

# Wisdom of Common Grace

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[ 0 : 00 ] Proverbs 22, 17. Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise. Apply your heart to what I teach. For it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart and have all of them ready on your lips.

So that your trust may be in the Lord, I teach you today, even you. Have I not written 30 sayings for you? Sayings of counsel and knowledge, teaching you true and reliable words so that you can give sound answers to him who sent you.

Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court. For the Lord will take up their case and will plunder those who plunder them.

Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man. Do not associate with one easily angered or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.

Do not be a man who strikes hands in pledge or puts up security for debts. If you lack the means to pay, your very bed will be snatched from under you.

[ 1 : 09 ] Do not move an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers. Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings.

For kings, he will not serve before obscure men. The Lord give us light tonight. Pastor Jason. First Kings chapter 5 gives us a peek into the fascinating world of wise men 3,000 years ago.

It says, Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the east and greater than all of the wisdom of Egypt. Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom sent by all the kings of the world who had heard of his wisdom.

So here you are. If you go back in time and this is you, here were these sages and wise men whose business it was to teach wisdom, to write wisdom, to think about wisdom, going to their king in some far away place, going to their king and saying, can we please have a transfer?

Can we transfer to King Solomon's court? Learn from him for a while and then we'll come back and we'll tell you what he said. And the king said yes and they would go and they would come back.

[ 2 : 39 ] There was apparently give and take. So that's a very fascinating little picture. Can you imagine? You're in some far away country and they're quoting King Solomon and his wisdom.

There was this back and forth. There was this whole system going on in that time and in that place where young men were raised up ready to be courtiers, ready to serve as ambassadors, ready to serve as counselors to the king, taking positions on cabinets, we would call it, or high places and being these officials.

And those men had to be trained up. And so they received the best of the best kind of training. You see that in the book of Daniel where the young men are brought into Babylon and they are taught the wisdom of Babylon.

And remember what it said, Daniel excelled over all of the other young men. He understood and he was so wise himself. Well, the reason I'm bringing this up is we're entering into a new section in the book of Proverbs today.

And I wanted to give you that little historical snapshot because it's kind of important to understand what's going on in Proverbs chapter 22, 17, all the way till into Proverbs 24.

[ 4 : 12 ] Proverbs 22, 17 begins a new section. The NIV has that heading, sayings of the wise. And we really have, we've left for the time being at least the sort of traditional Proverbs of King Solomon and we're going into this 30 sayings of the wise.

And what's fascinating, at least to me, maybe not to you, but what's fascinating is all the modern commentaries point to an association.

This section of the book of Proverbs has with an Egyptian wisdom book called the instruction of a minimope. And you're like, I've never heard of him and that's okay.

If I laid side by side this 30 sayings of the wise men and this instruction of a minimope, you would first of all notice right away that there are definite similarities.

It begins the same. It uses a lot of the same words like mouth and tongue and heart and listen and all these sorts of things. A lot of the Proverbs are very similar.

[ 5 : 28 ] There's real differences. There's places where it completely diverges. But a minimope says, open your ears, listen, keep these things in your heart for it's lovely or pleasing when you do.

I give you knowledge and you'll be able to answer those who speak to you. He says, I have 30 sayings for you. A minimope says, don't start a quarrel with a hot mouth man.

Do not move the markers on the borders of fields. He says, the scribe who is skilled in his office, he's found worthy to be a courtier. And so there's these similarities.

And that's fascinating. A minimope, we know, was a court sage who lived in Egypt. And he was probably responsible for teaching young men in that court.

And he wrote this thing that involved 30 sayings. He lived 200 years before King Solomon did. And so you might scratch your head and ask, well, what's going on here?

[ 6 : 35 ] What is going on? Well, it really seems that Solomon took, and this is why I brought up, there was this back and forth. There was this circulation of wisdom going on in the Far East or the Near East at the time.

So what's going on here? Well, it seems Solomon took this book of instruction that he found, he got somehow, this book of wisdom from Egypt, and he went through it.

And he changed it. And he edited it. And he cut out whole sections. And he edited, added in words. He digested it. He left out some things.

He added others. He put his wisdom to the best wisdom that was out there in the world at the time. And under God's inspiration, he took it and he transformed it.

He changed it into something flawless. something that isn't lost in the sands of time, but it's in our Bibles.

