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Bible Lessons



**"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED" II Cor. 3:18**

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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Volume 18

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No. 1

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Theme for First Quarter, 1986



Our series of lessons for this quarter will be taken from the Book of Proverbs. Having found many, many spiritual blessings from the sayings and messages in this part of the Holy Bible we feel greatly inspired and directed of the Lord to set forth an intense study of this Book. Our eyes have been opened to a greater scope of its value and purpose for us. Especially does it have a special appeal to the young people. It is to be noted that the Book of Proverbs is divided into five parts. Part 1 is as a father instructing his son or as a master his scholar. This first section covers the first 9 chapters and is a preparatory for Part 2. Our lessons for this quarter will cover Part 1, the first 9 chapters. Part 2 will cover that beginning with chapter 10 through chapter 22 and verse 17. This is the main bulk of the Book consisting of the various proverbs and wise sayings that Solomon brings forth. Part 3 begins with the 17th verse of chapter 22 and goes through chapter 24. Part 3 is the father or master again addressing the young man, giving fresh admonitions to wisdom and instructions. Part 4 is another collection of Solomon's proverbs copied out by men under King Hezekiah. This covers chapters 25 through 29. Part 5, which covers chapters 30 and 31, is from other sources. Chapter 30 has the words of Agur that were spoken to Ithiel and Ucal, who were probably his scholars. Chapter 31 is an address of King Lemuel, repeating words of counsel given to him by his Mother. In our studies this quarter, we will notice the earnest entreaty of wisdom, represented by a virtuous woman (because of charm, beauty, service, benefit, and stability). Let us also take heed to the warnings concerning the evils of the world and sin, which also are presented under the aspect of a woman. The source and content of True Wisdom we must also earnestly consider. May the Lord bless our souls in this series of Bible Lessons from the Book of Proverbs.

As the last Sunday in this quarter is Easter Sunday we have taken the last two lessons out of the study in Proverbs to study the purpose of Christ's death and what His resurrection means to us.

—Bro. Leslie C. Busbee

January 5, 1986

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

Prov. 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;

2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;

4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

9 For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

10 My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path:

16 For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.

17 Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.

Memory Verse: A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: Proverb 1:5.

Central Thought: Through the inspiration of the Spirit of God comes to us the wise, weighty, authoritative sayings, written by Solomon, preserved and handed down through the ages for us to read, consider, hearken to, and follow carefully with the intent to guide us in the safe, holy, and heavenly way, thus steering us away from the path of destruction.

Word Definitions: *Proverb:* A weighty, wise, and authoritative saying well worth taking heed to. *Discretion:* Good and wise planning. Another word for proverb is "Maxim" which is defined as a general truth and rule of conduct expressed in sentence form. This is the meaning of the term "dark saying". *Subtilty:* The ability to introduce fine-drawn distinctions into the use, discussion or interpretation of.

LESSON BACKGROUND

"Any thing worth doing is worth doing right." "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." I am sure that most of you have heard these two wise and authoritative sayings. These are samples of proverbs, or maxims, that have been expressed and handed down through the ages. They have probably helped guide many people in right decisions and wise moves. Man needs vivid and faithful guidelines to help chart his course in life. To disregard the wise counsels that have been proven by many before us is to invite disaster and defeat. We are looking now at the purpose of this book of Proverbs. These wise sayings are to help us to know, to perceive, to receive, and then to give to others. If we will hear these proverbs and receive the instruction that they offer, and if we will walk in the light of their guiding influence we will gain and increase in learning of the true ways of life. To be ignorant of the truth contained in these sayings or to ignore and fail to take heed to them is to assure us of failure and frustration. For, as we see clearly warned about in our lesson, there are many evil and dangerous characters about. They are out to influence us to go their way. They are not content to be foolish themselves, but they seek your company. They do not like to see you go different from them, for this brings reproof to their guilty hearts. Thus they seek your favor and fellowship and it soothes their minds to be content with their wickedness. Eve was not content to eat the forbidden fruit and bear it alone. No, she got her husband to take some, too. These proverbs are to help us to avoid such influences and walk the way of life and favor with God. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Who gave us these proverbs and who was he?
2. They are given for us to know what?
3. To perceive what?
4. We are to receive the instruction of what?
5. What are they to give to the simple, or the unlearned?
6. What does the young man need from these Proverbs?
7. What will a wise man do?
8. What will a man of understanding do?
9. Why are the sayings of the wise called "dark sayings"?
10. What is one to do when sinners seek to entice or draw you into their company?
11. What do you think is implied in verse 17 concerning a net spread in the sight of a bird?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Solomon, in these first nine chapters, is preparing us for the hearing and receiving of his proverbs and wise sayings. He wants us to realize the value of them, and also to be aware of the great impact they can have upon our entire being and every aspect of life. A wise man will hear and will increase in learning. It therefore follows that a foolish man will not hear, and consequently will become even darker and more ignorant still. What is the purpose of all of this counsel and wise sayings? It is to prepare us for the conflicts and opposers of good who will throng the highway of life. It is to equip us with readiness to deny every unholy and foolish influence that seeks to turn us into the downward way. Many snares are by the way, just waiting to catch you. There will be many nets spread to entangle your feet and to cast you down. If you see the net you will not fall therein. If you do not see the net you will be entangled and caught before you realize what is happening. How can you be prepared and how can you see the net and avoid its snare? The answer to that question is to receive the instructions given by Solomon here and learn the lessons that they contain. Let us picture two persons. One faces life with caution and good heed. He or she will listen attentively to the words of knowledge and do their best to follow their instructions. Their days pass by with wise decisions. What can be expected in such a life? On the other hand look at the youth who takes no time to listen or to seek instruction and guidance. He takes no heed to his ways and what the outcome will be. He goes headstrong after fleshly enjoyments and thrills. What can be expected in that life? The challenge is before us today. We are taking one of these ways. It is up to us and for our own advantage to take counsel and follow the voice of wisdom that speaks to us.

—Bro. Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Christian's life is made up of seeking, searching, learning and applying. We must never be content with our spiritual life, but ever seeking to know better the will of God. We are exhorted to, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." II Timothy 2:15. The apostle Paul was accused of being mad with much study. Those who have made the most of living for God have studied the Word of God and His dealings with others, and applied

their hearts unto wisdom. With this in mind, we begin our study of Proverbs.

The point should be stressed that just reading Proverbs and studying them will not make us wise. It is one thing to know something and another to do it. It has been said that, "There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool." Many times we can bear with someone through the realization of his ignorance, but it is provoking indeed to bear with someone who knowingly acts foolish. This is what incensed God so much concerning the Israelites. In Isaiah, the first chapter, God told them that they had gone away backwards. When you walk away from something backwards, you see and know what you are leaving. The children of Israel forsook God knowing what He required and what He could do for them. We see many today who have been raised to know that it is wisdom to give their hearts to God, yet they are caught in the net that Satan has spread for them. God is just as displeased with these as He was with the children of Israel. —Wayne Murphey

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January 12, 1986

THE APPEAL OF GODLY WISDOM

Prov. 1:20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:

21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,

22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scornors delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:

30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Memory Verse: He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good. Prov. 19:8.

Central Thought: The appeal to fear God and keep His commandments is heard on every side throughout all the world. From the heavens above to the ends of the earth the heart of man can behold undeniable evidences of God. The testimony is clearly seen of the benefit of fearing God and the sad consequences of those who turn away from Him.

Word Definitions: *Concourse:* Translated from the Hebrew word which means the hum, loud sound, or commotion made from the tumult, raging and clamor of humanity. *Simple, simplicity:* These are key words that describe and label the

unregenerated, the carnal and unenlightened soul. The Hebrew definition says silly, seducible. *Scorners, scorning*: Deriding and scoffing at that which is holy and pure.

LESSON BACKGROUND

“Common sense, universal experience, and the law of justice written on the heart, as well as the law of God, testify against rapine and wrong of every kind.” —Adam Clarke

Let us consider the two main thrusts of our lesson today. First, we must awake to the fact that wisdom is crying out in this world. Then let us ponder her message. Wisdom, the fear of God, constantly is uttering her voice in earnest appeal to the souls of men. One has but to take a good look in the face of mankind and the evidence is there. Survey the lives of those who do not love, fear, and obey God. What do you see? There is folly, failure, frustration, trouble, distress, destruction and misery on every hand. This is where wisdom can be heard. In the middle of the tumult and ridiculous strivings of people is heard the warning: Turn from this vanity to serve the living God! Here wisdom is personified, and later presented as a chaste, pure, beautiful woman. The beauty and charm of a woman attracts a man. Just so wisdom and the reverence for God has a beauty that will attract a person if the attention and eye is gained. Let us ponder her message in our lesson. It is a combination of promises and warning. The promises are for enlightenment, guidance, safety, and success. Its warnings foretell calamity, fear, trouble, and (worst of all) desertion by God in the times when they will need Him. Yes, wisdom does cry and put forth her voice. Men and women hear and follow for their own profit and good. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Where can the voice of wisdom be heard?
2. What does she tell us to do?
3. Who does she call to?
4. Why do people disregard the voice of wisdom?
5. What is ahead for all who refuse her call?
6. Can a person reach a point where the wisdom of God is not to be found for them?
7. What can we do to avoid such a calamity?
8. What is the future of the person who yields to wisdom?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Wisdom is crying among the sons of men, but how many hear and heed her voice? Jesus said in Revelation 3:20 that He

stands before the door of the hearts of men and knocks for entrance. If a man will hear His voice and open the door, Christ will enter and share His blessings with that man and will share what the man has with Himself. However, on the face of humanity is seen the pride and stiffness of heart, turning away from the challenge and responsibility of the fear of God to something easier and less resistant. It is a fool who will not respect, obey, and love his Maker. Look now and lift up your eyes on the mass of human kind today. What do you see? War, strife, lawlessness, crime, pride, death, destruction, sorrow, pain, disease, and every evil to be mentioned. All of this lurks many times beneath a mask of gaiety, frolic, entertainment, ambition, pleasure, complacency, ease, and fame. What does all of this tell us? It speaks something. It speaks it loud and long. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Is this all there is to life? Is there not something worthwhile and satisfying? Oh, it is the fool who refuses to look at the whole picture. The fear of God helps us to see the depravity of man and the emptiness of a life without God. Look death in the face, and reckon that you, like everyone else before you, will experience this some day. Does this not bring a serious and reflective thought to your heart? It is the fear of God, Wisdom, that is speaking thus to you. For your own sake and advantage, give heed to the voice of wisdom that is speaking to you even now. Your life will be happy and blessed indeed if you yield to God and let Him have his way with you.

