

PROVERBS

Treasuring Wisdom

When something becomes a treasure to you, it will draw you in and keep you in pursuit of it. Readers find excuses to curl up with a good book. Athletes push their bodies to the limit in order to achieve higher levels of skill. Musicians practice long hours to master a score of music. Artists return to the canvass as often as it takes to create the perfect work of art. Maybe you can relate to one of these examples, or perhaps there is something else that you highly value. Perhaps for you this looks like the love that you have for your child, or the care that you take to do an excellent job at work. You have undoubtedly noticed that something precious to you keeps you about itself.

The converse is also true. If you do not value something, then it has little influence on the way that you live. Treasure hunters don't bother looking for worthless rocks. This reality of treasuring something in a way that directs your life is a key theme in our passage. In the first four verses, our pursuit of wisdom is described as "treasuring", "crying out", "seeking as silver", and "searching for hidden treasures". In verses ten and eleven Solomon writes "When wisdom enters your heart, and knowledge is pleasant to your soul, discretion will preserve you; understanding will keep you..." Solomon

goes on to describe the ways in which this knowledge which has become pleasing to your soul will direct your life away from wickedness. When you treasure the wisdom of God, and when His knowledge has become pleasant to your soul, the corrupt values of evil men, who "rejoice in doing evil, and delight in the perversity of the wicked", become revolting to your soul. The path of death paved by the seducing flattery of the immoral woman becomes an unthinkable route to consider. You have come to understand the fear of the Lord (2:5), and the way of goodness (2:20) is of more worth than any worldly substitute.

Jesus painted the picture of treasuring that bears results in his parable of the treasure hidden in the field, and again the parable of the pearl of great price. Those who come across the greatest treasure that they have ever known will give up everything to obtain it. It is this sort of unreserved and unrelenting pursuit of God that Solomon calls his son to live by. If he will do so, then God will meet his pursuit with the promise of wisdom and preservation from judgment by keeping his feet on the right path. Treasuring wisdom will direct you to walk uprightly and achieve the promises of God, most importantly that of His presence with you.



LOOK CLOSELY

observation

Proverbs 2:1-22

¹ My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you, ² So that you incline your ear to wisdom, And apply your heart to understanding; ³ Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, ⁴ If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; ⁵ Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God. ⁶ For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding; ⁷ He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; ⁸ He guards the paths of justice, And preserves the way of His saints. ⁹ Then you will understand righteousness and justice, Equity and every good path. ¹⁰ When wisdom enters your heart, And knowledge is pleasant to your soul, ¹¹ Discretion will preserve you; Understanding will keep you, ¹² To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things, ¹³ From those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness; ¹⁴ Who rejoice in doing evil, And delight in the perversity of the wicked; ¹⁵ Whose ways are crooked, And who are devious in their paths; ¹⁶ To deliver you from the immoral woman, From the seductress who flatters with her words, ¹⁷ Who forsakes the companion of her youth, And forgets the covenant of her God. ¹⁸ For her house leads down to death, And her paths to the dead; ¹⁹ None who go to her return, Nor do they regain the paths of life— ²⁰ So you may walk in the way of goodness, And keep to the paths of righteousness. ²¹ For the upright will dwell in the land, And the blameless will remain in it; ²² But the wicked will be cut off from the earth, And the unfaithful will be uprooted from it.

Mark the actions listed in vv 1-4.

Mark the words “So that” in v 2.

Mark all the instances of path(s) and way(s) in this passage.

Mark the words “if” and “then” in vv 1-9.

Mark “Lord” and “God” and their pronouns in vv 5-8.

Mark the phrases “enters your heart” and “pleasant to your soul” in v 10.

Mark the verbs in vv 11-12a & 16a.

Mark the word “So” in v 20.

Identification Key

Develop your own key for identifying the various words and phrases in the text provided. Use different colored pencils, circles, boxes, underlining, etc., but be consistent from week-to-week.



