

**SEEKING WISDOM - PLEASING GOD  
MAY 11, 2012**

**1.0 Introduction – Objectives**

Thank you for inviting me to be with you. Thank you for coming out tonite.

Life is about making decisions. The greatest decision you will ever make is to repent and become a believer in Jesus Christ – a decision that affects your life for eternity. **Once that decision is made, you become an ambassador for Christ because he is your LORD and Savior.** He becomes our Master; we become his slave. As Christians, we must let Jesus govern our lives. The Book of Proverbs can help us. In fact the verb word “Proverb” means “to rule or to govern”. As Christians, we should let Proverbs govern our lives; that is their purpose. It is God’s Instruction Manual. Let me read from Proverbs 1:

Proverbs 1

**Purpose and Theme**

<sup>1</sup> The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:

<sup>2</sup> for gaining wisdom and discipline;

for understanding words of insight;

<sup>3</sup> for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life,

doing what is right and just and fair;

<sup>7</sup> The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,  
but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

I have three objectives tonite:

**No. 1 - Encourage you to be Proverbs Men – accept the 1 year challenge**

Proverbs 21:6 states:

**“He who gets wisdom loves his own soul,  
he who cherishes understanding prospers.”**

“Understanding” is the knowledge of God and prospers means having peace.

**Men need the 12 times** because we need the repetition and we need to see the influence of God’s wisdom in our lives over a period of time. Just as you have grown in your job or career, you will grow in wisdom.

**No. 2 – I want you to share the wisdom of Proverbs with others.** Proverbs 27:17 states: “**As Iron Sharpens Iron, one man sharpens another.**”

I ask that you share Proverbs with your sons, your grandsons, your father, your brother, your friends, your business associates. Share with at least one man each month, and then pray for that man. The wisdom of Proverbs could have a great impact on our country and culture.

If men knew right from wrong and the fear of the LORD, there would be less crime, fewer divorces, better husbands, fathers, businessmen, and politicians.

**No. 3 - I want You to Be Bold as a Christian – to stand up for God**  
Proverbs 28:1

In Revelation 3, Jesus says to the church of Laodicea, which represents this church age:

“ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other. So because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitifully poor, blind, and naked.”

We must be “Hot” for the LORD. Instead of being like Jonah and running away from our responsibility, we must accept our responsibility to be true ambassadors for Christ! We must be a light in a world of darkness!

**These are my objectives TONITE ! So let's start with Prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to join us in opening our hearts.**

Thank God that we are created in his image  
Pray that the Holy Spirit will open our hearts  
Pray that we may seek and have wisdom.  
Pray that.....

## **2.0 Solomon Asks for Wisdom**

1 Kings and II Chronicles describes that Solomon became king at an young age possibly he was in his 20s. God appeared to him in a dream and asked what he

desired most. He asked for “a discerning heart to govern the people of Israel and to distinguish between right and wrong”. **He asked for wisdom.** How many people would make that their No.1 desire? Solomon did because his father, King David, created in him a desire for wisdom. In Proverbs Chapter 4, Solomon writes that his father David taught him that wisdom is supreme and is worth all you have.

David shared his love of wisdom with his son, Solomon. David understood that as fathers we are accountable for the souls of our children. David understood that we are to help our children grow from:

- (1) foolishness to wisdom
- (2) selfishness to generosity and
- (3) an awareness of God to a passion for God.

Because Solomon asked for wisdom and not riches, long life, or death for his enemies, God was pleased and gave Solomon riches and honor in addition to wisdom. He not only became the wisest man but also the richest man in history.

But I got ahead of myself. 1 Kings 3 states that Solomon loved God and was obedient to His statutes. And in 1 Chronicles 17, we read of God’s Promise to David. God promised David that his son would build the Temple and that God would love his son forever. God said he will be a son to me. How awesome is that! **Yet that is what God has no promised each one of us!**

Proverbs is a book on how to live to please God, written for all people! Solomon wrote these Proverbs to share the wisdom of God. He did not write an essay on anger management; he simply wrote:

**“A gentle answer turns away wrath,  
But a harsh word stirs up anger.”**

Proverbs were written as short thought provoking statements often with contrasts between good and bad. Solomon shared the wisdom of God in brief Proverbs that people could memorize and share from one generation to the next; one man to another.

