

Proverbs Week #79 (8:20-21)

I walk in the path of righteousness, in the pathway of justice, that I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, and that I may fill their treasuries. Prov 8:20-21

As we study any subject, it is helpful to categorize or limit our area of study. If we wanted to study how businesses handled food, we might narrow our area of study by considering only restaurants. We could further narrow that subject area to Italian restaurants, those that specialize in Pizza, or even just those that serve take and bake pizzas. How we choose to approach any area of study will be greatly determined by how we intend to use the information we are learning. For example, we would approach the study above differently if our research were needed to start a new business in competition with other already established pizza shops as compared to opening a franchise. How might this study be different if the end goal was to start a business that could be passed on to our children's children?

Action Items:

Learn – Our verse above does not provide a narrow subject. While the parallel thoughts of righteousness and justice are described as places where Wisdom walks, they do not provide specifics. We can learn from other proverbs that Wisdom is concerned with how we speak to one another, our devotion to honest business transactions, and fairness and equity when legal issues arise. How can we begin to learn and apply Wisdom's lessons concerning righteousness and justice? The lessons of walking in righteousness can be learned and applied in everyday activities like how a brother and sister play and work together, how a parent encourages their children, how we treat people who wait on us in restaurants, or how speak with the teller at the grocery store. As both students and teachers we need to narrow our focus to specific areas in life where these lessons can be demonstrated and taught.

Discern – As I said last week, much can be said about seeking to be prosperous and rich. Scripture teaches us that we should seek those things that endure (Matt 6:20). Our trust should be in the LORD and we should not fix our hope on the uncertainty of riches (1 Tim 6:17). We should seek to use the things that God has given (Matt 25:13-30) and to know the difference between wise and foolish use. This is one of the primary goals of learning God's wisdom.

Receive – Our verses repeat the theme of what Wisdom causes to happen to those who love Her. If we love Her in truth, she will give us something in return. The inheritance of Wisdom is for those who love Her. You will not see slick ads in magazines or television commercials to sell you on this idea; there are no "Wisdom Action Committees" to lobby Congress to enact laws that will ensure every person will be wise. Nevertheless, Wisdom is calling out to all of us to believe Her words! She has things to give those who love Her. Will you be one of the people who are devoted to Her? Will you receive Wisdom's invitation to learn and study with Her?

Impart – *A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, and the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous. Prov 13:22*

This scripture tells us that a good man not only seeks the welfare of his children but also will pass along an inheritance to his grandchildren. Wills and trusts provide the means for ownership of property to be determined when someone dies, but we should not think of an inheritance only in terms of money or property. The passing on of skills or a trade, the teaching of kindness, or devotion to music or study should be included in the things we consider as treasure or wealth to be passed on to future generations. Our love for Wisdom can serve as the glue to enable Her lessons to stick in our own lives and with God's help the lives of our children and even our children's children.

Suggested Activities for families:

This week's suggested activity is much like last week's, just a bit more refined. This activity might require a little more preparation on the part of parents and greater care in training. Last week I suggested developing the skills of fruit inspection and this week my suggestion is to begin to develop some skills in determining which plants found in nature are edible and which are poisonous. Depending on the age of your children and their abilities to resist eating everything they pick, consider taking a field trip. Start at a local library for guides and books and consider taking a trip into one of our parks or national forests. **USE EXTREME CAUTION:** do not eat anything or allow your children to eat anything that you are not absolutely sure is safe to eat! There is a real lesson in this!