

JULY 8, 1990

THE VALUE OF WISDOM.

A group of kids were out having a good time and the guy who drove drank too much. One of the group refused to ride. Everyone told him that he was silly, but he still refused to ride. The drunken driver was speeding and all the kids in the car were seriously injured. That really didn't happen that way. The kid that refused to ride eventually gave in and was in the car, also. Now he's looking to another two weeks in the hospital and three or four months of limited activity. One of the other kids has a broken neck. The driver of the car is in a coma and may have brain damage. How valuable is knowing and doing what is right? How can we put a price on WISDOM? Is that story true? Yes, it is. It happened recently to the son of a lady with whom I work. Each of you could relate stories that validate the value of doing what is wise. You have seen wisdom at work and you have seen folly that leads to trouble. The wise man learns from what he observes but the foolish must experience it for themselves; that is, learn it the hard way. The message of the Word of God that relates to interpersonal relationships and our daily conduct is one that calls us to do the wise thing. We relate Wisdom with the character of God. The writer of the Proverbs also saw Wisdom as being associated with God.

²²“The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old. ²³“From everlasting I was established, From the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth. ²⁴“When there were no depths I was brought forth, When there were no springs abounding with water. ²⁵“Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills I was brought forth; ²⁶While He had not yet made the earth and the fields, Nor the first dust of the world. ²⁷“When He established the heavens, I was there, When He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep, ²⁸When He made firm the skies above, When the springs of the deep became fixed, ²⁹When He set for the sea its boundary So that the water would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth; Proverbs 8:22-29 (NASB95)

This passage is a hymn describing the role of Wisdom in creation. It is telling us that the character of Wisdom is eternal. Wisdom was in existence before the creation and it will be in existence when time has ended and has no more meaning. Wisdom is an essential characteristic of God and as long as God lives Wisdom will be vindicated as the right choice. This Proverb personifies Wisdom as one who calls to people to listen and to heed the message of always making the right choice. She is pictured as being in the market place and in the courts, along the road and where we live. The reason we should listen to Wisdom is because of that eternal nature and value described in this passage.

³⁰Then I was beside Him, *as* a master workman; And I was daily *His* delight, Rejoicing always before Him, ³¹Rejoicing in the world, His earth, And *having* my delight in the sons of men. Proverbs 8:30-31 (NASB95)

The NIV translates vs 30 in such a way that Wisdom is pictured as a "craftsman" at the side of God during the Creation. In other Old Testament passages, craftsmen were referred to as "wise men". A craftsman can appreciate the workmanship that has gone into a fine work. Here we see Wisdom getting great pleasure (delight) as she sees all the great work that God was doing in the creation. We can still look around us at God's creation and marvel and take delight in all that He has done. The more we learn about the world around us the more we ought to be rejoicing at what God has done. The simplest things of creation are marvelously complicated. An ordinary plant with its root system that removes nutrients and

moisture from the soil and turns all these components into plant cells of different kinds--stems, leaves, flowers, and fruit--scientist have never invented anything that can even come close to duplicating it.

The crowning delight of God's creation is mankind. As marvelous are the plants and the micro-organisms, the birds and the mammals, none compares to what God has done in creating man. We are created in the image of God and can possess the character of God. We should find our greatest rejoicing in the fact that God cared so much for us that He wanted to be able to fellowship with us. Even when we went away from Him, He provided a means of restoration and redemption.

³²“Now therefore, *O* sons, listen to me, For blessed are they who keep my ways. ³³“Heed instruction and be wise, And do not neglect *it*. ³⁴“Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at my doorposts. Proverbs 8:32-34 (NASB95)

Given that Wisdom is eternal and is a part of the character of God and is valued by God, we ought to heed the words of wisdom. The group of young people that were involved in the automobile accident could have saved themselves and their families a lot of grief by doing what they knew to be right--if you drink, don't drive--as they had been told by parents and even messages on television. Even in the midst of the folly of the event, there was some wisdom at work. One of the kids is alive today because another one of the kids insisted that she put her seat belt on. Because they listened to that small amount of wisdom lives were saved. We cannot afford to refuse to heed the voice of wisdom in even the most seemingly innocent of situations. How many times have we been told to use a ladder if we are going to climb on something and yet there will be many people injured and some killed from falls as a result of climbing on chairs or boxes or some other thing that is unsafe. As you are getting older, your eyesight may fade and at some point in time you will need to make the wise choice of NOT getting your driver's license renewed. I remember one of my wife's aunts that reach that point and she had a near tragic accident before she made the right choice.

³⁵“For he who finds me finds life And obtains favor from the LORD. ³⁶“But he who sins against me injures himself; All those who hate me love death.” Proverbs 8:35-36 (NASB95)

Life is made up of choices. We make the choices and we reap the problems or rewards that are a result of those choices. We might reject Wisdom; however, that does not hurt Wisdom. It only hurts ourselves. We do not invalidate wisdom simply because we do not practice it. It may seem that way in that we can often do something foolish and not suffer any immediate consequences from our actions; however, events will finally catch up with foolish actions and the price is always too high. The best thing for us to do is to always choose the path of wisdom. It would be what God would do and since we have been created in His image, then we should acquire His character. The way we accomplish that is to listen to the Word of God that is the source of wisdom. Choosing God's way brings happiness and life and all of us want that.