

## Wise Warnings

### Behold Our God! – Read the Bible for Life Series #28

Proverbs 6:1-19

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Let's open our Bibles to Proverbs 6. We're reading through the Bible together as a church and we're in the Old Testament section dealing with Solomon, his life and his wisdom. We're spending a few weeks looking at some of his proverbs and we saw last week that wisdom is not just something to get; wisdom is a Person we need to get to know—Jesus in Whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In order to gain wisdom, I need to know Christ. When I know Christ, I gain Him as my great treasure and in Him I gain wisdom and knowledge from God. To know Jesus is to find wisdom from God.

We're going to read Proverbs 6:1-19. We have three portraits dealing with our debt, our sloth and our divisiveness. Let's read the wisdom from God in His holy Word:

- <sup>1</sup> *My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor,  
have given your pledge for a stranger,*
- <sup>2</sup> *if you are snared in the words of your mouth,  
caught in the words of your mouth,*
- <sup>3</sup> *then do this, my son, and save yourself,  
for you have come into the hand of your neighbor:  
go, hasten, and plead urgently with your neighbor.*
- <sup>4</sup> *Give your eyes no sleep  
and your eyelids no slumber;*
- <sup>5</sup> *save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter,  
like a bird from the hand of the fowler.*
- <sup>6</sup> *Go to the ant, O sluggard;  
consider her ways, and be wise.*
- <sup>7</sup> *Without having any chief,  
officer, or ruler,*
- <sup>8</sup> *she prepares her bread in summer  
and gathers her food in harvest.*
- <sup>9</sup> *How long will you lie there, O sluggard?  
When will you arise from your sleep?*
- <sup>10</sup> *A little sleep, a little slumber,  
a little folding of the hands to rest,*

- <sup>11</sup> *and poverty will come upon you like a robber,  
and want like an armed man.*
- <sup>12</sup> *A worthless person, a wicked man,  
goes about with crooked speech,*
- <sup>13</sup> *winks with his eyes, signals with his feet,  
points with his finger,*
- <sup>14</sup> *with perverted heart devises evil,  
continually sowing discord;*
- <sup>15</sup> *therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly;  
in a moment he will be broken beyond healing.*
- <sup>16</sup> *There are six things that the LORD hates,  
seven that are an abomination to him:*
- <sup>17</sup> *haughty eyes, a lying tongue,  
and hands that shed innocent blood,*
- <sup>18</sup> *a heart that devises wicked plans,  
feet that make haste to run to evil,*
- <sup>19</sup> *a false witness who breathes out lies,  
and one who sows discord among brothers.*

God, we thank You for Your Word and I pray that the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts will be pleasing in Your sight. Would You send forth Your Spirit of illumination and empowerment into this time of worship through the preaching of Your Word? We pray that we would all grow in appreciating and embracing Jesus as our treasure, wisdom and knowledge. These gifts come from You so we can reflect Jesus in this world. Help us by Your Spirit, I pray—help me to preach Your Word. We pray this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

I heard a story about the French leader, General Charles de Gaulle, who at one time was touring a museum of modern art. He was not very impressed with modern art so as he went from display to display, he made derisive comments about the art he was seeing. Then he came to what he thought was at final display. He looked at it and said, "Hideous. Just hideous!" His aide said, "General, you're not looking at an art display. You're looking in a mirror."

We have three portraits here of characters we do not want to be like. In each case, we need to ask ourselves, "Am I looking in a mirror here? Am I seeing a reflection of my own character?"

The first man needs to get out of a bind. The second man cannot get out of bed. The third man is breeding discord and is broken beyond healing.

As we look at these characters, ask yourself, "Am I looking in a mirror? Is God saying something to me about my character here?" This passage may seem like a

smorgasbord of unrelated ideas—the Book of Proverbs is often like that. It might seem like the Golden Coral of the Bible—so much food laid out in front of us. But I believe the Holy Spirit put the Scriptures together with a unified design. In this case, we have a series of practical warnings—yellow caution lights—about living in freedom from enslaving debt, freedom from sloth and freedom from divisiveness. All these warnings relate to one another. How?

How do they relate to one another? That was the question I was pondering this week and here's how I believe they relate: All of them deal with our motives, our intentions.

- In verses 1-5, we see that when our motives are good we still need wisdom to act prudently.
- In verses 6-11, when our motivation is absent, we need wisdom to inspire us to action.
- Then in verses 12-29, when our motives are selfish, we need wisdom to avoid acting destructively.

