

## WEEK TWENTY TWO INTRODUCTION

The readings of Week 22 major in wisdom literature. Perhaps most challenging this week is Song of Solomon. How exactly ought Christians to read this book? Persevering here may make us uncomfortable, but God provides wisdom in His word for *every* area of life including even the intimacy between a husband and a wife. This book presents challenges which Christians wrestle with in each season. Some seek to skip over the historical situation of the book and read it in light of Christ and His Church. While Scripture is indeed about Jesus (Luke 24:27), there is fruit here for us in our daily living. In fact, in our current societal moment beset with distortions of humans and human sexuality, the Song of Solomon comes as a welcome correction. Counteracting the story of human liberation, freedom, and fulfillment as preached in this episode of the sexual revolution requires telling the truth of God's word and world. God's design is in fact *better*. He created us for a superior expression of sexuality, one that is engendered in creation as male or female and expressed within the covenant bonds of marriage. The fidelity and fruit of this union is poetically illustrated in the Song of Solomon.

## KEY SCRIPTURE

*Happy is a man who finds wisdom and who acquires understanding, for she is more profitable than silver, and her revenue is better than gold. — Proverbs 3:13-14*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

According to Proverbs 1:1-6, why does Solomon write his proverbs? What is the secret of wisdom and knowledge according to Proverbs 1:7 (see ahead to 9:10)? How would you define wisdom? Who is the wisest person you know?

To whom does Wisdom call in Proverbs 1:20? Wisdom, here personified as a woman, instructs her hearers to respond with *change*. Wisdom tells the wayward to turn around. Describe the parallels of Wisdom's proclamation and that of the Lord Jesus in Mark 1:15. What happens to those who refuse to heed Wisdom's message (see Prov. 1:24-32)? What promise is given to those who do listen (see Prov. 1:33)?

In many ways Proverbs chapter 2 can be read as a positive description of the 5th commandment as Solomon begins in verse 1, *My son*. Exodus 20:12 instructs, *Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you*. Parents, do you understand your responsibility to your children in these terms? How are you actively giving the words and commandments of God to your children?

Proverbs 2 ought not be limited to family relationships, however. The same truths press the Christian toward growth. Friend, are you calling out to God for understanding (v. 3), seeking for God's wisdom as for hidden treasure (v. 4)? According to verse 5, it is in the pursuit that *you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God*. Could there be anything better than knowing God? No! Press on to know Him more.

Proverbs 6:6-11 admonishes us against laziness. How does laziness and lethargy pop up in your life, particularly in your walk with Christ Jesus? What are some ways our current culture steers us toward laziness through a counterfeit version of rest?

Twice this week we read, *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death* (14:12 and 16:25). How is this principle of wisdom on display in our society? How is the same principle illustrated in your own story? This principle of unrestrained individualism mimics the time of the Judges. Judges 17:6 states, *In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*

Proverbs 16 nestles the life of wisdom in the sovereign will of God. Verse 1 instructs, *The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.* This is similar to Psalm 139:4. Proverbs 16:9 teaches us to surrender self-determination, *The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.* The course of our lives flows through our decisions, but God's purpose stands. As Proverbs 19:21 directs us, *Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.* Finally, verse 33 of chapter 16 teaches to stand in God's providence rather than the idea of luck or chance, *The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.* How does the sovereign care and purpose of your heavenly Father encourage you today? You can be sure His presence and purpose never leaves you no matter the circumstances of today.

**BE A DOER OF THE WORD**

“Plans are established by counsel; by wise guidance wage war.” -**Proverbs 20:18 ESV**

**Do you seek and heed godly advice? Who do you allow to speak into your life? Have you considered the importance of godly friendships? Do you have a mentor or have you offered yourself to mentor others?**