



## Theme: Summer Wisdom in Proverbs and James “The Beginning of Wisdom”

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### Weekly Memory Verse:

**<sup>5</sup>Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.**


**<sup>6</sup>Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.**

– Proverbs 3:5-6

**Meditation Moments for Monday, June 29** – As you begin your study of Biblical wisdom literature, you may want to divide your reading into three time slots per day – morning, mid-day, and night. Or you may wish to charge ahead in reading the entire day’s reading in one setting. The best way to savor wisdom literature is to have a journal or notebook with you to record your insights, prayers and thoughts each day. Start by reading **Proverbs 3:5-6** above as our memory verse to prepare your heart. Unless we spend time in the book of Proverbs, we tend to think of it simply as a collection of pithy one-liners that we’ve come to be familiar with over time: “A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger”, Proverbs 15:1; or “Train up a child in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not turn from it”, Proverbs 22:6; or “As iron sharpens iron, so one...[person] sharpens another”, Proverbs 27:17. But the book of Proverbs is so much more than that.


 Read **Proverbs 1:1-7**. This is the introduction to the book of Proverbs. Looking back to the weekend’s sermon, remember that wisdom is insight that comes with REFLECTION, enabling us to order our living according to God’s divine wisdom. In these introductory verses, what does a study of wisdom literature promise us? Verse 7 uses the phrase, “the fear of the LORD.” Remember that this idea is about reverence or awe. Is “fear of the LORD” a helpful term for you in relating to God? How might you think of “fear of the LORD”, a negative-


sounding term at first, in a positive way, a way that is faithful to the whole of the Biblical witness, that God is a God of love and grace?


 Read **Proverbs 1:8-19**. How do parents offer wisdom? In what ways do verses 10-19 capture how temptation sometimes works?

**Prayer:** *Wise and Loving God, may I soak in your wisdom today and every moment of my life, living in awe of you, and drawing close to you, like a helpless child in need of a protective parent. May your wisdom protect and guide me. Amen.*

**Tuesday, June 30** – Read aloud our memory verse for the week, **Proverbs 3: 5-6**, and invite God to help you do what the Proverb says.




 Read **Proverbs 1:20-33**. In the book of Proverbs, “Wisdom” is personified; it is not a “thing” we acquire. More than that, “Wisdom” is personified as a woman: Verse 20 reads, “Wisdom shouts in the streets. She cries out in the public square.” Most of us are used to thinking of God as “Father.” Is it possible for you to hear the Word of God personified in feminine terms? Why or why not? Bear in mind that in the act of creation in Genesis 1:26-27, God created humanity in God’s own image and likeness, “male and female” God created them. What does that say about the nature of God in connection with today’s readings from Proverbs?

 Read **Proverbs 2:1-11**. Here the author promises that if we seek God’s wisdom – the knowledge of God’s will and ways and divine order, we will find wisdom. How might you seek this wisdom? What are the benefits of seeking wisdom we read about in verses 5-11? What does this mean? Pray that you might truly seek God’s wisdom.

 Read **Proverbs 2:12-22**. Note that the first part of this chapter dealt with the promises to those who pursue God’s wisdom, but now, in the last half of the chapter, the author speaks of those who are the opposite – who ignore wisdom from God. While this passage uses the metaphor of an immoral woman, it is meant to represent anything that leads to death or separates us from God, ourselves, or others that we love. What happens when we pursue these things in our lives? What does the Proverb encourage us to do in verse 20 that helps us avoid disastrous relationships? How can you walk in that path today?



**Prayer:** *God of Wisdom, save me from evil and disastrous relationships. Help me to, “follow the steps of the good, and stay on the paths of the righteous,” so I will live with you and keep my integrity. Forgive me when I take the dangerous path and restore me to your heart. Amen.*

**Wednesday, July 1** – Read aloud **Proverbs 3:1-6**. This chapter begins to offer some wonderful and concrete ways to live. Savor each of these Proverbs. Read again verses 3 and 4. What are these words calling you to do? Read again verses 5 and 6, What do these verses, our memory verses for the week, really mean? What does it mean for God to make your path straight? It sets an appropriate warning before us: we are not the full measure of creation!