Let's look at these warnings and learn the wisdom of God from them. In every case, may we draw closer to our Savior in Whom we find all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

## **Our Indebtedness**

First of all in verses 1-5, when our motives are good, when we're trying to do the right thing, we still need wisdom to act prudently. This is important for us. A father is speaking to his son here, saying, "Son, I need to warn you not to make promises impulsively that you're not able to fulfill. Don't get yourself into a bind where you co-sign for a loan for a borrower whom you don't know or who is not able to pay you back. Don't put yourself out there as collateral. Don't put yourself in a position where your partner could bring you down if he defaults."

That's practical advice. It seems like common sense but the father is telling his son this because his son needs to hear it. "A lot could go wrong here, son. If the borrower doesn't pay the debt, you will have to pay it. Plus you could be responsible for late fees, collection costs, garnished wages. Your own credit report could get a blemish on it. So be careful, son. Be warned."

I heard a funny guy say, “I loaned a friend \$8,000 for plastic surgery. Now I don’t know what he looks like so I can’t find him to collect.”

There could be many motives this son would have to put up security for a stranger. Maybe he wants to be hospitable. Maybe he feels a sense of compassion for the plight of someone he just met and wants to help this person. As Christians that should be the instinct of our hearts, shouldn’t it? To help people in need.

But what’s the problem here? The son is in danger of being impulsive. He’s in danger of not acting prudently. We can have good desires but we still need wisdom to put them into practice in ways that are prudent. God calls us as His people to be generous but not to gamble.

In Deuteronomy 15, God is teaching His people to cultivate a culture of generosity, to give freely to the poor; to loan money freely to the poor. Every seven years, all debts in the nation were to be forgiven and forgotten. That was God’s desire for His people—that they have a culture of generosity.

We see a similar illustration in the New Testament letter of Paul to Philemon where Paul promised to pay all the past debts of Philemon’s former slave, Onesimus. Listen to what Paul says in verse 18 of that one chapter letter: *“If he [Onesimus] has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account.”* That’s generosity—a desire to assume someone else’s debt. But notice that Paul promised to pay Onesimus’ past debt. He did not promise to pay any future debt.

That’s what Proverbs is warning us against—don’t put yourself in a position where you assume a debt for someone who cannot reasonably repay. Don’t rope your financial future into someone else’s speculative risk. Don’t make yourself a hostage to someone else’s financial irresponsibility.

Are you looking in a mirror here? Do you ever have a tendency to get yourself in a bind—an irresponsible sort of bind—when you’re helping other people?

Verses three through five underscore how urgent it is, if you get yourself in this position, to do something to extricate yourself from it. Humble yourself. Verse three: *“Do this, my son, and save yourself...”* Make yourself small is what it is saying. Get down on the ground and admit how foolish you’ve been. *“Plead urgently with your neighbor...”* Pester him. Badger him. Keep calling him. Leave messages on his answering machine saying, “I hope you’re going to pay off that debt. Please release me from this agreement.” And if you have put anyone else in that situation, do all you can within your power to

release them from this obligation. Don't let relationships be strained because of situations like this.

Now a couple words of practical application. First of all, one of the things I appreciate so much about the deacons of our church is that they are very serious about caring for people's practical, financial needs. Every Communion Sunday morning, we give to a Love-in-Action Fund as we leave the sanctuary. This fund is designed to help God's people when we find ourselves sometimes in tight positions financially. What I appreciate is that the deacons think about this in a very conscientious way. They evaluate how they can demonstrate God's compassion with prudence and wisdom. They are also available to counsel those in difficult financial positions. Thank God for the ministry of our deacons who do an outstanding job caring for our church in this way. Thank God that He has given us that office in the Body of Christ. Think about ways you can contribute so we can help one another responsibly and wisely and compassionately in our financial difficulties. That's one application of this truth.

But I had to ask myself as I was reading verses one through five, "Does the gospel have anything to do with this?" What do you think my answer would be? Yes, it has to. But how? How does the gospel speak and shed light on verses one through five? Think about it. We were in debt up to our eyeballs, infinitely in debt. A debt we could not hope to repay if we worked it off forever. And what did God do? God gave His Son to be our surety. He put up security for us. Jesus laid down His life for us to discharge all our debt. He didn't do it for strangers but for people whom He is not ashamed to call friends and brothers. He promises to be our surety at the right hand of God the Father. What do we sing in that hymn, "Arise, My Soul, Arise"?

