

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

January 22, 2023 "Fresh Start: Wisdom."

I Intro.

IT'S 2023!! We're excited about what the new year will bring to NCC. This is our weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from Sunday's message. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. You can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. 2023 will bring some new and innovative ideas in all areas of our church life. We have seen an increased activity in our children's ministry, and we're working on new ideas for both our children and our students. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all that through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can also revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey.

II Recap.

This is the third in our ***Fresh Start*** series. How to begin again. Doing a fresh start in 2023. We all want this year to be better than last. We can't change much out there...the world is just going to be what it is. BUT...we can work on ourselves. The first week we redefined and gave some details about realigning our understanding of, and relationship with God. This is a foundational truth and practice. Last week we went in considerable detail about how to develop a regular practice of self-examination and testing. And the importance of doing this work BEFORE we run into problems, And also having a scripturally grounded faith to examine and test ourselves with. Both of these are available online. Today, the importance and practice of gathering and growing in wisdom.

III Sunday.

I'll be honest...wisdom is one of my favorite topics in the world. For several reasons. One, it is the practical knowledge gathered from real life experience...of others. I get to benefit from someone else's experience. Two, usually wisdom is found in concise, easy to understand forms. And three, really good wisdom is transferable across many areas. Wisdom isn't just advice in one area. It's a life truth that helps in all aspects of our lives. So, let me hear your take on wisdom.

Who are one or two really wise people you turn to for guidance?

How do you use wisdom from others in your life?

Do you have any regular practices to help you gain and grow in wisdom?

The scripture used for the topic of wisdom was the entire chapter 4 of Proverbs. It's not a particularly long chapter, you can read it in less than five minutes. But it's chock full of the specifics of gathering and growing in wisdom. So, read it and we'll put out what we are able to.

What jumped out to you from this passage?

What did you see as some benefits of wisdom?

What did you see as ways to acquire and grow in wisdom?

Here is a very brief overview of how Proverbs 4 talks about wisdom.

1. Wisdom is EVERYWHERE, so listen and pay attention to the world around you.

One of the greatest examples of wisdom being found in the world, is Paul's sermon at Mars Hill. He quoted one of their prophets to talk about how God reveals himself through everything. Learn to constantly be on the lookout for wisdom wherever you are. God has sprinkled the world with it.

2. Wisdom is the catalyst for developing good judgment.

Acquiring and growing a body of wisdom should move us to putting those truths into practice. Wisdom that's only quotes and pithy phrases but never implemented, is wisdom wasted. Grow your wisdom into actual practices that help you be better and better at life.

3. Picture wisdom as a person. Then it will become a trusted friend.

Wisdom is often portrayed as a woman. Even the Greek word for wisdom, sophia, is a woman's name. When you picture the wisdom you acquire as a close confidant, a person in your life you can turn to, then it will become real and practical for you. And will be a great guide through life.

4. Wisdom should be practiced, and you should be able to see the benefits in your daily life.

Wisdom that's just a collection of sayings is wasted. You should be able to see the actual and real changes in your daily life, because the knowledge, wisdom you've gathered you've put into practice.

5. People who don't live lives of wisdom are GREAT examples of wisdom.

This is a sad and unfortunate truth. Some people's lives are so out of control, wisdom is not practiced, they serve as a great example of wisdom that does not flow into good judgment. Scripture often calls these people "fools" because they know better but don't be better. We are still to love and reach out to these people, but we can also learn a lot from them.

6. The wisest thing you can do is guard your heart.

This one verse, Proverbs 4:23 is a well known and important singular truth. Our heart is where we make decisions. Our life flows from our heart and is so susceptible to being deceived. The scriptures warn us about this danger. So, we should do all we can to put guardrails, protections around our heart, to keep it from being influenced by things that can do us harm. We should know where our weaknesses are, and to do all we can to keep those things out of our life.

7. Keep people who don't practice wisdom outside of your inner circle.

There will be people in our lives who just don't live wisely. Their lives will be filled with poor choices. But they don't need to be the people who speak into our lives. The wisest thing we can do is have concentric circles of friends and acquaintances. Close wise friends who speak wisdom, and those we try to help by speaking wisdom into their lives.

IV Challenge.

I know this seems like a lot...and it is. But these are great nuggets of truth, wisdom, from scripture, that can help us live the life God wants for us, and that we really want to live.

Look over the list above again, and which truths, nuggets of wisdom, could you work on to give yourself a truth Fresh Start this year?