

Preserve Sound Judgment

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[0 : 0 0] Turn to Proverbs chapter 3. Wisdom is learning the fabric of the universe that God has made and then living in harmony with it and all the while knowing that we will not in this life fully ever comprehend it.

And so we have more wisdom from our God and we begin reading in Proverbs 3 21 and I'll read to the end of the chapter. My son, preserve sound judgment and discernment. Do not let them out of your sight.

They will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck. Then you will go on your way in safety and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid. When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

Have no fear of sudden disaster or the ruin that overtakes the wicked. For the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared. Do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it is in your power to act.

Do not say to your neighbor, come back later. I'll give it tomorrow when you now have it with you. Do not plot harm against your neighbor who lives trustfully near you.

[1 : 1 9] Do not accuse a man for no reason when he has done you no harm. Do not envy a violent man or choose any of his ways. For the Lord detests a perverse man that takes the upright into his confidence.

The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous. He mocks proud mockers, but gives grace to the humble.

The wise inherit honor, but fools he holds up to shame. Well, may we get wisdom tonight. Above all our getting, get wisdom.

Brother, come and preach. I'm sure you remember that story, Green Eggs and Ham. And if you don't, well, you're probably not from this country. Ollie, you know that story, right?

Eh, it's a little fuzzy. So Green Eggs and Ham, I was just thinking about it because that Sam I am, that Sam I am. He really wanted whoever the main character is, the narrator, to really try the Green Eggs and Ham.

[2 : 2 6] And he followed them over everywhere to get them. And he kept asking them, do you want it? Do you want it now? Do you need it? Here it is. Here it is. Try some. Try some. That feels a lot like, in a very silly way, what Proverbs 1 through 9 is.

It's saying, are you eating wisdom? Are you embracing wisdom? Do you have it? Do you want it? Do you want it? Do you want it? You should want it. You should want it.

We saw last time wisdom is a tree of life to those who embrace her. It's the tree of life, like taken out of the Garden of Eden and put near to men.

And those who embrace her have life, and it's blessed life. Those who lay a hold of her will be blessed. And how much we need that blessing that the book of Proverbs is offering us.

I just think of our country, our culture, and in many respects, we desperately need wisdom.

[3 : 35] Wisdom, the fear of the Lord. And you see it because of how it's missing and what is happening. People are not flourishing like we saw the last time we were here, where it's this great blessing that comes with wisdom.

You don't see that happening. People are not flourishing. They're doing the opposite. They're languishing. They're wasting away. And so now people are starting to talk about the unraveling of our culture and how things are starting to fall apart.

The CDC, the Center for Disease Control, did an extensive survey in late June of this year. And one question they asked was whether you have seriously considered suicide in the past 30 days.

And they didn't mean a fleeting thought about it, a momentary thought about it. They didn't say, you know, sometime in your lifetime, but seriously considered suicide at least once in the past 30 days.

And the results were stunning and actually horrifying. For Americans, 18 to 24, 25.5% said they had seriously considered suicide in the last month.

[5 : 01] And those are our youngest adults, youngest American adults. Those should be the people that are getting degrees and beginning families and looking forward to future, to life.

And for one in four of them, they're seeing very little to live for. Very little hope. Very little flourishing in front of them.

And really the question that is begging to be answered is why? What is behind that? And I'm sure there's a lot of answers. Just as a group, the youngest adults are struggling, as they tend to do.

But they're struggling with more debt than is normal, with higher unemployment than is usual, with feeling politically unheard or uncared for, not fitting in.

But it's more than that. They really have come to age in a time where there is a lot of anger and hatred and polarization that you hear all about.

[6 : 10] And the older adults around them. So if you're not one of them, the older adults around them, a lot of them are entrenched in enemy camps, polarization.

And there's the sense that community is suffering. It's fraying. It's dying. So what's going on? One article put it like this.

Why? And I found this very interesting. I didn't add this word spiritual. This was in there. Why is virtually every metric of mental and spiritual disease, suicide, depression, anxiety, addiction, and alcoholism, increasing significantly, rapidly in the richest country on earth, one filled with advanced technologies and at least the pretense of liberal democracy?

One answer was provided by Dr. Laura Williams of Texas Children's Hospital when discussing the rise of depression. There's a lack of community.

The amount of time that we spend in front of screens and not in front of other people. If you don't have a community to reach out to, then your hopelessness doesn't have any place to go.

