

DEDICATE YOURSELF TO CHRIST

2 My son, if you will accept my words, and store up my commandments within you, 2making your ear attentive to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding; 3indeed, if you call out for discernment and cry aloud for understanding; 4if you seek her as one seeks for silver and search for her as for hidden treasures, 5then you will understand the fear of Jehovah and find the knowledge of God—6for Jehovah gives wisdom. Out of his mouth comes knowledge and understanding. 7He stores up sound wisdom for the upright [so that it might be] a shield for those who walk in integrity; 8so that he may guard the paths of justice and protect the way of his saints. 9Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity—indeed, every good path; 10for wisdom will enter into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. 11Discretion will watch over you and understanding will guard you, 12to deliver you from the way of evil, from men who speak perverse things, 13who forsake the paths of righteousness in order to walk in the ways of darkness; 14who rejoice in doing evil, and delight in the perversity of evil; 15whose ways are crooked and whose paths are wayward. 1 [Discretion will watch over you and understanding will guard you,] to deliver you from the adulteress, the foreign woman who flatters with her words; 17who forsakes the friend of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God. 18Her house leads down to death and her paths lead to the place of the dead.** 19None who go to her return, nor do they reach the paths of life. 20 Discretion will watch over you and understanding will guard you], so that you may walk in the way of good men and stay on the paths of the righteous; 21for the upright shall dwell in the land and the blameless will remain in it. 22But the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the unfaithful will be rooted out of it. (Prov. 2:1-22)*

**Literally, “the stranger;” **Literally, “to the departed spirits”*

Introduction

Nothing worthwhile in life comes easy: there is always the requirement of hard work, discipline, practice, self-denial. To reap a good crop requires hard work; to be a good athlete requires the discipline of training; to become an accomplished musician requires practice.

To achieve anything worthwhile requires no small measure of dedication and self-denial. But the rewards are well worth the effort: the enjoyment and benefit of a good harvest; the exhilaration of athletic success; the satisfaction of artistic accomplishment.

The good things of this life require hard work, discipline, and dedication; and the same holds true with regard to the kingdom of God and the good things of that kingdom; Jesus said, *“Do not work for the food that spoils, but for the food that lasts*

for eternal life, the food that the Son of man will give you; for he is the one whom God the Father has affirmed” (Jn. 6:27.)

In our next session in the School of Solomon we receive the fatherly counsel to earnestly pursue divine wisdom with all diligence. Yes, the kingdom of God and the good things of that kingdom require at least the same degree of dedication as does the attainment of the good things of this present world.

But, as the disciple of Christ dedicates himself to Christ and the kingdom of God, he has an assurance that the world cannot give: the assurance of success. Hard work does not necessarily guarantee a good crop; disciplined training does not necessarily guarantee a championship athletic performance; practice does not necessarily guarantee that one will become an accomplished musician. But the Word of God does guarantee that the diligent commitment to divine wisdom (in New Testament terms, dedicated discipleship to Christ) will have its divine and eternal reward.

I. Dedicate Yourself to Christ, Because This is God’s Good Counsel for You

In verse 1 the beloved son is urged to receive his father’s word and store up his father’s commandments. He is to pay attention to and accept his father’s counsel and allow that counsel, (which comes with the urgency of a well-intended commandment,) to have a permanent lodging place in his heart and mind. Let us recognize here the words of our heavenly Father as He addresses us as His beloved sons and daughters in Christ.

Verse 2 defines for us exactly what is the father’s counsel: *“Make you ear attentive to wisdom.”* That is to say, appreciate and accept the wisdom of God as it is offered to us in the Scriptures. The father further exhorts his son, *“Apply your heart to understanding.”* We are to diligently put our whole heart and soul into the task of getting understand in the things of God and the ways of God.

Verses 3-4 emphasize that we must not merely be content to passively accept godly wisdom if it happens to be handed to us; on the contrary, **we must actively pursue it.** The father exhorts his son to *“call out for discernment.”* As a baby cries out for his needs to be met, so are we to cry out for the milk of God’s word: *“earnestly desire the pure spiritual milk, like new born infants, so that by it you may grow in your salvation”* (1 Pet. 2:2.) The son is instructed to “cry aloud for understanding.” We are to call out to God for understanding of spiritual things, in imitation of the Psalmist: *“Teach me your way, O Jehovah, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name”* (Psl. 86:11.) The son is to seek wisdom as one would seek silver and search for it as one would search for hidden treasure. As the father will inform his son: *“Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who acquires understanding; ¹⁴for gaining wisdom is better than gaining silver, and it is more profitable than fine gold”* (Prov. 3:13-14.)

In New Testament terms, this is the message to us: We need to have a whole-hearted, active, dedicated involvement with Christ. Christ is the One who possesses the wisdom of God: *“in [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”* (Col. 2:3.) Christ is the One who exhibits the wisdom of God: Jesus said, *“The one who sent me is with me, he has not forsaken me; because I always do the things that are pleasing to him”* (Jn. 8:29.)

Mary sat at Jesus’ feet, ... Nicodemus sought an interview with Jesus, ... the Greeks desired to meet Jesus, ... and the heavenly Father instructs us to listen to Jesus: *“While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!’”* (Matt. 17:5.)

