409.

is worth noting that this gift is received and the calling lived out in the warp and woof of everyday life in the context of relationship. This stands in opposition to wisdom being a commodity to be earned and exploited for our gain. Kathleen M. O’Conner recognizes that, “Wisdom understands the realm of divine-human encounter to be ordinary human life, and it teaches that the way to stand in the world, the stance to adopt before reality, is the way of relationship.”¹⁸ Wisdom prioritizes relationships over material gains. Aitken defines walking in wisdom as “the ability to reach sound decisions and to make the right choices, and thus the *ability to discriminate* between what is right and what is wrong, wholesome and damaging, important and unimportant, wise and foolish. It is the wisdom which takes stock of life to see what matters most, and which recognizes trivialities for what they are.”¹⁹ Goldsworthy summarizes the main goal of wisdom to reveal “to us what we need to know in order to be restored to a right relationship with God, our fellow man and the world.”²⁰ God gifts wisdom to us in our restoration to Him, our neighbors, and Creation so as to practically live out this restoration as a present benefit with the hope of drawing others to fear the Lord unto eternal life.

Proverbs imaginatively describes this unfolding process of becoming wise for the life of the world through a cast of main characters and subsequent minor characters that result from the choice to follow wisdom or folly.²¹ The primary authority is the Father / Teacher who will serve as the guide for the Son / Student.²² The Father / Teacher serves as the embodiment of the collected sources of wisdom written, spoken, and taught now made focal in the book of Proverbs collected by Solomon. Estes points out that a “key goal of education in Proverbs 1-9 is the formation of godly character in the learner. The focus of the instructions is on the development of the inner person not just the adoption of a pattern of actions.”²³ The Teacher

¹⁸ Kathleen M. O’Connor, *The Wisdom Literature* (Collegeville: Michael Glazier Books, 1988), 15.

¹⁹ Aitken, 11.

²⁰ Goldsworthy, 418.

²¹ Please see **Appendix B: The Cast of Characters in Proverbs** for the complete list and associated descriptions.

²² Please see **Appendix A: The Role of Gender in Proverbs** for a discussion of the use of masculine descriptions for the Teacher and Student

²³ Estes, 68.

uses a variety of techniques and images to accomplish this. Primarily, the Teacher serves as a guide for the Student to become a lifelong learner gleaning wisdom from wherever it can be gleaned in every context and from wherever it's offered. Estes notes, "The teacher's progression from expert authority to facilitator parallels the intellectual and moral development of the learner. When the learner is a novice, the teacher must exert a higher degree of direction, but as the learner grows in wisdom, the teacher is able to become more of an enabler to assist the learner as he makes his own decisions. Thus, the teacher's role is to be a guide, to motivate the learners on to maturity."²⁴ The Teacher hopes to "cultivate an active desire by the learner to appropriate wisdom for himself"²⁵ through provoking "(the student's) thoughts, getting under his skin by thrusts of wit, paradox, common sense and teasing symbolism...."²⁶ The Student, who represents the sons and daughters of God as audience, must assume a humble but engaged posture to receive the gift of wisdom being offered. According to Estes, "The prominent aspects of the role of the learner are receiving, responding, valuing and assimilating. Through these attitudes and activities, the learner develops a comprehensive and coherent philosophy of life."²⁷ O'Connor adds, "To become wise individuals must have open minds; they must be able to stand before life and to learn from it. Some people are incapable of learning, not because they lack intelligence but because they lack humility. Moreover, such people disrupt the community because they are unable to learn from others...The humble, on the other hand, are those who are aware that there is more to life than their limited experience of it. They can recognize the narrowness of their own frame of reference, and so they are teachable. Conversely, people without humility join the ranks of fools and suffer the consequences."²⁸ As we engage with Proverbs, we must remember that Jesus calls us to serve as both Teacher and Student when He calls us to be disciples who make disciples in Matthew 28:16-20. We must be humble, lifelong learners who give away the wisdom we gain in our fear of the Lord as lived out in Christ.

²⁴ Estes, 134.

²⁵ Ibid., 65.

²⁶ Derek Kidner, *Proverbs: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1964), 59.

²⁷ Estes, 135.

²⁸ O'Connor, 41-42.

The other two main characters worthy of note are Lady Wisdom²⁹ and the Temptress / the Woman Folly. Lady Wisdom serves as the personification of a concept or characteristic of God that condescends and pursues His sons and daughters in all of life. She is not an embodied personality like Jesus Christ who perfectly lives out and accomplishes God's wisdom through His person and work.³⁰ Derek Kidner beautifully describes Lady Wisdom in this way: "...there is presented to us the figure of Wisdom as the soul's true bride, true counselor, true hostess, and as the very offspring of the Creator. In Proverbs 1-9 this figure varies with the context: seen now as an imperious preacher who will not be silenced or confined, but heard in every street (1:20ff; 8:1ff); then, by contrast, as one who in her reticence must be sought out and waited for, as by an earnest pupil (8:34), or cherished as by a dear friend (7:4), indeed as by a husband....Or again, she is Lady Bountiful with everything to give, from riches and honour to righteousness and life itself (3:15-18; 8:18-21, 35); and her feast, like that of the gospel, is for the hungriest and the least promising."³¹ The Temptress / Woman Folly functions as the foil to Lady Wisdom calling for the destruction of the Student as commodity. She solicits the Student not just to sexual sin but also evil, folly, and idolatry against God.³² The means of temptation evidences the intimate relationship between us and our sin with us as the primary commodity being consumed. Proverbs poses the question as to whether the Student will accept the blessed invitation of Lady Wisdom born of the fear of the Lord to walk in knowledge or choose the banquet in the grave offered by Woman Folly as the cost of autonomy and rebellion.³³

Jesus makes an even better offer to us as the fullness of wisdom embodied and fulfilled in his life, death, and resurrection. As Tremper Longman III writes, "...the association between Jesus and Woman Wisdom in the New Testament is a powerful way of saying that Jesus is the

²⁹ Lucas, 108, argues "...the word for 'wisdom' in Hebrew is a feminine noun meant that when personified wisdom was naturally depicted as a woman."

³⁰ Derek Kidner, *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes: An Introduction to Wisdom Literature* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1985), 23.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

³² Estes, 54-5.