[7 : 31] Now, I don't know exactly what she meant by that, but you get the main drift that these younger adults are growing up and coming of age and dealing with life without significant community around them.

And humans need that. We were created by our God, by our Creator, to connect, to live connected with Him and with each other, with family and friends in a community.

And so just a word to myself and a word to all the parents of teens and children, they desperately need to connect with you. And the phone and the screens, they can be easier.

For me and for them. But they need it. And they need it as much as they need food and air and everything else. They need to have connection with other people, especially with their parents.

And that's why we all desperately need wisdom. Because wisdom is how we live in that harmony with God and with our fellow man.

[8 : 43] That's how we live connected with each other and how we stay in sync, so to speak, with each other. It's folly and mocking and simple thinking, not understanding the people that you are living with, not understanding you, not understanding God.

That is what ends up fraying community. Because we say and we do things that end up hurting our relationship with God and our relationship with our fellow man.

And so wisdom creates a community of life. And that's what the end of Proverbs 3 shows us. I said a few weeks ago that Proverbs 3 can be basically broken down into two main ideas.

Walking wisely with God. And we saw that in the first 12 verses. And then the rest would be walking wisely with man. And so now tonight we are going to talk about walking in harmony and wisely with our fellow man.

That's verses 27 through 35. And we see that as we do this, you're going to understand how wisdom creates a community of life.

[9 : 56] Where I can trust my neighbor. And my neighbor can trust me. And we have each other. We help each other. We are working for each other. And what the result is, is what Proverbs 3 calls the tree of life.

It comes into our life. And we experience it. And so it breaks down, this walking wisely, walking in harmony with our fellow man. It really breaks down into three commands.

And we see those in verses 27 through the end. And we're just going to take each command and turn. And we see the first one is, don't withhold good.

Verse 27, do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it is in your power to act. Don't hold back. Don't withhold good from those who deserve it.

That's how the NIV has it. That's probably not quite exactly right. The idea is more like, is more, don't withhold good from its owners. And so we're not so much talking about, do they deserve me to do good to them?

[11 : 04] We're not talking about merit. We're talking about, do they have a claim? Do they have a right on some good that I have? So don't withhold good from its owners.

So if you owe good to someone, give it to them. Don't hold it back. And now we're going to explore all the different ways that that is something that we need to do. And so we, this really builds very nicely on what we have been talking about in Sunday morning about loving your man.

Because what does Paul say that we owe to all men? He says we're not to let any debt remain outstanding except for the ongoing debt that we have to love one another.

That's the only kind of debt that we should continually have, that we should continually experience in our life is that, you know what? I owe that person just as I owe the mortgage company my mortgage payment.

I owe my brother or sister, my neighbor, I owe them love. Now, when you give money to your mortgage company to pay off your mortgage, there's no idea of, well, they deserve this or we're on good terms with them.

[12 : 20] No, the idea is that this really does belong to them and I need and I owe it to them. And that's what Paul is saying here. Love is not a grace that I give to some when and how I feel like it.

If I'm in agreement with them, then I do it. If I feel like it, then I do it. No, it's an ongoing obligation that we have to all men. So this is part of the answer of don't withhold good from those who it belongs to.

And one of the good that we owe to all men is the good of loving them. So everything I owe to my fellow man, we've seen this on Sunday morning, everything I owe to my fellow man hangs on love.

It hangs on love. It's the sum of the law. And I think what you're beginning to see is that in many ways, it is the sum of wisdom. Remember how Proverbs 3 began?

It said, let love and faithfulness never leave you. Bind them around your neck. Write them on the tablet of your heart. That's wisdom. That's how you live wisely is you live in love.

[13 : 30] And I think that can be very surprising. I found that to be very surprising as I came to this book and really started studying it because I kind of had, you know, maybe that's just this idea that, you know, wisdom is to help me.

How to live a nice life, a good life, a smart life, a financially successful life, how to get along with people life. And what we find here, though, is shot straight through the book of Proverbs is that love is the wisest way to live.

And that's why Paul can say, I'm praying that your love would grow in knowledge and depth of insight. Those two things go together. That's wisdom. And so Proverbs is written especially for young people.

And so young people, this section is written especially for you. Do you want to be wise? Well, then love your brother.

Love your sister. Love them when you're piling in the car and you're picking out seats and you want that seat and they want that seat. Well, who are you going to love, yourself or them?