—Bro. Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Today, wisdom is traded for self gratification. As we see the masses move towards eternity enjoying the pleasures of sin, we wonder if they realize what they are doing. Many do know that the wages of sin is death, and they hear wisdom crying to them. Yet they choose to play the part of the fool and satisfy the desires of the moment.

Aesop, who was considered a very wise person, once wrote a parable about a chicken in a barnyard. One bright spring day the chicken was scratching up the straw that littered the barnyard, in search of food. To his great surprise, his industrious claws turned up a jewel that by some chance had been lost.

"Ho," said he, as his bright eyes examined the jewel, "I can see you are a very valuable thing, though how you got here I have not the least idea. I can see too, that there are

those who must prize you, but as for me, give one a kernal of corn rather than all the bright jewels in the world."

This story is the synopsis of many lives. People come face to face with salvation. Wisdom tells them that they need it, that it is valuable, yet we find they put much more emphasis on that which will satisfy the flesh.

How horrible it will be when people desperately need God and He laughs at their calamity. One man wrote, "The wise man does three things: he abandons the world before it abandons him; prepares his sepulchre before entering it; and does all with the design of pleasing God before entering into His presence."

—Wayne Murphey

WISDOM

Wisdom took her harp, and stood in place
Of frequent intercourse, stood in every gate,
By every way, and walked in every street;
And lifting up her voice proclaimed: "Be wise,
Ye fools! be of an understanding heart;
Forsake the wicked, come not near his house,
Pass by, make haste, depart, and turn away.
Me follow—me, whose ways are pleasantness,
Whose paths are peace, whose end is perfect joy."
The seasons came and went, and went and came,
To teach men gratitude; and as they passed,
Gave warning of the lapse of time, that else
Had stolen unheeded by. The gentle flowers
Retired, and stooping o'er the wilderness,
Talked of humility, and peace, and love;
The dews came down unseen at evening-tide,
And silently their bounties shed, to teach
Mankind unostentatious charity.
With arm-in-arm the forest rose on high,
And lesson gave of brotherly regard,
And on the rugged mountain-brow exposed,
Bearing the blast alone, the ancient oak
Stood, lifting high his mighty arm, and still,
To courage in distress, exhorted loud
The flocks, the herds, the birds, the streams, the breeze,
Attuned the heart to melody and love.
Mercy stood in the cloud, with eye that wept
Essential love! and from her glorious bow,
Bending to kiss the earth in token of peace,
With her own lips, her gracious lips, which God
Of sweetest accent made, she whispered still,

She whispered to Revenge, "Forgive! forgive!"
 The sun, rejoicing, round the earth announced
 Daily the wisdom, power, and love of God.
 The moon awoke, and from her maiden face
 Shedding her cloudy locks, looked meekly forth,
 And with her virgin stars walked in the heavens,
 Walked nightly there, conversing as she walked
 Of purity, and holiness and God.
 In dreams and visions, sleep instructed much.
 Day uttered speech to day, and night to night
 Taught knowledge. Silence had a tongue; the grave,
 The darkness, and the lonely waste, had each
 A tongue that ever said, Man! think of God!
 Think of thyself! think of eternity!
 Fear God! the thunder said—Fear God! the waves;
 Fear God! the lightning of the storm replied;
 Fear God! deep loudly answered back to deep;
 And in the temples of the Holy One,
 Messiah's messengers, the faithful few,
 Faithful 'mong many false, the Bible opened,
 And cried, Repent! repent! ye sons of men!
 —Robert Pollock

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January 19, 1986

HOW TO SEEK FOR WISDOM AND HER REWARD

Prov. 2:1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;

2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;

3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

6 For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;

11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:

12 To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;

16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;

17 Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

20 That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.

21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.

22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

Memory Verse: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Proverbs 9:10.

Central Thought: Wisdom, that will enable us to find the path of life and escape the way to destruction, can be found if we seek for her with all of our heart.

Word Definitions: *Sound Wisdom:* Wisdom that is supported and substantiated by true knowledge and understanding. *Buckler:* Armor, shield, protector.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson last week was the call of wisdom to man. Our lesson today reveals how we are to seek for wisdom. Although wisdom calls for us, it means much for us to successfully seek and find her for ourselves. The father or master is talking again to the young man. Note the action words in our lesson. We are to “receive” His Words. Our hearts must be receptive to the Word of God. By being teachable and reasonable, the words of the wise can find an entrance to our hearts and minds. Then we are to “hide” His commandments with us. Hide His Word in our hearts that we might not sin against God. (Psalm 119:11.) It means much for us to do this. Then we are to “incline” our ear to listen to the voice of wisdom. Many things are not heard because our ears are not inclined in that particular direction. Have you ever stopped and given a special listening ear to the singing of birds? They are singing constantly, but so often we do not hear. We do not hear unless

we incline our ears to hear. This is true about wisdom, also. Then we are to “**apply**” our hearts to understanding. Be willing to carry out and put in action what the Lord reveals to us in His Word. We are to “**cry**” and “**lift up**” our voice for wisdom and understanding. And we are to “**seek**” for her. How earnestly? Seek for her as men seek for gold and silver and “**search**” for her as for hid treasures. THEN we shall understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. Oh, if we could but be aware of the great value of wisdom and understanding and knowledge! We would not sell it so short, as people so often do. Wisdom will help us to find and walk in the way of good men. We will be able to avoid the pitfalls and the snares that are on the downward road.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are we to do with God's Word?
2. What are we to do with His commandments?
3. Is it possible for us to hear and yet not hear?
4. How are we to seek after wisdom?
5. What does God lay up for the righteous?
6. What does God do about the way of His saints?
7. What will be our state when wisdom and knowledge enter into our hearts?
8. What will discretion and understanding keep us from?
9. What is the happy state of the upright?
10. What is going to happen to the wicked?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We have in our lesson today a recipe for the obtaining of true wisdom. Receiving His Words, holding sacred in our hearts His commandments, inclining our ears and applying our hearts to wisdom, crying and lifting up our voice for understanding, and seeking for her as men seek for gold and silver—This is the recipe. We cannot expect to get much from God without doing this kind of quality seeking. We can seek thus if we can but realize the wonderful value of wisdom and the fear of God. As long as we are satisfied in our degraded and lost condition, we will not be much moved to seek for higher wisdom. This is where Satan has got the upper hand in many lives today. He has destroyed their true sense of values. Material wealth and money hold the uppermost place in their affections. They seem not to realize that the most valuable things are not to be bought with silver and gold. Wisdom that will guide a man's soul to fear God and walk in His heavenly

way is worth more than ten thousand worlds like this. Satan is attacking that part of man that gauges His values. He did this to Adam and Eve. He got them to thinking that the knowledge that they would gain by disobeying God was more valuable and more to be desired than their life of innocence and fellowship with their Creator. And Satan still works in this same way. And how many people does he have duped this way? Just about the whole world he has thinking in this way. Oh, that men would lift up their eyes to better things than just the beggarly elements of this world! The Lord has sound wisdom laid up for those who will qualify! He will not just give it to anyone who comes along. We have to pass the test and qualify for Him to give us His sound and hidden wisdom. Oh, let us seek for it with all of our hearts and open up to Him that He might instill within us His divine favor and understanding. Then our lives will be in safety and true joy.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Wisdom does not reveal itself so much by precept as by our words and actions in everyday life. To further explain this, a person can apply himself to secular etiquette, read all the books on what good manners are and in many situations act properly. However, because his wisdom is learned, in time he will find himself in a situation that he has not read about. In our lesson we learn that a person can seek after and find the knowledge of God. Such a one will automatically practice good behavior for he will be looking for every opportunity to do to his brother as he would have his brother do unto him. He will be more equipped for every situation for the wisdom of God is in his heart. This is why Solomon was able to say, "Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea every good path."

In the legal realm, righteousness, judgment and equity would be known as justice. Many efforts are made through our legal system to bring about justice for all, and many a treatise has been written on how law should be administered. Hours of study are spent by students of the law who delve into the structure of the judicial system. Much of this complicated search for justice could be eliminated if everyone would obtain the wisdom God offers. Those with wisdom from above are very sensitive to the needs of others. People receive fair treatment at their hands. Crimes are committed by those who are insensitive to the needs, desires and passions of others. In

wisdom we practice the words of the song, "Others, Lord, yes others, let this my motto be."

Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee." How many times people have gotten themselves into trouble by indiscretion and unwise speech. God's wisdom will help one know when to keep silent.

Suffice it to say, though one may be lacking in secular education, God's wisdom equips us for every phase of life.

—Wayne Murphey

THE MUCKRAKER

The Interpreter takes Christian and Christiana apart, and has them first into a room where was a man that could look no way but downwards, with a muck rake in his hand. There stood also one over his head, with a celestial crown in his hand, and proffered to give him that crown for his muck rake; but the man did neither look up nor regard, but raked to himself the straws, the small sticks, and the dust of the floor.

Then said Christiana, "I persuade myself that I know somewhat the meaning of this; for this is a figure of a man of this world. Is it not, good sir?"

"Thou hast said the right," said Interpreter, "and his muck rake doth show his carnal mind. And whereas thou seest him rather give heed to rake up straws and sticks, and the dust of the floor, than to do what he says that calls to him from above with the celestial crown in his hand; it is to show that heaven is but a fable to some, and that things here are counted the only things substantial. Now, whereas it was also showed thee that the man could look no way but downwards; it is to let thee know that earthly things, when they are with power upon men's minds, quite carry their hearts away from God."

Then said Christiana, "Oh, deliver me from this muck rake!"

"That prayer," said the Interpreter, "has lain by till it is almost rusty. 'Give me not riches', (Prov. 30:8), is scarce the prayer of one of ten thousand. Straws, and sticks, and dust, with most, are the great things now looked after."

(Taken from *The Pilgrim's Progress*)

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January 26, 1986

EARNEST COUNSELS FOR YOUTH

Prov. 3:1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

9 Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

11 My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction:

12 For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

Memory Verse: Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. Prov. 3:5.

Central Thought: He who takes the path of wisdom and obeys the voice of godly instruction does so with a promise of great favor and benefits.