[ 7 : 45 ] And it's for us. And something perfect. And it comes down to us as this chunk in the book of Proverbs. These 30 sayings of the wise.

And I think that's instructional to us in a way, just knowing that, just to say, does the world have wisdom sometimes? Yeah, it does.

Do they get some things right? Yeah, they do. Common grace is a real thing. It's really at work out in the world. So should we ignore it? Throw it away or call it worthless and be completely oblivious to it?

That's not what King Solomon did. That's not what King Solomon did. But on the other hand, we want to be careful of another danger of, should we just accept it?

Should we just swallow it whole without any sort of discernment, without any thinking, without putting it through the word of God, without putting on our scripture glasses and looking at it?

[ 8 : 45 ] Well, that's not what Solomon did either. He was curious and he was careful. He was curious and he was careful.

And Christians should be the most curious and the most discerning people at the very same time. This is God's world. This is our Father's world.

We should be curious about it. He calls us to think, to live wisely, to open our eyes and to be wise. And so Christians should be the most eager to learn.

But at the same time, we should have so much of the word of God as the framework of our heart, as the DNA of our minds, that we're able to take the meat and spit out the bones.

That we're able to just totally relegate some of it all to the trash and some of it we pull out and we use it. Christians should be the most curious and the most discerning at the same time.

[ 9 : 45 ] And that's just because these two doctrines are true, that there is common grace, but there's also total depravity. There's common grace and common sin.

And you don't get the right balance when you ignore one or the other. So there's no room for mental laziness or mental dullness. Maybe you've heard that book, Amusing Ourselves to Death by Neil Postman.

He wrote that probably 40-some years ago now. And it was the power of TV and how just watching so much TV, we're now amusing ourselves to death.

He died right before the internet was beginning to take over. And if TV was bad, if TV was powerful, at finding ways that we can just amuse ourselves into oblivion, the internet is even more powerful.

I think Neil Postman must be doing somersaults in his grave at what's going on today. But God calls us to think, to process, to learn, to love him with all of our minds.

[11:00] With all of our minds. Now, that is essentially the very first saying that we get in this section. Verses 17 through 21 is a kind of prologue of this section and it's the very first saying.

And we're going to look at six of the sayings today. The prologue is the first one. And that will take us to the end of chapter 22. This prologue, pay attention, listen to the sayings of the wise, apply your heart to what I teach for it's pleasing, and so on.

This section is very reminiscent of Proverbs chapter 1 through 9. These are things that we've heard, these kinds of things are things that we've heard before. This was the beginning of the book of Proverbs.

And it's a command to pay attention, to listen, to apply this to your heart. Literally, it's talking, your belly, your core, eat these words.

Digest them. If food, if bread is, gives life, then these words give life. And that's how earnestly and eagerly we should take on this book of wisdom.

[12:15] I need this more than bread. bread. The same word can also talk about your womb. And so, put this down into the very part of you where life comes from.

Remember, it's out of the, remember, Proverbs 4.23, above all else, guard your heart. For it's the wellspring of life.

So, what he's saying here is, take these Proverbs and make them a very part of your DNA. Now, your DNA is responsible for creating the proteins and providing the map for how you live and how you live physically.

And so, brand your mind with these words. Bend your mind to this word. You just can't ignore it or take no notice of it or just be dead to it. It's very interesting that this word apply here is used in the negative sense in 1 Samuel.

Remember Eli, the old priest, and he had those two wicked sons? Do you remember that one really, really bad day in Israel history where Eli died, his two sons died, and the Ark of the Covenant was captured?

[13:33] Well, that very bad day, one of Eli's daughter-in-laws went into labor, probably just from the shock of all of this. She went into labor, and she gave birth, and it says she paid no attention to the child.

It's the same word as apply. She didn't apply herself to the child. She was so distraught, so stunned, so traumatized, so out of her mind with grief, with terror.

She paid no attention. She didn't apply herself to the baby. The baby's born, and she can't even think about it. Well, is that how you are with the word of God?

Where you're disconnected from it? It's not registering? Or are you taking it in and you're imprinting it upon your heart?

You're praying, Holy Spirit, help me to understand how to apply this. Well, why do this? And he gives us these reasons, verse 18, it'll be pleasing.

[14:45] It'll be so pleasant when it comes time to speak. Do you need wisdom for spur of the moment? I have to say something here. Well, it's so pleasant when the right words come.

