

Living Under God's Favor and Blessing

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Take your Bibles and let's go to the book of Proverbs. You find Psalms, you go right, you find Proverbs. Go to Proverbs 2. My heart's been on Proverbs for a while lately, and I thought in this interim between book studies we might look at a Proverb or two. We're going to look at chapter 2 this morning. I think what I'm going to do is cover a section of the text as I do an expositional exhortation from the text, because we're going to do the whole chapter alright?

I call this "Living Under God's Favor and Blessing." Is that not what you want? Is that not what I want? There's only one alternative to that, living under God's disfavor and curse. It's one of the two. And to live under God's favor and blessing you must walk in God's wisdom. This world is full of those who are self-appointed wise men who walk in the "wisdom" of this world and the Bible says they're fools and they do not know God's favor and God's blessing, and it will show up one day. They look like they're getting ahead for a while, but it will show in the end.

Now a common secular definition of wisdom could be this. Now there are a lot of them, but generally speaking I ran across this one, a common secular definition. "Wisdom is the art of learning how to succeed in life." Wisdom is the art of learning how to succeed in life, that'd be a common definition from the unregenerate world, you might say. Well, that's not a good definition of wisdom. A good definition of wisdom might be this, this is my own, you may have a better one, but it would basically contain these components. "Knowing God and learning from God how life works." Knowing God and learning from God how life works.

Proverbs 9:10 reminds us, "The fear of the LORD," that means coming to a place of holding him dear, reverencing him, having an awe, a respect of him. That's what the word "fear" means. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." In other words, you don't even start on the track of knowing how to be a wise person or live in wisdom until you come to know him in the sense of treasuring him and honoring him and respecting him, not just an intellectual knowledge of him. The word "understanding" is he also used in Proverbs 9:10 and knowledge of the holy one is understanding, that's the idea of a right perception of things, an intuitive recognition of what is truly right and good. When you when you know the Lord and you're growing in his wisdom, you, you begin to intuitively naturally, you could say, grasp what is truly right and what is truly good because you and

I live in a world that calls good evil and calls evil good. How you gonna sort that out? It starts with knowing the Lord.

Philippians 3:10 and 11 reminds us, Paul speaking of his own purpose, "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." Paul had wisdom. Paul said, "You know, it all starts with knowing Him, that I may know Him." Now don't, don't miss what else he says, "and the power of His resurrection." Know him in a saving way so that my life counts now and I'll live for all eternity with him. You see, we are not moralists. We don't want to just take the 10 Commandments or the moral teachings of the Bible as proper and essential for a sane and good society, as they are, nevertheless, we're more than just those who adhere to the moral truths of God's word. We want to know the God of the moral truths. Love him and also, of course, his truths because they come from him.

So we're not about just behavior modification. I told you one time before I had a professor at the university in the Business School who who talked about, and he would pick on me a little bit every now and then. He'd say, "You know, you're you're a minister and you're about the same thing the rest of us are about you're about behavior modification." I thought, "No, I'm not." Not primarily. I I I do think it's good for society if people modify their behavior to align it with biblical truth and biblical morality. Of course, it makes a better neighbor, it makes a better friend, makes a better citizen. But we're not about just making America better, we're about building God's church in America and in the world. We we don't want to just be moralists who change people's behavior, we want to help people know the God of the universe and then consequently it by knowing him in a saving way, behavior will change. But it's the byproduct, it's not the same main thing.

You see, Paul when he talks about, "that I might know Him and the power of His resurrection," he's telling us what true wisdom is about because, by the way, if you could, if you could take the Bible and prescribe to your life from the Bible the best way to live, the the way that works the best, uh, your raise your children in the best way if you follow the Bible, you'll have a better marriage if you follow the Bible, you'll you'll have a happier and better life with your fellow man and in the world if you follow the Bible. But if you just follow the Bible and don't know Christ, you end up in eternal loss and that's not wisdom. Amen? Just just knowing good precepts to follow that makes life better, that's good for mankind but that's not true wisdom because at the end you lose everything. That's why Paul said, "I will know Him and the power of His resurrection." Eternal life. 1 John 5:20 reminds us, "And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, the true God and eternal life."

So that brings us right into our first Roman numeral as we unpack this text, to have a life that is under the favor and the blessing of God, number 1, you must know the God who is wisdom. You must know the God who is wisdom. Look at verses 1 through 6 of Proverbs 2. "My son," Solomon is writing to his son but obviously the truth is for all of us.