Word Definitions: "*Health to thy navel*": Prosperity to the center of thy strength. *Marrow*: Moisture or refreshment.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Here again we have the father speaking to the son or the master to his scholar. We can take it as the heavenly Father speaking to everyone of us individually. Length of days, long life, and peace are the desire of every living soul. Anything that threatens one's pleasure, happiness, and prosperity is naturally avoided. The reason that many people draw back from the true Christian way of life is because to them it threatens their peace and security. It is sad that the way of the Lord is so misconstrued. In reality the way of the cross secures these desirable blessings rather than threatens them. Mercy and truth desire entrance to the soul and will never willfully forsake us. It is when we allow our hearts to pursue other values that they will leave us. And really it is not mercy and truth forsaking us, but rather we are the ones who forsake them. Mercy and truth remain in their faithful place. We are the ones who stray. Our part is to cling to the precepts of God and make them a vital part of our life. As in all divine injunctions, these commandments are not without benefits and rewards. Health, prosperity, strength, plenty, richness, joy, and true happiness are the fringe benefits of following the path of wisdom. And these blessings are mainly of a spiritual nature. Natural and material blessings will accompany the faithful soul, but the mainstream of his life is spiritual. Gold, silver, rubies, diamonds, and any other valuable substance coveted and desired of men are far inferior to the quality and worth of wisdom and God's blessings. To pursue these rich and blessed treasures is a wise and profitable venture indeed. Verses 11 and 12 of our lesson are quoted by the New Testament writer in Hebrews 12:5, 6. The New Testament quotes from the Proverbs several times. This helps to assure us that the book of Proverbs is a worthy, divinely inspired volume of Holy Scripture, well worth our attention.—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does loving and keeping God's law promise us?
2. What does the term "length of days" mean to you?
3. What should we do with mercy and truth?
4. What will we find by holding to mercy and truth?
5. Is it very easy to lean unto our own understanding?
6. How can we avoid doing this?

7. How can we hope to have God direct our paths?
8. What will fearing the Lord and departing from evil bring to us?
9. Is there a tendency for us to despise or count lightly the chastening of the Lord?
10. What is chastening a real sign of?
11. What are the benefits of finding and having wisdom?
12. What is wisdom to those who lay hold and retain her?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"All things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her." There are many things that people can and do desire. It would be interesting for you to make a list of worldly and fleshly things that one can desire, and on the other side of the sheet make a list of the spiritual and heavenly things. Then draw a clear comparison of them. We have read the story of D. L. Moody's first Sunday morning in San Francisco. It was a rainy morning and not many out for Sunday School. It was decided that he would speak to all as one class. His lesson was a comparison of Christ and worldly treasures. He had the class help him make a list on the chalkboard, first of earthly treasures, and then of Christ and heavenly treasures. The first on the list was "gold". This was followed by other things such as pearls, fashion, liquor, pleasure, etc. Then they started in on the heavenly treasures. The first on the list was "Jesus". It went on and on. Then when they were through calling out treasures, the list of worldly things looked very cheap indeed. The young man who was doing the writing on the board was struck with conviction. He was an unconverted Sunday School Teacher who had come west to California to strike it rich in the gold rush. He was Moody's first convert on the west coast. Oh, do we not think about this comparison today? We should. Our lesson today endeavors to show the benefits of serving God. How much better it is that men and women fear the Lord and seek to follow Him! Remember our central thought that we will do so with a great promise of favor and benefits.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As we start out in life it is important to ascertain early what real happiness is. Too many think that the road to happiness depends on prestige and high position. It is considered to be a road that by-passes all self-denial and chastenings of God.

There is a point well made in the story about the dog who was so wild and mischievous that his master despaired of taming him. The last straw was when he bit someone who was being playful with him. His master was taking him out to the woods to dispose of him when a neighbor suggested: "The way to tame that beast is to fasten a chain around his neck and attach a heavy wooden clog to the end of it. That will stop him from biting and worrying others."

The master decided to try it. The next day the dog, viewing his clog as a badge of distinction, went to the market place, shaking and rattling the hobble to attract everyone's attention. An old dog approached him and said, "If I were in your place, I would make less noise and not call people's attention to my disgrace. Wearing a hobble is anything but a mark of distinction."

There are many today who are acting just as ridiculously as that dog. People will do anything to gain notoriety among others and at the same time refuse to recognize the chastening of the Lord. There is much wisdom in the verses, "Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord and depart from evil." "My son despise not the chastenings of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction." Happiness is found in living a quiet, peaceful life in all humility before God. —Wayne Murphey

February 2, 1986

COUNSEL, WARNING, AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Prov. 3:19 The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.

20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:

22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.

23 Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.

24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

25 Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.

26 For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.

27 Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

28 Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

29 Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.

30 Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.

31 Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

32 For the froward is abomination to the Lord: but his secret is with the righteous.

33 The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.

34 Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

Memory Verse: The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just. Prov. 3:33.

Central Thought: The wisdom that guided the Lord in founding the earth and establishing the heavens can be life to our soul and grace to our lives, guiding us in our relationship with our fellowman.

Word Definitions: *Wisdom:* Webster's definition says: Discernment and sound judgment concerning what is true or false, right or wrong, proper or improper, good or evil; choosing the best ends and the best means for accomplishing them. *Understanding:* The Hebrew word means to separate or distinguish, while the Greek word means to put together. Understanding is the ability to see things, their motive and value, and to put them all in harmony for use. *Knowledge:* What one knows, observes, learns, experiences, comprehends; it is the essence of that which is gained through understanding and wisdom. "*Grace to thy neck*": Beauty and adornment to your decisions and resolutions.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is a continuation of the discourse last week of the father to the son. He is stressing the importance, benefit, and value of godly wisdom. He speaks of the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of their life and endurance through the system of watering and vaporization. The founding of the earth and the establishing of the

firmament, or heavens, preceded the bringing forth of life. Even so wisdom, the fear of God, and understanding, the parting from evil, precedes spiritual life and favor with God. We take for granted things when, if we would but consider their source and how they got here, they would have a greater meaning. Life without wisdom is a tragedy. Without understanding it is double tragedy. Earthly knowledge without true wisdom is error and deception. It cannot be overly stressed. With wisdom, which is accurately in the Scriptures defined as the fear of God, safety, confidence, hope, protection, guidance, and assurance of success are inevitable. Without it, one can expect the opposite. We face this challenge in the midst of a society that is cursed with error and darkness as to what this true wisdom is. The oppressor, the froward, the wicked—they are all here. We must chart our course keeping the danger in mind. The last four verses of our lesson declare the two kinds of people and their status. The froward, the wicked, the scorers, and the fools, are contrasted with the righteous, the just, the lowly, and the wise. Verse 34 is quoted in the New Testament in two places. In the language of James 4:6 and I Peter 5:5 it says: "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you express ways that God's wisdom is revealed in the earth?
2. What can you see of His understanding in the heavens?
3. How important is the moisture and fruitfulness of the soil to us?
4. How can these compare with the wisdom that we need in our lives?
5. Why does wisdom assure us of safety and rest from harm?
6. Does wisdom have any aid or help in our dealings with our fellow man?
7. How does God feel about the froward, the wicked, the scorner, and the fool?
8. What are His feelings toward the wise, the lowly, the just, and the righteous?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, what a valuable lesson we have before us today in these Scriptures! How valuable they are to every phase of our existence! What kind of world would we have today if wisdom had not guided the creation? Chaos, darkness, disorder, and confusion would prevail: a place wherein no life could be. It

was wisdom that guided the forming of life and all nature above and below. Just think of the wonderful fruit and treasures that are in the earth. It all bespeaks the love and wonderful attributes of God Almighty Who formed them. And then to think that this same wisdom makes her appeal to the sons of men, offering them her help and guidance for their lives! How wonderful! Oh, we need to give wisdom her rightful place in our hearts. How we need to pray to God for His will to be done! What rest it brings to our souls, erasing worry and fear of tomorrow. Calamities and awful happenings need not distress or trouble us if we are being guided by wisdom! Our association with our fellow man needs to be gauged by wisdom and rightful understanding. All strife, ill will, envy, jealousy, and bitterness must be denied. To promote peace, good will, holiness, love, and righteousness is our duty. "His secret is with the righteous." God has hidden wisdom to give to those who seek Him with their whole heart. He scorns and resists the scornful and proud. He will not walk with fools. Those who love and serve God will have His blessings upon their homes and families. How we need to let God have His blessed way with our lives! Of wisdom comes glory. Of folly comes shame. The choice is ours. Which one will we take? We are free moral agents. We can give over to the tide of the world around us and be fools, or we can listen to the gospel and be wise.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If you want to feel the presence of God go alone to behold the beauties of nature. Walk on the carpet under the majestic trees, lay beside the bubbling brook, admire the simplicity of a sunset or gaze at the far away stars. In all these you will find the handiwork and wisdom of God manifested. Perhaps the reason our nation is not as religiously inclined as it was when it was founded is due in part to the fact that we do not live as close to nature as before. We are surrounded by man made objects that keep us occupied much of the time. We no longer have time to enjoy the beauties of nature like our forefathers. This does not mean that we should live a hermit's life, but that we must retain in our minds who the Creator is. Our lesson tells us that if we won't forget these things, it will be life unto our soul.

Man in his wisdom has done some great things, yet he has done nothing to begin to rival what God has done. Man has been able to reach the moon, but God made the moon.

Man has discovered microscopic life, but God is the one who designed the pinpoint life. What great wisdom; and to think we can be partakers of the source of that wisdom. Why would anyone want to continue in their own foolish conceit? Our lesson describes the result of wisdom. "The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be in the promotion of fools."

—Wayne Murphey

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February 9, 1986

SEEKING THE PATHWAY OF THE JUST

Prov. 4:1 Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

2 For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.

3 For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.

4 He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.

5 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.

7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

8 Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.

9 She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

13 Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.

14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.

25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

Memory Verse: But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Proverbs 4:18.

Central Thought: The way that a person takes to follow determines which direction he is going, and where he will be at the end. Wisdom will guide us in the right way, away from the paths of the wicked and the snares of sin.

