

A Proverb A Day Keeps the Fool Away

Good Advice

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted Proverbs

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Making good choices is harder than you think. There's not a person in here that could stand up on the stage who hasn't made at least one foolish decision in their life, one choice that we wish we could take back. Granted, some have made more mistakes than others, but we're all guilty every single one of us. And sometimes our foolish decisions, our bad choices, are made because we just don't know any better.

But more often than not, the foolish decisions that you and I make happen because of different reasons. We make foolish decisions because we think about the moment and not the long-term effects. We get caught up in the here and now. We make foolish decisions because we are selfish and we just simply want what we want and we don't care. We make foolish decisions because many times we think we are smarter than we actually are.

We make foolish decisions because we aren't patient. We also make foolish decisions because we want to be our own gods. We don't want anybody to tell us what we can and cannot do. And this is all because of our sinful nature. You and I are born into a world that has been corrupted by sin. So if we are naturally inclined towards sin and folly, how do we make wise choices in the world in which we live?

I'm so glad you asked because we have the answer. We can learn from those who have gone before us. We can gain wisdom from God's Spirit that He gives to us. He doesn't just leave us on our own, and we can also gain wisdom and insight from His Word, which is a blessing and a gift that He has given to you and to me. And so for the last two weeks, we have been going through this book of Proverbs, looking at this letter, these Proverbs that were written mostly by King Solomon.

For those of us that know the story of King Solomon, he was filled with great wisdom because God asked him, "If you could have anything, what would you like?" And he asked for wisdom so that he could rule and govern God's chosen people. It is good to know that he is the author of this book of Proverbs and that even with all of his wisdom, he made plenty of mistakes. You see, having wisdom doesn't mean that you always do the right thing.

Simply having wisdom, having a head knowledge, doesn't mean that you're always going to do the right thing because doing the right thing requires commitment and it requires effort. And so this book of Proverbs was written to give us those practical skills to live well in God's world. It's written with the understanding that if God created everything that you see, including you and me, then He knows how to best live in this world that He has put us in.

Living a life of virtue and integrity and generosity that will inevitably lead to success and peace. This is the goal of our lives. This is God's invitation to learn God's wisdom from previous generations, truly a gift that He has given to us. And so for the remainder of the time today, because this is our last week in Proverbs, I wanted to choose various categories of Proverbs, put them together, and see how we can learn from them.

So we're going to be going through a lot of Scripture. Of course, you can follow along in the Bibles in the pew in front of you. You can use your notebook, your iPhone, your iPad. The scriptures will be on the screen behind me. But in reality, the best way for you to follow along is probably to use your version on your app if you have that. You

can just go to events and find Fairview because it has all of those listed out. I do think I have about 50 verses today. So if you want to flip a lot, you can do that.

But if you just want to be able to follow along, you can do that as well. But again, we're going to start and be in Proverbs. So let me pray, and then we'll jump in. Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You that it continues to teach us that we can gain wisdom and insight from You and from those who have gone before us. Help us to live well in this world that You have given to us. Make the most of our opportunities.

We pray this in Jesus' name, amen. Proverbs 10: 4, Solomon says, "Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth." Again, in Proverbs 24, verses 33 and 34, Solomon says, "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man." There are many proverbs that we have here in this book that talk about this idea of hard work, that God created us to work.

Work is actually a blessing. Work was not the result of sin. For some, that may come as a surprise. Work existed before the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden. Before they sinned and kind of the world became corrupt or became influenced by sin, Adam and Eve had jobs. They had responsibilities there in the garden. But when sin entered the world, sin made work more difficult.

And it also made it never-ending. I want you to imagine some of you love to have a nice, perfect, manicured yard like I do. Could you imagine what it would be like to live in a world without sin where you could edge and trim and mow your yard once and it would stay that way forever? Wouldn't that be nice? It would be green. There would be no dandelions. Just so you know, dandelions are the result of sin. There's no dandelions in heaven, all right? I actually don't know if that's true or not.