³³ *Ibid.*, 149.

embodiment of God's Wisdom."³⁴ **Luke 2:52** starts the discussion by declaring that Jesus was the Student of Proverbs par excellence as His faith in and fear of the Lord resulted in His growth in wisdom in His humanity. Jesus, thus, reaped the favor of both God and humanity as a result which is a key goal in Proverbs. Paul later proclaims in **1 Corinthians 1:20-31** that the crucifixion of Christ shattered the wisdom of humanity and granted those in union with Him the very wisdom of God along with righteousness, sanctification (i.e. the ability to live in wisdom), and redemption. These things were worthy of boasting of in word and deed. In **Colossians 2:2-3**, Paul declares that Christ is the fullness of the knowledge and wisdom of God which is available to us in Him. Derek Kidner writes, "The God whom Jesus Christ reveals is the Creator whose ordering wisdom lies behind everything that exists, whose moral character gives meaning to our awareness of right and wrong, and whose Holy Spirit infuses us with life, light, love, and creativity. The wisdom, the values and the Spirit of God are seen in Jesus."³⁵ Goldsworthy grants insight on the implications of this for us as Students in Christ seeking wisdom: "...if all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ, think what that means for the whole intellectual pilgrimage of mankind. If it means nothing else, it means that all of man's search for knowledge is defective in some critical way when it is not pursued in the light of Jesus Christ. The gospel has a controlling interest in all true knowledge."³⁶ This is not to say that there is no wisdom or knowledge through God's common grace, however, what it does mean is that the integrated life of a disciple comes only through fear of the Lord in union with Christ. We should strive to mirror Goldsworthy's description of the wise Christian: "A mature Christian is one who is able to look at the whole of reality through Christian eyes....He is learning to understand all things in terms of what they are in this corrupted realm and of what God intends them to be by virtue of his redeeming work. Thus, he is an integrated person who is learning daily through the gospel how to relate, not only to himself, but to all things according to the creative purpose of God."³⁷ May Proverbs form us further into and root us in the image of Christ as the embodiment of God's wisdom!

³⁴ Longman III, 110.

³⁵ David Atkinson, *The Message of Proverbs: Wisdom for Life* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 19.

³⁶ Goldsworthy, 356.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 356.

As Charles Bridges reminds us, “The first thing to do, which should be done as any page or verse of the Bible is read, is to pray. Begin with prayer. Then link an enquiring mind to a praying heart....Then when we discover God’s words to be our treasure, we are to “eat” this invigorating food, so that it becomes the joy of our hearts (see Jeremiah 15:16).”³⁸ Pray that the Holy Spirit will use our time in Proverbs to form and root us in wisdom for God’s glory and for the life of the world. Pray that as we grow in our fear of the Lord as Sovereign Creator that we would receive wisdom as a gift and respond to its calling to reflect the image of God in how we live for His glory and the life of the world. Pray also that it will reveal God’s wisdom in and through the person and work of Christ. May the Lord mature us in humility and wisdom!

We will continue to seek nourishment from our historic faith and the Old and New Testaments for our weekly devotion and worship. The calls to worship will come from **the Psalms** that declare the wisdom of God in Creation and in the redemption of His people. We will respond together from **James 3:13-18** as we prepare to receive the wisdom that comes from above. Our assurances of pardon will come from texts throughout the New Testament that declare the wisdom of being in union with Christ. The Prayer in Response to the Assurance will come from **2 Timothy 3:15-16** as we celebrate the sufficiency of Scripture to make us wise. Our benedictory blessings each week will come from **Colossians 1:9-10** to remind us of what it means to be blessed. The sum of these elements will hopefully serve to deepen our appreciation for God’s wisdom in Creation and in the fullness of redemption in Christ.³⁹ In addition, we will seek to be formed further into the image of Christ as we learn to live wisely for the sake of God’s glory and those in our spheres of influence.

This devotional is designed to encourage daily meditation and prayer in personal devotions and/or family worship. You are encouraged to use it the week prior to the associated sermon so that you and your family are prepared for worship. In addition to the Scriptures and associated questions, there are opportunities each Wednesday to pray for one of missionaries that we support through Faith Promise or one of the churches in our

³⁸ Bridges, xiii.

³⁹ While we long to include the Lord’s Table in our worship, we remain unsure as to when it will be wise to resume this practice and include those who can’t yet join us for in-person worship.

Presbytery. On Saturday and Sunday, we will prepare for worship in prayer for our church and those who will visit to be blessed by our time in **Proverbs**. Our desire is to continue to facilitate and grow in our dependence on the Lord through prayer.

May God bless our time in personal devotion, family worship, and corporate worship as we seek to for the Church to grow in our fear of the Lord and receiving of the gift and calling of wisdom!

Soli Deo Gloria

STRUCTURE OF PROVERBS 1-9:

INTRODUCTION TO THE *Wisdom* OF PROVERBS

PROVERBS 1:1-7: THE PREAMBLE:

THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE

PROVERBS 1:8-19: LECTURE 1:

THE WISDOM OF THE COMPANY YOU KEEP

PROVERBS 1:20-33: *Lady Wisdom* INTERLUDE:

WISDOM CRIES IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

PROVERBS 2:1-22: LECTURE 2:

THE CALL TO PURSUE AND CHERISH THE TREASURE OF WISDOM

PROVERBS 3:1-12: LECTURE 3:

THE CALL A LIFE ADORNED WITH WISDOM

PROVERBS 3:13-20: *Lady Wisdom* INTERLUDE:

WISDOM AS A TREE OF LIFE

PROVERBS 3:21-35: LECTURE 4:

THE CALL TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR IN WISDOM, PART 1

PROVERBS 4:1-9: LECTURE 5:

THE CALL TO BE CROWNED WITH WISDOM

PROVERBS 4:10-19: LECTURE 6:

THE CALL TO PERSEVERE IN WISDOM

PROVERBS 4:20-27: LECTURE 7:

THE CALL TO ATTENTIVELY LISTEN TO WISDOM

PROVERBS 5:1-23: LECTURE 8:

THE CALL TO WISELY AVOID LOVERS LESS WILD

PROVERBS 6:1-19: LECTURE 9:

THE CALL TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR IN WISDOM, PART 2

PROVERBS 6:20-35: LECTURE 10:

THE CALL TO PROTECT AGAINST IDOLATRY WITH WISDOM

PROVERBS 7:1-27: LECTURE 11:

THE CALL TO WISELY ACKNOWLEDGE THE POWER OF SIN

PROVERBS 8:1-31: *Lady Wisdom* INTERLUDE:

WISDOM'S FAITHFUL PERSEVERANT PURSUIT OF US

PROVERBS 8:32-9:18: *Lady Wisdom* INTERLUDE:

WISDOM'S INVITATION TO THE FEAST

PASSAGES FOR *Wisdom Topics*:

Wise **HUMILITY**: PROVERBS 15:33, 16:5, 16:18, 22:4

Wise **LISTENING**: PROVERBS 15:31, 18:2, 18:13

Wise **SPEAKING**: PROVERBS 10:19, 15:4, 25:11

Wise **MARRIAGE**: PROVERBS 11:29, 23:24-25, 31:10-11

Wise **FRIENDSHIP**: PROVERBS 17:17, 27:6, 27:17

Wise **WORKING**: PROVERBS 10:4, 13:11, 16:8

Wise **JUSTICE**: PROVERBS 11:1, 14:31, 19:17

PROVERBS INTRO SERMON SCHEDULE

DATE	CALL TO Worship	ASSURANCE OF PARDON	BENEDICTION	SACRAMENT
Sunday, 7/19: PROVERBS 1:1-7	PSALM 111	REVELATION 14:6-7	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 7/26: PROVERBS 1:8-19	PSALM 73	1 TIMOTHY 6:9-12	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 8/2: PROVERBS 1:20-33	PSALM 49	MATTHEW 22:1-14	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 8/9: PROVERBS 2	PSALM 91	MATTHEW 6:19-21	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 8/16: PROVERBS 3:1-12	PSALM 26	HEBREWS 12:1-11	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 8/23: PROVERBS 3:13-20	PSALM 1	1 PETER 1:3-9	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 8/30: PROVERBS 3:21-35	PSALM 149	COLOSSIANS 5:15-21	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 9/6: PROVERBS 4:1-9	PSALM 8	JAMES 1:5-12	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 9/13: PROVERBS 4:10-27	PSALM 86	JUDE 24-25	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	

PROVERBS INTRO SERMON SCHEDULE

DATE	CALL TO Worship	ASSURANCE OF PARDON	BENEDICTION	SACRAMENT
Sunday, 9/20: PROVERBS 5	PSALM 119:9-16	REVELATION 19:1-10	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 9/27: PROVERBS 6:1-19	PSALM 119:33-40	1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-8	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 10/4: PROVERBS 7:1-5, 21-27	PSALM 119:41-48	HEBREWS 10:11-18	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 10/11: PROVERBS 8:1-11	PSALM 119:57-64	1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-25	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 10/18: PROVERBS 8:12-36	PSALM 119:73-80	COLOSSIANS 1:15-23	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 10/25: PROVERBS 9:1-6	PSALM 119:97-104	MATTHEW 26:26-29	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 11/1: PROVERBS 9:7-12	PSALM 119:105- 112	ROMANS 5:12-21	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	
Sunday, 11/8: PROVERBS 9:13-18	PSALM 119:145- 152	ROMANS 6:20-23	COLOSSIANS 1:9-10	

Wisdom Topics SERMON SCHEDULE

DATE	CALL TO WORSHIP	ASSURANCE OF PARDON	BENEDICTION	SACRAMENT ⁴⁰
Sunday, 1/10: Wise Humility	Psalm 25:1-10	Philippians 2:1-11	Colossians 1:9-10	Bread and Cup
Sunday, 1/17: Wise Listening	Psalm 81	James 1:19-25	Colossians 1:9-10	
Sunday, 1/24: Wise Speaking	Psalm 15	James 3:1-12	Colossians 1:9-10	Bread and Cup
Sunday, 1/31: Wise Family	Psalm 128	Ephesians 5:22-33	Colossians 1:9-10	
Sunday, 2/7: Wise Friendship	Psalm 133	Acts 2:42-47	Colossians 1:9-10	Bread and Cup
Sunday, 2/14: Wise Working	Psalm 90:12-17	Colossians 3:23-24	Colossians 1:9-10	
Sunday, 2/21: Wise Justice	Psalm 112	Luke 14:12-14	Colossians 1:9-10	Bread and Cup

⁴⁰ These possible dates for celebrating the Lord's Table are listed here in the hope that we will be able celebrate this means of grace together in full.

WEEKLY CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Abba Father,

Who is wise in understanding among us?

By our good conduct let us show our works in the meekness of wisdom.

But if we have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in our hearts,
may we not boast and be false to the truth.

This is not the wisdom that comes down from above,
but is earthly unspiritual, demonic.

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist,
there will be disorder and every vile practice.

But the wisdom from above is first pure,
then peaceable, gentle, open to reason,
full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

May we sow a harvest of righteousness in peace
as Your wise peace-makers.

Amen.

ADAPTED FROM JAMES 3:13-18

WEEKLY PRAYER IN RESPONSE TO THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Abba Father,

Help us continue in Your Word
which is able to make us wise for salvation
through faith in Christ Jesus.
You breathed out all Scripture,
and it is profitable for teaching,
for reproof,
for correction,
and for training in righteousness,
that we may be complete,
equipped for every good work.

Amen.

ADAPTED FROM 2 TIMOTHY 3:15-16

WEEKLY BENECTION

May you be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in knowledge of God,

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

Amen.

ADAPTED FROM COLOSSIANS 1:9-10

The Week of July 19th

PROVERBS 1:1-7

Monday, 7/13: **PSALM 111**: Meditate on how the fear of the Lord is grounded in His goodness, provision, and redemption. How does this affect our understanding of the purpose of wisdom in our lives?

Tuesday, 7/14: **REVELATION 14:6-7**: What role should the ultimate judgment and deliverance of God play in our fear of Him?

Wednesday, 7/15: Pray for the Robertsons with MTW South America to plant churches that will help others grow in the fear of the Lord and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Thursday, 7/16: **PROVERBS 1:1-7**: Pray for the Holy Spirit to bless you through our time in Proverbs helping you to grow in the fear of the Lord and gain wisdom to live for His glory .

Friday, 7/17: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10**: How has your knowledge of God's redemptive will fulfilled in Christ blessed you and motivated you to share what you know with others?

Saturday, 7/18: Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts and minds to grow in our fear of the Lord as the beginning of knowledge and wisdom.

Sunday, 7/19: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH**: Pray for the means of grace to help us to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity.

The Week of July 26th

PROVERBS 1:8-19

Monday, 7/20: **PSALM 73:** How has the temporal prosperity of the wicked and suffering of the righteous caused you to struggle with envying the arrogant?