That's what this is for. It will show you what trusting the Lord looks like, that your faith, that your trust, verse 19, may be in the Lord.

What he's saying is, this is what faith in the Lord actually looks like. Do you want a more robust faith, a more living faith, a more thorough faith?

I hope you do. Well, what does that look like in real life? Well, he's laying out a map. He's saying, this is what it looks like for your faith, for your trust to be in the Lord.

So how do you do it? Well, you do these proverbs. And then you'll be able to know how to answer, I think it's the king here, when he comes to question you.

[15:49] That's verse 21, so that you can give sound answers to the one who sent you. Again, remember the context. Young men are learning to be officials. They're learning to be ambassadors.

They're learning to be emissaries. So they're going out. They're making deals in the king's name.

They're settling disputes. They're learning to walk on the public stage.

And if royalty and government is the setting, then there comes a time when you have to answer for what you've been doing. There comes a time when you need to, you get called back in and the king says, hey, what's been going on?

What happened? What, how did you fare? Well, here is wisdom so that you can go to that meeting, to that accountability meeting with your head held high without fear.

You know, that's, that's how I want to go into eternity. I have an accountability meeting with a king and, and that's how I want to go into eternity with a wise life behind me with no fear to say, you know, to just be able to say, you gave me 10 talents.

[ 17 : 06 ] You gave me five talents. You gave me two talents. And look, I earned you 10, 10 more, five more, two more. No excuses. No spin. This is how it went. because I have nothing to hide.

That's what these proverbs are preparing us for. To get us ready, not only in this world, in this life, with our, with authorities that we have to answer to at work or at school, but finally, for that great accountability meeting, when we are summoned by the king and we're asked, so what did you do with the things that I gave you?

What did you do with that life? Well, that's the first saying. So now, what do you do? You apply it to your heart. You bend your mind to it.

There are ways that even this little section is saying, you need to change the way you're thinking about this. You need to reprioritize your life. you need to think about how this applies to you and then you need to do something.

And I think most of all, what you need to do is pay attention to what comes next. This is going to be on the test, so to speak. These proverbs are what we are going to be questioned on when the king comes and says, okay, it's time to answer.

[ 18 : 36 ] And so, pay attention to what we are now going to talk about. So, here's the second saying, do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court for the Lord will take up their case and will plunder those who plunder them.

And so, again, if it's court officials, if it's royal officials, judges, ambassadors are the main target, then you see how this would affect them. It would be nothing for a high up person, a connected, powerful official, to put his finger on the scales, to slide in a paragraph into some law, to get another lawmaker to bend a little.

lawmaker to the poor. And what happens is the poor are plundered. The poor are plundered. It is a very strange situation that happens when you go to Congress.

people. And I don't know if it's just my imagination, but they seem to do fairly well for themselves after they go. What happens? Well, I don't know about that, but again, and again, and again, in Proverbs, and I hope you are getting it, I hope we are getting it, God cares about the poor.

He cares how you treat them, how you treat the ones who are not powerful, who are not connected, who don't have access, who don't have money. Wisdom doesn't find a way to blame them, or cheat them, or ignore them.

[ 20 : 13 ] Wisdom finds a way to help them, because God in his wisdom helped us when we were a debt that we could not pay. And again, what's the motivation here?

So how do you treat the poor? What's your attitude towards them? He says don't exploit them just because you can. Don't exploit them because they're weak. And the motivation here is simple, brute fear.

I don't live by fear, I live by faith. Well, Proverbs says sometimes it's wise to live by fear. Plunder the poor. He says you are making an enemy of the greatest plunderer of them all.

people. Our Lord Jesus plunders the God of this age. Then how hard will it be for him to plunder you?

The Lord is the greatest lawyer of them all. He says before him the whole world stands condemned and their mouths are silenced.

[ 21 : 28 ] They have nothing to say for themselves. The prosecuting attorney has done a job perfectly. And so what will happen if he takes up the poor's case against you?

What he says is what you did to them I will do to you and more. So fear.

We need to be careful with what we think and act and do towards the poor because we might be calling down an enemy upon ourselves that we are not strong enough to handle.