1 My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you, 2 Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; 3 For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; 4 If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; 5 Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God. 6 For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Now the wisdom of God is not mysterious. You do not have to be a scholar to find it. Matter of fact, the wisdom of God has more to do with the condition of your soul than the depth of your intellect. Uh, the key is to go to the word of God with this kinda diligence Solomon is exhorting his son about. And by the way, in parallel here, wisdom is Jesus. There's no wisdom outside of Jesus. And I'm convinced it's a very proper way to understand the teaching of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding as knowing Christ and his truth is the way to wisdom, to knowledge and understanding.

You see, knowing and honoring God's wisdom must be our chief aim. Note the two now: knowing and understanding. He says in verse 1, "receive these things, son." Verse, uh, 1 again, "treasure these things." Verse 2, "be attentive to these things." Verse 2, "incline your heart to these things. Cry for these things," verse 3. "seek these things," verse 4. "Search for these things," verse 4. In other words, God will be found by those who want to find him. God will be found by those who want to find him.

Matthew 7:7 Jesus said it this way, "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Note the attitude of some great men of the Scriptures. Job says he treasured God's word more than his necessary food. Jeremiah says, "I ate the word." It's a metaphor for devouring, taking it into my heart and holding it. "I ate the word and it became a joy and a delight to me." David said, "It was good that I was afflicted that I might learn thy statutes." Jesus said, "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." As I heard from a wise preacher years ago, you see, men can't find God for the same reason a thief can't find a policeman. He's not looking for him. That's the problem.

So he says, "Son, know God and keep driving and striving to understand more of Him. Son, that's wisdom, that's knowledge, that's understanding. Treasure Him." That's where wisdom begins. Uh, how shall I say it? I wish pastors, some pastors seem to be very gifted at taking practical applications from the word of God, but they seem to downplay the knowing God aspect of the whole thing. This is not a manual just to have a better life, it's a book to reveal God to us and we will have a better life, but always in that order.

He tells him in verse 5 to do but if you do the things outlined in verses 1 through 4, all the seeking and giving attention and crying out for etc, then verse 5, "then you will discern the fear of the LORD." In other words, you'll learn to fear God as he ought to be feared. So you'll not just have an intellectual esteem and an intellectual conclusion that God is right and we ought to honor him. No, no, no it'll be deeper than that. "Son, you'll learn from the heart in flow with the intellect to reverence God for who God is." So that that's

that's what wisdom does, it takes you to the place of putting God where God ought to be in your heart and in your mind.

He also says in verse 5 you'll discover the knowledge of God. That's the idea of knowledge from practice and experience, not just the God that you know some things about in your mind. It's an intimate understanding of God and his ways.

Look at verse 6 in our text, "For the LORD gives wisdom; [and] From His mouth come knowledge and understanding." So first we must know him, then he gives wisdom, understanding and knowledge. Uh, you young people sitting here, maybe even college folks and singles, um, our job as parents and our job as your pastor is not just to plug into you some rules and some do's and don'ts. Now, there are rules that matter, and do's and don'ts are helpful, but primarily we want the foundation stone in your heart, and that is Christ. Him. Him. I want you to go from this building today and I want you to walk through your afternoon on Sunday and I want you to lay your head on the pillow at night and think, "It's Him. He's wisdom. He's understanding. He's knowledge."

You see, today's culture wants to "find the successful way to live, find the way to live life," but then they want to bypass the God of the living. Man tries to start with his own dreams and his own ambitions and his own desires, and then he wants to plug God into his system. "Oh yeah, I believe in God and I, you know, I won't be in membership in the church. I'll be baptized. But I'm going my own way and I just need a God to plug into my system." You're a fool. You start with God. You see, to know how to live, God is the starting point. To know how to live, God is the middle point. And to know how to live, God is the ending point. He is to be all in all.

So you must know the God who is wisdom. Do you know him? Have you come to him through his Son, Jesus Christ? Have you come to feel and sense the weight of your sinfulness and the the greatness of your offensiveness to his Triune holy character and you realize afresh, "I can bring nothing to this God to appease His wrath that is against me. I can do nothing before, nothing prescribed, nothing jump through any hoops that would in any way cause this Holy One to embrace me and not judge me. So I come to his Son who took my place and bore my wrath and my punishment and has given me His own righteousness." That's knowing God and that is the beginning of wisdom.