Word Definitions: *Decline:* To turn or bend away. *Principal:* First, most important, ahead of every thing else. Verse 18 in the Hebrew reads: "But the path of the righteous is as a bright light, going and shining till the day is established." In the Greek Septuagint translation (which is used by the New Testament writers in their quotations from the Old Testament) it reads: "But the ways of the righteous shine like light; they go on and shine, until the day be fully come." The path of the just tends to lead upward to better things, on to improvements and progress. The way of the wicked is downward, becoming worse and worse. *Ponder:* Weigh carefully.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The father's earnest entreaty for his children is that they ponder the steps that they take in life. He states that he was a son once upon a time. His father, David, instructed him to take the course of wisdom. Just how much of our lesson is direct quotes from David, we are not sure of, but we are sure that the essence of all of these counsels Solomon had received from the godly instruction of his father. And although it has been many hundreds of years ago when these counsels were given, they are still of vital use today for us. It will be wise for us to fear the same God that David served. The same God that counselled and sought to guide Solomon is still yearning to direct our paths today. Verses 18, 23, and 26 are outstanding quotations so often referred to and so good and wholesome to be remembered. The perfect day, or the fullness of light and understanding, is truly a goal to be desired and reached for. The path of the just will lead us to that perfect day. There is a moral spiritual perfection of heart that we can attain to in

Christ in this life, but there is a fulness and perfection that we must continually reach for all the way, never solacing ourselves to have reached it, but, as Paul, pressing toward it always. The heart is the seat of the affections, desires, purposes, attitudes, and motives. It decides our true standing with God. Diligence and earnest care are called upon for the safeguarding of our hearts before God. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was this father's desire concerning his children?
2. What does our lesson tell us to do with wisdom and understanding?
3. What are we supposed to do with instruction? Why?
4. What should be our attitude and feeling toward the way of evil men?
5. In what way can the path of the just shine brighter and brighter?
6. What is the contrast drawn between the righteous and the wicked?
7. Why should we keep the heart so carefully?
8. What is so important about the heart?
9. What should we take time to do in every decision that we make?
10. Why should our eyes look straight on before us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The way of the wicked is progressive and downward in its progress. However, what I have noticed is that the progress of the wicked life is overlooked by the individual thus affected. In rejecting the narrow, difficult way of life, they seek to seize on pleasures at hand and the way of least resistance. This pursuit blinds their minds to everything else that is going on. They are unaware of the damage that their unrestrained life is doing to their character and to their relationships with others. They are gradually progressing toward the pit of destruction. The path of the just is a clear-cut thing. Light from heaven illuminates and makes their way clear and plain. They are constantly aware of their need for advancement. The light that shines down from Christ not only reveals the good things that they can use and enjoy, but it also reveals every crevice of fault and failure. It shows where improvements and progress need to be made. And as one moves on from strength to strength, the light keeps shining and revealing other moves that need to be made in their forward march toward attaining

life's goal. For the just, their minds are enlightened and taught of God. They are constantly reaching out for more and better things. Contrary to the wicked, the righteous are continually on guard against things that will defile and hinder them. The only thing that is a hindrance to the wicked is the reproofs and warnings that they are constantly faced with, not only from righteous people, but from the stark testimony of their own conscience. Instead of hearing and heeding the voice of wisdom, they count it all as stumbling stones, and are forever trying to mend and repair their broken lives with something worse. While the wise ponder, study, and weigh carefully their paths, the wicked rush on to more folly and shame. Thank God for the pathway of the just that we can follow as we obey the voice of Jesus.—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We know very little about the kind of home life David had. We generally picture him as a leader and great man of war, but according to our lesson, he took time to sit down with his son Solomon and teach him. The great wisdom that Solomon possessed in later years could have resulted from the love for it that was instilled in him by his father's direction. This should give us an insight into the importance of teaching our children. While they are young and moldable we should instruct them how to conduct themselves in wisdom.

The essence of the instruction that David gave Solomon was, "Keep yourself out of trouble and in time to come you will be glad that you did" When God created the animals He endowed them with an instinct for survival. It is only wisdom for the deer to pause at the edge of the forest, investigate and sniff the air. It is vital for its continued existence. When God created man, He developed within him an instinct called conscience. If this conscience is not seared, it is a valuable asset. It will make us ponder the path of our feet and turn not to the right hand nor to the left. If, in our youth, it is impressed upon us that we should go not in the way of evil men, it will give us willpower when our conscience sounds a warning. This is vital to our spiritual life; "keep my commandments, and live."

—Wayne Murphey

Evening Prayer

"Our Father."

The mother's voice was low and tender, and solemn.

"Our Father."

On two sweet voices the tones were born upward. It was the innocence of reverent children that gave them utterance.

"Who art in heaven."

"Who art in heaven," repeated the children, one with her eyes bent meekly down, and the other looking upward, as if she would penetrate the heavens into which her heart was aspiring.

"Hallowed be thy name."

Lower fell the voice of the little ones. In a gentle murmur they said,—

"Hallowed be thy name."

"Thy kingdom come."

And the burden of the prayer was still taken by the children—

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," filled the chamber.

And the mother continued—

"Give us this day our daily bread."

"Our daily bread," lingered a moment on the air, as the mother's voice was hushed into silence.

"And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever."

"Amen."

All these holy words were said piously and fervently by the little ones, as they knelt with clasped hands beside their mother. Then as their thoughts, uplifted on the wings of prayer to their heavenly Father, came back again and rested on their earthly parents, a warmer love came gushing from their hearts.

Pure kisses—tender kisses—the fond "good-night." What a sweet agitation pervaded all their feelings. Then two dear hands were placed side by side on the snowy pillows, the mother's last good-night kiss given, and the shadowy curtains drawn.

What a pulseless stillness reigns without the chamber. Inwardly, the parent's ears are bent. They have given those

innocent ones into the keeping of God's angels, and they can almost hear the rustle of their garments as they gather around their sleeping babes. A sigh, deep and tremulous, breaks on the air. Quickly the mother turns to the father of her children, with a look of earnest inquiry upon her countenance. And he answers thus her silent questions:—

“Far back through many years have my thoughts been wandering. At my mother's knee thus said I nightly my childhood's evening prayer. It was that best and holiest of all prayers, ‘Our Father,’ that she taught me. Childhood and my mother passed away. I went forth as a man into the world, strong, confident, and self-seeking. Once I came into great temptation. Had I fallen in that temptation, I should have fallen never to rise again. I was about yielding. All the barriers I could oppose to it in the in-rushing flood, seemed just ready to give way, when, as I sat in my room one evening, there came from an adjoining chamber, now first occupied for many weeks, the murmur of low voices. I listened. At first no articulate sound was heard, and yet something in the tones stirred my heart with new and strong emotions. At length there came to my ears, in the earnest, loving voice of a woman, the words,—

“ ‘Deliver us from evil.’

“For an instant, it seemed to me as if that voice were that of my mother. Back with a sudden bound, through all the intervening years, went my thoughts, and a child again I was kneeling at my mother's knee. Humbly and reverently I said over the words of the holy prayer she had taught me, heart and eye uplifted to heaven. The hour and power of darkness had passed. I was no longer standing in slippery places, with a flood of water ready to sweep me to destruction; but my feet were on a rock. My pious mother's care had saved her son. In the holy words she had taught me in childhood was a living power to resist evil through all my after life. Ah! that unknown mother, as she taught her child to repeat this evening prayer, how little dreamed she that the holy words were to reach a stranger's ears, and save him through the memory of his own childhood and his own mother. And yet it was so. What a power there is in God's Word, as it flows into and rests in the minds of innocent childhood.”

Tears were in the eyes of the wife and mother, as she lifted her face and gazed with a subdued tenderness, upon the countenance of her husband. Her heart was too full for utterance. A little while she thus gazed, and then with a trembling

joy, laid her hand upon his bosom. Angels were in the chamber where their dear ones slept, and they felt their holy presence.

February 16, 1986

WARNINGS AGAINST STRANGE WOMEN

Prov. 5:1 My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding:

2 That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge.

3 For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smother than oil:

4 But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword.

5 Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.

6 Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.

8 Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house:

9 Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel:

10 Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger;

11 And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed,

12 And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof;

13 And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!

14 I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly.

15 Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.

18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.

22 His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.

23 He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

Memory Verse: For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings. Prov. 5:21.

Central Thought: God created woman in her charm and beauty to be a blessing to man, but, because of sin and wickedness, evil women have become a curse to man, leading him downward to the ways of death.

Word Definitions: *"Her ways are moveable"*: The way of the seducing spiritual powers in the world are continually shifting, changing, wavering, and assuming different shapes and garbs so as to decoy the mind from recognizing their folly and danger. *"Be thou always ravished with her love"*: A lawful and loving wife is a great comfort and source of pleasure to the man. God planned and purposed this to be. However, the pleasure of the man and woman with each other must be restricted to the bounds of holy matrimony and marriage. *Strange (woman)*: Foreign, profane, adulterous.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We can see two phases in our lesson today. The first aspect is that of natural women and the God-given blessing that He intended for them to be to man contrasted with the sad ungodly sway that a lustful, evil woman can exert over man. The other phase of our lesson reveals that the term woman can refer to any influence or power that beguiles and deceives man away from the path of life in Christ. This woman can be the world in its attractions and pleasures and pride. It can be a religion that draws the unaware soul into its organization. It can be a business that enraptures a soul with the promise of earthly gain. It can also be a Church that promises help for the soul, but deceives it instead. Yes, there are many wicked and evil women in the world today. They and their degrading influence are all around us, thronging the borders of the highway of life. We must pass near them and we will hear their call and feel their drawing influence. We see it referred to in the Bible and we read in ancient writings of how the children of Cain finally drew the children of Seth down from the holy mountain to their evil way of life. It seems that wickedness has an overwhelming influence in this life. So many snares are by the wayside. And people get caught in them. As Adam Clarke expressed it: "Most people who follow unlawful pleasures, think they can give them up whenever they please; but sin repeated becomes customary, custom so engenders habit, and habit in the end assumes the form of necessity." May God help to steer clear of this terrible whirlpool of evil around us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the outward appearance of evil influence?
2. How does sin and ungodliness deceive the soul?
3. Why does Satan keep a person from pondering the path of life?
4. What will be the decision and reaction of the person who honestly and open-heartedly considers the way of Christ?
5. Notice the descriptive terms of the final end of the wicked life. What are they regretting doing?
6. Is it possible to go astray and be lost right in the midst of the assembly of the righteous?
7. What do you think the terms "thine own cistern and thine own well" refer to?
8. What does the Lord do about the ways of a man?
9. What is it that will take the wicked and what are the cords that will hold him?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We are face to face with factual realities in our society today that prove the truth that is found in our lesson. Hardly a family exists today who has not been affected by this mad way of lust and unlawful gratification of the flesh. Adultery and fornication are running rampant in our land. Very few homes are unaffected by double marriage and unbridled lusts. It is affecting the whole world. These last days, prophesied of in the Bible, are sizing up to be just what they were foretold would be. People are selling their virtue for moments of pleasure to reap a lifetime of sorrow. God has given us warnings and a way to avoid this awful pit of corruption. There is no need for a young man to go after the strange flesh that is being advertised and offered today. It has been said that adultery and fornication has the strongest cords to bind a man with. It is worse than tobacco, liquor, dope, gambling, or any other vice or immorality. Once a person gets a taste of such ways of life, it is terrible to try to get away from. That is why the warning is so persistent! This Scripture has been fulfilled many times. Many, many lives have been shortened and brought to an early grave on account of uncontrolled passions and desires. God has a pure and holy provision for man's needs. As a general rule, God wants a man to have a lawful wife and enjoy the pleasures of happiness from one another. However, He must have a chance to work this out, and His reward is great for those who do give Him a chance. Survey the lessons here. Look at the danger, and the outcome

of evil. Then consider what possibilities there are if you will seek God with all of your heart, and go His way. I am sure that you will acknowledge that God's plan is so much better.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

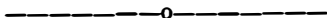
In this lesson there are specific instructions to the young. The subject of fellowshiping with unsaved companions is relevant for today's youth. Too often young people raised in a pure atmosphere lose their innocence because they allow themselves to flirt with temptation and date someone who is not saved. I am sure that the innocent party does not begin such a relationship with the idea of degrading themselves. In fact, you hear them say, "I believe that I can help that unsaved one." This is a delusion. You cannot walk down the same path of life with an evil person and come out unscathed!