-  Read **Proverbs 3:7-12**. What are verses 7 and 8 calling you to? How can fearing the Lord be healing and refreshing? What do verses 9 and 10 ask of you? What does it promise? What role does discipline play in the life of a child? Have you ever experienced the discipline of God?
-  Read **Proverbs 3:13-35**. What do these verses call you to? What do they promise? As Christians, we are to see in Jesus the ultimate personification of the Word and Wisdom of God (John 1), and we are to put our trust in Christ!
-  Read **Proverbs 3:27-35** – what are these various Proverbs demanding of you? How do they warn you? What are some obstacles that keep you from living into these words?


**Prayer:** *God, my heavenly parent, may I be your child that does not, “lose sight of common sense and discernment.” May I hang on to your words of wisdom, so they refresh my soul. May they keep me safe on my way, so my feet will not stumble, and I can go to bed without fear and sleep soundly. Amen.*


**Thursday, July 2** – Read once again your memory verse, **Proverbs 3:5-6**, and ask for God's help in living by it.

-  Read **Proverbs 4:1-9**. David was the second king of Israel, having become king after Saul. This claims to be David's words to his son Solomon, who would be the next king of Israel and who is said to have gathered the wisdom sayings we find in the book of Proverbs. What do you think is meant by “wisdom” here? Why is wisdom personified as a woman? How does wisdom bring about the blessings described here?
-  Read **Proverbs 4:10-27**. As is common in Proverbs, the path of the righteous is contrasted with the path of the wicked. We find concrete instructions for living a life of wisdom in the final verses of this chapter. Pause to consider the meaning of each of these verses and pray for God's help in living them.

**Prayer:** *Gracious God, help me to guard my heart above all else, for it determines the course of my life. May I always look straight ahead and fix my eyes on what lies before me. I want to mark out a straight path for my feet and stay on the safe path; not getting sidetracked and keeping me feet from following evil. Amen.*

**Friday, July 3** – Recite this week's memory verse, **Proverbs 3:5-6**, once again. Now read **Proverbs 5**. In contrast to “Lady Wisdom”, the father in these first several chapters of the book of Proverbs, draws a contrast to what is referred to as “Lady Folly” or “the immoral woman.” His admonitions are to his son(s) to avoid personal destruction through loose or immoral living.

-  Although cast in what we would call “sexist terms” today, there is broad applicability in this contrast if we can allow the text to speak metaphorically. Are men the only victims of loose living? Aren't there just as many “immoral men” who pose as real a threat to women seeking to live upright lives as vice versa? Is sexual immorality the only form of immorality that destroys life the way God envisions it for us?

 Adultery is not simply a modern phenomenon. Most of us will experience this temptation in our lives. The question is, what will we do with these feelings? Proverbs 5 instructs us and then makes plain the consequences of pursuing inappropriate relationships, and then it offers God's will for our relationships. The adulteress in this chapter could be any kind of temptation that leads you from the path God intends. Do you ever struggle in this area? If so, use this chapter to form your prayer inviting God's strength and help as you seek to remain faithful to God and your mate.

**Prayer:** *Lord God, may I pay attention to Your wisdom and listen carefully to Your wise counsel. Help me show discernment so my lips express what I've learned. You see my path, so lead me in the way to life. Amen.*

**Saturday, July 4** – On the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of America's birth, let's read a few proverbs appropriate for us as a nation. As you read these verses, be in prayer that our nation and its leaders might be wise in these ways.

 Proverbs 14 (NLT):

**31** Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker,  
but helping the poor honors him.

**32** The wicked are crushed by disaster,  
but the godly have a refuge when they die.

**33** Wisdom is enshrined in an understanding heart;  
wisdom is not found among fools.

**34** Godliness makes a nation great,  
but sin is a disgrace to any people.

 Proverbs 11 (NLT):

**11** Upright citizens are good for a city and make it prosper,  
but the talk of the wicked tears it apart.

**12** It is foolish to belittle one's neighbor;  
a sensible person keeps quiet.

**13** A gossip goes around telling secrets,  
but those who are trustworthy can keep a confidence.

**14** Without wise leadership, a nation falls;  
there is safety in having many advisers.

**Independence Day Prayer:** *"For freedom, Christ has set all free." (Galatians 5:1)*  
*Almighty God, you rule all the peoples of the earth. Inspire the minds of all women and men to whom you have committed the responsibility of government and leadership in the nations of the world. Give to them the vision of truth and justice, that by their counsel all nations and peoples may work together. Give to the people of our country zeal for justice and strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with your gracious will. Forgive our shortcomings as a nation; purify our hearts to see and love the truth. We pray all these things through Jesus Christ. Amen.*