[14 : 39] Love them when it's time to pick out that movie that you want to watch. Or I want to play the Xbox or the PlayStation and they want to do something else.

Who are you going to love? When it's time to take out the trash. When it's time to decide who's got to clean out the litter box. Who is going to love?

You want to be wise then live in love. And you know what happens is when you have a family, when you have children and when you have boys and girls and young people living in love. What happens to that little family?

Does it get happier or does it get sadder? It certainly gets happier. This little community gets a little happier. A better place to live. A nicer place to be.

And that's exactly what Proverbs is saying. This happens if you live in wisdom. And so love. That's a good that we owe to everyone. Let's get even more practical.

[15 : 39] Don't withhold good from those it's due. Probably the most basic explanation of this verse is pay your bills. Pay your bills.

Don't withhold good from those who it's due. And don't delay. Don't come back. Don't say come back later and I'll give it to you tomorrow. Christians should be those people who are paying their bills and paying their bills on time.

Pay your workers. If you're an employer. If you're an employer. Pay them what they're worth. Not the lowest that you can get away with.

But what they're worth. You know. Sort of just heartless.

Capitalism without any concern for humanity. Or families. Or community. Where profit is the only goal. That's not biblical.

[16 : 40] You would have a hard time finding that in the Bible at all. And really it was that kind of spirit that just said. How do I make. How do I put the most money to the bottom line.

Without any consideration of anyone else. Is you know. Why children at eight and nine were working in factories in the 1800s. And adult workers were killed because of these unsafe factories.

And where you just sort of expected a certain amount of death. Well. That's not. That's not love. It was really a clear choice between money. And caring for your fellow man.

And people were choosing money. And that. That. That goes on today. We can't be under any delusion that people don't make decisions based on love or money.

It's still there. And Jesus makes it clear. You can't serve God and money. But God is. Or money is the God of many. So pay your bills.

[17 : 39] Pay your workers. Give physical help if there's an opportunity or a need. Now you can think of a lot of different situations where this applies. Where my neighbor needs something.

Where my friend needs something. Where. And. And. They're in trouble. Or they're in danger. Or. They have some sort of physical need. That's a good that we owe them.

Let me just read Exodus chapter 23 4. And here he's talking about your enemies. And if this is true of your enemies. Then how much more is it true of your friends. If you come across your enemies ox.

Or donkey. Wandering off. Be sure to take it back to them. If you see the donkey of someone who hates you. Fallen under its load. Do not leave it there.

But be sure you help him with it. What is. What is the Lord saying to those ancient Israelites. And what is he saying to us. He's saying. You owe even your enemy.

[18 : 38] That kind of good. That you would care for their urgent. Physical needs. Or the physical needs of their animal. The things that are under their care. And so you need to help.

So urgent physical needs. Need to be. Met. Right. Now. And so you can think of the parable of the good Samaritan. And two of those people walked on by.

And one saw someone in urgent physical need. And he. With great risk to himself. Helped. Well. The good Samaritan. Proverbs would say. Is the wise Samaritan.

And that Levi. And the priests. They weren't good. And then neither were they wise. Another way. Remember the Lord told the harvesters. To leave the edges of the field.

Ungleaned. Unpicked. Or the vines. Don't go over them a second time. He said. Don't clear out every single time. And make sure that you got every single grape.

[19 : 37] And every single sheave of grain. He said. Leave that. To the poor. The Lord said. That belongs to the poor. That's for them. And the Lord sealed those commandments. He said those things.

A number of places. Throughout Deuteronomy. And Leviticus. And Exodus. He. On three out of the four occasions. Sealed that command with. I am the Lord your God.

That's why you should do that. Because that's who I am. That's the kind of God I am. You need to remember that. And so. Because there's this temptation. This temptation.

To. Take what belonged to the poor. And give it to myself. And he was saying. That is theirs. And it's from me.

And if you go back a second time. And you relentlessly get every single piece of. Of grain or grape. You aren't being a good businessman. Or you aren't taking. What really belongs to you.

[20 : 34] He's saying. You're stealing. From the poor. And don't do that. That's what they need. To live on. So that's a good that we owe. Generosity to the poor.

To the financially oppressed. Or the financially vulnerable. Is not. An extra virtue. That we can tack on. Whenever we feel like. In our life.

It's not a take it or leave it. James reminds us. It's the only religion. That God our father accepts. If it's not part of. Your religion. God says. I don't accept this.