Tuesday, 7/21: **1TIMOTHY 6:9-12:** What are the various ways in which you are pursuing righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and gentleness? How are you protecting yourself against the love of money and gain?

Wednesday, 7/22: Pray for the Caltons with RUF at KSU to be wise and cultivate company that fears the Lord for the students and teachers in their spheres of influence.

Thursday, 7/23: **PROVERBS 1:8-19:** How is the company that you are keeping encouraging you to fear the Lord and live wisely? How are you encouraging others to this end?

Friday, 7/24: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** Pray for those in your spheres of influence to be filled with the knowledge of God's redemptive will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Saturday, 7/25: Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts and minds to grow in wisely assessing the company that we keep.

Sunday, 7/26: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us encourage one another in love to live wisely in union with Christ.

The Week of August 2ND

PROVERBS 1:20-33

Monday, 7/27: **PSALM 49:** Give thanks for all of the ways in which God seeks to communicate His wisdom to you as His beloved child. Share a recent example of your Abba Father calling to you in wisdom from His Scriptures.

Tuesday, 7/28: **MATTHEW 22:1-14:** How did God pursue you to call you to His wedding feast? Who could you share this story with as a means of encouragement?

Wednesday, 7/29: Pray for Grace Potter interning with RUF at KSU to be a vessel of wisdom that calls to the students and teachers to fear the Lord in union with Christ.

Thursday, 7/30: **PROVERBS 1:20-33:** Where is Lady Wisdom calling out to you? What does this mean for how we view public spaces and pursue missional opportunities there?

Friday, 7/31: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** Meditate on how God blesses you by persistently pursuing you and calling for you to grow in your knowledge of His will in all wisdom.

Saturday, 8/1: Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts and minds to hear and be formed by God's wisdom proclaimed throughout the service by His Word read, confessed, prayed, sung, and preached.

Sunday, 8/2: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us wisely dwell secure in the sovereignty and omnipotence of our good God in Christ alone.

The Week of August 9th

PROVERBS 2

Monday, 8/3: **PSALM 91:** What are the ways in which the Lord has served as a refuge and fortress for you at various points in your life? Share this with someone this week.

Tuesday, 8/4: **MATTHEW 6:19-21:** What do you treasure as evidenced by what you focus on with your time and energy? How does what you treasure affect how you live?

Wednesday, 8/5: Pray for Jim Whittle with ELI India to help others pursue and cherish wisdom by being formed further into the image of Christ.

Thursday, 8/6: **PROVERBS 2:** What ways are you pursuing the wisdom of the Lord so as to grow in the knowledge of God? How does this affect your affection for the things of God?

Friday, 8/7: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** Give thanks for the blessing of having others pray for you to grow in pursuing and cherishing the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Saturday, 8/8: Pray for the Holy Spirit to make your ears attentive to wisdom and incline your heart to understanding of God's redemptive will and plan for His people.

Sunday, 8/9: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us pursue and cherish wisdom in Christ for God's glory and our joy in the abundant life.

The Week of August 16th

PROVERBS 3:1-12

Monday, 8/10: **PSALM 26:** Meditate on the ways in which God keeps His steadfast love before your eyes helping you to walk in faithfulness. Give thanks for His love.

Tuesday, 8/11: **HEBREWS 12:1-11:** Consider a time when your Abba Father disciplined you. How did He express His love for you in His discipline?

Wednesday, 8/12: Pray for the Mills with MTW Thailand to help others adorn their lives with God's steadfast love and faithfulness in Christ.

Thursday, 8/13: **PROVERBS 3:1-12:** What areas of your life or topics are you prone to lean on your own understanding? What would help you grow in trusting in the Lord in these areas or topics?

Friday, 8/14: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** How have others been blessed by you living a life adorned with wisdom and understanding in the redemptive will of God?

Saturday, 8/15: Pray for the Holy Spirit to write the steadfast love and faithfulness of God as displayed in Christ on our hearts and bind them about our necks to adorn our lives.

Sunday, 8/16: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us fear the Lord acknowledging Him in all our ways without being wise in our own eyes.

The Week of August 23rd

PROVERBS 3:13-20

Monday, 8/17: **PSALM 1:** How has obedience to God's law as summarized in the call to love Him and your neighbors as yourself helped to establish you through the various seasons of life?

Tuesday, 8/18: **1 PETER 1:3-9:** Give thanks for God's various trials that have helped to strengthen the roots of your faith in Christ.

Wednesday, 8/19: Pray for Mwamba Johnson with Vision Collegiate Ministries to lead others to wisdom in Christ and eternal resurrected newness of life in the Gospel.

Thursday, 8/20: **PROVERBS 3:13-20:** How has your growth in God's wisdom granted you life more abundant in Christ? Share this with someone this week.

Friday, 8/21: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** Meditate on how your growth in the knowledge of God as displayed in the person and work of Christ has blessed you.

Saturday, 8/22: Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts and minds to lay hold of the wisdom of God as a tree of life and to hold fast so as to be called blessed.

Sunday, 8/23: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us see the inestimable value of God's wisdom as revealed and given in union with Christ.

The Week of August 30th

PROVERBS 3:21-35

Monday, 8/24: **PSALM 149:** Give praise to God for taking pleasure in you as His child adorned with His salvation.

Tuesday, 8/25: **EPHESIANS 5:15-21:** What does it look like for you to carefully walk in wisdom making the best use of your time? What distracts you from this?

Wednesday, 8/26: Pray for First Care Women's Clinic to patiently do good in Christ to those the Lord sovereignly entrusts to their care for His glory.

Thursday, 8/27: **PROVERBS 3:21-35:** How should your growth in God's wisdom affect how you treat your neighbors?

Friday, 8/28: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** Consider how you have benefitted from the mature godly wisdom of others. Let one of them know how they have blessed you.

Saturday, 8/29: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help us have the eyes to see God's wise ordering and sustaining of the world.

Sunday, 8/30: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us love our neighbors in wisdom for the glory of God in Christ.

The Week of September 6th

PROVERBS 4:1-9

Monday, 8/31: **PSALM 8**: Consider the various ways that God has crowned you with glory and honor. Praise the Lord for His lavish and creative goodness displayed in your life.

Tuesday, 9/1: **JAMES 1:5-12**: What do you do when you need wisdom? Who and where do you turn to for wisdom on a regular basis?

Wednesday, 9/2: Pray for the Sawyers in Kenya to in word and deed help those they serve come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and be crowned with eternal life.

Thursday, 9/3: **PROVERBS 4:1-9**: What are the ways in which God's wisdom has crowned your life in beauty?