The Apostle Peter gives us this instruction: *“grow in the grace ... of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”* (2 Pet. 3:18.) Use the grace God has presently given you as a means of gaining more grace. By way of illustration: You use your muscles on the exercise machine to develop more muscle; likewise, as you use God’s grace as a resource for godly living you will develop your capacity to receive a greater measure of divine grace. Ask yourself the question: Am I able to do greater works for God now than at an earlier stage in my Christian life, and at the same time am I more conscious of the fact that it is God working in me? Note the Apostle Paul’s testimony given in 1 Corinthians 15:10, *“I worked harder than all of them—not I myself, but the grace of God that was with me.”*

Peter further exhorts us to *“grow in the ... knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”* (2 Pet. 3:18.) Grow in your understanding of His ways; ... in an appreciation of His sacrifice; ... in a love for His person; ... and in an ever-deeper experience of His presence and His life. As the British preacher, Martin Lloyd-Jones expressed it, “The only way to avoid falling in the Christian life is to advance. The only way to avoid slipping back is to go forward. There is no such thing as being static in the Christian life.”

II. Dedicate Yourself to Christ, Because Such Dedication Shall be Richly Rewarded

Verse 5 guarantees that if you diligently pursue godly wisdom—if you cultivate devotion to Christ—you will gain understanding and you will find knowledge. More specifically, *“you will understand the fear of Jehovah.”* You will appreciate what it means to have a wholesome, holy reverence for the LORD, because you will meet Him “up close and personal.” Consider the experience of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah,

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the LORD seated on a throne—high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him stood the seraphs, each one having six wings: with two wings they covered their faces, with two wings they covered their feet, and with two wings they flew. ³They

were calling out to one another, "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory." ⁴At the sound of their voices the foundations of the thresholds shook, and the temple was filled with smoke. (Isa. 6:1-4)

Furthermore, *"you will find the knowledge of God."* You will experience deep and precious fellowship with the living God, as the Lord Jesus promises, *"If a man loves me, he will obey my teaching; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and live with him"* (Jn. 14:23.)

Verse 7 further informs us that the LORD *"stores up sound wisdom for the upright."* Note that this *"sound wisdom"* is *"stored up,"* or reserved, (laid away as in a safe deposit box) and is made accessible to "the upright" (those who love the LORD, those who commit themselves to Him and desire to walk with Him in His ways; i.e., those who are disciples of Christ.) This sound wisdom serves as *"a shield"* that guards Christ's disciple from unknowingly and unwittingly practicing sin, and guides him in the path of righteous living. An example of this *"sound wisdom"* is found in the teaching of the Lord Jesus as presented in Matthew 5:27-28; *"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'* ²⁸*But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."* The Jews were taught to avoid the act of adultery, but the Lord Jesus explains a deeper dimension of the law: it pertains not only to actions but also to the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. This *"sound wisdom"* is a deeper understanding of the meaning and the application of the commandments of God; a deeper understanding of the righteousness of God and its application to our life.

Verse 9 guarantees that if we diligently pursue godly wisdom (if we cultivate devotion to Christ the Savior,) we will understand *"righteousness and ... every good path."* This will prove to be the case because *"wisdom will enter into your heart"* (vs. 10.) The wisdom of God will go to the very core of your being; it will transform your outlook (you will begin to see things the way God sees them) and your thinking (you will begin to think like Christ,) it will make you become more like Christ who declared to His Father, *"My Father, ... not as I will, but as you will"* (Matt. 26:39.) Furthermore, *"discretion will watch over you"* (vs. 11.) With the gaining of a better understanding of the depths of God's righteousness and a truer comprehension of the God who is righteous, you become more spiritually discerning and you become more cautious in your moral life.

What purpose are divine wisdom and discretion intended to accomplish in your life? One purpose is to *"deliver you from the way of evil, from men who speak perverse things"* (vs. 12-15.) A further purpose is to *"deliver you from the adulteress"* (vs. 16-19.) The ultimate purpose is to enable you to *"walk in the way of good men and stay on the paths of the righteous"* (vs. 20.)

What is God's gracious intention in all of this? His intention is that we may inherit the kingdom of God, (which is the kingdom of righteousness,) and all of

its blessing: *“the upright shall dwell in the land”* (vs. 21.) His intention is for us to be spared from the judgment and punishment that awaits the ungodly: *“the wicked will be cut off from the land”* (vs. 22.)

Dedicate yourself to Christ, because such dedication shall be richly rewarded. It will be rewarded with a deeper understanding of righteousness—a greater appreciation of God’s righteousness, and, to an ever-greater degree having your life become more conformed to that divine righteousness. Such is a spiritual necessity, because it is the life of righteousness that is well pleasing to God and that receives His eternal blessing. Speaking specifically of Christ, the Scripture says, *“You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy”* (Heb. 1:9.)

Conclusion

Nothing worthwhile in life comes easy: there is always the requirement of hard work, discipline, dedication. It should come as no surprise that the Word of God counsels us to place ourselves under the discipline of Christ and dedicate ourselves to the Savior.

The Word of God makes the sure guarantee that such dedication to Christ, undertaken in reliance on the grace of God, shall be richly rewarded. It shall be rewarded with an ever-deeper acquaintance with and conformity to the righteousness of Christ our Savior, and with an ever-greater identification with that Righteous Life that receives the eternal blessing of God.