I don't accept any of it. Now. I'm not. And I can't. Tell you what that should look like. For you. But what the problem. What book of proverbs is saying. Is that's wisdom. That's how you create.

A community. Where there's flourishing. That. That's how you. End up helping yourself. And we're going to start to see that. As we go through the book of proverbs. That those who are kind to the poor. They end up blessing themselves.

[21 : 31] Those who are generous. End up. Somehow getting more money. It's a very interesting thing. That's going on. But that's what the book of proverbs is saying. That's wisdom. Well what other good do we owe?

Well we could put a lot of things in this category. We owe our spouses love. Affection. We owe our children. Affection and love.

And a lot of other things. We owe our parents. Respect. And care. Especially as they. Become older. We owe our friends. Kindness. And encouragement.

Those are all goods. That our friends. Need. And have some claim on. And what proverbs is saying is. Don't withhold it. Whether it's bills. Or whether it's an encouraging word.

Give it. And. And he's very clear. Don't delay on any of that. Not tomorrow. Because. Delay can be as destructive. As just not giving it at all. If my brother needs an encouraging word now.

[22 : 31] He needs an encouraging word now. And to delay. Is to not do any good. Delay can ruin. Excuse me. In communities. Delay. Just not helping.

When they need the help. Can be ruinous for families. And for. For friendships. James 4.17. Anyone who knows the good. They ought to do. But doesn't do it.

Sins. And we can not do it. By just saying. I'll do it tomorrow. I'll just do it tomorrow. There's an old proverb. That says. He who gives quickly.

Gives twice. He who gives quickly. Gives twice. So. If I'm making. Chocolate chip cookies. And I need an egg. Give me one egg now.

And that's better than two dozen eggs. Some other day. When I don't need them. He who gives quickly. Gives. Twice. So. Do you see how. Just in this first command. Do you see how this builds community?

[23 : 28] How if we were to do this. More and more and more. That. What would happen is. Love. Would flourish. Encouragement would flourish. Hope would flourish.

And. Where's that. Where there is this. Outflow of good. And love. And care. For one another. It really does.

If you smell closely. It begins to smell. A lot like the garden of Eden. It's good. Wisdom is a tree of life. To those who embrace it.

To those who live with it. And love it. And obey. So don't withhold good. That's the first command. The second command. Is don't plow evil. Don't plow evil.

Verses 29. 30. Do not plot harm. Against your neighbor. Who lives trustfully. Near you. Don't plot. It's literally the word. For plowing. And you probably see.

[24 : 24] The connection. If you're. Preparing your field. You plow it. If you're. Plotting evil. You're preparing. To sow seeds of evil.

And so he's saying. Don't plow evil. Don't plan. Don't plot. Don't scheme. Don't prepare harm. Against your neighbor. And especially. Your innocent neighbor. Who doesn't expect anything. But good from you.

So don't accuse a man. For no reason. When he's done you no harm. And so really. What. What causes so much strife. What causes fights and quarrels.

Among you. Well. We're not content. With what God has given us. We're not content. With what we have. James for.

Your desires within you. And if we were content. If we were content. We could be. Like what.

[25 : 21] The prophet Micah prophesied. Where we could all live. Peacefully. Under our own vine. And fig tree. I would be happy. With what I have. And enjoy it. And you would have. What you have.

And enjoy it. But instead of. Something. Of Eden. We. We experience something. Of the wilderness. And.

Because sinful. Foolish man. Is not content. With what he has. And there's this greed. There's this selfishness.

In our hearts. That says. I want. What they have. And so. What do I do? I plow evil. I get out my tractor. Maybe it's the tractor.

Of my mouth. Maybe it's the tractor. Of my mind. Maybe it's the tractor. Of what I'm doing. With my hands. But. I'm going to start. Plowing evil. And I'm going to get. What you have.

[26 : 16] I'm going to bring you down. In order to lift myself up. You see a perfect example. Of this. In Ahab. He wanted Naboth's. Vineyard.

Remember. He wanted Naboth's. Inheritance. From the Lord. And Naboth said. No. You can't have it. This is my inheritance. From the Lord. This is. This is special to me. This means everything to me. This is. And.

He said no. And King Ahab. He had lots of vineyards. He had a palace. He had enough. To make.

Any man. Happy. Happy. But. Was he happy. No. He. He wanted one more. He wanted that piece of property. And so he was swollen with desire. And he's pouting.