Then y'all remember the old, independent Baptist, fundamentalist, Texas preacher named Lester Roloff? Lester Roloff. Lester Roloff used to say that education without regeneration is an abomination. What's his point? You can just gain a lot of facts and knowledge, and thank God under God's common grace he lets the unregenerate world gain facts and knowledge in the medical field or whatever, and it's a blessing to us, but it's also a curse to us because with that medical knowledge they start killing babies. You see what I mean? Without regeneration, they become an abomination. They misuse the knowledge they gain so it's not wisdom. It's about perversity of the knowledge God's allowed them to gain.

Well, number 2, II and I've only got two points but number 2 is rather long. Number 2 is how we flourish in the way of wisdom. There's a pastor up in the northeast and he's done some good things, and recently he's leaned a little too far to the left to accommodate the culture and that's a common temptation of all of us, and particularly of pastors perhaps, but he does like to use the word "human flourishing" a lot, and there's a good way to use that word, and that is that mankind does best, he flourishes when he follows God's wisdom.

Well notice, first of all, this includes how God protects us and takes care of us. Uh, verses 7 through 19. We'll begin in verse 7 and comment as we go.

7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, 8 Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones. 9 Then you will discern righteousness and justice And equity and every good course.

That means he gives you direction. You will discern the righteous and just and equitable path for life. So he's our shield. He's our guard. He's our preservation. He directs us. So if we seek the God of wisdom and desire to observe the way of wisdom as our chief aim in life, then he's our shield, he's our guard, he's our preservation, he's our direction.

Listen to me, folks: I don't know where this world is headed but I do know where God's church is headed. Are you listening to me? I don't know where this world is headed. Uh, uh, Billy Graham's wife used to say, "If God doesn't judge America, he'll have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah." But listen to me: in the midst of the turmoil and the despair and the and the woe and the wickedness of our age, we can know God will be our shield, God will be our guard, God will be our preservation, and God will give us the paths to walk on if we're those who are his who look to him and his wisdom. We don't want to just read books about the Bible. We want to do more than that. When Christians draw their thoughts from one another but neglect the reservoir of truth, the Bible, the result is dry intellectualism just the opposite of fresh, vigorous personal spirituality. And I think that's what Solomon is fighting against here, "Son, the world would say gain intellect. That's not wrong, it's just not the main thing and it becomes a tool for wickedness if you don't start first with God and His wisdom."

Those who know the God of wisdom and observe the way of wisdom will be delivered from two chief enemies and that's the way I outline the remainder of chapter 2, two chief enemies. A) in our outline: he'll deliver you from evil ways. He will deliver you from evil ways. We see this in verses 12 through 15. Let's just read it all and then we'll go back to it.

12 To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things;

Can we just stop right there? Do you think it would be an accurate description of our modern culture to say it's a culture that speaks perverse things? And by the way, far too many pulpits are beginning to echo the perverse things of the culture.

13 From those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness;

Look at the metaphorical words here that just describe that path, that way.

14 Who delight in doing evil

Boy, this speaks to the, this is this is a a perfect description of modern culture, last part of verse 14,

And rejoice in the perversity of evil;

We no longer have people who have some shame left. We no longer have people in our culture who who are involved in in wicked perverse things and kind of want to stay in in the back alleys and in the darkness. No, they rejoice publicly, openly in celebration what the Bible calls perverse evils. Are you listening to me, friend? If you're ashamed of your sin, there's hope for you. Amen? By the way, I'm ashamed of my sin and you ought to be ashamed of your sin. But when you get so brazen that you go out in the public square and glory in it, listen to me, that brings the judgment of God. You've far gotten far off the paths of being a repentor when you're celebratory about those things that God says are perverse and evil.

"From those," verse 13, "from those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness; Who delight in doing evil," verse 14, last part, "And rejoice in the perversity of evil."

15 Whose paths are crooked, And who are devious in their ways;

These describe evil men who walk in the pride of their hearts and they walk in independence from God and from his wisdom You see, pride is the exaltation of self. Pride is the complete anti-God state of mind. Pride says, "It's about me." And so you may say it's about God but, no, if it's about you it's not about God. And by the way, you flourish the best when it's about God. You're under God's favor and blessedness when it's first and foremost about him as far as your life aim and your life purpose.