There is a simple story that portrays this truth very well. Two pots, one of earthenware and the other of brass, were carried downstream by a river in flood. The brass pot begged his companion to remain as close by his side as possible, and he would protect him.

"You are very kind," replied the earthen pot, "but that is just what I am afraid of. If you will only keep your distance, I shall be able to float down in safety. But whether I strike you or you strike me, I am sure to be the one who will get the worst of it."

We must realize that sin has absolutely nothing to offer. There will be arguments to the contrary, but they are deceiving. We must love the souls of sinners but never their ways. The truth of the Scripture, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" should be impressed upon the minds of our young people. It will save them from being ultimately holden with the cords of sin.

—Wayne Murphey



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February 23, 1986

MORE WARNINGS AGAINST EVIL ASSOCIATIONS

Prov. 6:6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,

8 Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

16 These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

20 My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

21 Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.

22 When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.

23 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

24 To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.

25 Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.

30 Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;

31 But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house.

32 But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.

33 A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.

Memory Verse: Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. I Corinthians 15:33.

Central Thought: It will pay a soul to cast off all slothfulness, be on guard against the influence of evil, and strive to please God in every way.

Word Definitions: *Sluggard:* One who is idle, lazy, slothful, and sluggish. "So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.": This means that because of slothfulness one's poverty will catch up with him, and he will not be able to ward off want.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Diligence is one of the worthy attributes that is praised in the book of Proverbs. Laziness, slothfulness, and idleness are fervently rebuked by the same. Adam Clarke has some good observations about the ant. He says: "The ant is a remarkable creature for foresight, industry, and economy. At the proper seasons they collect their food—not to lay up for winter; for they sleep during the winter—but when necessary food is most plentiful, they collect it for their consumption in the proper seasons. No insect is more laborious, and none is more fondly attached to or more careful of its young, than the ant. When the young are in their aurelia state, in which they appear like a small grain of rice, they will bring them out of their nests, and lay them near their holes, for the benefit of the sun, carefully removing them on the approach of rain to their nests. Spring, summer, and autumn they are incessant in their labour; and their conduct affords a bright example to men." Diligence in the fear of God is just as necessary, and being slack in one's soul brings on poverty of the worst kind. A lesson could be formed on each one of the seven things that are an abomination to the Lord. Two of these things, the second and the sixth, have to do with falsehood and lies. But really we can see falsity and deceit in each one of the seven. The Lord wants the truth to be implanted in the heart. Satan is the father of lies and his whole work is woven around such. Even in the sin of adultery is found the root of falsehood and lies, for who would forego the happiness of his companion or family if they really knew the truth? The law of God will safeguard us from being allured by evil and adulterous women. Their artificial beauty will not draw the affections. Mankind would do well to heed the warning in verses 30-33. Committing

adultery has the greatest sorrow and consequences which so very often cannot be erased from the heart and memory.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What lesson does the ant give to us?
2. What will too much sleep do to a person?
3. Is there any thing one can do to stave off poverty when they have been slothful?
4. What members are mentioned in the six things that the Lord hates?
5. Where is the root of the lying tongue?
6. What is there about the seventh that stands out a little farther than the others?
7. What is the commandment and the law for?
8. What will it keep us from?
9. Why is adultery with so much greater consequence and punishment than thievery?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It surely pays to be diligent in our service to God. We are striving for the mastery of our own soul's welfare, and it is worth all the effort, time, expense, and devotion that we can give. Just think what a little carelessness and lack of devoting to our Christian life can cost. If it comes at the crucial time of need it can mean eternal loss to our own soul as well as to others. Now is the time for devotion and earnest effort and labour. We are to be laying up for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come so that we may be able to lay hold on eternal life. (I Timothy 6:19) We need to hate pride, deceit, iniquity, wicked thoughts, mischief, and strife as much as God does. We must deny these things any place in our hearts and we must not condone it in others. These things rule a man's character and mar the image of God that should have rightful place in his heart. The precious blood of Jesus can cleanse these elements from our being. It seems that the one who sows discord among his brethren stands out to be even worse than all the rest. All of these things affect out fellow man, but for us to have a disposition about us that we would purposely cause hard feelings and division among a community, a family, or a church is so grievous in the sight of God. And this can develop among people who morally are good and seemingly upright. But the tongue gets to wagging, and the mind

gets to working. Discord is the result. When you have discord working the Spirit of God withdraws. There are so many things that appear beautiful, but are corrupt and poison. The carnal world stresses good looks and nice appearance. But with God the outer appearance is not as important as that state of heart and soul. Satan beguiled Eve and got her looking at the fruit that was pleasant to the eyes. He still works that way today, and many people are swayed by the glitter of sin and the things that it promises.

—Leslie C. Busbee

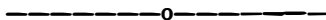
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Everything that is not done for the profit of righteousness is done in vain. Many are what could be termed as “idly busy”. On a job, some people appear to be very busy and yet produce nothing. This is the condition of a sinner. He is always going and doing but he produces nothing of consequence. This is slothfulness. If we know what is right and what we should do, we must not fold our hands and sleep, but arouse ourselves and be a doer. When it comes to spiritual matters, there are too many who take the attitude of the boy who remained in bed very late one morning. His mother asked him, “Aren’t you ashamed to be lying there so late?” “Yes, Mother, I am ashamed, but I had rather be ashamed than get up.”

What are the characteristics of a slothful person? They are very vividly described in the seventeenth through nineteenth verses of our lesson. It seems to be the tendency for the one who is slothful to fault others. They are quick to find mischief and lie to cover their ways. In general, they are as the drone bee in the bee hive; nothing but a parasite to society.

If we will be diligent about serving the Lord and helping our fellowman, we will avert the destruction of our own souls. This is wisdom.

—Wayne Murphey



March 2, 1986

KEEPING AWAY FROM THE PIT OF DESTRUCTION

Prov. 7:1 My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.

2 Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.

3 Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.

4 Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman:

5 That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.

6 For at the window of my house I looked through my casement,

7 And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding,

8 Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house.

9 In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:

10 And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.

11 (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house:

12 Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.)

13 So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him,

18 Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves.

21 With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.

22 He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;

23 Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.

24 Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.

25 Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.

26 For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.

27 Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

Memory Verse: Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Prov. 7:2.

Central Thought: Sin and worldliness have an attraction for the soul who does not hold fast to wisdom and the fear of God, and many, many souls are ensnared to go the downward way to their own destruction.

Word Definitions: *Sister and kinswoman:* Figurative terms expressing the closeness and acquaintance we should have with wisdom. We should be as acquainted with wisdom as we are with our closest of kin. Be closely aware of her value, purpose, and ways. "*As the apple of your eye*": As the pupil of your eye.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Since Adam and Eve gave in to Satan, accomplishing the great fall of man from the favor of God, sin and evil have spread across the whole of mankind. Ruin and disappointment have marked the trail of mortals. The allurements of sin so entices the unaware heart of man. The fear of God and the respect for His laws of holiness and right is a sure safeguard against taking the downward path to the pit of destruction. We have in our lesson today the entreaty and exhortation of the father to his son, warning him of the danger that lurks all around to ensnare his life. We have here a scene that so many times has been a reality. Oh, the young person is fresh in vitality and desires for happiness and fulfillment. But he must be aware of the danger that there is. The father is telling him for his protection and safety to make wisdom and understanding his close kin and bosom companion. Before a young person ever becomes attracted to the opposite sex, he or she needs to marry wisdom. Take her with you where ever you go in life. The strange woman of the world, of covetousness, pride, fashion, and fame ever lurks to allure your soul away. There are false religions that are out to get you. And, in a literal sense, there are wicked women that would like to seduce young men. There are wicked and lustful men who would love to ruin and defile young girls. We do not know the half of the awful defiling current of evil that is flooding our world. It was that way back in Solomon's time. How much worse it is today! The background of this lesson is the reality that is yet por-

trayed before our very eyes today. Let us make wisdom and understanding our close kin, so we will not be ensnared by the evil influences that come against us. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are we to do with the commandments of God?
2. What does it mean to call wisdom your sister and understanding your kinswoman?
3. What will they keep us from?
4. What kind of person did he observe from his window?
5. What kind of influence did this young man meet?
6. What caused him to yield?
7. What was his going after this woman likened to and what did he fail to realize?
8. What was his end?
9. How can we keep from getting into this awful pit of destruction?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There is a time in a young person's life when the appetites of the flesh and the allurements of the world are so strong and keen. The fear of God and the value of eternal things have a way at this time of life of being obscure and far away. The present enjoyments and attractions take the priority. It is a dangerous time, and the simple, unaware youth that is void of proper understanding is swayed and moved to pursue these deceitful lusts. Those who have passed through this critical time and who have observed the downfall of others are quite heavily laden in heart and very much concerned about their children and other young people. The young are seemingly unaware of the pit of destruction that waits for them. It is hard for them to see the danger. "Oh, there will no harm come to me," they say. This is the critical point. There IS danger, and there WILL BE harm come to you for an exploration out into the world and its vain allurements. There is a pit out there that you will very easily get in. And the getting out is much, much more difficult than the getting in. One foolish young girl I heard about decided that she would give up the Lord and go out into sin for one year. How trifling and dangerous such a notion is! She stayed out in sin and the world for FIVE years. She finally escaped and came back to the Lord, but she heaped much sorrow upon her heart. Oh, that old fantasy of fulfillment keeps eluding them out in the cages of deception! Young people, it does not pay to refuse the

fear of God and try to find pleasure in this old wicked world. You will be disappointed, and it may cost you your soul. Let wisdom be your close kin. Listen to her voice and you will never regret doing so.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There are many good examples in the Bible of people who have withstood the allurements of sin. One of the most outstanding is Joseph. The devil carefully laid a trap for him down in Egypt, at his master's house. What a contrast between the end of his story and the one in our lesson. Rather than going as an ox to slaughter, he walked away with his head held high in victory.

