

Proverbs Week #91 (1:2-4 & 10:17-19)

To learn wisdom and moral instruction, and to discern wise counsel. To receive moral instruction in skillful living, in righteousness, justice, and equity. To impart shrewdness to the morally naive, and a discerning plan to the young person. Proverbs 1:2-4 (NET)

As I have continued in this study of book of Proverbs, I want to again highlight four things that our study together aims to accomplish. The goals are:

- 1) **To know wisdom and knowledge**
 - a. **To learn** – how do we do that? Have you learned anything today, this past week, or this past year?
 - b. To be in a relationship with the One who is Wisdom – to know God (Proverbs 3:5,6)
- 2) **To discern** wise counsel
 - a. To realize when the counsel you are hearing is wise (is Wisdom)
 - b. To hear counsel either internally (from yourself) or externally (from someone else)
 - c. Who in your life is wise? If I asked you to name them – who would they be?
- 3) **To receive** instruction in wise behavior
 - a. To agree to practice – to make a conscious decision to exercise your ability to learn
 - b. The determination to live righteously, justly, and uprightly with others
- 4) **To impart** shrewdness to the naïve –The goal of our instruction is not to gain the knowledge of information but to teach/learn skills

The imparting of this kind of wisdom fosters the growth of plans – our goals will be frustrated if we do not have God’s goals as our focus – *“The LORD nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation.” Psalms 33:10-11*

I have emphasized that one could learn “the easy way” or “the hard way.” One person may learn from their mistakes, another may learn from the mistakes of others, **but a truly wise person hears righteous instruction and learns to avoid mistakes because of the value placed upon that instruction.** This is the perspective I hope to continue to present in these lessons; the perspective of putting a high value on God’s wise instructions and learning from them before we make mistakes.

He is on the path of life who heeds instruction, but he who ignores reproof goes astray. He who conceals hatred has lying lips, and he who spreads slander is a fool. When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, but he who restrains his lips is wise. Proverbs 10:17-19

I am going to present the “tools” first this week. If words can be compared to water, what kind of person are you? Are you like an eyedropper, a garden hose, a fire hose, or Niagara Falls (the falls have a combined flow rate on average of 750,000 gallons per second). We all know that we should not gossip (that is tell stories – even if true – about others that might harm them or their reputation). The grouping of today’s verses from Proverbs make an interesting parallel. One who “spreads slander” can be understood as one “who conceal hatred” and “has lying lips.” This kind of person is a fool. What makes this person even more foolish is that they do not hold back their words. They are like a fire hose or Niagara Falls who empty large amounts of water on the ears of anyone who is willing to listen (and often on people who would rather not listen).

In all that I’ve said today you have the decision to listen, learn and teach, to guard, to perform, and fulfill the words of instruction I have spoken. You might ignore or forget my instruction and it may not cause you great harm, but if you ignore Wisdom’s instructions and Her reproofs you will go astray.

For those who would like to take this lesson today to a more “advanced level” here is a suggested homework assignment. Read Psalm 119 and note every time the use of our mouth, lips, voice, or words can be used with a view towards wisdom (that is to say a righteous way of speaking – verses 13,14).