Before the throne my surety stands,  
My name is written on His hands."

(Arise, My Soul, Arise by Charles Wesley, 1742)

What did Jesus do on the cross? Colossian 2:14 says He canceled "*the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*" So I had a debt I could not pay and Jesus paid my debt that He did not owe and He continues to pledge Himself to be my surety. He's glad to pay my debt—that's good news. He's able to pay my debt. I'll never run up a debt for which Jesus does not have the resources to pay. Isn't that hope-giving?

So how does this good news transform our attitudes toward those who are financially in need? It ought to fill us with compassion, not judgment. You need to view

yourself as someone who was indebted to God with an infinite debt and understand God to be so full of mercy and kindness that He sent His Son to come down from heaven to assume all your debts and take on all your needs. If God has been that generous toward you, how can you ever look down on anyone who finds himself in poverty, even if they are there because of their own irresponsibility? How can we who have been forgiven an infinite debt ever look down on someone else who, even through their own misbehavior and irresponsibility, find themselves in a bind? A Christian can never just turn his back and say, "Well, I don't care about you. It's your fault. You deal with it."

So our hearts are to be compassionate and generous. As Christians, I think we should be inclined to think in terms of gifts rather than loans. Of course, a loan can be a reasonable thing and it's not necessarily wrong to make a loan but I think our hearts should desire to give freely. But if our minds are constantly consumed with, "How am I going to get this money back?" then we better think twice. Here's where I think gospel truth complements Biblical wisdom. I think it's important for us to understand that the gospel frees us from guilt-motivated giving. These verses from Proverbs vigorously counsel us to avoid getting ourselves into financial bondage in our efforts to help others. The gospel is the perfect remedy because we're reminded there is only one Savior Who is willing and able to assume the debt of the world and I am not He. Jesus is the Savior.

So as Christians, when we solicit funds for our ministry, guilt should never be the motivation that we're putting out there. How needy we are and making people feel guilty so they'll give out of a sense of compulsion should never be our method. No. And we should not give to people because we feel guilty. Instead, we should always look to Jesus and say, "Jesus, You are the Savior Who is able to meet every need. Show me where I can distribute freely. Show me where I can give and where I cannot give financially. Help me remember, Lord Jesus, that I can always give You. You are the treasure the world needs. You're the great Debt-Forgiver of the world. I can't give everyone my money but I can give everyone my Savior."

We may find ourselves in a position like Peter and John when they met that crippled man and said to him, "Silver and gold we do not have but we have Jesus. We give you Jesus" (Acts 3:6). He's the One we can always give to the world. The One Who is able to forgive every debt.

So that's the wisdom of verses one through five and I think it applies to a lot of different areas of our lives. We might have right motives but we still need wisdom to put them into practice in prudent ways.

## Our Slothfulness

Then in the second section, verses 6-11, we see that when our motivation is absent—when we can't even get out of bed in the morning—we need wisdom to inspire us to action. We're introduced in verse six to a " sluggard." How many of you want to be called a sluggard? Just the whole word sounds really negative. A sluggard is like molasses in January. His favorite words are, "Don't rush me." A sluggard is lacking in initiative and follow-through but is full of excuses.

He lacks initiative. He won't start anything. He prefers to lie in his bed as long as possible. Listen to Proverbs 26:14: *"As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed."* He's hinged to his bed, tied down at many different points so you can't get him out of bed in the morning. If you ask him, in the words of verse nine, *"How long will you lie there?"* you're being a little bit too definite for him. "Well, I don't know." His favorite morning exercise is pressing the snooze button. "Just a little more sleep. Just a little more slumber" (Proverbs 6:10, 24:33). He won't say no but he won't say yes either.

Derek Kidner said, "By inches and by minutes, opportunities slip away from him." He's the guy who arrives at work late, just in time for a coffee break. Then he putzes around for a while, distracting everyone else and before you know it, it's time for lunch. Then after lunch, he has to check Facebook and answer a few e-mails. Then it's the middle of the afternoon and time for another break. Then before you know it, it's too late to start anything significant so it's time to pack up and go home. That's the sluggard—he doesn't get started.

In the rare event that he does get something started, he won't follow through. He won't finish anything. If he gets going on something, that impulse quickly fizzles out; it's too much to see the task through to its finish.

Listen to Proverbs 26:15: *"The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth."* Someone has prepared a nice meal for him; he can get his hand to his plate but he doesn't have the energy to actually put it in his mouth and eat it. What happens? The food gets cold.