And it's funny, just this last week, I got the yard all nice and done, and I want my kids to enjoy it so that they can run barefoot. And I said, "Hey, Mariah, my middle daughter, don't you love that our yard is nice and green and soft so you can run on it?" And she said, "Actually, Dad, I like the dandelions better." I thought, "That's real nice." you know But wouldn't you just love that? You don't have to pull weeds anymore. Things like you paint your house and you don't have to worry about it fading or the color ever going out of style, right?

Things like, for me, especially doing woodworking, you can make a project that's going to sit outside some furniture, and you don't have to worry about the sun fading the wood or cracking or the elements messing with it. You can do woodworking without getting splinters and splinters. Wouldn't that be nice? Those are the result of sin. Work was not meant to be hard. Could you imagine raising your children and never having to say no? Because raising children is a job. It's a responsibility.

Being able to accomplish work or to do something and build something or even nurture something to change. Those are all blessings, not part of a curse. Remember, sin has just added to the frustration of something that was originally intended to be good. And so because of that, just like we do with many things, many gifts that God has given to us, sin can also allow work to be overdone. We call it a workaholic.

And work becomes our God. You see, we often take things that God gives to us that were meant to be blessings, and we take them too far, something they were never intended to be. So because of this, some people believe that we will actually have work to do in heaven because there was work in the garden, and we have this connection between the garden pre-sin and heaven, and the Scriptures seem to make that connection. But if for whatever reason you can't imagine working in heaven, don't worry about it, okay?

It will be wonderful, whatever you do in heaven. All right, let's move on. Proverbs 10:17, Solomon says, "Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray. "Whoever loves discipline," Solomon says, "loves knowledge, but whoever hates correction is stupid." Now, I know some people don't like that word, but it's in the NIV here, so we're just reading it, okay? That's what Solomon says.

Proverbs 16:20, "Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, here is the truth. Discipline is a good thing. You and I, if we want to gain wisdom, should view discipline as a good

thing." Now, I know, I understand, no one wants to be corrected. No one enjoys being told they are wrong. No one enjoys being disciplined.

But discipline is actually a gift that God has given us to bring us to a change. But when we are disciplined, often our defenses go up right away. And we think to ourselves, "Who are you to tell me what I can and can't do? How dare you? Look at the log in your own eye, buddy. Don't show the speck in my own." I've noticed as I've gotten older and as I have kids of my own, that we as humans are better at handling discipline and correction as children than we are when we reach the teenage years and beyond.

I think that we become less good at taking discipline as a good thing. And I read Proverbs 11:2, Solomon says, "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom." I think this is part of the cause. As we get older, we get pride and we think that we know everything. We shouldn't be corrected by others. And so Solomon encourages us, don't allow pride to steal your opportunity to grow and to learn.

All right. On to the next one. And this has 100 Proverbs about it. And so I've chosen some for us to read, but this next truth that Solomon's going to give us, Proverbs 10:19, "Sin is not ended by multiplying words but the prudent hold their tongues." Proverbs 12:16, "Fools show their annoyance at once, but the prudent overlook an insult." Proverbs 15:1, Solomon says, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Solomon says, "The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even tempered.

For even fools are thought wise if they keep silent and discerning if they hold their tongues." I love that verse. Even fools are thought wise until they opened their mouths, right? Proverbs 18:13, "To answer before listening, that is folly and shame. A person's wisdom yields patience. It is to one's glory to overlook an offense. Do not be easily offended." Isn't that true in our world?

Proverbs 23, "It is to one's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel, to get into a fight. A gossip betrays a confidence, so avoid anyone who talks too much." Don't you like that verse? Proverbs 21:23, "Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity. Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person.

Do not associate with one who is easily angered, or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared." Proverbs 25:15, "Through patience, a ruler can be persuaded and a gentle tongue can break a bone." And finally, Proverbs 29:20, "Do you see someone who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for them." The truth, be a person of few words. Be a person of few words.