Now to young people, and again, this is written to young people, it certainly has application to all of us, but Solomon's writing to his son, and young people seem to find those who walk in pride and walk in perversities and evil, sometimes they think that's neat or attractive. But you see, you can't just tell your young, your children that's not neat and attractive. Say that certainly but say, "The key is, son, you must know God. You must know Christ." Because if I just cram into my children or my grandchildren some rules and some morality, then they'll do the best they can, and pretty soon they'll hang it

up. But if I can get them to know the God of love and the God of grace and the God of forgiveness and the God of wisdom, then they'll begin to see these wicked and perverse things as contrary to them, as unattractive to them and that's the goal. If you know the God of wisdom and desire to follow the way of wisdom, then all these enticements of the world will become alien and unattractive to you. I'm not saying that our flesh doesn't still draw us toward them, but something deeper is in you when you're converted, something deeper and truer. It resides in your heart when you're one of God's children that makes these things at the final end unattractive to you and alien to you.

Young people often ask, "Well, can I do this? Can I do that?" You know, I worked with the students for eight years here and I was pretty strong on them about a child of God has no business going to these public dances, and a child of God has no business courting or dating someone who's rejected Christ and is not converted. And every now and then I would have one that would say, "Well, Brother Jeff, can I date, uh, a person that doesn't know Christ?" And I would say that the question is not can you but how can you? You know the God of wisdom and somebody that does not know him is attractive to you? The point is, of course they are if they're pretty. He's handsome. He's popular. That's good and okay. Don't marry somebody that you think's ugly. Don't do it because I've got a word for you, I looked in the mirror this morning, they're gonna become even uglier. It's gonna happen. You look so good and tight and drawn up but it's gonna sag, bag and drag. Every bit of it. That's okay. Like, yeah, of course God made us that way but there's something more to us than what the beasts have. God gives us something that says, "If they don't love my Christ, then there's something of an alienation to them. There's something of an unattractiveness." Moms and dads, don't you want your sons and daughters to have that inside versus a bunch of rules? The rules are good but the foundation is knowing Christ and his wisdom.

So it's not can you, it's how can you. Now, now I'm not gonna say that. God protects us if we know the God who is wisdom and we walk in his wisdom and it doesn't mean in perfection but that's the aim, that's the the path of our life. He protects us in so many ways. Again, verse 12, "He delivers us from the way of evil from the man who speaks perverse things." Uh, uh, verse 14, uh, "We were delivered or guarded from those who rejoice in the perversity of evil," and on and on we could go. As he, as as Solomon unfolds all of these vile things, perverse things, rejoicing in perverse things, speaking perverse things, and being protective, that all of those things are noxious weeds that come from the taproot of deception, the taproot of the lie, the taproot of misrepresentation. In other words, what I'm saying is they take what God's made and they put their spin and their twist on it and they distort it. "Well, God gave you this sex drive. So Bing, Bing, Bing, Bing, Bing, you're all good and right." You see it, distortion, a spin on it, misrepresenting God's truth. He says, "Son, if you'll know God and you'll walk in his wisdom, you'll see through that twisting, that perverse logic, that turning God's truths upside down to validate your sinful or your sinful lifestyle, I should say and accommodate your fallen lust.

You see, the Spirit behind the evil influences of a depraved culture is the spirit of deception. It's the spirit of Satan. It's the spirit of misrepresentation, that is, they

misrepresent good stuff. The good, they they misrepresent the true, and they even begin to misrepresent, distort, what is defined as the wisdom of God. And again in verse 12 they speak perverse things. The idea of perverse means misrepresent, perverse means to distort it, perverse means to twist it out of its original form. And then they rejoice in the perversity of evil. They they find themselves glorying in their distorted, misrepresented, twisted way of viewing things.

For example, when we preach to this world and we stand on God's truth concerning biblical morality, what are they gonna do? They're gonna twist it. "Oh, you're oppressive. You teach biblical morality, you're oppressive. You're robbing us of our liberties and freedoms. You're bigoted. You're a hater." They're just twisting it and turning it upside down because if you tell them the truth, that's the best love you could ever give a person. And here's one of the latest ones that they're flying as their banner to show their misrepresentation, their their twisted, contorted view of God's truth. People are dying because of your view, they'll tell you. People are dying when you tell them this is sin and evil.