So he lacks initiative. He lacks follow through. But he's full of excuses. Just listen to some of the excuses the sluggard uses:

- Proverbs 22:13: *"The sluggard says, 'There is a lion outside! I shall be killed in the streets!'"* He says, "Oh, a lion is roaming around on Randall Road—I can't go out and work today!"
- Proverbs 20:4 (KJV): He thinks a lot about the weather. *"The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing."* If it's not too cold, it's too hot or rainy or too dry. On and on the excuses go.

You might try to talk to the sluggard and reason with him and say, "Do you see where this pattern is leading you? This lack of discipline? This lack of industry?" But he won't listen. Proverbs 26:16 says, *"The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly."*

Benjamin Franklin said, "I never knew a man who was good at making excuses who was good at anything else." The sluggard is an expert at making excuses. Because of that, he's going to be restless and helpless and useless to others.

Verse 11 speaks of the consequences of the sluggard's inactivity—his lack of industry. It says, *"...poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man."* There's going to come a time when you find yourself destitute because you were not industrious when you needed to be.

So what's the remedy for the sluggard? Well, in verse six, the sluggard needs to take the course entitled Antology 101. The sluggard says, "I don't want to study ants. I want to study John Calvin or something sophisticated and deep." No, you need to study ants. *"Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise."* For one thing, she doesn't need a boss. There's no *"chief officer or ruler"* with a clipboard, telling her what to do and making sure she stays on track. She's a self-starter. She's self-motivated. For another thing, she works hard when other people may be relaxing. Verse eight, *"she prepares her bread in summer..."* While we're lounging around our summer picnics, the ants are down there feverishly working hard, carrying off our bread crumbs to some ant hill somewhere, getting ready for a future time when they will need those provisions.

Verse eight says, *"She prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest."* Because she's planned ahead—she's prepared—she will have the food she needs when winter comes. This applies very much spiritually. There will be winter times in our

lives. There will be droughts. There will be times of great difficulty and we need to be industrious now in cultivating the knowledge of God, in growing in our love for the Word and being in His Word. By growing to know Jesus Christ now, when winter comes we will have stored up sufficient spiritual provision to sustain us through the winter time of our lives; to feed us during the time of drought.

Do you see yourself in the mirror here? Do you ever struggle with sloth? Do you ever feel like you're lacking motivation, like you can't get going spiritually or physically?

Let me clarify, too, that sloth is not being still before the Lord. There is a real need for us to be still and have times of quiet meditation and reflection on Who God is through His Word. Observing the Sabbath is not slothful either. In fact, that's one of those very important patterns in our lives. Someone has said, "If we break God's law here, God's law will break us." We must observe Sabbath in our lives. In fact, it's possible to be very feverously busy and still be slothful because you're just keeping busy to avoid really doing the things that matter most. Recreation isn't slothful necessarily either. And of course, having an illness is not slothful.

Sloth is lack of caring. It's apathy. It's ambivalence toward the things that matter most. It can happen to any of us. We can all see ourselves in the mirror here. Derek Kidner says, "The sluggard is just an ordinary person like you and me who has made too many excuses, too many refusals, too many postponements and it has all been as imperceptible and as pleasant as falling asleep."

That's the man in the mirror for all of us at times. There are plenty of excuses for spiritual indolence, for physical inactivity, for not working diligently in the vocation that God has given us. But in Christ, we have a huge impetus for action. We are united to the One Who died for our sins and Who rose from the dead. When we realize we are united to the One Who has risen from the dead and His Spirit dwells in us, this gospel truth frees us from apathy. It's impossible to say you don't care when you live in the Kingdom of Christ and belong to the One Who has conquered sin and death and hell; Who is coming again to make all things new. His gospel frees us and liberates us from apathy, drudgery and despair. He fills us with zeal and energy.

Listen to a couple New Testament verses that apply the gospel to our struggles with sloth:

- 1 Corinthians 15:58 - *"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."* It's not a waste because Jesus is risen from the dead.

- Colossians 3:23-24. We follow Christ Who was a hard working carpenter. We follow the example of the Apostle Paul who was an industrious tent-maker. These verses say, *“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”*

So when we're lacking motivation, we need the wisdom of God's Word to get us moving again; to make us active again. To never be lacking in zeal but to keep our spiritual fervor as we serve the Lord.