Why? Because according to Solomon and as you and I have experienced in life, the more you talk, the more trouble you can get in. The more we open our mouths, the more trouble we can get in. I have always heard it said, "You were given two ears and one mouth for a reason because you should listen twice as much as you should talk." And so you and I should spend more time listening and less time talking. James agreed with this when he said, "Who can tame the tongue?

Who can keep control of everything that comes out of their mouths? Every single one of us has said something again that we wish we could take back." But we can't. It's like trying to put toothpaste back in the tube, isn't it? Once it's out, it's out there and it's going to hurt. Many of your parents probably told you the same phrase my parents told me, "Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words will never hurt me." It's a fun saying, but it's not true.

Words do hurt. They can sting. And so we are encouraged to be careful with what you say because you can't take it back. This is even more true in our world today with social media where most of us think that everybody wants to know our opinions. Can I just tell you it's not true? Most people don't care about your opinions. You don't need to share everything you think. And we are so quick to get offended. We are so quick to be hurt or to be offended by somebody.

And so then we have to spout back and we're just good at getting in fights. We're a lot better at throwing gasoline on a fire instead of water. And Solomon says, "Be careful with what you let come out of your mouth. Let your words be few." Let's look at some just funny proverbs. I wanted to break it up a little bit here. So some funny proverbs that I loved, especially as a teenager, these were fun for me, all right? Proverbs 11:22, "Like a gold ring and a pig snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.

This should be on every house wall you know when you're growing up. This would be good," right? Now, the same is true, of course, of male, you know male people. You know This idea that if you're only dating somebody or attracted to somebody because of their outward appearance, then you're totally missing the point. Totally missing it. Now, this doesn't mean that you can't have both. You can have beauty and discretion. That's great. That's the best of both worlds. It's not true. Some of you may know these lyrics by Jimmy Soul.

He said, "If you want to be happy the rest of your life, never make a pretty woman your wife." How many of you have heard that before? Okay, some of you have. I wondered maybe I was the only one. It's just not true, okay? You can have both. You can be a pretty woman and have discretion. But the idea is outward appearances, of course, are fading. Proverbs 16:31, this has become more of a life proverb for me as I get older. But Solomon says, "Grey hair is a crown of splendor.

It is attained in the way of righteousness." Now, you may not recognize because my hair is done on Sunday mornings when you guys see me, but if I don't have gel in it, my wife, who cuts my hair, tells me that at least 40% of my hair is gray already. And I tell her that there are three reasons for that. One is her sorry, honey. Two are the kids. And three is when I took over the lead pastor role here at Fairview Missionary Church. So what I am telling you, really, is I see you all as a blessing to help me attain a life of righteousness.

So thank you very much for doing that. No, the idea of gray hair, he says it's a splendor. It's a gift of those who are attaining a life of righteousness. All right, let's get to some more serious ones. As we look in the book of Proverbs, over and over again, Solomon encourages us to be generous. Let's just look at a few of those. Proverbs chapter 11 verses 24 and 25.

Solomon noticed in his world, and we noticed it in our world today, that you look at one person who gives freely, and yet that person gains even more, and you look at another person who withholds their wealth unduly but comes to poverty. And so the conclusion of the matter, a generous person will prosper, whoever refreshes others will themselves be refreshed. You see, hoarding all of your wealth, Solomon says, I've noticed, actually leads to poverty and ruin.

You and I were never meant to keep everything that we get for ourselves. This is a truth in life that somehow works. The more you give, the more you get. And I'm not preaching the prosperity gospel, but you and I all know people that are extremely generous, and it seems like the more they give away, the happier they are. The more they give away, the happier they are. And the more opportunities God allows them to give to others. Do not hoard your wealth.

Proverbs 12:9, Solomon says, "Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant than pretend to be somebody and have no food." In other words, it is better to live below your means than to spend everything you have trying to impress others. It's better to live below your means because if you spend everything you have, you may end up with nothing. People around you may think you have wealth and you have everything, but you may end up with nothing.

