

Wisdom 101: Proverbs

Lesson #6 – Decisions, Decisions

Brad Paisley wrote a song “Letter to Me,” in which he imagines what he would write if he were composing a letter to his seventeen year-old self. If you were writing a letter to yourself at that age, what would you be sure to include?

Were there people giving you that kind of advice during that time? Why is it difficult for us to take advice during the times we often need it the most?

Heading Down the Wrong Path

Heading down a certain road will always lead to a certain destination. It doesn't matter what we tell ourselves, how we explain it to others, or how we justify it in our minds, if we are not traveling down God's path, we will not end up where God wants us to be. Above all else, we need to make sure we aren't sidetracked from God's path.

7:6-12, 21-27 – “From a window in my house I looked through my screen. I was looking at gullible people when I saw a young man without much sense among youths. He was crossing a street near her corner and walking toward her house in the twilight, in the evening, in the dark hours of the night. A woman with an ulterior motive meets him. She is dressed as a prostitute. She is loud and rebellious. Her feet will not stay at home. One moment she is out on the street, the next she is at the curb, on the prowl at every corner...With all her seductive charms, she persuades him. With her smooth lips, she makes him give in. He immediately follows her like a steer on its way to be slaughtered, like a ram hobbling into captivity until an arrow pierces his heart, like a bird darting into a trap. He does not realize that it will cost him his life. Now, sons, listen to me. Pay attention to the words from my mouth. Do not let your heart be turned to her ways. Do not wander onto her paths, because she has brought down many victims, and she has killed all too many. Her home is the way to hell and leads to the darkest vaults of death.”

(God's Word)

As we read through this entire chapter, what is it that draws the young man to this path? Read Judges 13:2-5, 14:1-2, and 16:1-5. What are the parallels to this passage from Proverbs? What are some paths that Satan offers to God's people in an attempt to sidetrack Christians from the true path? How can we identify the way we are being tempted and counteract that with wisdom from God's Word?

In his book *The Principle of the Path*, Andy Stanley tells a story about a time he and a friend were driving on an unfinished road and had to be warned by someone else to stop before they headed off the road and into a swamp. He writes...

“...If we had, in fact, driven through the next set of barricades into a swamp, we would have done so for two reasons. And neither has anything to do with IQ, education, goals in life, net worth, looks, or church attendance. We would have ended up in the swamp because *that’s where the road led* and *that was the road we chose*.

Anyone, regardless of race, creed, color, or sex, would have ended up in the same place had they chosen that stretch of highway. It didn’t dead-end in one place for one kind of person and somewhere else for another kind. That unfinished stretch of highway was no respecter of persons. Everybody got the same treatment. And that’s true of every highway, freeway, driveway, or path. It leads where it leads, regardless of who’s on it.”

Getting on God’s Path

3:5-7 – “With all your heart you must trust the Lord and not your own judgment. Always let him lead you, and he will clear the road for you to follow. Don’t ever think that you are wise enough, but respect the Lord and stay away from evil.” (Contemporary English Version)

6:23 – “The commands and teachings from your parents are like a light that shows you the right way. They correct you and train you to follow the path to life.” (Easy to Read Version)

9:6 – “Stop being gullible and live. Start traveling the road to understanding.” (God’s Word)

15:24 – “The path of life leads upward for the wise that he may keep away from Sheol below.” (NASB)

27:12 – “A prudent man sees evil and hides himself, the naïve proceed and pay the penalty.” (NASB)

What can Jesus’ ministry teach us about holding firm to the right path? How can we encourage each other to continue on the right path?

Decisions Require Counsel

1:5 – “A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel.” (NASB)

11:14 – “A nation will fall when there is no direction, but with many advisers there is victory.” (God’s Word)

12:15 – “A foolish person always thinks his own way is best. But a wise person listens to the things other people tell him.” (Easy to Read Version)

13:10 – “Arrogance produces only quarreling but those who take advice gain wisdom.” (God’s Word)

15:22 – “Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors, they succeed.” (NASB)

19:20 – “Get all the advice you can and be wise the rest of your life.” (The Living Bible)

Read 1 Kings 12:1-15. What did Rehoboam do in this passage that shows wisdom? What did he do that does not show wisdom?

Whose advice do we listen to more often – those who have experience or those who have the same level of experience as we do?