

Proverbs Lesson #109 (11:20-21)

"He who is steadfast in righteousness will attain to life, And he who pursues evil will bring about his own death. The perverse in heart are an abomination to the LORD, But the blameless in their walk are His delight." Proverbs 11:19–20

Two choices and two results—Wisdom is at it again! She gives advice and urges us to listen. In these verse we learn that those who pursue evil bring about their own death. In times of war we would consider such actions the act of cowards. Self-inflicted wounds may get a soldier a purple heart but if the truth was known this soldier would bring disgrace upon himself. I was considering how our society has changed. During WW II such an action would also bring disgrace upon the name of the family. In some ways, I believe our society has lost its grasp on virtue, character, and sacrifice.

To Learn Wisdom and Instruction: To learn we need to exercise for the purpose of godliness (1 Tim 4:7-8). We need to work out? Go to the gym? Do calisthenics? For godliness? Does this mean that we can make ourselves godly? If we just work out enough in spiritual things, can we do it? I don't think that is what Paul was trying to say. But, with God at the center of my "workout routine" I can see His power to change me. If my heart is unredeemed and not replaced with a heart of flesh, I should not expect to walk in a blameless way. I need the Spirit of God to renew my heart from a heart that is perverse (an abomination to the LORD) to a heart that will result in walking in a way that is God's delight.

To Discern Wise Counsel: How old does someone need to be to have their heart changed by God? At what age? Is embracing godliness and wisdom something only older people can do? Or is it possible that our children can also grow in wisdom and learn to live a life pleasing to the LORD?

If we take Yeshua as our example, we learn that even as a young boy He grew in wisdom and stature. Paul also says of Timothy that from childhood he had known the sacred scriptures that were able to make him wise to salvation. Last week in our lesson we heard how Solomon learned from his father when he was tender in the sight of his mother. We as adults and every child here can learn from God and grow in wisdom. God is able to make Himself known to any one at any age. God said of Jeremiah that he knew him before he was even born (even before he was in his mother's womb).

To Receive Moral Instruction in Skillful Living: Now is the time to train our children. I know I am preaching to those who are already doing this very thing but I want to urge you to seek God's wisdom more and more, to lean on Him with full faith, and to trust in Him with all your heart (Prov 3:5,6). It is possible to live our lives with God being pleased with us. When we look in the mirror what words fill our minds? Are we killing ourselves with our words, our thoughts, and our desires? If we are we need to repent.

To Impart Shrewdness to the Naive: Repentance is not just for new believers. Turning to God can be done at all stages of maturity. Old and young need to learn to recognize when they have wandered off the straight and narrow way and return to God. Yeshua had very strong words with many who witnessed His life and what God did in and through Him. They had seen Him do great wonders and miracles and still did not believe. He said that if these miracles would have been done in Sodom it would have remained until that day. Then he turned His attention to a different group of people and proclaimed these things.

"At that time Yeshua said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. "Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.

"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:25–30 NAS95)