Friday, 9/4: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10**: How has your knowledge of God helped you to better understand your own dignity as His gloried and honored creation?

Saturday, 9/5: Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare our heads to receive the crown of wisdom from our time in worship.

Sunday, 9/6: **The Lord's Day Sabbath**: Pray for the means of grace to help us gain wisdom and insight from God's Word so as to live for His glory and the life of the world.

The Week of September 13th

PROVERBS 4:10-27

Monday, 9/7: **PSALM 86:** How has God recently been gracious to you in inclining His ear to your prayers? Give thanks for His willingness to condescend and attend to you.

Tuesday, 9/8: **JUDE 24-25:** How does the finished work and reign of Christ applied to your life grant you the liberty to live more fully in this fallen world?

Wednesday, 9/9: Pray for the Larsens with NEXT to equip others to persevere in sharing God's wisdom revealed in Christ to youth around the world.

Thursday, 9/10: **PROVERBS 4:10-27:** What are the ways in which you are seeking to be attentive to God's Word so as to grow in wisdom? What are some ways that you can improve you active listening skills?

Friday, 9/11: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** Give thanks for those who have persevered in prayer on your behalf to grow in Christ. Who can you be praying for in this way?

Saturday, 9/12: Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare our ears and incline our hearts to expectantly hear from the Lord in worship.

Sunday, 9/13: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us to persevere and grow in the way that the Lord has called us in Christ.

The Week of September 20th

PROVERBS 5

Monday, 9/14: **PSALM 119:9-16:** What are the areas of your life that you are guarding according to God's Word? What are some areas that you've left unprotected?

Tuesday, 9/15: **REVELATION 19:1-10:** Take the time to imagine how lovely the Marriage Supper of the Lamb will be. Give thanks for Jesus' faithfulness to us His bride.

Wednesday, 9/16: Pray for the Women's Extension to profess the love of God the Father as beautifully displayed in Christ for the residents who struggle to feel loved.

Thursday, 9/17: **PROVERBS 5:** What competes for your attention to and affection for God and His Word? Seek to bear the fruit of repentance in turning from these things.

Friday, 9/18: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** What has God recently revealed to you about Himself and His redemptive will for you that has blessed you?

Saturday, 9/19: Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts and minds to receive the love of God through His Word in worship.

Sunday, 9/20: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us fix our affections on Christ alone through God's grace alone by faith alone.

The Week of September 27th

PROVERBS 6:1-19

Monday, 9/21: **PSALM 119:33-40:** Meditate on the times when loving God and loving your neighbors brought you delight. What role did difficulty play in increasing your delight?

Tuesday, 9/22: **1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-8:** How does how we relate to others affect the assurance that we have in our pardon in Christ?

Wednesday, 9/23: Pray for the Stocks with MTW in SE Asia to persevere in loving difficult people in the name of Christ so that He may draw some to eternal life in Him.

Thursday, 9/24: **PROVERBS 6:1-19:** How important is it for us to be reconciled to those in our spheres of influence?

Friday, 9/25: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** What relationships could you use God's wisdom in pursuing the process of reconciliation? Ask someone you trust to pray for you in this.

Saturday, 9/26: Pray for the Holy Spirit to give us the eyes to see and ears to hear which relationships we need to pursue reconciliation in according to God's wisdom.

Sunday, 9/27: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us not grow weary in loving others for the glory of God.

The Week of October 4th

PROVERBS 7:1-5, 21-27

Monday, 9/28: **PSALM 119:41-48**: Which passages encourage your love for God's

Word? Share these passages with someone this week.

Tuesday, 9/29: **HEBREWS 10:11-18**: Give thanks for the completed work of Christ on

behalf of your sin. How is this eternal truth affecting how you live at current?

Wednesday, 9/30: Pray for Mike Kennamer with MNA Disaster Response to have many

opportunities to share God's love in word and deed with those who've suffered loss due to a natural disaster.

Thursday, 10/1: **PROVERBS 7:1-5, 21-27**: What are the ways in which you are keeping

God's Word as a precious treasure ever before your eyes? How does this protect you from the destructive and intoxicating power of sin?

Friday, 10/2: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10**: What blesses you most about God's redemptive

work in your life? Share this with someone this week.

Saturday, 10/3: Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts and minds to behold the

glorious treasure of His Word read, confessed, prayed, sung, and preached in worship.

Sunday, 10/4: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH**: Pray for the means of grace to help us

make God's Word the apple of our eye and take seriously the deadly allure of sin.

The Week of October 11th

PROVERBS 8:1-11

Monday, 10/5: **PSALM 119:57-64:** Do you ever hasten to keep God's commandments?

If not, why not?

Tuesday, 10/6: **1 CORINTHIANS 1:18-25:** Meditate on how God's wisdom differs from the world's wisdom. What are some of the key differences?

Wednesday, 10/7: Pray for Dave Lindberg and Immanuel Church in NJ to persevere in boldly proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thursday, 10/8: **PROVERBS 8:1-11:** Praise God for condescending and perseveringly pursuing you even when you were His deaf and blind enemy.

Friday, 10/9: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** How have you been blessed by God's faithful pursuit of you to grow in knowing Him through Christ?

Saturday, 10/10: Pray for the Holy Spirit to grant us the ears to hear what God's Word is calling us to know and do for His glory.

Sunday, 10/11: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us receive God's instruction as more valuable than any earthly commodity.

The Week of October 18th

PROVERBS 8:12-36

Monday, 10/12: **PSALM 119:73-80:** Consider the ways in which others fearing the Lord and living this out have caused you to rejoice. Let them know how they've encouraged you this week.

Tuesday, 10/13: **COLOSSIANS 1:15-23:** Meditate on this glorious description of Jesus Christ as preeminent. Try to commit this verse to memory along with at least one other person.

Wednesday, 10/14: Pray for Byron Johnson with Vision 9:38 to raise up and send missionaries who will help others grow in the fear of the Lord and hatred of evil.

Thursday, 10/15: **PROVERBS 8:12-36:** Are you growing in your hatred of the various forms of evil displayed in this fallen world?

Friday, 10/16: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** What fruit has the Lord blessed you with as a result of you growing in your knowledge of His will in spiritual wisdom and understanding?

Saturday, 10/17: Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare us to grow in our fear of the Lord and hatred of what is truly evil.

Sunday, 10/18: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us find life more abundant in Christ and grow in favor from the Lord.