Now that. Naboth said no. And. But his wife Jezebel. She had. She was filled with the wisdom from. From hell. And she says. I know what to do.

[27 : 10] And she plots evil. And she gets evil men to accuse. Innocent Naboth. And they end up killing him. That's. That's what Proverbs is saying. Don't do. Don't do that.

Don't have that heart. Don't have that. Those kind of. Thoughts. Don't plow evil against your neighbor. Now. None of you. I doubt. Are going to set up some sort of. Blackmail.

Or trap. Or scheme. Where you end up getting someone killed. But we do this in a lot of other ways. I'm jealous of. Someone's leadership position.

I want. Their place. I want. Or I want to be on. The same. Level as they are. And so I can. Scatter.

Just a few. A little gossip around. Little choice morsels. Or. I just say a few words. To a few people. To just try to.

[28 : 05] Somehow. Get on that level. And to bring them down. Or maybe just. Open the door a little. So. They fall. And I can rise. I was talking with another pastor.

And he. He was talking that. A family came into the church. And as soon as they got there. Gossip and scheming. Started. And there's just little whispers.

Little complaints. About. About the leadership. Going over. And talking to this family. And saying. Well. What do you think about. What's his name. What. The pastor.

What he's doing. And what do you think about that decision. They're making. Well. What was behind it. Well. They wanted. A place. They wanted power.

They wanted that leadership. And really. It spread through the whole church. And one family after another. Is. Exposed. And listening to this. And they're drawn off.

[29 : 00] For these little. Secret conferences. And it really. All came to a head. The church was. Not doing well. Pastors.

Found out about it all. And they had to sit down. With these people. They weren't even members. And so. There's very little. That they could actually. Formally do. But they basically. Had to say. We know what you're doing.

We see it. And. You gotta go. You gotta go. That's what this is talking about. Well. I want my neighbor's reputation.

I want them to think well of me. And bad of them. And so. Instead of protecting my neighbor's reputation. I plot against her. I bring her down a little bit. So I can lift me up a little bit.

And so. It's very. It can be very subtle. Can't we? We know this craftiness. This subtlety. That. We just say a few words. Say a few things. And.

[29 : 54] And what I've done. Is I've plowed evil. And I've plotted. Harm. Against my. Innocent neighbor. And so. Don't denigrate your neighbor. Don't gossip.

Don't be a fault finder. A nitpicker. Don't attack. Or belittle. Or despise. Don't argue with him or her. About everything. Because all of that. Is contributing. To this culture.

Of death. Of suspicion. Of. Of this. Life is suppressed. And that's. And really. Don't do it. Because that's. At one point. That's all we had. That's.

That is the world. Hating. Being hated. And hating one another. And that's where we were. That's all we could experience. And then Christ came.

And. I want you to remember. He did not. Plow. Evil. He was plowing. Good. He was plotting. Good. And God didn't bring us. Into judgment.

[30 : 54] He didn't come to accuse. And destroy. Instead. He came to justify. And bring life. The exact. Opposite. Of what this is saying. That we shouldn't do.

And. And. Our Lord. Defended us. When we didn't deserve. Any defense. When we didn't deserve. Anything. And so.

Don't attack. Your neighbors. That's Satan's work. That's not Jesus work. Protect. Don't attack. That's wisdom. That's Christ like. That's life giving.

So that's the second. Second command. Don't plow evil. Don't plan evil. Don't work evil. For your neighbor. Third command is this. Don't envy the violent. Don't envy the violent.

And. You're probably thinking. And. This is. Like. The first thing. I thought of. Is. The violent. Are we talking about. Like. Gang members. The mafia.

[31 : 49] Like. Wife. Beaters. I don't know. Like. Who. Who are these violent. I'm not. I don't have any sort of tendency. To. Envy them. Don't envy the violence.

But. I think we need to broaden our. Mind a little here. Or think about. What. What. What goes for violence. What's behind violence. And. You can just see it.

Because. Right now. Often. In our world. The violent. The heartless. The ruthless. The brutal. The willing to hurt. In order to get what I want. They.

Tend to get ahead. In our world. Or at least they can. For a long time. And so. The playground bully. Gets his way. And everyone. Respects him.

Or that. That. The. The. The person in church. Who's heartless. Can run over the meek. In high school. The mean girl.