Proverbs identifies the difference between life and death; between choosing the woman of wisdom vs the woman of foolishness. James says there are two kinds of wisdom:

**“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts....such wisdom does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual from the devil. For where you find envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”**

**“But the wisdom that comes from heaven, is first of all pure, then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.**

Selfish ambition & Envy – what does that look like? It looks like the world we live in. It is a world of materialism where money becomes our king, our ruler. Where shame is not related to sin but lack of money, lack of materialism. Where people are looked down upon because they are unemployed, at the Food Bank, or begging for work or money. Where men commit suicide because they are without a job and believe they have failed in life.

### **3.0 Proverbs – A Way of Living**

The Jewish people were God’s people; they were called to be obedient. Proverbs was written in a culture that understood God, His Power, His Love, His Discipline. They acknowledged God. Wisdom or Hokmah in ancient times was something very valuable; something to strive for, to seek. “Hokmah” was a high Priority for Jewish men and for their children. Children were most important in the Jewish community. Josephus wrote **“but our chief ambition is for the education of our children.”** **The center of education was the Jewish home.** By using Proverbs, parents could train their children in Godly living, just as children in future years would teach the next generation. (Ref: Proverbs Bible Study – by Life Change NAV)

The source of many problems in our country today is **that men have fallen captive to the wisdom of the world.** The wisdom from heaven is no longer pursued by men or taught to children. So we have a culture of greed and selfishness. **Now, more than ever, men need “hokmah” for godly living and for passing on to the next generation. ...**

Our goal is to search for wisdom as if it is a hidden treasure. James 1:5 says

**“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”** What an incredible

promise! Just as God made the promise of John 3:16 – here He promises us wisdom if we truly ask and seek!

Proverbs has more than 100 promises. For example:

**“Commit to the LORD whatever you will do,  
And your plans will succeed.”**

**“ A generous man will prosper;  
He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.”**

#### **4.0 The Heart of a Proverbs Man**

How can the enemy take us captive – by simply putting out our light. Jesus said to let our light shine; yet Christians have many of the same attributes of our fallen world. As Christians, we must focus daily on being Godly men.

Proverbs Men by the Holy Spirit selected 12 characteristics from Proverbs 11 that define a Godly Man; these are:

##### **Reaching in:**

- **Be Humble**
- **Be Honest**
- **Have Integrity**
- **Be Righteous**

##### **Reaching out to our neighbor**

- **Be Understanding**
- **Be Trustworthy**
- **Be wary**
- **Be Kindhearted**

##### **Reaching Up to God**

- **Ask forgiveness**
- **Be Generous**
- **Be Fruitful**
- **Trust God**

**Tonite, I want to talk about the four characteristics that God wants in each of us!**

## 5.0 Humility

### God tells us to be humble.

**11<sup>2</sup> When pride comes, then comes disgrace,  
but with humility comes wisdom.**

Often we define humility as the opposite of Pride, thinking more of our accomplishments than our relationship with God. Aren't we all guilty of that?

Holman Bible Dictionary defines **humility as the ability to recognize our dependence on God and respect for other persons. It is "Discovering God"; Discovering that God is our Creator and that we are His Creation.** Humility is to acknowledge that we are the created not the Creator; we are the servant, not the Master.

Rick Warren states that "humility" is being teachable. Are you teachable? Am I teachable? Are we willing to learn? To change our lives?

Humility, the first step to wisdom, is to acknowledge our dependence on God and to be teachable. Our culture encourages pride, which separates us from God's wisdom.

Proverbs 16: 5 states;

**The LORD detests all the proud of heart,  
Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.**

Only humility opens us up to spiritual growth. Look at what God said about Moses in Numbers 12:3& 8

**<sup>3</sup> (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)**

**<sup>8</sup> With him I speak face to face,**

In the 1895 book "**Humility – The Journey toward Holiness**", Andrew Murray writes about "Humility" and "Fear of the LORD" -- this is the foundation of wisdom. He writes four key points:

- Humility is to acknowledge that our relationship to God is "one of unceasing, absolute dependence" and "that we owe everything to God".

“We must present ourselves as empty vessels in which God can dwell and manifest His power and goodness”.

- “When I look back upon my Christian experience, or at the church of Christ as a whole, I am amazed at how little humility is seen as the distinguishing feature of discipleship.” Humility is not esteemed the cardinal virtue, the one indispensable condition of true fellowship with Jesus.”
- “Humility is the only soil in which virtue takes root “And so pride – the loss of humility – is the root of every sin and evil.”
- “Humility is not something that will come of itself, but that it must be made the object of special desire, prayer, faith, and practice.