The Week of October 25th

PROVERBS 9:1-6

Monday, 10/19: **PSALM 119:97-104**: Think of a time when you experienced God's

Word as sweeter than honey. What contributed to its sweetness?

Tuesday, 10/20: **MATTHEW 26:26-29**: What are the ways in which Lord's Supper

helps to remind you of your forgiveness and newness of life in Christ?

Wednesday, 10/21: Pray for Christ Covenant in Woodstock to faithfully invite their

neighbors to the feast of God's forgiveness in Christ.

Thursday, 10/22: **PROVERBS 9:1-6**: What wise insights have you gained from our study

of Proverbs thus far?

Friday, 10/23: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10**: Who are you inviting to join you in being filled

with the knowledge of God's will in spiritual wisdom and understanding?

Saturday, 10/24: Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare us to feast on the God's Word and

taste and see yet again that He is good.

Sunday, 10/25: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH**: Pray for the means of grace to nourish

our maturity further into the image of Christ.

The Week of November 1ST

PROVERBS 9:7-12

Monday, 10/26: **PSALM 119:105-112**: Give thanks for how God's Word has been a lamp to your feet throughout your life. Share this with someone this week.

Tuesday, 10/27: **ROMANS 5:12-21**: Meditate on how the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness help you reign in life in Christ.

Wednesday, 10/28: Pray for our children's ministry to teach our children the fear of the Lord in Christ and the knowledge of the Holy One so as to live according to wisdom.

Thursday, 10/29: **PROVERBS 9:7-12**: How have you benefitted from growing in God's wisdom and your fear of the Lord?

Friday, 10/30: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10**: How do you respond when others seek to correct you in wisdom or point out your need for growth in the knowledge of God's will?

Saturday, 10/31: Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare us to humbly receive the instruction of the Lord so that we may grow in our fear of Him.

Sunday, 11/1: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH**: Pray for the means of grace to help us discern who in our spheres of influence needs to receive the wisdom that we have to offer in Christ.

The Week of November 8th

PROVERBS 9:13-18

Monday, 11/2: **PSALM 119:145-152:** Which passages help you navigate times of temptation to sin?

Tuesday, 11/3: **ROMANS 6:20-23:** Give thanks for your freedom in righteousness and eternal life in Christ who has delivered you from slavery to sin and death.

Wednesday, 11/4: Pray for First Presbyterian in Villa Rica to boldly and humbly warn their neighbors of the seductive power of sin calling them instead to the redemptive feast in Christ.

Thursday, 11/5: **PROVERBS 9:13-18:** Which sins are most tempting to you? Why these in particular?

Friday, 11/6: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** How is your knowledge of God in Christ helping you to reduce the seductive allure of sin?

Saturday, 11/7: Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare us to see clearly what is seeking to tempt and destroy us.

Sunday, 11/8: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us flee from temptation with the way of escape provided by God in Christ.

The Week of January 10th

Wise Humility

Monday, 1/4: **PSALM 25:1-10:** What truth humbles you so that you may be lead by the Lord in what is right?

Tuesday, 1/5: **PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11:** What helps you to in humility count others as greater than yourself? Who has exemplified this to you in your life?

Wednesday, 1/6: Pray for Grace Church in Canton to grow in humility and love toward their neighbors so that they might see the family grow bigger in Christ.

Thursday, 1/7: **PROVERBS 15:33, 16:5, 16:18, 22:4:** Pray that the Holy Spirit would form us into a more humble people as we are transformed further into the image of Christ.

Friday, 1/8: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** What does it look like for you to walk in a manner worth of the Lord that is pleasing to Him?

Saturday, 1/9: Pray for the Holy Spirit to show us where we are arrogant and humble us in the fear of the Lord in preparation for worship.

Sunday, 1/10: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us receive the reward for humility and fear of the Lord through Christ who gifts us eternal life.

The Week of January 17th

WISE LISTENING

Monday, 1/11: **PSALM 81:** What is the cost of not listening to the Lord when He calls to us?

Tuesday, 1/12: **JAMES 1:19-25:** Are you quicker to listen or to speak? Does this vary with who you are relating to?

Wednesday, 1/13: Pray for Grace Covenant in Dallas to grow in being able to listen to the true needs of those in their community so as to rightly apply the Gospel.

Thursday, 1/14: **PROVERBS 15:31, 18:2, 18:13:** Who are you listening to most attentively? What affect is this having on your life as a disciple in Christ?

Friday, 1/15: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** How have you been blessed by attentively listening to what God is revealing to you in and through His Word?

Saturday, 1/16: Pray for the Holy Spirit to give us ears to hear from God's Word and be formed into loving disciples in and through worship.

Sunday, 1/17: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us grow in active listening so as to better love God and our neighbors.

The Week of January 24th

Wise Speaking

Monday, 1/18: **PSALM 15:** Meditate on how your speech helps to stabilize or destabilize you in your relationships with God and with others.

Tuesday, 1/19: **JAMES 3:1-12:** What has been your experience with the destructive power of speech? How does your experience help you be more careful with your words?

Wednesday, 1/20: Pray for Grace Presbyterian in Cedartown to grow in speaking the truth in love and wisdom to those in their spheres of influence.

Thursday, 1/21: **PROVERBS 10:19, 15:4, 25:11:** Give thanks for those who have spoken life giving words of great value to you at the right time. Send them a thank you card this week.

Friday, 1/22: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** Meditate on the role that speaking plays in manner in which you walk in the world. Where do you need to grow in speaking in a way that pleases the Lord?

Saturday, 1/23: Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal to us where we fail to speak wisely and guide us in where we can grow for God's glory.

Sunday, 1/24: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us grow in discerning when to speak words of life in due season for the edification of others.

The Week of January 31ST

Wise Family

Monday, 1/25: **PSALM 128**: What are the potential benefits of fearing the Lord?

Tuesday, 1/26: **EPHESIANS 5:22-33**: Meditate on the parallels between Christ's marital relationship to the Church and earthly marital relationships. Does this help to inform the way that you view your present or future marriage?

Wednesday, 1/27: Pray for Hope Presbyterian in Marietta to help strengthen the marriages within their church to serve as hospitable sacred canopies for their neighbors.

Thursday, 1/28: **PROVERBS 11:29, 23:24-25, 31:10-11**: Pray that the Holy Spirit would bless you through our time in Revelation giving you the ears to hear and eyes to see Christ as victorious.

Friday, 1/29: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10**: In what ways does it bless you to know that you have a place secured in Christ before the throne of God?