[32 : 45] Can be the popular girl. And everyone's afraid of her wrath. And. And so. The best way to avoid that wrath. Is to stay close to her. And to laugh at her. And to envy her. And say. Wow. At work.

In business. The ruthless. Can get ahead. Those willing to do what it takes. To get ahead. To do anything. And the collateral damage. You know. To their family. To their friends.

To other. Their co-workers. The collateral damage. Doesn't matter. And so. You can see this. We can see that. And we can become like Asaph. Who said. I began to envy.

The wicked. I began to envy the wicked. And we can envy the people. That look at the whole world. And they say. Mine. This is mine. I'm going to take what I want.

This is my church. My house. My family. My company. My neighborhood. My country. This is mine. And the whole world is theirs.

[33 : 43] And so. They have the perfect right. To demand their way. And so. You can see this. In the smallest things. Where should we do Christmas? I want to do it at my house.

Grandparents. Telling the dad and mom. How to raise their children. Why? Because. They're my grandchildren. Or. Son. You got to do it this way. Because you're my son. And if they don't get what they want.

They make everyone miserable. And. They get their own way. And they never seem to have to pay. And they get what they want. And then.

It's easy to start to envy them. The book of Proverbs would not be telling us to be careful of this. If it wasn't a real tangible temptation that we have in our life.

And. It is. And he's saying. Don't envy them. Why? Because it's folly. It is folly. It is foolishness.

[34 : 42] Remember. Wisdom is. Is living in harmony with that fabric. And these men are crooked. They're perverse. They don't go with the fabric.

They don't go with the way. Things. God has made. No. They cut across it. And they. Take the shortcut. They're perverse crooked men. And it's folly. And so. Don't incline your heart towards their way.

Whether it's the heartless businessman. Or whether it's the grumbling grandma. Don't envy. Their way. Why? For the Lord detests.

The perverse man. That word detest. It means it turns his stomach. It's an abomination. Have you ever seen something that just made you want to throw up?

That's. That's the word. That's the idea. To see it is to. God wants to vomit. Because he sees it. They're crooked. And they're twisted. And God abhors them.

[35 : 40] That. That word is used 21 times in the book of Proverbs. And. It's always talking about some sort of social behavior. That humans engage in. That God hates. Whether it's fixing the weights and the scales.

Whether it's looking and plotting evil. Whether it's. Whether it's haughty eyes. It's something that men do to other men. And God looks on. And he abhors it. And this is one of those things.

Those who. Who. The violent. God detests. He abhors the violent. The brutal. The threatening. The name calling. The belittling. The despising.

Men and women. And boys and girls. Who only care. About getting what they want. Who can look at the whole world.

And with proud eyes. Say this is going to be mine. I want it. And God says. I detest them. Verse 33 says. His curse is on them. A curse.

[36 : 38] It's when God turns his. Creative word. That powerful word. That spoke. Everything into existence. And he turns it. A powerful word.

And turns it into destruction. And so sooner or later. God will destroy. These proud. Mockers. He mocks.

Proud mockers. Now that gets translated. In the New Testament. In those very. Words that you know. God opposes the proud. But gives grace. To the humble.

That's why you don't. Envy the violent. Because one of those people. Are on God's side. And one is God's. Enemy. And so he will give them. Enough rope. But he will give them.

Enough rope. To just hang themselves. And when they are. In judgment. They won't be his friend. The curse will be at work. In their whole house. Their family.

[37 : 36] And that's why. It is so stupid. To join. The bullies. To join the heartless. And the greedy. And the ruthless. To those who say. I'm going to get my way. Because they are.

Community destroyers. They are family destroyers. They are country destroyers. They are life destroyers. And God has said. I will oppose the proud. And I.

Know. How. To humble. Them. Those who walk in pride. He said to Nebuchadnezzar. Or Nebuchadnezzar said of him. He knows how to humble them.

And so it's. It's them. Verse him. So would you envy someone. Who's now chosen opponent. Is God himself.

Who can destroy. Every. Single part of their life. And their family. Don't envy them. Because one day. The whole world. Will see their nakedness. And see their shame. And the whole world.

[38 : 30] Will see them. For the shrunken. Broken. Crooked. Perverse things. That they are. And no one. Will envy them. On that day. But the upright. Is God's friend.

Is confident. With God's blessing. And with God's honor. And Jesus himself said. The meek will inherit the earth. They will. The wise will eat.