This is exactly what Solomon meant in verse 12 when he said they speak perverse things. They distort, they misrepresent God's wisdom on these matters. In our culture today, we hear perverse speaking when someone says, "Well, I am gay. I'm a lesbian. I'm bisexual. I'm transgendered." Now first of all, we have love and compassion for all people, period, but we do not rejoice in the perverse things they teach and believe. Are you with me, church? That's what Solomon is talking about. And now we don't just have gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered, we have 1,000 points in between each one of those. And it never seems to end. When they say, "Well, this is what I am," in effect, what that means is, "You cannot say any different about me. You cannot have a different opinion about me. You cannot look into my soul and prove any different because this is what I am." Another phrase they use as they speak twisted or perverse things, "This is my truth." Well, that's that's the greatest twist of all, because you don't have any truth. Truth is objective. It's of God who's outside of you. Truth is not found in you. All you find in you is a depraved wicked heart that took the death of Christ to remedy. "Here, this is my truth," they say. Well, here is the truth about that. You see, the things you do, the behavior you give yourself over to does not determine who you are. You're not Creator. You're not God. You're not. What you do and the behaviors you give yourself to does not determine who you are, God determined that when he made you. See how it's twisted? They take God off the throne and place themselves as God. "I will create me."

Folks, this is a sin problem. This is a sin problem, not a philosophical problem, not a cultural problem. This is not the evolution of coming to a better society. It's the devolution of exposing the depravity of men's hearts and we're like the Apostle Paul, if it wasn't for the grace of God, I'm the chief of sinners. So I'm not better than them. I've just been rescued, someone outside of me rescued me. So we have compassion. Can I get an Amen there? We have humility. We have love and kindness for all of these people because so many of them, they themselves have been taught a lie. They've they've succumbed to the misinterpretation, to the twisting of God's truth and God's standard. But the truth is, they are foolish and, in effect, have rejected the godship of God. That is, they

reject God's rank. Not having a God unless they can subject God and submit God to their views, opinions, wants, desires, and fallen lust.

So God is thrown down in their minds and they have ascended to the throne as their own creators. That's what Psalm 53:1 is referring to, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God,' They are corrupt, and have committed abominable injustice; There is no one who does good." Now these always go together, committing abominable injustices, walking in corruption, or you could just say sin goes hand-in-hand with a false or warped philosophy of life and the the foundational warped or false philosophy is no God. That's what that means, the fool in his heart has said, "No God for me. I will not allow the God of the Bible to have any place in my life." The problem is, he's omnipresent. You can't get away from him.

So they reject God as God, and when they say, "Well, God made me this way." Psalm 50:21 says, "These things you have done and I kept silence; You thought that I was just like you." I am drawn to these behaviors and habits and activities, so that's who I am. And God said, "You you think I'm like you when you say that I made you that way because I'm not like you, I'm holy and I'm upright and I'm righteous, and what you're doing is unholy. It is not upright. It is not righteous. And you think I'm unrighteous like you're unrighteous. You think I'm unholy like you're unholy. You think I'm immoral like you're immoral." You remember I told you last week when we were in Greece, I've I was just fascinated that these ancient Greeks of such great advancement in the arts and the sciences and in architecture etc., clinged with passion to the false mythological gods of Greek ancestry. What was that? But they lived such him immoral lives. I mean, their gods were gods who committed fornication and adultery and wickedness. Their gods did that. That's what the Psalm said. He said, "Look, I'm not like you. Don't bring Me down to fit your morality."

Now, so here's what I'm saying, all of this new thinking in these new ways, it's just not new at all. When I was a younger man, uh, the Liberals came out with the phrase "the new morality," and I thought, "Well, it looks just like the old immorality to me." There's nothing new about it. Cain slew Abel. Murder is not new. God judged Sodom and Gomorrah for glorying in perversity. These things are not new. This is not new and modern and novel and cool and click and whatever the word is today. I don't think click's one of them actually. It's not new. It's old sin. It's been around since the garden of Eden when Satan told Eve, "Eve, has God said you shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? God didn't really mean that. Eve, matter of fact, God knows when you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you will be like God. In other words, you can become your own God, you'll be your own creator. And God's robbing you, Eve." That's how old this this misrepresentation, this deception, this lying is. And young people, I want you to be wise. I want you to see through it and Solomon said, Solomon said to his son, "If you know God and seek Him, you won't just know in your mind it's false, you'll know in your heart this isn't right, dishonors the God who made us." Romans 1:22 reminds us, "Professing to be wise, they became fools."

