

May 17

## Proverbs

Hi this is Reid Brown with the May 17, Project 4:4, our continuation in our reading in the book of Proverbs, a compilation of sayings by the wisest man in history.

A topic of discussion from today's reading is a comparison between the thinking and actions of a fool and the thinking and actions of a wise person. The designated sections in today's reading deal with the subjects of wisdom and folly and dealing with fools.

Here are some of the characteristics of a wise person that emerge in today's reading:

He acts out of knowledge (13:16), they exercises discernment (14:6) she spends time thinking and reflecting on her actions (14:8), he fears the lord (9: 10) keeps a straight course (15:21)- that shows consistency in their actions. These are the characteristics of wisdom. If you can look at your own life and find these qualities then you are doing quite well.

Solomon also describes for us the characteristics of a fool. They are: a pattern of acting foolishly (13:16). A fool believes anything that they are told without taking time to finds out what the facts really are (14:15), the fools characteristics are evident in people who display a lack of judgment (15:21).

I imagine that few of us would be self- professed fools. Now having said that, it is quite clear to me that all of us- especially me could stand to be a whole lot wiser and a lot less foolish than we are at present. If you are desiring to go deeper in this portion of the reading, go back through and write out the characteristics of a wise person and a foolish person as Solomon has described them for us and then work through the lists to identify the areas of wisdom that you need to strengthen and the areas of foolishness that you need to correct. Then ask God to help you today to work on these items. I know that he will do that and help each one of us today to take steps toward becoming a wiser person than we are right now.

The results of being wise or foolish are clearly noted by Solomon. Those who embrace wisdom are crowned with knowledge. They become a fountain of life to others turning them from the snares of death and are led upward through life toward God. Fools on the other hand have a very hard time learning anything. They inherit folly and their path takes them down to the grave.

There is of course a very close connection between being wise and being righteous in the book of Proverbs. One leads to the other and while they are not exactly the same, from the point of view of the Scripture, you cannot be wise without being righteous and you cannot be righteous without becoming wise and therein lies a very important truth. These two attributes are connected but the path to wisdom lies through righteousness and not the other way around. This is important. Think about it carefully with me for a minute or two.

Here's the point. Solomon understood it very very well. Wisdom and knowledge and righteousness are all related. But this is how it really works. First comes righteousness. Then comes wisdom and that brings knowledge. If you do the right things (not because you understand them but because God says to do them) then you begin to understand (that's wisdom) and with wisdom comes the ability to easily and truly learn much more. If you wait

for a child to understand before you expect him to obey, he will never obey or understand. But if you teach him (by your own example) to obey the commands of the lord then both you and he will learn to understand and will gain both wisdom and knowledge in the process. That is the reason that Solomon keeps saying the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The path to wisdom and knowledge lies through obedience to the Word of God. I don't know about you, but I really want to become a wise man. I now know hope to achieve that end. It comes by obeying the commands of God and by knowing the word.

This is Reid Brown with the May 17 Project 4:4 reading wishing you wisdom and knowledge through your obedience.