People get into trouble when they listen to the reasoning of sin. At such a time the commandments of God are no longer the apple of their eye. Notice what Joseph said when he was tempted, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Just think of the trouble this world might have been spared if Eve would have spoken these words to Satan. Imagine the trouble that people today would be spared if they would reply thus to the temptation of evil. It is only wisdom to do so.

"For she hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her." Many young people Satan has wounded by the small darts of frivolity. They are then entangled by fornication, which is a very strong net indeed. Moreover, there have been people of apparently great moral strength who were suddenly toppled by adultery. Satan is very adept at using this sin to entice souls to hell.

The Christian life requires constant vigilance but it is not a life of fearing failure. God has complete victory for us if we will keep His law as the apple of our eye.—Wayne Murphey

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March 9, 1986

THE VOICE OF WISDOM

Prov. 8:1 Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?

4 Unto you, O men, I call: and my voice is to the sons of man.

6 Hear: for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.

10 Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold.

11 For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

20 I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment:

22 The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.

23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:

30 Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him:

31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth: and my delights were with the sons of men.

32 Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways.

33 Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.

34 Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.

35 For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.

36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

Memory Verse: And unto man he said. Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding. Job 28:28.

Central Thought: Wisdom calls to all men and promises life, success, true riches, honour, peace, hope, and all the favor of the Lord to those who will follow her guidance. This same wisdom was present in the heart of God when He created the world, and she still offers to us today the same counsel for our lives.

Word Definitions: *Arrogancy:* A feeling of superiority which exalts the worth or importance of one's self to an undue degree. *Froward:* Perverse or opposite to that which is right; the opposite of toward. "*The habitable part of His earth*": The part of the earth where human beings dwell.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Once again we have wisdom speaking to the sons of men, only this time her speech is more extensive and thorough. Our lesson last Sunday was about the simple youth void of understanding, who went after the strange woman. Our lesson ended with the dire warning not to go her way, for, "her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." Then our lesson today speaks forth, continuing the discourse, "Doth not wisdom cry?" The answer to this question is very obvious. She does cry. She speaks every where to men, but, as we have already observed, very few people pay her any heed. But she does cry. There is a saying of Jesus in Matt. 11:19, and also in Luke 7:35. This was where He was speaking about the present generation of His time not accepting Him or John the Baptist who had come before Him. He illustrated or likened them to silly children who would not be satisfied with any suggestion of activity or sport. They were piped to and they did not dance; and they were mourned to and they did not weep. "For," said Jesus, "John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man [Jesus] came eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" And then He made the statement that ties in with our lesson today: "But wisdom is justified of all her children." To be a child of wisdom means to hear her voice and not be affected by anything else. Jesus implied here that the children of wisdom are very rare. It is the same today. Not very many people hear and heed the voice of wisdom. But let us remember that she is still crying, and making her earnest appeal to the sons of men. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Is wisdom still calling today?
2. Where can she be heard?
3. Are there very many who hear her voice and take heed?
4. What is the fear of the Lord defined as?
5. What does seeking wisdom early mean?
6. In what way does wisdom lead us?
7. When did wisdom get her start and was set up?
8. How often should we seek for wisdom?
9. How can we wait at the posts of her doors?
10. What do we do when we sin against wisdom?
11. What do we prove that we love when we hate wisdom?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The very fact that we have a further extension of the stress put on wisdom calling makes us aware of the seriousness of the subject. We are stirred at this thought and it burdens our hearts when we see so many failing to take heed to the voice of wisdom as she speaks. What can be done to awaken slumbering humanity? Jesus recognized man's insolence and gross condition of heart and mind. He said in Matthew 12:42 that "a greater than Solomon is here", mentioning the fact that the Queen of Sheba would condemn the generation of Christ's time, for she came from the uttermost part of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. She was interested in what she had heard about the great King of Israel. People are so indifferent today. It matters not how God works to reach their souls, so many are unconcerned and disinterested. People need to wake up out of the sleep of death. Oh, how the god of this world blinds their minds! And all the time wisdom is speaking, calling, promising, inviting, instructing, reproving, testifying, and enlightening. There is a certain frequency of heart and mind that one must have to be able to hear wisdom when she speaks. And that is humility, honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness to follow and obey. Yes, wisdom is calling, seeking for her peculiar delight of uniting with a human soul. How blessed to be one of those who are constantly seeking guidance and understanding, ever conscious of the need for greater things! Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. (I Cor. 1:30) Through Him the wisdom from above can visit our hearts and abide there forever. Praises be to His name!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Job, in the midst of his tumultuous time, fully concurred with Solomon concerning the value of wisdom. "But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire." Job 27:12,15,16. When everything looked dark, Job was looking for wisdom to know how to behave himself as he should. We can see in his answer to his wife that he still retained wisdom. She said, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die." In his wisdom Job replied. "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh." Job 2:9,10. Through wisdom Job kept his integrity with God. The result of this was he was given more than he had before. He proved what Solomon said, "Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways."

Those who fail to answer the call of wisdom harm themselves. "but he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." How foolish it is for people to go right on doing the things that bring harm to their souls. In death they will realize the value of wisdom but it will be too late to utilize it.

—Wayne Murphey

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March 16, 1986

MORE ABOUT THE CALL OF THE TWO WOMEN

Prov. 9:1 Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars:

2 She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.

3 She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city,

4 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,

5 Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.

6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

7 He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot.

8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.

9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

11 For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.

12 If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself: but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.

13 A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing.

14 For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city,

15 To call passengers who go right on their ways:

16 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,

17 Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.

18 But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.

Memory Verse: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Proverbs 9:10.

Central Thought: Wisdom is not only calling, but she has builded her house for shelter, and has furnished a table for a feast of wonderful things. The world is also calling for souls to come and enjoy her commodities, not revealing that the end of those things is death.

Word Definitions: *Clamorous:* Loud, with great commotion, raging, roaring, and tumult. *The beginning of wisdom:* The basis or foundation of wisdom.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we see Wisdom, no more as a lone woman standing in the streets calling. We see her with a builded house upheld by seven pillars. We see inside her shining walls all the things necessary for true happiness and riches. She has a feast spread for the soul who will come and be willing to take her way. Is not this a true picture of wisdom in the Lord Jesus Christ and His New Testament? Is not this temple of wisdom the Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth? If you could label the seven pillars mentioned here, what would you label them with? Love,

holiness, humility, honesty, industry, righteousness, and patience could be used as labels. All the standard qualifications of the fear of God could be used. Jesus Christ had all of these things fully perfected in His life. For in Him the wisdom of God is making her last and highest appeal to the sons of men. The gospel brings to us the acceptable year of the Lord, the time when we can seek God and be accepted of Him. Jesus has set the pattern of humility, faith, obedience to God, and every other requirement laid down in His Word. He has set the pattern and promises grace if we will humble ourselves to follow Him. Yes, wisdom has through Christ made her final call. "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Psalm 95:7. But in the same place where wisdom puts forth her voice and has builded her house, we see it expressed that another house stands with an open door. Yes, it is the house of evil. It stands in conflict with the house of wisdom, striving to decoy men and women away from the heavenly path. The choice is ours as to which of these voices we will heed and follow.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What has wisdom done in our lesson?
2. What is the Bread that she is offering? What is the wine?
3. What is the difference in a scorner and a wise man?
4. Why will a scorner not hear a rebuke?
5. What will happen if you rebuke a wise man?
6. If you give a wise man instruction what will be the result?
7. If you will be wise, who will it be for?
8. What is sweet about stolen waters?
9. What is pleasant about the bread of secret and underhanded things?
10. Besides the sweetness, what else is there?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

This will be our last lesson from this first part of Proverbs. For the third time wisdom is presented as an earnest woman putting forth her earnest call to the sons of men. As we have already stated, she has progressed to build a temple for the shelter and safety of her children and all who love her. She is providing wholesome and delicious food for the soul. Oh, there are wonderful things in store for the children of wisdom! But, oh, let us not forget to take heed to keep away from this sinful world and all its attractions. Oh, it can look so inviting and good! But sin has a bitter end. The taste is sweet for awhile.

but it is bitter at the latter end. To go against the fear of God and the admonitions of His Word is to invite sorrow and trouble in your life. This brings us into much danger of eternal damnation. Why? Because the path of sin affords less and less a convenient way of escape. It will never be any easier to turn to the Lord than it is right now. Satan will see to it that the way will be closed up more and more, and may whisper some deceit in your mind that farther on you might find it easier. Oh, these Scriptures are so impressive and true! Let us be wise and give heed to the fear of God. Let us turn from the paths of worldly pleasure and press closer to Jesus! Only He can satisfy the craving of your heart. Remember that the way of righteousness looks hedged up with thorns, but rewards greatly the determined heart. The way of sin looks tempting, inviting, and desirable, but the end thereof is death and hell!

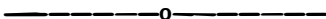
—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In our lesson we notice that a feast is spread and wisdom compels us to be a partaker of this banquet. The call has gone forth, "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." Christ, through wisdom, is the One who has prepared this feast. "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them. This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." Mark 14:22-24. We notice another place where Jesus produced wine to be partaken of. This was in Cana at a marriage feast. The ruler of the feast wanted to know why the best wine was saved until the last. The wine that is served at the table Christ sets always improves with time. Notice in our lesson the phrase, "wine which I have mingled". Sometimes we may partake of some suffering along with salvation, but the way grows brighter as time passes. At the end, heaven will be unmixed bliss. It will be a nectar that the mortal mind cannot comprehend.