**The root of the seven deadly sins is the lack of humility. Humility is essential if we as to enter into prayer. Without humility, our prayers are in vain.**

Humility is not be a wimp; but being a faithful servant to God! Can there be anything greater? Yet we often fight it – and choose the world; we chose PRIDE

Hosea 13:6 **“When I fed them, they became satisfied;  
when they became satisfied, they became proud;  
when they became proud, they forgot me.”**

**Doesn't this describe ourselves –Doesn't that describe our nation?**  
Let us be humble discovering and declaring our dependence on God!

## **6.0 Honesty**

**God tells us to be Honest.**

Proverbs 6:16-17

**There are six things the LORD hates,  
seven that are detestable to him:  
haughty eyes, a lying tongue,**

The first is pride; the second is dishonesty

**Honesty is the fabric that holds a nation together.** Our nation was founded by honorable men who spoke the truth. Today, honesty is becoming less visible in our country. Our politicians, our business leaders, our families are no longer rooted in honesty.

Some time ago, I had a individual call me. He wanted to do business together. After some time, I simply asked him “are you honest?” His reaction..... He hung up. Some time later another individual called with the same question. I did the same thing expecting the same result. This time the individual simply said “I wish I had asked that question of a few of my business partners.” Ask yourself that question daily in your business activities – “Was I honest today? Did I please God?”

Donald Douglas of Douglas Aircraft and J.P. Hayes.... In the early days of jet aviation, Mr. Douglas was willing to lose a \$135 million contract by telling the truth. Mr. JP Hayes gave up a year on the professional golf tour. Share your stories of honest men. I encourage us be honest men.

Larry Burkett of Crown Financial Ministries said

**“A Christian’s usefulness to God is directly proportional to his honesty.”**

**We must be honest when we claim that Jesus is both our LORD and our Savior.**

## **7.0 Integrity**

### **#3 God tells us to have Integrity.**

**<sup>3</sup> The integrity of the upright guides them,  
but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.**

Integrity means to be whole - One. The opposite is duplicity. Think about that? Are you the same man at work as you are at home or at church? Are you the same man Saturday night when you are with friends as you are Sunday at church. Does your word mean something? Does your language at work honor God as if you were at church.

Integrity goes beyond honesty – telling the truth; Integrity is keeping your promises, fulfilling expectations. Integrity means being willing to take

responsibility for correcting errors whether we are at fault or not. Jesus was the greatest example of this. (Ref: Solomon Pg 53)

Paul Coughlin in his book "Unleashing Courageous Faith" discusses Thumos (courage). He states that when the Holy Spirit speaks to us to do something – to speak up, to do an act of kindness or compassion. If we hesitate, we will talk ourselves out of doing it. If we do not act, we lose a portion of integrity. If we act with thumos, God will surprise us.

The word integrity is used only in this Proverbs and Job. Satan attacked Job and throughout it all – but Job still maintained his integrity. He was a whole man. He was consistent. Isn't that one quality you look for in others. Integrity is not to be two people but simply a man of God.

Proverbs 13:4 "**Righteousness guards the man of integrity**"

## **8.0 Righteous**

### **He tells us to be Righteous.**

Our current English translation for righteousness is "uprightness"; but righteousness, in biblical usage, is about the relationship between God and man. Holman Bible Dictionary defines "righteousness" as **absolute faith in and the commitment to God**. The standard is raised.

Proverbs has many verses on the righteous man and the wicked man. If one is not righteous by having that special relationship with God, then one can only be wicked. One cannot be half righteous - yet that is what Satan wants.

**"Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath,  
but righteousness delivers from death."** Proverbs 11:4

Righteousness is superior to riches; yet, we as a society pursue riches. We encourage our children to go to college and get a good paying job - not to glorify God - but to gain material wealth. Should we not spend more time helping them to develop a relationship with God?.

The Puritans wrote the Mayflower Compact which starts with:

**"In the name of God, Amen.** We, whose names are underwritten, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by the **Grace of God**, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, defender of the Faith, etc.

**Having undertaken, for the Glory of God,** and advancements of the **Christian faith**, and the honor of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia; "

The first winter at Plymouth 47 of the 100 settlers died. The captain of the ship offered to take them back because conditions were so bad. **Yet they all refused - because their commitment was for the glory of God. That is righteousness!**

For me, righteousness is simply - "Wanting to please God instead of myself" - this increases my faith and my commitment. Often we have to make a choice. When someone says something that offends us or attacks us. When someone sues us. How do we respond? Our worldly desire is to attack, but that is not God's will. It will not please God? Jesus said we must pray for our enemies. As Ambassadors for Christ, we must faithfully represent God's love and grace.