Paul preached before the apostles in Galatians 2 it says and they added nothing to my message. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor the very thing I was eager to do. The apostles said you know what Paul your message is perfect just don't forget to remember the poor. And Paul said that was the very thing I was eager to do. So remember the poor.

[ 22 : 39 ] Saying number three don't make friends with a hot tempered man. Now here I want you to go into your life and go through the files of your life and in your classroom and you know the yearbook of your class or the people at your job or your family go through the file cabinet of your life.

Do you know someone who is always getting angry? Who you would describe as a angry person or a hot mouth person a man hot mouth man who gets angry too easily or too often or when he gets angry he gets too angry.

There is a place for righteous anger but it's an emotion that needs to be kept in bounds and for the right reasons. The Proverbs say just don't associate with him.

Don't be friends with him. Don't share your heart with him. Don't be close to him. Don't open yourself up and walk life with him. It's really that simple and I don't need to say anything much here. Don't be friends with him or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared. He's in a trap. If your eyes are open and you have that person in mind you know he's in a trap.

[ 24 : 04 ] She's in a trap. And what Proverbs is saying is don't imagine that somehow you'll escape. You're going to probably learn his ways. Because there is something as I thought about this and maybe you can relate to this.

There is something so tempting about anger. anger. There's something sinful man likes about hearing how someone got really angry and stormed out.

Or I really let them know what I thought of them. And we like those kind of stories. I've seen people ruin themselves with anger. I've been on factory floors and in gym, you know, gyms at school and they fly off the handle and you could tell they're just totally letting go.

And if. And it feels so good for them to rage, to yell, to curse. It feels good for them to be angry that the heat feels nice.

I've been there where I just wanted to let it go and I have and there's the heat feels nice. But fools. I was full of fool.

[ 25 : 15 ] They were fools. And they're trapped and they're ruined. They ruined their own lives. Those stories are you hear them but you know there's no unemployment benefits if you storm out and you yell and curse and at the boss.

You're now caught in poverty and you've burnt your bridges and now you don't have references and now you can't put them on your resume. You've ruined your own reputation, your own life.

life. They're in a trap. Don't be don't associate with them. Don't be friends with them. Now is that saying like you don't try to seek to win them?

You don't try to seek to speak the gospel to them? No. It's talking about friendships and now I'm doing life with this kind of guy. He's coming over to my house and we're hanging out together and and my guard is down around him.

Don't let your guards down around these kind of people. Kids maybe you can think of someone in your class who's hot tempered. Here's where you need to not be friends with them or you'll become like them.

[ 26 : 33 ] They are dangerous. Bad company corrupts good character. Bad company corrupts good character.

Saying number four, don't be a man who strikes hands in a pledge. That's verse 26.

Do not be a man who strikes hands in a pledge or puts up puts on security, puts up security for debts. If you lack the means to pay, your very bed will be snatched from under you.

I like that it doesn't just say don't strike hands in a pledge. There are proverbs where it says that. He says don't be the kind of man that does that.

That's a little bit different. He's not just talking about something that you do. He's talking about the kind of person you are. Don't be the kind of man that does that, that does stupid financial things.

[ 27 : 36 ] Don't be the kind of man or woman who makes rash financial decisions. Again, this is more than what you do. It's the kind of person that you are. Wise men have their money under control because they have themselves under control.

They are self-controlled people. And so they aren't swayed by strong, unthinking desires. Now here, we don't know what's driving these people to strike hands in a pledge.

It might be I want to help. But their help is foolish. It might be greed. So I have a business opportunity, they say. And Solomon says don't be the kind of man that makes, that gets into all these sorts of business opportunities where you're promising financial backing.

Be smart. Be slow. Know what you're getting involved in. Don't take unnecessary risks. Stay away from debt, especially other people's. Don't be that kind of person.

Don't be that kind of person. And so I would need to ask you, are you that kind of man or woman that makes rash financial decisions?

[ 28 : 56 ] Proverbs is clear. You'll have to pay. You'll have to pay. Your very bed will be snatched out from under you. That's comparable to our saying that they'll take the shirt right off your back.

The very last thing you own, they'll take it from you. And so how's that for a picture? You're sleeping nicely in your bed. You're snoozing gently the hours away. And two burly workmen come in and one's on one side and one's on the other.

And they pick up and they tip you over and they take your bed right out of the house. Probably your last bit of furniture in the place. So now you are down to nothing because of your foolishness.