Well, B) not only deliver us from these evil, perverse things, but he brings out one particular thing that he wants his son Solomon to think about and that's deliver you from the snare of sexual immoralities. He begins in verse 16 on this and we'll take it a verse at a time. He says,

16 To deliver you from the strange woman,

He says, "One thing will happen, son. If you'll know the God of wisdom in a personal way as your Savior and your Lord, and you continue that striving to know Him and learn of Him, it will just naturally protect you from the snare," the word here, "of the strange woman." The word "strange" here means a foreigner. It means one outside the circle of one's proper relations. You'll see through the brief thrill of sexual immorality into the long-term blessedness of walking in righteousness.

Notice verse 17,

17 That leaves the companion of her youth
And forgets the covenant of
her God;

Notice that the sin of adultery here is first a sin against God. She forgets the covenant of her God. The seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." So I would charge our young people here today, our single folks, and by the way, this goes for senior adult single folks. Can I just say it? We have as many senior adults who find themselves single that act like fools as we have teenagers who are single and act like fools percentage wise. And ladies, you are most vulnerable. Guard yourself from these wicked, strange men. Don't be sucked in by it, drawn in by it. Well, how do you do that? You better know the God of wisdom and walking in his ways. And can I say this? One of the ways you walk in his wisdom is get good, strong, loving accountability from fellow church members who can say, "Stay away from that guy." And guys, your moms are gifted by God to see evil motives in young girls that you can't see because you know what you see? I know what you see. But they see something you can't see. And girls, your dads are able to see wrong motives in a young man that you can't see because I know what you see. That's walking in wisdom, you see. That's walking in wisdom, and the only way you really joy in that is if you know the God of wisdom. Now in balance here, there is a God who's the God of the second chance. A God of grace, mercy and forgiveness, and if you've lived this horror story of sexual immorality, it's over when you come to Jesus in repentance. It's over and you don't have to carry that burden any longer.

So I'm talking to single people, young single people, middle-aged single people, older single people, and I would say this to you based on the truths of this text: don't marry based first on another person's love for you. Marry them first based on their love for God. The other will work. I don't know how to say this, but you know what you'll find out? Miss Pam has found this out. Once you get married to him, they're not quite as lovely as you thought they were. "I didn't know he did things like that." Obnoxious things. But if they love God, they keep their covenant with God and keep their

commitment to you. Amen? Isn't the Bible good? Proverbs, hadn't been in Proverbs almost 30 years since I've preached in Proverbs.

18 and 19 of our text. He's still talking about his son and the adulterous woman, and if you'll know the God of wisdom, walk in the God of wisdom, you'll have human flourishing, your life will flourish, and one of the way it flourishes flourishes is that you're protected from the strange woman, or you could say the strange man. Verse 18,

18 For her house sinks down to death And her tracks lead to the dead; 19
None who go to her return again, Nor do they reach the paths of life.

The idea here of the word "death" here means that it robs one of the essence of what life is according to God. By living in this sin, you live or you rather you enter a life that is not worth living. It promises so much at the beginning, fulfillment, pleasure, satisfaction, but it gives you death.

It's been a while, but the surveys and the polls that I have read through the years says that those who are in committed marriages have the highest sexual satisfaction, and those who are committed Christians in committed marriages have the highest sexual satisfaction. Flourishing. God says, "If you'll walk in My wisdom, they'll be flourishing." Or, as I said for my title, God's favor and God's blessing even in the bedroom. The world's living like a bunch of alley cats but you really can't say that anymore out of respect for alley cats. Trying to find the next sexual thrill. This is not new. The ancient Greeks, who were vile and perverse, had to invent words they made-up so many sex acts. Only for a couple 100 years to pass and the Roman Emperor who took over Greece declared all of his kingdom would now be Christian because the other stuff ain't working for us anymore. If you'll study history, you can learn some things. Oh, they're giving themselves to their great learning and their great knowledge and their great philosophies and their great intellect and their base fallen immoralities led them to despair so that now, unfortunately, it wasn't that everybody got saved. We wish that would be true, but he he brought all of the kingdom of Rome to commit to Christianity because they needed biblical morality to have decency, honesty, sobriety, sanity in their culture.