Saturday, 1/30: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help us more clearly see God as loving Abba Father to us His children and Christ as faithful husband to we His bride the Church.

Sunday, 1/31: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH**: Pray for the means of grace to help us cultivate our families for God's glory, our joy, and missional service to our neighbors.

The Week of February 7th

Wise Friendship

Monday, 2/1: **PSALM 133:** What impact does our unity as friends have on our church and the communities in which we dwell?

Tuesday, 2/2: **ACTS 2:42-47:** What relationships have you gained from dedicating yourself to the Word and mission of God? Let a friend in Christ know this week how much you have benefitted from their friendship.

Wednesday, 2/3: Pray for King's Chapel in Carrollton to grow in their desire and ability to befriend those in their community who are friendless.

Thursday, 2/4: **PROVERBS 17:17, 27:6, 27:17:** What kind of friend are you? Are you willing to endure when it isn't easy and willing to say what's hard when it's needed?

Friday, 2/5: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** Are you bearing fruit for the glory of God in your friendships?

Saturday, 2/6: Pray for the Holy Spirit to help us hear and see the beauty of Jesus declaring us no longer servants but friends.

Sunday, 2/7: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us grow as friends who are able to love at all times and sharpen one another in the Gosepl.

The Week of February 14th

WISE WORKING

Monday, 2/8: **PSALM 90:12-17:** How has the Lord established the work of your hands for His glory?

Tuesday, 2/9: **COLOSSIANS 3:23-24:** Who are you serving primarily in the work that the Lord has entrusted to you?

Wednesday, 2/10: Pray for Midway Presbyterian in Powder Springs to help their congregants to work heartily for the Lord as a testimony of His goodness and grace to those they work for and with.

Thursday, 2/11: **PROVERBS 10:4, 13:11, 16:8:** What impact does how you do your job have on your production, your witness, and what you gain?

Friday, 2/12: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10:** How has the quality of your work been affected by your growing knowledge of God in wisdom and understanding?

Saturday, 2/13: Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts and minds to be convicted and encouraged in our stewardship of the work that the Lord has entrusted to us.

Sunday, 2/14: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH:** Pray for the means of grace to help us grow in the quality and just ethics of our work for the glory of God and betterment of those we serve through our vocations.

The Week of February 21ST

Wise Justice

Monday, 2/15: **PSALM 112**: What impact should the fear of the Lord have on you living justly?

Tuesday, 2/16: **LUKE 14:12-14**: What condition were you in when the Holy Spirit invited you to the banquet of Christ's redemption? Give thanks for God's grace.

Wednesday, 2/17: Pray for Smyrna Presbyterian in Smyrna to grow in making disciples who reflect and live out the justness of God in Christ.

Thursday, 2/18: **PROVERBS 11:1, 14:31, 19:17**: What impact do your just dealings with others have on your relationship with God?

Friday, 2/19: **COLOSSIANS 1:9-10**: How has your growth in the knowledge of God in spiritual wisdom and understanding affected you walking justly and loving kindness?

Saturday, 2/20: Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts and minds to behold afresh the justice of God satisfied in the crucifixion of Christ, the Just for the unjust.

Sunday, 2/21: **THE LORD'S DAY SABBATH**: Pray for the means of grace to help us care about issues of justice in both the Now and the Not Yet for the life of the world.

APPENDIX A:

THE ROLE OF GENDER IN PROVERBS

A frequent question posed concerning the reading and application of Proverbs is how to navigate the masculine focus of the Teacher and Student (or Father and Son) and apply its teaching for both the sons and daughters of God created and called in His image. As is so often the case with Scripture, this question doesn't require us to dismiss or torture the text. We don't have to dismiss the issue by rendering the earthly authors of Proverbs as culturally bound, relatively benevolent patriarchal misogynists whose supposed ignorance we can ignore. Nor do we have to torture the text to say something different than what it is saying to suit our perceived evolved morality and lose something deeply important that God is communicating to us in the process. It's important that we give the text a humble hearing both within the confines of the book itself and within the broader sweep of Scripture as it reveals God's redemptive love in Christ for us. In this case, we will find that God loves His sons and daughters equally as co-image bearers and co-heirs to His Kingdom.

Beginning with Proverbs, we discover immediately following the Preamble in **Proverbs 1:1-7** the Teacher commands the Student to hear and not forsake the teaching imparted by both the Student's father AND mother. This was a unique command in the canon of wisdom literature in the Ancient Near East and for hundreds of years following. The mother's role in instruction in wisdom was culturally unique in Israel evidencing a value not expressed in other traditions in Egypt and Babylon particularly.⁴¹ This means that the home would have been a critical location for training in wisdom by both parents for a fuller, richer education overall of which the mother played a vital role.⁴² Richard Belcher, Jr. further observes based on the role of the mother in teaching wisdom that, "(a)lthough the son is the one addressed in the instructions, it is clear that the daughters are also taught wisdom because the mother is very

⁴¹ Estes, 48.

⁴² Ibid., 32. It's worth noting that the home was not to be the only location for training in wisdom as evidenced by both Proverbs and the cultural practices in Israel, but the parents would have been primarily responsible for ensuring that their child's total education and influences were founded on and equipping in the fear of the Lord.

capable of teaching the son.”⁴³ This means that daughters were instructed in the wisdom to be lived and later passed on to their children in which they would play a critical part.

In addition, the acrostic poem at the end of Proverbs in **31:10-31** gives a description of the virtuous woman who has actually received the gift of wisdom and lived out its calling in the fear of the Lord. As Daniel J. Estes points out, “In the larger structure of Proverbs the virtuous woman fulfils the challenge set forth in the thesis of the book in 1:7.”⁴⁴ Tremper Longman III further reveals, “The emphasis at the end of the poem, as one might expect, is not on beauty or charm, but on the woman’s fear of the Lord. Indeed, this woman is the epitome of wisdom. She is the human embodiment of God’s wisdom; a flesh-and-blood personification of Woman Wisdom.”⁴⁵ This would have also been counter-cultural to the surrounding nations evidencing that the Israelites were to display their mutual and complimentary image bearing from **Genesis 1-2** as evidence of who and whose they were as part of God’s wisdom.⁴⁶

Both of these truths lead us back to the question of why the term “Son” was used in reference to the Student in Proverbs. In the Israelite culture, the firstborn sons were responsible for serving as the steward of the family’s name, reputation, property, businesses, and other family members as needed. Where there were no sons left, then the eldest daughter if unmarried or her married family would be entrusted with the inheritance. The use of “Son” in Proverbs makes use of firstborn heir as a motif to emphasize the magnitude of what’s being entrusted to the Student as gift and the calling to steward it as a servant for the sake of the coming generations. This same motif is present in the New Testament for example in **Galatians 4:1-7** where this understanding is critical for both sons and daughters understanding what has been entrusted to them in Christ. Thus, both sons and daughters of God must read Proverbs with this idea of gift and calling in mind in order to be able to glorify the Lord in receiving the gift and investing it in the coming generations.