I've seen a little kid's bedroom suite repossessed out of their parents' house before. Talk about miserable.

Don't be those kind of people. So don't exploit the poor. Don't be friends with an angry person. Don't be the kind of person that makes rash, risky financial decisions. Do you see how this is all about your character?

[ 30 : 05 ] God is training us to be wise men and women and young people that can go into situations and be the kind of people that make good decisions, that represent him well.

Wisdom isn't something that you do, just that you do. It's who you are. Fourth saying, don't move an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers. Don't set up an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers.

Now, when I was prepping this sermon, I'm getting, gathering my thoughts and writing down these verses and thinking about how each of these verses sort of apply to our lives or what I could say about them.

I will be completely honest. I was thinking, what am I going to say about not moving ancient boundary stones? How, unless you guys are out at night moving fence rows, and I sure hope you aren't for a lot of reasons, I didn't know exactly how this was going to apply, except for maybe in a very, very general sense.

But, you know, every word of God is God-breathed. And all of Scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, and correcting, and training in righteousness.

[ 31 : 23 ] The whole word of God is a sharp sword. And once you get to know this little passage, this little proverb, it's plenty sharp.

It will cut you. So let's just dig in a little bit. He's going to come back to this about not moving an ancient boundary stone. And so it's obviously not something that's just like a glib thing that he threw away.

It warrants repeating. It warrants us saying, what? And why is this so important? What's going on here?

Well, I think it helps, first of all, that unlike our culture, in ancient Israel, it was a primarily agricultural society. So your wealth, your income was in your land.

Your paycheck was in your land. And so we aren't just talking about where you put the fence in the suburbs, where you're arguing about whose fence it is and where the tree goes. And at the end of the day, it's more about pride, I guess, than anything really essential.

[ 32 : 30 ] It's about your livelihood. But it's more than that. It's much more than that. You need to understand that from the Israel perspective, this land was God's gift to them.

And it wasn't just sort of like, here's the whole thing. No, it was sovereignly allotted and handed out and decided where each tribe and clan and family's land was.

So when you went out your door, you're talking about, this was God's gift to me. More than that, God promised Abraham the land.

And the land that each of them had was a part of that covenant fulfillment. So I know God is faithful and I know God is good and he keeps his promises.

How? Well, I'm on this land. So the land represented their part, their relationship, not only with father Abraham, but with the living God, with the community of faith.

[ 33 : 44 ] And so it's not just about economics and stealing to take someone's land, to move the borders, was to cut that person off from the community, was to deny their place in the family of the faith of God.

And that's why it was so important that every 50 years the land was supposed to go back to all of its original owners in the year of the Jubilee. It had to revert back to the original owners because it was that important that each person knew that God gave me this land.

Not even kings should or could take the land of others against their will. That's what King Ahab was doing with Naboth's vineyard. Remember Naboth said no because this was from the Lord.

And so I just want you to think then with that as the context. Think of the heart of someone who would go and move boundary stones.

These are set up by the forefathers, the first people that came in the land, the first people that God said, this is your land and this is your land and this is your land. This is who that's who set these up.

[ 35 : 05 ] So think of the heart of someone who would go and move a boundary stone. You aren't just stealing from them financially. You're showing a total disregard for God who gave them that land. A stone mover was a godless man, was a faithless man, was purely materialistic with no fear of God.

They didn't care about God's promises or God's love or God's character or how God was involved in the world, how he saved them out of Egypt, how he gave them this land. These are godless brutes with no fear of God before their eyes.

And you say, isn't that a little bit of an overstatement? We don't have time, but Hosea 5.10, you can see how seriously God takes just this issue of moving boundary stones.

In the passage, he's prosecuting, he's railing against the rulers and the priests and the princes for their idolatry, for their rebellion, for their arrogance.

That's who these people are. They're rebellious. They don't care about God. They're arrogant. They're too proud to bow their rebellion. They're going to do their own thing. And this is what the Lord says.

[ 36 : 31 ] He says, Judah's leaders, what do you say about people like that? He says, Judah's leaders are like those who move boundary stones. That's what they're like.

What do you say to someone when they're idolatrous, rebellious, arrogant, godless, faithless, Christless? You say, those are people that move boundary stones. They have just no regard for God.

No regard for God's people. Only care about themselves. Because that's what a stone mover was. He might have been polite as can be.