If you know the God of wisdom and desire to observe the way of wisdom, then the seductions of immorality will begin to become alien and unattractive to you. Now we'll conclude with verses 20 through 22. So in summary, conclusion of the teachings he's been giving his son,

20 So you will walk in the way of good men And keep to the paths of the
righteous.

The paths of righteousness are in contrast to the path of those who rejoice in perverse things we saw earlier in verse, what, 14? It's in contrast to those who speak perverse things in verse 12 we saw. He said, "Instead of going that route, son, if you know the God of wisdom and walk in his wisdom, it'll guard you from those and you will walk those paths of righteousness."

And he adds a phrase verse verse 19, the first part there, um, I'm sorry, verse 20, the first part, "So you will walk in the way of good men." Wow. I would hope when I leave this world that maybe somebody will say, "You know, he walked in the ways of good men." Good men. This is the local church. When you're when you know the God of wisdom and you're striving to walk in the ways of this God of wisdom, you're drawn to other people who know that God and want to walk in his ways and that's what the local church is. We're drawn to these weird people who love this God who we can't see, touch, smell, but reveals himself by his Spirit through his word. And we're just drawn to each other, and we find others who reject our God and his wisdom, we find that we love them, we have compassion for them, but we find ourselves kind of alienated from them. Now we're members of the human family, but we found a deeper family than the human family. We found the family of the firstborn, the family of the regenerate, the family of the new creation, and we're drawn to them.

Verse 21. Here it is, living under the favor and blessing of God.

21 For the upright will live in the land And the blameless will remain in it;

For an ancient Israelite to live in the land was the same as saying living under the favor and blessing of God. Wow. I've watched a lot of you, and I think it's obvious watching you that you live under the favor and blessing of God, but God first had to change your heart so that you would know the God of wisdom and then begin to learn to walk in the wisdom of that God of wisdom.

And then verse 22.

22 But the wicked will be cut off from the land

That means they'll be removed from God's favor and blessing. Brothers and sisters, friend here this morning, you do not want to live a life where you end up outside the favor and the blessing of God. It's horrible beyond compare. They'll be cut off from the land. Last phrase of verse 22,

And the treacherous will be uprooted from it.

It's a graphic picture. It has a lot of force in it. God says, "I'll rip you up and take you outside of my favor and blessing." This is a common truth in the Old Testament Psalm 37:9, "For evildoers will be cut off," plucked out, taken outside of my favor, "But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land." Psalm 37:11, "But the humble will inherit the land," humble in the sense of humbling themselves before God as a sinner, looking to Christ as their Savior, and coming to know the God of wisdom therefore and walking in that wisdom. "But the humble will inherit the land," the favor and blessing of God, "And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity. You don't have to know God to be wealthy but to have blessed wealth, you have to know God. Wealth would turn out to be a curse, it would be bitterness in your mouth if it's not blessed wealth. Psalm 37:29,

"The righteous will inherit the land," the favor and blessing of God, "And dwell in it forever." We're blessed in this life and son, Solomon is saying, Solomon is writing to his son. "Son, listen and you'll have blessings forever."

James 1:5, "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously." Does not God give to all generously? God lets the sun shine on the wicked man, the atheist man and grow his crops, and God lets the sun shine on the righteous man. God's generous to all in a thousand, hundreds of thousands of different ways. So the point is if God's that generous to even those who'd reject him, how much more he wants to pour his wisdom off on you, if you'll seek it. If you'll say, "God. I've got to have it. I've got to have wisdom." I've said this to you before, but I'm convinced perhaps the most powerful thing in my life was when I was urged early in my Christianity to seek God's wisdom. And I begin to pray and pray and pray and pray and pray and pray for, "God, I need wisdom. I need to see this the way You see it. I need to see the church from Your perspective. I need wisdom." And I do it even to this day. If a difficult situation comes up, I just, I start whispering, "God, O God, give me wisdom. Give me wisdom." Chief, you're gonna have to have that in your line of work. "God, give me wisdom," because yours is different than a preacher but you still need God's wisdom. And we all have to walk in that.

So could I charge you afresh this morning, seek the God of wisdom for his wisdom. And one of those ways of getting it is being in this pew and hearing the preaching of the word. That's a foundational way, but it doesn't just end there. Seek God for wisdom and then you will know the favor and the blessing of God on your life for time and for eternity.