Proverbs 15:16, Solomon says, "Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil." The truth here, money can't buy you happiness. All of the money in the world will not fulfill you. Yes, it might be fun for a little bit. Of course, we all would enjoy it, but it will eventually leave you empty. And let me tell you why. It's because you will wonder, "Is this all there is?" Because we spend our lives working trying to gain wealth or trying to gain security.

And then many people receive that and they wonder, "Is this it? Is this why I did everything so that I could retire and I could travel? And yes, it's fun, but there's got to be more to life than this." I remember when I was growing up, after my senior year of high school and after my freshman year of college, I worked at a car plant, a factory, packing car parts. And I worked with a lot of people that just were rough, rough people, rough around the edges. And we'd have many conversations about faith and life and everything else. And this is one truth that I just could not convince them of.

They would say, "No, money would make me very happy, Joel. You know Money would make me very happy." And I said, "You know, I think it would, but I'm just telling you from people who have experienced it. Solomon, who had immeasurable wealth, said, "Listen, that's not the end goal of life. We all know movie stars, rock stars that had everything, but it couldn't buy them happiness." Proverbs 22: 7. There we are. Okay.

The rich rule over the poor and the borrower is slave to the lender. Let me just be upfront. It is not a sin to borrow money. That's not what Solomon is saying. That's not what I'm saying. But he is saying it isn't always wise to borrow money. I personally believe that in our culture, in our world today, not just in our culture, but we have taken the idea of borrowing money way too far. I can't tell you how many people I have talked with who are in bondage to debt.

There's always a way out, but the way out of debt is a lot harder than the way in debt, and it's always painful. Always. I have the opportunity to serve on the north central region of the Missionary Church here in northern Indiana and southern Michigan. And there have been quite a few times where our board has had to make some extremely hard decisions with churches who have taken out loans and can't repay them. They are in bondage to the bank.

And it's a very difficult situation. And so Solomon just encourages us, "Be careful. Be careful when you borrow because you will be in bondage to who you borrow from." Proverbs 23:4, "Do not wear yourselves out to get rich. Do not trust your own cleverness." In other words, don't make riches your goal. Don't waste your life trying to reach a number, believing that once I reach this number in my retirement account or whatever else, then I will have arrived at my goal of life.

Some of you remember Bernie Madoff, that name? You remember that name? He ran one of the largest Ponzi schemes ever with people's retirements and ended up cheating out thousands of people out of their retirement. And I remember I was just growing up when this was happening. I was a little older, and I remember watching the news and seeing reports of people that were taking their own lives because they had invested everything in this and lost it all.

Those were people that had as their entire goal, this retirement account, and there was nothing more to life. Now, of course, it's sad. Of course, it's wrong what happened. But don't make riches your goal because when you get there, you will find it's empty. All right. Our next truth. Solomon is going to encourage us to avoid bad company. Most of our parents encouraged us to do this.

Proverbs 14:7, "He tells us to stay away from a fool for you will not find knowledge on their lips." In other words, be careful who you allow to be in your inner circle of friends. I have heard it said that you are the average of your five closest friends. So what you think about, what's important to you, what you kind of do in life, you're the average of your five closest friends. In other words, you become like those you spend time with.

Now, Solomon is not saying you can't have friends that don't believe what you believe and don't do the things you do. It's actually good for us to have relationships with those that we can share Jesus with. But be careful who you allow in your inner circle. Remember what the apostle Paul said, "Bad company corrupts good character." It's just a truth about life. Proverbs 19:19, he says, "A hot-tempered person may pay the penalty.

Rescue them, and you will have to do it again." We all know and have someone in our lives who has a temper, and it is difficult to be around that person. It's my belief that every single one of us has at least one person in our

family who has a temper. And that's what makes holidays and getting together so hard, right? It is difficult to be around those that have a hot temper. Let's look at some other great advice that Solomon gives us. These are just going to be random verses that I'm pulling out.

Again, I should have probably made this series six weeks and not three, okay? So I'm trying to cram some stuff here in Proverbs chapter 20, verse 1, Solomon says, "Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler.