There are many who sit at the banquet table that Satan has spread. He offers the very opposite of what Christ serves. Satan serves his best wine first. There are sweet temptations in sin. The young person sips of these and they tingle his soul. He indulges in sin and the wine is not as good as he thought

it was. As time goes on and sin ravages his body and soul, he realizes that it is not at all good. However, he is drunk on it and cannot help himself. The end of it is the bitter dregs of hell. It is wisdom to partake of the feast prepared by Christ. "Forsake the foolish and live; and go in the way of understanding."
—Wayne Murphey



March 23, 1986

THE PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST

John 12:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

Rom. 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

II Cor. 13:4 For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

I Tim. 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Rom. 4:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Heb. 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Heb. 13:11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Memory Verse: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Matt. 20:28

Central Thought: Jesus died, giving His life as a ransom to save mankind from the bondage of sin. In dying, He gave us an example to follow; death to self, sin, the world, and this present life in confidence of a greater life to come.

Word Definitions: *"God commendeth His love toward us":* God introduced or exhibited His love. *Ransom:* A redemption price or atonement.

LESSON BACKGROUND

As this is the season of the year when we have special commemoration and thoughts about the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we deem it well and in order to depart briefly from our studies in Proverbs and have some special lessons for this Sunday and the one following concerning the significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus. We will not study the actual scene of His crucifixion, as we just recently in previous lessons have done. We will rather turn our thoughts to what the New Testament writers have to say concerning what the death of Christ has accomplished for us. Our first Scripture and our memory verse were spoken by the Lord Himself in reference to His death. Christ knew that this was the purpose of Him coming into the world. He must die as a ransom to save the lost. His death was also the sowing of the seed that was to germinate into eternal life. For eternal life to be made available for mortals, it must be preceded by death to this present worldly system. In death Christ did take the place of mortals in punishment for sin. His crucifixion was also the avenue by which He gained the realm of power and life. The New-Testament writers are very strong in their expressions of this. Christ was the Atonement for sin by His death and

suffering, but it was for the purpose of leading many sons unto glory. Death to us has two phases. The first is our death to sin and the world. Then there comes the departure of our soul from this life. Life also has two phases. There is the spiritual life we gain in our souls when we die to sin. Then there is the eternal life which we will receive when we leave this world. We are to bear His reproach in hope of being glorified when we share in Christ's resurrection.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What natural illustration did Jesus give concerning His death?
2. Who are the only ones who will keep their life and not lose it?
3. Who did Christ die for and for what purpose did He die?
4. What was made manifest when Christ was crucified through weakness?
5. Christ died for the ungodly, but gave Himself as a ransom for all. Can you explain this? Was there anyone who did not need this ransom paid?
6. Christ was delivered to be executed for what?
7. Why did Christ need to taste death for every man?
8. How was Christ made perfect?
9. How are we to relate to Christ's reproach and death? Are we to share in that reproach? How or in what way can we bear His reproach?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It is good to ponder and view in mind the sacred scenes of Christ's sufferings and death as revealed in the four gospels. It is also, and even more, important to understand what it all meant and what it was all for. It is very evident that no one, not even Christ's disciples, knew and understood just what all of His sufferings and death was for. It was not until later, after His resurrection, and even after the Holy Spirit had come and taken charge of the work of the Church, that the meaning of His death and its great purpose was made plain. Jesus knew full well what His death was for, but the earth-borne minds of his disciples could not comprehend the meaning of it all despite all the things that the Master had said. As time went on and the Holy Spirit began to reveal things that before this they had not been able to see, the death of Christ became clear. Jesus likened it to the planting of seed. Paul

was able to see that Christ's death was for the atonement of sin. He saw that the crucifixion of the Saviour in weakness and poverty was the means of bringing strength and true riches to every one. He saw that Christ's death was an end to the old law system, and the introduction of the new covenant of faith; the fulfillment of the covenant of Abraham. He saw that Christ's ransom was for all men, not only the Jew, but for all nations. He saw that Christ was delivered to the wrath of the crowd because of our offences, that we might be justified. Man could not die for himself. Someone had to die who was sinless and pure, without fault or blame. He had to die, this blessed One. The reproach that He bore was to make it possible for us to take that road, the only road to eternal life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Cyrus, King of Persia, after a famous victory, took prisoner a noble prince, with his wife and children. When they were brought into the tent of the victors, Cyrus said to the prince, "What will you give me to set you at liberty?" The prince replied, "I will give you half that I possess." Cyrus exclaimed, "And what will you give me if I release your children?" The prince answered, "I will give you all that I possess." Cyrus questioned him still further, saying, "But what will you give me if I set your wife at liberty?" Looking upon his wife he replied, "If you will restore my wife to liberty I will lay down my life." Cyrus, won by the true nobility of the sacrifice offered by that devoted man, immediately set them at liberty without any recompense whatsoever. That evening, when the prince and his wife were rejoicing together over their freedom, he said, "Did you not think Cyrus a very handsome man?" His wife replied, "I did not notice him sufficiently well to tell." The prince exclaimed, "Why, where were your eyes?" She answered, "I had eyes only for him who said he would lay down his life for me."

We are the Lord's because He has already laid down His life for us. He has redeemed us from the chains of destruction, and has delivered us from the prison of spiritual death. As His bride, our eyes should only be on Him. —Wayne Murphey

March 30, 1986

WHAT THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST MEANS TO US

Rom. 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I Cor. 15:17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Memory Verse: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:11.

Central Thought: God Almighty raised up His Son Jesus from the dead, generating power to quicken the lost from the dead state of sin to a life of victory. He also provided hope for all who follow Christ to be resurrected from the dead in that last great day to live forever.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The resurrection of Christ had a different visible or outward effect upon the disciples than His death. His death plunged them into dismay and gloom, while His resurrection stunned them with wonder and joy. Even in the midst of their joy they still did not comprehend what it was all to mean to them. However, as time went on and the impact of all these wonderful events was felt more and more, they were made to realize the great blessing and benefit that the risen Christ was pouring into their lives. From the Scriptures we have in our lesson and from many more, we can see the wonderful effect that God meant for the resurrection of His Son to have upon us. In the first place we are made spiritually alive through the virtue of His risen life from the dead. We are quickened to a life for God. We can die to sin and its cause. We can live in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. We can walk each day the new and living way. We can enter into the most holy place, the heavenly life, being raised up to sit and live with Christ in heavenly places. We are bound by sin no longer, for we are quickened to life and victory. This is the basis for the hope that the resurrection of Christ brings. From the resurrection chapter (I Corinthians 15) we find great revelations of the blessing and benefit of Christ's conquering of death. By His risen life we have hope and confidence of also being resurrected from the dead when Jesus comes again. Sin has been deprived of its power and influence over us. It was the sting of death, and by being taken away, death has no more sting. The grave no more has the victory. The victory is ours through our Lord Jesus Christ. How we can rejoice today that Christ is risen from the dead and gives life to us forever!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does baptism refer to in our lesson?
2. What kind of life is this "newness of life"?
3. How can we be in the likeness of His resurrection?
4. How can we be in the likeness of His death?
5. How are the two relative to each other?
6. What is to be crucified with Christ? What does this do for us?
7. What has no more dominion over us?
8. How would we be affected if Christ is really not risen?
9. Where is death's sting, and where is grave's victory?
10. Who has the victory now?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Christ allowed Himself to be bound by the cords of death so that He could conquer death, and burst asunder the bars of the tomb. He could do this because He was pure and sinless. Because of His resurrection and the triumph over the grave He has made a clean sweep of everything. Sin, death, and the tomb have been conquered! He has overcome the world and the devil! This victory was gained for you and for me. No more do we need to be bowed down under the yoke of sin. We do not have to go down into the pit like the beast of the field with no hope of coming up in the resurrection to see good things. We have hope through the risen life of God's holy Son, Jesus Christ. Through the resurrected life of Christ we can live a clean, upright and holy life right here in this present world. We can overcome temptation and corruption. We can follow in the footsteps of Jesus all the time. We can be like Him. Oh, His resurrection has accomplished everything! The Holy Spirit can live and abide with us forever. We do not have to be afraid of anything. Death or men can not stop us! Our faith and hope reaches far into that within the veil. It goes far up into the heavenly element and is anchored there in the promises of God. Truly our hearts are rejoicing in this wonderful victory over all the powers of the enemy. Satan is a conquered foe. We do not need to bow to his will anymore. We can be stronger than him through Christ. We thank God for His unspeakable gift of life in Jesus Christ, His Son. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Apostle Paul said, "Know this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed,

that henceforth we should not serve sin." In another place he put it a little differently. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. 6:14. Since Christ's death on the cross, the world no longer had sway over Paul; it was dead. When Christ came into the world, He judged it. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." John 12:31. When He died He imprisoned it. Therefore it is just the same as a dead enemy as far as a saved person is concerned.

Because we can reign over sin here, we have hope of a hereafter. The poet, Longfellow, very eloquently stated, "The grave itself is but a covered bridge leading from light to light, through a brief darkness." This is very applicable to Christ's death and resurrection. The grave could hold Him only three days. Our lesson says, "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

The Psalmist David said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." Psalms 23:4. I am glad that he said through. We do not have to stay in that valley of death, but can come out on the side of life. While we are in it for a brief time, the One who has already passed that way has promised to be with us.

—Wayne Murphey

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THE MISSION FRIEND'S SON

It is not much to be wondered at that so many farmer's sons become great and influential men, surrounded as they are by the wonders of Nature and spending most of their time in the open air. The dawn and the starry night, the meadows with their wealth of flowers, the majestic forest, the caressing breeze and the roaring tempest, the glimmering sunbeams, and the awe-inspiring lightning stamp their images indelibly on their souls, are woven into the fabric of their thoughts, and accustom their eyes, mind and thoughts to the pure, the beautiful, and the great. Base thoughts do not thrive in their company, but the ambition for the true and the sublime grows daily in the farmer's son, just as the trees of their own accord grow heavenward.

At the age of seventeen Carl Pihl had already developed into manhood and had for several years performed a man's work. Years of stern discipline had made of him an industrious and conscientious young man, and his parents had only joy of their beloved Carl. Living amid majestic scenery he had early acquired a taste for the sublime in Nature. Every gigantic tree preached to him of the Eternal One, and while tilling the soil he felt the presence of the great God. He had read in Sunday school of how God came to Elijah in the quiet solitude, and when the day's work was done and the gentle breezes of the night began to blow he seemed to hear the whispered voice of the Most High.