## Our Divisiveness

There is one last portrait in Proverbs 6:12-19. I like the way Ray Ortlund connected these two in his commentary. He says, “When we really start moving forward in the Christian life, we can count on counter attacks.” We can count on being attacked by the enemy. These verses show us there is an enemy within our hearts and within our body-life. Together we need to be vigilant in defending ourselves against these attacks when they rise up within our church body.

Verses 12-19 teach us that when our motives are selfish, we need wisdom to avoid acting destructively. You see, we've moved from bad to worse here. In the first portrait, we saw someone who was well intentioned but imprudent. In the second portrait, we're dealing with someone who lacks godly intentionality—he's a sluggard. But in the third portrait, we have someone who is motivated by evil intentions. He's a scoundrel.

Look at verse 12. It calls him *“a worthless person.”* The word there is vile, meaning without benefit or profit or use. It's the word that is used of the devil himself in 2 Corinthians 6:15. He is a worthless person—a wicked person.

We get this character sketch, this mental picture. Think of the FBI's Most Wanted posters hanging in the post office. God's Word is saying, “These are the ones you need to be on the lookout against. And you need to watch for this in yourselves.”

Solomon lists seven traits of the trouble-maker in 12-14 and then in 16-19, he lists seven things the Lord hates. In both cases, the seventh item is the climax—the one that summarizes the whole character. So what is it? Look at verse 14, the seventh trait is that this person is *“...continually sowing discord.”* Then look at the seventh thing the Lord hates in verse 19: *“...one who sows discord among brothers.”*

Wisdom is giving us a yellow caution light here. It's saying, “Be careful. You can do an awful lot of harm without much effort and when you do, God is not pleased. God

detests divisiveness.” Sometimes these selfish, evil motives rise up in our hearts and we need the wisdom of God to avoid causing great harm.

Second Timothy 2:16 says there is a kind of irreverent babble that can start to take place in churches. Irreverent babble will eat its way like gangrene through the church. So avoid divisive people and avoid being a divisive person yourself. A spark of divisiveness can seem trivial at first but it can spread like a wild fire and endanger the life of the whole body.

And how does it start? Look at Proverbs 6:12. It starts in little ways, “with crooked speech...” It’s just a little bit off—off direction, off course, with half-truths, with exaggerations, veiled suggestions, innuendos, secretive conversations, cunning speech. A lot of times when we’re speaking crookedly, we disguise our deceit and don’t realize when we’re doing it ourselves but it leads to the sowing of discord.

There are certain phrases that stand out to me as red lights of crooked speech whenever I hear someone (or myself) saying them. “You know what? I think this way and there are a whole bunch of other people who feel this way, too.”

Okay, who? “Well, I’m not going to tell you. But there are a bunch of other people. Trust me.” That’s crooked speech.

Or we say, “I’m just expressing concerns about so-and-so.”

Well, have you talked to so-and-so? “Well, no. I’m just expressing my concern.” That’s crooked speech.

Be careful about what your language suggests. Be careful about planting suspicions in other people’s minds about someone. Even through little innuendos. Proverbs 16:28 says, “*A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.*”

Then Proverbs 6 moves on to some non-verbal communication—he “*winks with his eyes.*” You know the winking eye (which I have a hard time doing—it’s really obvious when I try to do that). But some people are really good at sending signals with their eyes.

Verse 13 also talks about non-verbal communication that includes “*signals with his feet...*” I’ve been in the Middle East where they practice many types of non-verbal cues. They have lots of ways to talk to one another with their feet. Another signal listed here is “*points with his finger...*” You know what that’s like. All of these things stem from a “*perverted heart devising evil*” and its aim is “*continually sowing discord...*”

I’m going to read little excerpt from Ray Ortlund’s commentary on Proverbs. He gives a concrete example of seeing this happen in a church. I pray it never will happen here.

I think God gives us preventive care in His Word so we're on our guard from things like this happening. Ray Ortlund writes,

"I remember sitting in the back row of a Christian meeting some years ago. The leader was upfront. Then I noticed a man over at the right end of the back row, leaning back in his seat, looking slyly at another man over on the left end of the back row. He was rolling his eyes in disdain. He had a smirk on his face as if to say, 'Can you believe that moron up front?'"

That's what Proverbs is talking about here—subtle, non-verbal ways of insulting others. Ways of aligning ourselves with one another. If you find yourself in a position in the church where you're starting to align yourself with a group of people over and against another group of people, be very careful because this is where divisiveness starts. We are one in Christ and we're not a political action group. We don't have to push our own agendas and interests forward. When we're having trouble agreeing with some people, they are the ones we need to be the most aggressive to reach out to and get close to so we can see eye to eye as much as is possible within the church. We need to strive to be at peace with one another because God says He takes this very seriously. Look at verse 15. God says He will punish this kind of behavior: *"...therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly; in a moment he will be broken beyond healing."* That's what will happen to the man who is continually sowing discord.