A godless businessman who just did whatever he wanted with no thought of God. God never entered, percolated down into his thoughts to actually affect how he did his business, how he treated people, how he thought of making money.

Now, I say that starts to hit home, doesn't it? Do we go to work? Do we do our business? Carry on business? With just no fear of God?

[ 37 : 43 ] Do we leave God in this building and then we go out and do whatever we want out there? That's what moving boundary stones was like. So, do you go to work?

Do you go to school? And God weighs nothing. And he means nothing. You're just stuck in the here and now. You know, a stone mover just saw a stone.

But a wise person saw, you know what? That's God's faithfulness. That's God's promise. That's God's presence. That's God's. He saves. They saw God in it.

And the person that moved stones, God was gone. So, I say God save us from being stone movers. Just completely oblivious to him.

Fifth saying, do you see a man skilled? Or is that our sixth? Six. Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings. He will not serve before obscure men.

[ 38 : 45 ] This is our last one. The word skilled, it means alert, talented, ready, prompt, quick, clever.

And so, we've kind of come full circle here. We're back to what are we doing with our minds? Here's a man that's ready. He's alert.

He's thoughtful. He's skillful. He's taken the word of God. And he's now applied it. And he's pursuing excellence in his work.

He's pursuing excellence for his king. And he starts out low on the totem pole, so to speak. But he is rising to the top.

And it's his skill. It's his mind. It's his heart that is taking him there. And that's what he's been talking about.

[ 39 : 42 ] A lively mind. That's what we need. A mind that's ready to excel. A heart that's bowing to the Lord. Not dull minds. Not plodding along.

Clumsy and rash and foolish. Not thinking about things, but just doing things. Paul again says, be very careful how you live. Not as unwise, but as wise.

Making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish. Don't be foolish. But understand what the Lord's will is.

The Proverbs say, if you're that kind of person, your skill will raise you up to greater usefulness. To greater influence. And I just couldn't help but thinking just how wonderful the grace of God is.

You know, we already are. We don't have to wait to serve before kings. We're already serving before a king.

[ 40 : 45 ] And what purpose, brothers and sisters. What purpose we have for our lives. What purpose. What a reason to excel.

What a reason to apply our hearts and our minds. To throw off sluggardly thinking and sluggardly living and rash living and careless living and godless living.

What a reason to really apply ourselves. Because we're serving before a king. And what a reason to convert to Jesus Christ.

To bow the knee. What purpose. What reason do you have for living? What reason do you have to say, oh, this is worth excelling for. This is worth trying.

This is worth pouring my life out for. Well, in Jesus Christ, our king, you find every reason to say, I am going to go to work and do as good of a job as I can.

[ 41 : 44 ] I'm going to go to school and do as good of a job as I can. And I'm not doing it just for money and influence here and now. I'm doing it because he is worthy.

What a reason to convert. The Lord saves. And then he gives us a reason to live and a reason to excel. And he gives us a purpose and a high calling. And I am a servant of the king of kings.

I don't serve before obscure men. It means shadows. I don't serve before shadows. Here today, gone tomorrow.

As thin as a shadow. As wavering as a shadow. Nobody's. I serve the king. And he called me. And he sent me.

And he called you. And he sent you. And so what a reason to apply ourselves. What a reason to dig into the book of Proverbs and say, Lord, you're worthy.

[ 42 : 48 ] I want to live a life that's worthy of you. And that so when I, my turn comes to give an account, I could say, Lord, I've lived a wise life by your grace.

Jesus is worthy. Jesus is worthy. And we should serve him in. Enjoy. With great purpose.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we do thank you for the word of God, that it's clear, that it's simple, that it's pointed, that it tells us the things that we need to know, that it's practical.

I pray that you would help us to apply these things, that we would watch our attitudes towards the poor, that we would watch our friendships with the angry, that we would watch our own hearts, that we would not be godless, faithless.

I pray that you would save us from being lazy. Lazy thinkers. Lazy livers. You've given us a great and high calling.

[ 43 : 59 ] As your children, you've given us a first-class education in how to live. And we want to live for you.

Please strengthen every good resolve that we have. Strengthen our minds and our purposes and our hearts and our wills to do what is good.

You are worthy of more than what we've given you. And we pray that you would help us to give you more. Pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.