THINK CAREFULLY

interpretation

To **treasure** means to store up something because of its value. So the idea presented here reflects the worth and value of the father's instruction. If the father's commands are viewed as possessing worth, they will be treasured.

seek (stresses physical action) **search** (requires diligence). A silver miner digs (seeks) until the vein is retrieved. A treasure hunter searches until the treasure is found. The efforts of seeking and searching for wisdom are demanding, but rewarding.

The Hebrew word for **shield** refers to the small round shield carried by soldiers. The word **uprightly** means "completeness" and refers to moral uprightness or integrity. In these verses the Lord *Himself* is a shield (i.e., a protector for those who have the kind of moral integrity which God provides through wisdom).

The **paths of justice** represent the righteous ways of those who follow wisdom.

The word **preserves** indicates carefully or diligently giving attention to or guarding something. Here it pictures God's faithfulness to give attention to the way of His saints. The word **saints** indicates those who are loyal to God and His people.

Discretion is a synonym for wisdom. The basic idea has to do with wise planning. It is related to thoughtful discernment. Someone without discretion will jump into something without thinking. However, a person with discretion carefully thinks things through and is able to make a wise decision about it. The benefit of this is that he is preserved from the unwanted and avoidable consequences of a wrong choice.

Understanding refers to insight. When you rightly understand God's mind as revealed in Scripture you are able to make informed decisions. It is in this way that discretion preserves and understanding protects (*keeps*). It keeps one from the disastrous and devastating decisions that might injure spiritually, emotionally, or physically.

The pleasure and delight of the evil man is in doing evil. He doesn't just enjoy it, he **rejoices** in it! His ways are crooked and twisted and he is devious in his path. This is the perverse, dark, devious path from which wisdom delivers those who embrace God and His truth.

...forsakes the companion of her youth... This woman hasn't always been a seductress. As a young girl she herself was guided by parents and then a husband (the companion) who instructed her in the right path. However, she has thrown off the restraint of leadership (both of her parents, her husband, and of God) and now makes her own way to get what she wants.

The **covenant of her God** may refer to the covenant of marriage, but likely refers to the covenant that Israel entered with God where He would be their God and they would be His people. The immoral seductress wants no part of that and so she has intentionally forgotten any responsibility to obey God's law.

...will dwell in the land... "while the promise of land applies uniquely to the Jewish people, the one who chooses to walk in the fear of the Lord and the knowledge of God may fully expect that God will honor all the promises of His word in his personal life" (John A. Kitchen, *Proverbs*, Mentor, 69.).

...cut off... This phrase "is an oft-used expression describing the sudden and irreversible judgment of God" (John A. Kitchen, *Proverbs*, Mentor, 69.).

What do the verbs in verses 1-4 say about our pursuit of wisdom?

Write out verses 1-4 in your own words.

Summarize God's response to the pursuit of wisdom in vv 6-8.

List the words that describe those to whom God gives wisdom.

What are the benefits of wisdom given in vv 9-20?

Provide a description of the people God's wisdom protects us from in vv 9-20.

List the words that are used in vv 21-22 to contrast the blameless (upright) and wicked (unfaithful).
Distinctly mark these words.

Go back through the passage and answer the following questions:

What truths does this passage teach me about God?

What actions does this passage urge me to take?

What sins does this passage urge me to avoid?

What promises does this passage give?



RESPOND WISELY

application

Our passage shows us that God wants us to be successful in life and to avoid the pitfalls of sin. So He invites us to seek the wisdom that He gives.

On a scale from 1–10, how would you rate your pursuit of wisdom?

How might you encourage others to treasure God's word?

Peer to peer

Adult to young adult

Parent to child

Describe how God has been a shield to you.

Give an example of an instance when someone tried to entice you to sin.
How did God's wisdom help you face that situation?

What stood out to you most from this passage? Is there a specific action that God is directing you to take?

For Parents:

Explain to your children how the Lord gives wisdom, "*from His mouth*" (v 6).

Read Matthew 4:4 and describe how Jesus relied on God's Word when tempted, and how God's wisdom will protect your children from the destructive pitfalls of sin.

Share with your children your personal testimony of salvation and explain why you now "*incline your ear to wisdom and apply your heart to understanding*" (v 3).