⁴³ Belcher, Jr. , 22.

⁴⁴ Estes, 35.

⁴⁵ Longman III, 141.

⁴⁶ Unfortunately, like many of God’s designs and commands, the Israelites struggled in their rebelliousness to display God’s wisdom for the sake of the surrounding nations. All too often, they chose instead to look like the surrounding nations that did not share their wisdom or ethics in how they were to treat women as co-heirs.

APPENDIX B:

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS IN PROVERBS

MAIN CHARACTERS:

Solomon, Son of David, king of Israel: The author of many of the proverbs contained and compiler of the book as a whole.⁴⁷

Son / Student: Audience for the book of Proverbs to be instructed in wisdom which would include males and females as evidenced by mothers who participate in the teaching of wisdom and by the Wise Wife in the acrostic poem in **Proverbs 31:10-31**.

Father / Teacher: The personification of a guide in wisdom that could represent a parent, teacher, group, or tradition. The teacher in whichever form serves as an intellectual and moral father.⁴⁸

Mother / Teacher: The uses of mother in Proverbs seem to singularly indicate the matriarchal parent of the student who participates in instructing the student in wisdom (cf. Proverbs 1:8).

Lady Wisdom: The personification of God's wisdom that condescends to freely offer wisdom to those who fear the Lord and humbly receive her invitation (cf. **Proverbs 1:20-33**).

The Temptress / The Woman Folly: The personification of false gods, goddesses, idols, and sin that tempt people away from God with an invitation to a banquet in the grave (cf. **Proverbs 2:16-19; 9:13-18**).⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Aitken, 2.

⁴⁸ Estes, 32.

⁴⁹ Longman III, 33.

The Characters that Fear the Lord and Pursue Wisdom:

The Wise: A student with a humble, teachable spirit who fears the Lord and lives righteously, justly, and with equity in prudence over the whole of their lives. Another way of saying this is that they love the Lord their God and their neighbors as themselves in word and deed.

The Righteous: The one who acts rightly according to God's law and wisdom with an eternal perspective which results in a good reputation in their community (cf. **Proverbs 10:2-3, 6-7**).⁵⁰

The Wise Wife (or Proverbs 31 Woman): Lives out the wisdom detailed throughout the book of Proverbs (cf. **Proverbs 31:10-31**).⁵¹

The Characters that Pursue Folly:

The Fool: Refuses to listen and demands autonomy, self-direction, and personal freedom in antithesis to God's law and wisdom at all costs even death (cf. **Proverbs 1:7, 32b**).⁵²

The Sinners: A rabble of fools who seek to draw the student into their sinful ways (cf. **Proverbs 1:10-19**).

The Simple: Usually young and gullible with the potential to be easily led astray as a follower due to not having a firm and wise foundation (cf. **Proverbs 1:22a, 32a**).⁵³

The Scoffer / Scorners: Arrogantly dismisses the wisdom of past generations and the need for instruction. They cynically tear down the things of God and the wisdom of others lacking a humble, teachable spirit (cf. **Proverbs 1:22b**).⁵⁴

The Sluggard: Lazy and unwilling to put in the work necessary for even the most basic of needs much less to grow in wisdom leading to poverty of body, mind, and spirit (cf. **Proverbs 6:9-11**).⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Ernest C. Lucas, *Proverbs* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2015), 222-3.

⁵¹ Fee and Stuart, 153.

⁵² Estes, 45.

⁵³ Estes, 76.

⁵⁴ Lucas (2015), 226-7.

⁵⁵ Lucas (2015), 227-8.

The Wicked: A person who commodifies their relationships and interactions with others for their own evil gain seeking only what they can gain in the moment regardless of the means or cost (cf. **Proverbs 6:12-15**).⁵⁶

The Drunkard: Undisciplined in their consumption of alcohol leading to a host of out of control behaviors that prove costly (cf. **Proverbs 20:1**).⁵⁷

The Liar / Flatterer / False Witness: Selfishly misuses words and truth for personal gain while causing strife and perpetuating injustice (cf. **Proverbs 11:12-13**).⁵⁸

The Hot-Tempered: Easily angered with no self control in word or deed that frequently leads to violence. This person also lacks the willingness to forgive (cf. **Proverbs 15:18**).⁵⁹

The Greedy: Covetous and envious of what others have while being unsatisfied with what they have leading to a lack of generosity, unjust practices, lying, and theft (cf. **Proverbs 11:24**).⁶⁰

The Proud: Arrogant and unwilling to listen to wisdom as they think that they already know it all and that everyone else is beneath them in what they could potentially offer (cf. **Proverbs 11:2**).⁶¹

⁵⁶ Lucas (2015), 229-30.

⁵⁷ Aitken, 121-125.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 134-7.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 105-10.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 125-28

⁶¹ Ibid., 112-16.

APPENDIX C:

SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

You are encouraged to read further on Proverbs. These resources are in alphabetical order by author under the headings and have a variety of strengths with most being relatively short and comprehensible. Feel free to ask questions, and wrestle with the truths of Proverbs during, between, and after both series!

DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARIES:

Proverbs by Kenneth Aiken

The Message of Proverbs by David Atkinson

Proverbs by Charles Bridges

Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary by Derek Kidner

Proverbs: Everyday Wisdom for Everyone by Eric Lane

Proverbs by Ernest C. Lucas

TOPICAL/THEOLOGICAL ISSUES:

Finding Favor in the Sight of God: A Theology of Wisdom Literature by Richard P. Belcher, Jr.

Hear, My Son: Teaching and Learning in Proverbs 1-9 by Daniel J. Estes

How to Read Proverbs by Tremper Longman III

Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Psalms & Wisdom Literature, Vol. 3
by Ernest C. Lucas

The Wisdom Literature by Kathleen M. O'Connor

The Christ of Wisdom: A Redemptive Historical Exploration of the Wisdom Books of the Old Testament by O. Palmer Robertson