In verse 16, we learn this is an *"abomination"* to the Lord. God hates the sowing of discord. Divisiveness is detestable to Him because it tells lies about Who God is. God is One. Christ came into the world to make us one people. We are indwelt by One Spirit. So divisiveness is self-centered, not God-centered. It tells lies about God's work in redeeming us and it tells lies about His power to rule us. When people come into the church and see people divided, it makes Christ look like an impotent King. Like He can't keep us together. Like He's not strong enough to rule His church.

There are always some within the church who cannot be satisfied unless they are stirring up controversy. Listen, there are always some of these seeds in us—in me. We do see ourselves in the mirror here and if we don't we're probably not paying attention. I might think I'm immune to this until someone touches one of my pet issues or does something I don't agree with, and then I think I have a righteous cause. Divisiveness usually starts with a righteous cause—the cause of truth, the cause of holiness. We become inflamed with being right and use that to justify a lack of love. Remember, just because

you're right about something doesn't necessarily mean you're helpful. In love, strive to build up the body.

Let me ask you something, friends. Is there ever an excuse to stop loving the church? Is there ever an excuse to stop loving someone in the church? Even to lack love, to grow cold in our love to one another—is there ever a good reason for that? Richard Baxter said, “No way. No way is the way of God which is not the way of love.” If we don't love Christ's bride, we have no right to correct or criticize her. So avoid divisiveness.

Wisdom teaches us to guard ourselves against the selfish motives of our hearts so we can avoid bringing trouble and turmoil into the community of which God has made us part.

Thank God for these yellow warning lights—three yellow flashing lights. It ends on kind of a heavy note but let's look back to Jesus Christ. *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”*

**Our Indebtedness**--what did Jesus do? He came into the world and paid our debts so we could be free.

**Our Slothfulness**--what did Jesus do? He came into the world and abounded in the work of the Lord so we could be energized by the motivation that He so mightily inspires within us to do the work of the Lord.

**Our Divisiveness**—what did Jesus do? He humbled Himself to make us one body who love one another deeply from the heart.

As we follow Jesus and fear Him, we learn how to live a radically new life. We learn how to walk in wisdom. The song we're about to sing says,

From Him  
And through Him  
And to Him are all things

(Romans Doxology by John Elliott)

Every practical detail of our lives, guided and ruled by Jesus, comes from Him. So let's look to Him together and ask Him to help us when our motives are bad, to repent when we're lacking motivation and need to be revived. And when we have good motives, may He help us know how to put them into action in ways that are truly helpful and wise.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You for the clear teaching of Your Word. We thank You that it addresses us in the nitty-gritty details of our lives. There's a lot here for us to consider and we can see the seeds of failing in all our hearts but thank You that when You brought us to Christ, You did not leave us to ourselves. Thank You that we have a perfect Savior to look to now, Who can teach us to live in a whole new way. I pray that You would

protect our church from divisiveness and protect each one of us from letting that spirit rise up in our hearts. God, I pray that You would revive us with godly spiritual activity this week. May we work heartily in the jobs You've given us and in the care of our families and in our spiritual disciplines, knowing that our labor in You is not in vain. God, thank You for filling us with good desires to help people. We pray that You would give us wisdom so we would know how to be most helpful to others in this world and in everything may we point people to You, Lord Jesus. You're the One—the One and only Savior. From You and through You and to You are all things so we give glory to You now as we worship You in song. Amen.

Oh, the depth of the riches, the wisdom of God  
How unsearchable are His ways.  
How profound are His judgments, so high above our thoughts,  
And His pathways no man can trace.

*REFRAIN*

For from Him and through Him,  
And to Him are all things!  
To Him be glory forevermore!  
To Him be glory forever!  
Amen! Amen! Amen!

Oh, the depth of the riches, the wisdom of God  
How magnificent are His ways.  
Who has been His advisor and who has counseled Him?  
All He gives us who can repay?

Oh the depths of the riches, the wisdom of God  
How immeasurable is His grace!  
How unfailing His kindness, so far removed His wrath,  
And His mercies are new each day!

(Romans Doxology by John Elliott)

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## **New Covenant Bible Church**

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*All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.*

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