Jesus said **"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."** Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector, gave up his dignity to climb a tree seeking Jesus Christ. And he was filled. That is the thirst, the hunger that we should have for righteousness - willing to do whatever is required to develop that personal relationship with God! And Jesus said to Zacchaeus "Today salvation has come to this house".

Wisdom can only be learned in a personal relationship with God; therefore, we must seek righteousness.

In summary, these verses identify the four major character traits – Humility, Honesty, Integrity, and Righteousness. **These are the building blocks God desires in us.**

## **9.0 Be Bold**

People reacted to Jesus in three ways:

- 1 – Rejected him like those in Nazareth and Jerusalem wanting to kill him.
- 2 – Came to him to receive something -- such as the miracle of healing –
- 3 – the Apostles came to him to learn and to serve.

Jesus taught conflict because he clearly showed God's will. **He did not compromise with evil. He was bold.** He healed on the Sabbath; he ate with tax collectors; he forgave sins to confront the Pharisees; he drove out evil spirits, one time into a herd of pigs. He did not ask the owners of the pigs if it was all right. The owners got angry; the Pharisees got angry. Jesus produced conflict because He stood up for God wisdom and not the wisdom of the world.

Wisdom will empower us. Jesus sent us out into the world to be a light. But to be a light, we must have wisdom. Boldness happens without planning. When events come together and we must make a quick decision – Do we trust God? Do we have the courage to speak up? To challenge the secular world?

A.W. Tozer writes “We have developed in recent times a peace-loving, soft spoken, tame and harmless brand of Christian of whom the world has no fear, and for whom it has little respect. . . . We fear to talk about the destructive sins of modern civilization for fear someone will brand us bigoted or narrow. **What has happened to the spirit of the American Christian?**”

**Proverbs 14:34 “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.”**

**Proverbs 23:10 “Do not move an ancient boundary stone”**

**Revelation 2:5 “Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things that you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come and remove your lamp stand from its place.”**

Our country has moved the ancient boundary stone; our sin is a disgrace; our lamp stand will be removed unless we repent and remember!

Proverbs 14:2 **There is a way that seems right to man, but in the end it leads to death.**

As Christians, we must stand up for God's will – we say “thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” – **Now we must show our faith and do it!**

- We must share our beliefs in Creationism and oppose Evolution
- We must stand up for Our Christian Heritage
- We must stand up for marriage between a man and a woman.
- We must be Pro-life

Proverbs 24:11-12 states:

**“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say we knew nothing about this, does not he weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your heart know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?”**

As a Christian, I am obligated to vote for only Pro-Life and Pro Marriage candidates. I cannot separate my faith from my actions. **Otherwise I am a hypocrite.** These are strong words, but Proverbs 25:26 states:

**Like a muddied spring or a polluted well is a righteous man, who gives way to the wicked.**

Christians must have Courage and be Bold – if we are luke warm Jesus will spit us out!

**How many of you have seen the movie “Courageous”?** It is the story of five men. These men seeked and exhibited humility, honesty, integrity, righteousness. They stood up for what is right and what would please God.

Paul Coughlin writes in his book “Unleashing Courageous Faith” that God meant for men to be courageous. **Without courage, we cannot practice any virtue with consistency. We must learn to be courageous – because for most people it does not come naturally.** Our military, our police and fireman are trained to be courageous – to tackle dangerous situations. **Christian men are not trained and we are not united.** Therefore cowardice erodes our integrity

and weakens us. Martin Luther wrote that avoiding spiritual battles due to cowardice is equivalent to spiritual treason.

Christians with courage came here and served God, established colleges and universities, abolished slavery, and established civil rights. Today, most Christians hide when there are battles to be fought. Courage is contagious. If you want more courage, hang out with courageous people – read books about courageous people. In sports, defense destroys, offense creates. It takes more courage to go offensive – because it is more conspicuous, so it is criticized more.

Pope John Paul II visited Poland in 1978, his homeland, which was officially atheistic. Pope John Paul reminded his fellow Poles of their God given nature by saying” You are men; you have dignity. Do not crawl on your bellies” That visit was the turning point for Poland. **Courage and Faith are inseparable.**

### **The Movie “Courageous” ends with the words**

**“But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”**

We accept Jesus as both our LORD and Savior, for Jesus to be our LORD we must be the servant – so thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

At the end of his life Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes:

**Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter; Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgement, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.**

May God bless you and I with Wisdom, Understanding,  
and the Courage to be a Man of God!

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