When the fall work was over and the bleak winds blew over the barren landscape, Carl one day approached his father and said: "Father, I believe you can get along without me this winter. I would like to get out and earn a little money."

"I have use for you at home, Carl," was the reply. "Where would you go to find work this time of the year?"

"I thought of going to Forestdale, where they are cutting timber this winter. I have heard that there are some two hundred men at work already, and they can use all they can get."

"You are too young, my boy!"

"I can make good wages during the next six months and be home in time for the spring work," said the boy, eagerly.

"I am afraid that the temptations to which you will be exposed are entirely too great for you. Do you know what it is to live among uncivilized, ungodly toughs in a lumber camp?"

"Oh, God will protect me! Besides, I don't intend to fraternize with them."

After much hesitation the father gave his consent to the departure, and for the first time in his life the settler-boy left home.

Arriving at Duluth, he was engaged for a period of six months and immediately set out with fifty other laborers for the pine regions. The first part of the trip was accomplished by team, the last ten miles through the forest being covered on foot. Carl had seen much of the forest about his home; still he had only a faint conception of its vastness. The journey along the snow-covered path in the forest was impressive to the poetic soul of young Carl. About him was silence, interrupted now and then by the report of a gun, as one of the party shot at a rabbit, a squirrel, or a deer.

Finally they arrived at their destination. They found scant accommodation in the rough cabins, which barely protected them against the cold wind. Through the crevices in the walls Carl could discern the moon and the stars; but, rugged and strong, he soon grew accustomed to the life in the forest and liked his surroundings pretty well, excepting the sinful life of which he was an unwilling spectator. Never had the young settler-boy dreamed of the existence of such ungodly people as those with whom he came in daily contact. Throughout the day he listened to curses and oaths in well nigh all the languages under the sun. The men swore in English; they swore in Swedish and German and Finnish and Italian and Russian. Carl Pihl shuddered at the thought of such a life. He soon gained the good-will and friendship of the Swedes in the gang, for, as they nearly all were fresh from the old country and could speak only their native tongue, he was in a position to render valuable assistance to them by serving as interpreter, by accompanying them to the company's store when they wished to make their purchases, etc. On the other hand, there was one rough Irishman who, above others, made young Pihl the target for his grim jokes from the first day in which they met. His name was Mike Sullivan. Learning that Carl had never before this been any great distance away from home he thenceforth referred to him as "Mother's Pet" and teased him whenever he met him. But the young man held his peace and took it all good-naturedly. Among the Swedes was a stalwart man who was known as "Strong Pete", and this man, who had seen better days in his native country, had a good deal of fun at Carl Pihl's expense, calling him an unbroken colt and other names. And when he learned that Carl did not swear he was enraged and tried in every way to provoke him. Religion

was openly derided by the gang. Their conversation was fearfully degrading. The troop was composed mainly of debauchees, who, when they were in the city, gave themselves up to drink and vice.

Pretty soon the companions of the youth took note of his quiet ways. The very fact that he refrained from the use of vile language and did not season his talk with oaths was sufficient to rouse the party to aggressiveness. Sarcasms and ridicule were showered upon him. It was not often young Pihl had opportunity to read the Bible he had brought with him, but one evening he retired to a corner and began to read the comforting passages which he in his loneliness valued higher than ever. While he was absorbed in the study of the precious Word he suddenly heard a gruff voice behind him.

"What are you doing here, you rascal?"

Pihl looked up in surprise.

"Oho! You are reading novels, you hypocrite," continued the intruder. "A fine young man you are!"

The man, who was none other than Strong Pete, leaned over and grabbed the book out of Carl's hand. Then he saw that it was a Bible.

"So you are a Bible reader," exclaimed Strong Pete sarcastically. "Who ever heard of a Bible reader in a lumber camp! We don't tolerate that here! Come here, boys, we've got a Bible reader among us! Let's have some fun!"

The men came running from their nooks and gathered around Carl. Before him stood Strong Pete holding Pihl's New Testament in his hand. "Come, boys, we will make this straggling evangelist preach to us!" The ruffians shouted their applause. Carl knew that the hour of trial was upon him. He prayed for strength, courage, and wisdom to go through the ordeal and not to deny his Savior before these men.

Mike Sullivan proposed that they should burn the book before the eyes of Carl Pihl. That ought to get the notions out of the head of "Mother's Pet." But while the men were harassing the youth there appeared on the scene another stalwart Swede, nicknamed, on account of his tall stature, "Tall Pine." His countenance was pale. Pihl had never heard him speak to his comrades, but now, with a commanding voice he cried to Mike Sullivan, who had taken the New Testament: "You give that book back!" Then, as Mike hesitated, he raised his fist menacingly in the face of the Irishman and in tones that carried conviction with them: "Whoever after this disturbs Carl in the least when he wants to read his Bible will get a

taste of this!" And he shook his fist in the faces of the ruffians. His words had the desired effect, and, one by one, they slunk away and left the youth to himself.

The man who had thus interposed in behalf of Carl had been brought up in a good, Christian home in Sweden and had once been a professing Christian, but after getting out into the world he had been drawn away from God. But he never forgot the time when he had fellowship with the believers in Jonkoping, though that was a long time ago. On witnessing Pihl's steadfastness the poor renegade felt deep remorse because he had been too cowardly to confess his Master as this young man had done and made haste to defend the young man against the insults that were heaped upon him.

Carl Pihl at times felt very lonely in the dreary forest among the godless lumber-men. On the Sunday following the above related incident, the day being lovely, he decided to go to a secluded place in the forest, where he could read his Bible without being disturbed by the noisy crowd. Scarcely had he seated himself beside a pile of logs when he heard voices behind him. His first thought was that his enemies had followed him up and were lying in wait for him. Then he heard a soft voice close to the place which he had chosen. He listened. To his great surprise he heard words from the Holy Scriptures read in tones of deepest reverence.

As the voice read on each new verse seemed better adapted to his own circumstances: "If I ascend up into heaven Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, Thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say: 'surely, the darkness shall cover me,' even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee, but the night shineth as the day. The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee."

There was silence for a moment. Then followed a heartfelt, earnest prayer, as when a child speaks to its father. It was a prayer for the protection of God, for more love, for perseverance in the midst of unbelievers, for grace to live as it behoves a Christian in such a place. It was a heartfelt prayer to Him who loved us and who died for us in His great love.

Then the praying man arose and started to walk away. Carl too arose, and, extending his hand, exclaimed: "Brother!" Both looked surprised, for they thought that no eye save that of the Almighty had observed them. Now young Pihl had a new friend, and they spent many edifying moments together

about the Word and in prayer. And Carl was made conscious of the fact that the Lord everywhere has those who call on His name.

In the spring Carl went with a gang which was to float logs down the Mississippi to the great saw mills in the City of Mills. This work was not infrequently attended with great danger. The logs, which had been hauled to the river bank and lay in great heaps all along the course of the river, were to be started off as soon as the ice broke. It often happened that the logs became obstructed, and then the raftsmen had to run out upon the floating logs, in doing which they often exhibited great skill and daring, for it often happened that a log rolled over in the water, and then the greatest agility was necessary in order to avoid falling into the water. Once down in the water with the logs piling overhead the chances for rescue were slim indeed.

One windy day a gang of workmen was sent half a mile down the river to a place where it made an abrupt turn, in order to dislodge a number of logs that had stuck there and were fast piling up. In the gang were Strong Pete, Mike Sullivan, and Carl Pihl. All the way Mike kept up his jesting, asking Carl if he was ready to die. Pihl made no reply.

Soon the work of dislodging the logs was well under way. Each workman had been assigned his task. They hurried intrepidly out upon the logs. The Mississippi was swollen, and the water surged against the piles of logs covering the men with spray. After an hour's toil the logs began to move slowly down stream. In the midst of the pile was Mike Sullivan. He stood on a large log which was suddenly torn loose by a wave and shot down the stream. Before Mike could leap to another log he was cut off from the main pile, and in his effort to reach another log he lost the sharp pointed pole with which he maintained his balance. At the same moment a wave came along and precipitated itself on the pile of logs like a mountain of white foam. There was a crashing and a trembling, and it seemed as if the entire pile should be scattered like chips on the surface of the river. Still Mike clung to his log.

A new wave, larger than the first, bore down upon the logs and hurled them into the eddying, foaming water, where they instantly disappeared. Soaked to the skin and nearly blinded by the spray all the workmen rushed ashore.

Shock after shock was felt, and the logs were torn apart by the eddies. All realized that Mike's hour had struck. He was

still in sight, but he was being carried farther and farther away from the shore.

Despairing cries were heard above the din of the elements. The men had been waist deep in water and worked with the energy of despair, but no one ventured out any more. Again there came agonized cries from the unlucky Mike.

None of his friends dared go to his rescue.

Just then Carl came running and cried: "There is only one way to save him. There is not a moment to lose! Come here with your horse," he called out to Flying Deer, an Indian who chanced along the shore. Carl leaped upon the back of the animal and rode out into the torrent, braving the fury of wind and wave. His comrades on shore applauded the heroic deed. Soon young Pihl was at the side of Mike, whom he grasped by the collar and dragged unconscious to the shore. "How magnanimous!" It was his bitterest enemy, and all who heard of the deed were unanimous in their praise of the young hero.

—Selected

THE WORLD IS WAITING FOR YOU



The world is waiting for you, young man,
If your purpose is strong and true,
If out of your treasures of mind and heart
You can bring things old and new.
If you know the truth that makes men free,
And with skill can bring it to view,
The world is waiting for you, young man,
The world is waiting for you.

There are treasures of mountain and treasures of sea,
And harvest of valley and plain,
That Industry, Knowledge and Skill can secure,
While Ignorance wishes in vain.
To scatter the lightning and harness the storm,
Is a power that is wielded by few;
If you have the nerve and the skill, young man,
The world is waiting for you.

Of the idle and brainless the world has enough—
Who eat what they never have earned;
Who hate the pure stream from the fountain of
truth,
And wisdom and knowledge have spurned.
But patience and purpose which know no defeat,
And genius like gems bright and true,
Will bless all mankind with their love, life and
light,
The world is waiting for you.
Then awake, O young man, from the stupor of doubt,
And prepare for the battle of life,
Be the fire of the forge, or be anvil or sledge,—
But win, or go down in the strife!
Can you stand, though the world into ruin should
rock?
Can you conquer with many or few?
Then the world is waiting for you, young man,
The world is waiting for you!

—Selected

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