Whoever is led astray by them is not wise." He goes on to say, "Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor and drowsiness close them in rags." And then in Proverbs 31, "It is not for kings, Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine nor for rulers to crave beer, lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and deprive all the oppressed of their rights." Now, if you have been at the church for a while, you probably have heard me say, and I continue to believe it to be true, "I do not believe that drinking alcohol is a sin.

I do not believe drinking alcohol is a sin, but I still believe this to be true. It should be done with extreme caution." If you are going to drink, it should be done with extreme caution. Why? Because there are so many people that fall into this trap, so many people that fall into this trap. And so the end goal of all of this, if I'm reading Proverbs correctly, if I'm understanding Solomon correctly, if I've lived enough in this world correctly, I would say that for most people, the best option is just to stay away.

For most people, the best option is just to stay away. Again, I don't believe it's a sin. I obviously don't believe you're going to hell if you do that, but it should be done with great caution. Because again, just like we all have somebody in our family who struggles with their temper, I would venge to say that every single person here in their family has somebody who struggles with alcohol. It's why we have phrases like alcoholic. It's why we know that people are in bondage to that.

And so the best option for many is to stay away. This is what Solomon says. Proverbs 25:17, "Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house too much of you and they will hate you." Isn't this just good advice, right? We say, "Don't wear out your welcome." Yeah? Don't spend too much time with people. Try to pick up on their nonverbal communication. You're like, "Hey, it's time to go." You know like, "I'm going to bed. You don't have to leave, but I'll see you later," type thing. It's just good advice. Set boundaries.

Proverbs 22:6, "Start children off in the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it." I wish I had a quarter every time someone quoted this verse to me. I wish that this were true 100% of the time, but that's not what Solomon's giving us here. It's not a promise. This is a general truth. If you want your children to walk with the Lord, the best thing you can do is model that in your life. Train them up. As they're getting older, teach them about Jesus. You know Love them.

Show them who Jesus is. But it's not a promise. And how do I know that's not a promise? Because I know many of you have children that you desperately want to come back to Jesus and they haven't. But I also notice in this verse that Solomon says, "When they are old, they will not turn from it." And so this is my encouragement to you. If your child is an adult child, they're 40, 50, 60 years old, and they have still not come back to Jesus, don't stop praying for them. Keep praying for them. Keep loving them.

Keep sharing Jesus with them. That truly is the best that we can do. You see, we are all given a free will and we all get to choose our own path. Proverbs 22:1, "A good name is more desirable than great riches. To be esteemed is better than silver or gold. Again, riches fade, but your reputation can last a lifetime. I have learned it to be true in my own life that nobody can take away my integrity.

The only one that can lose that is me. So think about that. The only person that can take away your integrity is you. Don't allow anybody to take that away. In Proverbs 38 and 9, the last two, "Keep falsehood and lies far from me. Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you," saying, "Why do I need you? Who is the Lord?"

Or I may become poor and steal and so dishonor the name of my God." This has become a life verse for me as well that I say to God, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." There's not many people who pray this. I know a lot of people that pray against poverty, but they don't pray against riches either. And I say, "God, give me neither." This is a good prayer. Give me neither so that I can continually trust and depend on you. Again, I love the book of Proverbs. There is so much wisdom here.

I encourage you, again, maybe go through the book of Proverbs. There's 31 chapters. Read one chapter a day for every day of the month and just keep going through it. Keep allowing this to be in your mind and in your heart, for it will transform you. Also know that wisdom is only valuable if you follow it. So I recommend picking maybe one piece of advice, one of those areas that we talked about that maybe stood out to you and say, "Yeah, I can learn in that area. I need to grow in that area. I can work on it.

It's a struggle that I have." That's what a lot of Proverbs is about, the struggles of life, and how do we overcome them? So I encourage you to do that. Let me close in prayer. Heavenly Father, thank you for your wisdom that you give to us. Thank you for not leaving us to our own folly to continually and repeatedly make bad decisions. Thank you that we can know the truth. We can stand with you.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.