

THE SERMON NOTEBOOK

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(Proverbs, No. 13)

SUBJECT: WISDOM

TITLE: WISDOM TRANSFORMS PEOPLE

TEXT: PROVERBS 24:3-7

INTRODUCTION. Consider our text:

“By wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established; And by knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong, And a man of knowledge increases power. For by wise guidance you will wage war, And in abundance of counselors there is victory. Wisdom is too exalted for a fool, He does not open his mouth in the gate.”

Now consider with me the transforming power of wisdom - and let me stress that it is the wisdom of God of which we speak. This wisdom is not achieved, awarded, attained, or divined through some mystical process. Never forget, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”* (9:10). It is the wisdom that comes through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, fed by the Word of God, and nurtured by the Holy Spirit that transforms lives. It transforms people from death to life. It transforms cowards into martyrs; spiritual cripples into mighty warriors of the cross, spiritual pygmies into giants of the faith.

It has been claimed that there are two themes in the New Testament: How to be saved, and how the saved should live. That is something of an oversimplification, but there is no theme in the New Testament does not find roots in the Old Testament.

I. THE WISDOM OF GOD TRANSFORMS US FROM DEATH TO LIFE.

- A. “The wages of the righteous is life,” 10:16a
- B. “The income of the wicked, (is) punishment” 10:16b.
- C. The wisdom of God is best expressed in Jesus Christ, (1 Cor. 1).

“When the whirlwind passes, the wicked is no more, But the righteous has an everlasting foundation,” 10:25 .

II. THE WISDOM OF GOD TRANSFORMS BELIEVERS.

A. Wisdom Transforms Pride into Humility

1. Pride Is One Of The Seven Things God Hates, Pro. 6:16-19.
2. "When pride comes, then comes dishonor," 11:2a.

Regardless of what God says in His Word, fallen man are much more inclined to pride than humility. We teach our children to be proud of their country, proud of family, and proud of their school. For years, I attended meetings of the Louisiana Baptist Convention and observed many of the messengers wearing buttons that read, LC PROUD. As a Mississippi College alumnus I questioned ... Maybe I had better save that for another day.

We teach our young people to take pride in their appearance. We urge them to take pride in their work. As a matter of fact, there was a public service spot on Tv a number of years ago that asked people if they would be willing to sign their name to their work. This is not the pride of which Solomon is writing here.

What is condemned is an egotistical, self-centered pride. This is the kind of pride that dishonors God and inflates the individual's ego. Pride dethrone Gods and enthrone man. Pride replaces God at the controls and moves God to the co-pilot's seat.

"Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall," 16:18.

ILLUSTRATION: Whales really do communicate with each other. One whale sounded the following caution to his dear mate:

"Better watch it; when you get to the top and start to blow, that's when you get harpooned!"

What's true at sea is also true in our world.

3. But with the humble is wisdom" 11:2b.

"A man's pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will obtain honor," 29:23.

"God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble," James 4:6b.

B. Wisdom Transforms Folly into Understanding

1. "Doing wickedness is like sport to a fool, 10:23a

2. "And so is wisdom to a man of understanding," 10:23a
3. "The wise of heart will receive commands, But a babbling fool will be ruined" 10:8.

C. Wisdom Transforms Failure into Success

1. "The way of the lazy is as a hedge of thorns," 15:19a.
2. "But the path of the upright is a highway," 15:19b.

ILLUSTRATION - From *The Biblical Illustrator*.

Many successful people have acknowledged in their memoirs that whenever they came to an impasse in their work and were completely baffled, they sought wisdom from the Lord.

This was true in the life of the inventor of the telegraph, Samuel F. B. Morse. In an interview, George Hervey inquired, "Professor Morse, when you were making your experiments at the university, did you ever come to a standstill, not knowing what to do next?"

"I've never discussed this with anyone, so the public knows nothing about it. But now that you ask me, I'll tell you frankly -- I prayed for more light" "And did God give you the wisdom and knowledge you needed?"

Yes He did," said Morse. "That's why I never felt I deserved the honors that came to me from America and Europe because of the invention associated with my name. I had made a valuable application of the use of electrical power, but it was all through God's help. It wasn't because I was superior to other scientists. When the Lord wanted to bestow this gift on mankind. He had to use someone. I'm just grateful He chose to reveal it to me." In view of these facts, it's not surprising that the inventor's first message over the telegraph was: "What hath God wrought!"

Every time you face a perplexing problem, seek wisdom from above. And when the answer comes, always be sure to thank God and give Him all the glory.

D. Wisdom Transforms Evil into Righteousness

1. "The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked," 3:33a.
2. "But He blesses the dwelling of the righteous," 3:33b.
3. "The LORD will not allow the righteous to hunger," 10:3a.
4. "But He will reject the craving of the wicked," 10:3b.

E. Wisdom Transforms Irreverence into Reverence.

1. "Live in the fear of the LORD always," 23:17b.
2. "The fear of man brings a snare," 29:25a.
3. "He who trusts in the LORD will be exalted," 29:25b.

"He who fears God need fear nothing else, and he who fears not God needs to fear everything else." - - Edythe Draper, *Draper's Book of Quotations for Christians*.

F. Wisdom Transforms Curses into Blessings.

1. "The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked," 3:33a.
2. "But He blesses the dwelling of the righteous," 3:33b.
3. "How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, 3:33b.

"Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at my doorposts. For he who finds me finds life And obtains favor from the LORD. But he who sins against me injures himself; All those who hate me love death," (8:34-36).

G. Wisdom Transforms the Tongue

1. "He who conceals hatred has lying lips," 10:18a
2. "He who spreads slander is a fool," 10:18b.

*"A worthless person, a wicked man, Is the one who walks with a **perverse mouth**,"* 6:12.
"The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverted mouth, I hate" 8:13.

It may be proverbial that "loose lips sink ships," but we have it on the authority of God's Word that *"The tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell,"* (James 3:6).

The tongue a tiny member is,
which lights a mighty flame.
The jungle beasts can man control,
The tongue he cannot tame.

Francis Shaeffer used to stress that we should not be surprised at how low fallen man will stoop. If

we may amend that, I would like to stress that we should not be too surprised at what the tongue can reveal about people - and not just lost people. Saved people. Even those who have walked with the Lord for many years. Can you not think of times when you have said something and wished you could take it back? My mother must have believed that I possessed a tongue that could rightly be described as “a fire.” I don’t know how many times she called my attention to Proverbs 15:1 (I will quote it in the KJV because she did): *“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.”*

3. “The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver,” 10:20.

“The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence,” 10:11.

When I was a student at New Orleans Baptist Seminary we heard many distinguished preachers in chapel. One I particularly remember was Dr. C. Roy Angel, who was for many years pastor of Central Baptist Church, Miami, Florida. Dr. Angel was considered by many to be Southern Baptists’ greatest story teller. I went on to buy a number of his books, one I especially remember was entitled, *Baskets of Silver*, based on Proverbs 25:11: *“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver”* 25:11. The NAS has, “Like apples of gold in settings of silver.”

H. Wisdom Transforms the Mind

1. “Wise men store up knowledge,” 10:14a.
2. “The mind of the intelligent seeks knowledge,” 15:14a
3. “But with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand,” 10:14b.
4. The mouth of fools feeds on folly,” 15:14B.

I. Wisdom Transforms One’s World View.

There is a wisdom from God that the world cannot comprehend. It knows about it - often mocks it, but it does not comprehend it. New Age Movements brought an unhealthy dose of eastern mysticism to America during the last quarter of the Twentieth Century. It gave America an alternative to atheistic evolutionary Humanism (monotheistic evolutionary religious movements). Many people who had been warning of the dangers of “secular Humanism,” thought Christianity was winning the spiritual war for America and the world. Little did most people, including many Christian leaders, understand that Humanism was being replaced with something far more subtle and much more difficult to identify of debate.

The atheist says there is not god. We answer, “Of course there is a God!” The New Ager amplified it, “Of course, there is a god, or a god-like force. In fact there may be many gods. I have my god

and you have yours. If I am happy with my god and you are happy with your god, we should be happy for each other.”

Many who joked about New Age music and New Age spiritual matters never realized what was happening when New Agers began using a different terminology. I have had people tell me that New Age was a fad that had passed. Yet they would mention postmodernism as though there was no connection. I heard two preachers within a month of each other ask, “have we moved beyond New Age to animism?” It was obvious that they had concluded that the world has indeed moved on beyond New Age religious movements. I assure one that we have not moved beyond New Age philosophies: “How can you go beyond anything and everything (except Christianity, of course)?”

The New Age (postmodern) ethic is the same as that of the Humanists. Morality is determined by a majority of one. The only sin to some of these people is calling something a sin. They don't mind telling you they have made a mistake, or done something stupid, just don't give it any moral connotation. When I was a teenager, I would have said, “Yes, I am a sinner. Just don't call me stupid.” Now, it's “Call me stupid, just don't call me a sinner.”

Is it any wonder so many young people flock to churches that serve up a smorgasbord of feel good about yourself programs and opportunities, but “religiously” shield them from the scriptural demand for confession of sin and repentance? Can you not imagine Paul before Felix (Acts 24:24ff), reasoning with him about self-esteem, self-worth, self-realization? No! The Scripture says that “As he **“reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come,** Felix was afraid and answered, “Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you” (NKJV). The KJV tells us that Felix trembled.

If Satan wrote the program for some churches today, it could not serve his purposes any better. I realize just how scary that statement is, but it is not intended to be judgmental. It is an appeal for us to take a fresh look at what we are doing - not what another church is doing - and see who is getting the most good from our services, the Lord or the prince of this world.

CONCLUSION. The wisdom of God transforms us from death to life. It transforms us from children to mature adults. It transforms us from losers to winners, from the agony of defeat to the thrill of victory, from professors of the faith to possessors of the Kingdom. It transforms us from wilderness beduins to possessors of a land flowing with milk and honey.

If you have never received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord - and He never seeks to be anyone's Savior without becoming his Lord - let me urge you to simply trust him for His great salvation right now. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. Today is the day of salvation, this is the accepted time. You will find new life in Jesus Christ and you will be blessed with the wisdom of God.

The wisdom of God transforms families. It transforms nation, and it individuals. The wisest move

I ever made was to trust Jesus Christ. When I believed, committing my life to Him, God gave me eternal life. When He gave me this new life, He placed His Spirit in my heart to nurture and develop me, to guide and teach me, to empower me to walk in wisdom, and in the light of the Son of God.

INVITATION.