

Proverbs Week #31 (3:16-18)

“Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those grasp her, and happy are all who lay hold of her.”
Proverbs 3:16-18

These verses speak about Wisdom. Our previous verses said that Wisdom was more precious than jewels and that nothing compares to her. These are the verses that we repeat once in English and then again in Hebrew every week during our Shabbat Service.

The second time in the liturgy that we repeat this phrase we add to it, “Cause us to return to you Adonai, and we shall return. Renew our days as of old.” (Lam 5:21) These words are sung right before we close the doors of the ark. They express not only a need for us individually, as families, and a community to have our days renewed, but also that God would fulfill His promises to the nation of Israel. If we have listened to the message from the Torah and seek to faithfully apply its truths, then we also want to remember to pray for those of God’s people who are still not hearing these truths.

Have you taken hold of Wisdom? Do you continue daily to take hold of Wisdom? The imagery of the “tree of life” speaks of eternal life. To those who take hold of the true teaching of the Torah and of Wisdom there is the hope of eternal life. This hope comes when we “take hold” according to God’s plans. In its basic meaning, the Torah is God’s instruction for us on how to think, act, learn, and grow in wisdom. As families and a community we need to embrace God’s wisdom and learn from it. If we lack wisdom we will lack the stability, basic provisions, and resources to sustain our lives. We will not shine the light of Yeshua in the world; instead we will reproduce the philosophy and worldview of this present age. Our lives and our very character must be marked by Biblical wisdom. The teaching and training of our children and our standards as a community must draw from this source.

Adam and Eve were not allowed to remain in the garden and eat from the Tree of Life. (Gen 3:22-24) God placed a guard (a cherubim and a flaming sword) around the tree of life. “Lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever...” (Gen 3:22) If Adam and Eve would have continued to eat from the Tree of Life in the garden, the text tells us, they would have continued to live forever. Eternal life and continuing to eat from the Tree of Life illustrate powerful lessons for us as believers. We too put our hope in God, that as we place our faith in Yeshua and feed on God’s word we will have eternal life. God’s provision for us is His word which is like food for our souls.

This Hanukkah season has provided us at Beit Hallel with at least two very encouraging examples of memorizing scripture. As we continue to seek God for His wisdom and ask Him to provide for us, may we also do our part in devoting ourselves to the regular reading, studying, and memorizing of His scriptures. May we encourage our children to continue to write God’s words on their hearts as they trust in Him to produce growth in wisdom. Our Messiah is the Word of God made flesh, and as His disciples may our lives be marked by living out God’s words to those around us.