From the truth of life. And those who join Jesus. Will be humbled. Or will be exalted. Those who join the humble Jesus. Will be exalted.

And so. This is. This is. Here we are at the end. And. And really the question is. And that's how this. Ends. Is. Is. What kind of person. Are you going to be?

If we begin. All the way back. In chapter three. At the very beginning. Of chapter three. What kind of person. Are you going to be? This. Humble. Person.

[39 : 27] Who trusts the Lord. Who puts the Lord. At his right hand. Who fears him. And who walks in righteousness. And he. And he. Loves his neighbor. And he. He takes care of his neighbor.

Or this. The proud person. The violent person. What kind of person. Are you going to be? It's very important to know. Because right now. There are two sides.

And one side. Is. Is up. Pretty high. They're doing pretty well. And the proud. And the greedy. And the cruel. Are. They're mostly in charge.

A lot of the time. Of a lot of things. And the meek. Can be pushed to the side. And they can be trampled upon. And so.

One's riding high right now. And one's not. Riding high. But. The question you have to see. And what Proverbs. Is. Is trying to show you.

[40 : 22] Is. This. This is wisdom. This is the fabric. Of God's world. That situation. Is not the way. It's going to be. It's not the way. It should be. It's not the way.

It's going to be. And so. Who really are the winners. And who really are the losers. And whose. Stock is rising. And whose stock. Is now falling. You want to be.

In the right company. May 15th. 1997. That was a long time. For some of you. Before you were even born.

May 15th. 1997. The Kodak film company stock. Just. Closed. On the Dow. At its highest ever.

Far. And. Kodak stock owners. Were. Were doing pretty well. The CEO. The VPs. All the stock owners. They're. They're. They're.

[41 : 15] At their height. They're wallowing. In. In wealth. The same day. A little company. Had their first day. On the stock market. Kodak. Closed. Around. Ninety five dollars. A share.

In this little company. They just started. There's. Eighteen dollars. A share. And so. Which would you rather own? The one that's on the height. Or the one just starting out.

The mighty Kodak company. Living on the mountaintop. Or just this little company. That's selling books online. Called Amazon. They're just starting off.

One was going. Up. And the other one. Was going. Down. Quickly. You go to Eastland Park. Industrial Park.

In Rochester. New York. Where the Kodak's huge factories used to be. And what you'll find is. A lot of rusted out buildings. Things shuttered. And. And has been. An eyesore.

[42 : 08] A ghost town. Of what used to be. And. Well. We know when Amazon decides. Hey. I want to put a. Build a new headquarters. Whole cities. Will bend over backwards. For them. One was going up.

One was going down. You know. The cross. Is. Is. Like May 15th. 1997. Because. That man on the cross.

Who's doing good. Who's plotting good. Who's planning good. The humble. Meek man. Who's destroyed. By. Oppression. By oppression.

He was taken away. By the Romans. And the Pharisees. And the high priests. And that man on the cross. That looks like weakness.

And that looks like losing. But. That's God's wisdom. That's God's dearest. And closest friend. His dearest confidant.

[43 : 05] And the one from whom. All blessings flow. And. Really the question is. Is so. When you. When you look at that cross. Like.

My question is. Is. Who. What kind of glasses. Are you using. As you look out in the world. You can tell what glasses you have on. Because when you look at that cross. Do you see.

How do you feel about that man. What do you feel about what he's doing. Is that. Weak. Cross. Is that your strength.

Is that your stronghold. Is that your salvation. Is that all your hope. Well that tells you whether you're wise. Or whether you're foolish. That tells you whether. You're getting it. Or not.

That tells you whose side you are on. So how do you. Are you trusting in the Lord Jesus. How do you feel about the man on the cross.

[44 : 04] Because that tells you whether you're. You're rising. Or whether you're falling. Because. That was his low point.

Because he humbled himself. God highly. Exalted him. And all those who are. Saying that's. He's my hope. He's my trust. And I'm joined to him. He exalts them.

With him. So how do you. How do you feel about the man on the cross. Do you love him. Do you love him for that weakness.

That he showed for you. For his humbleness. For his humbleness. For his humbleness. Humility. Or are you still in love with the pride of this world. And the pride of life. And boasting about what you have.

And what you've done. Well that tells you whether you're rising. Or you're falling. Whether you're wise. Or whether you're foolish. Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord we do want to be.

[45 : 09] Wise. We want to be wise. And we want to see clearly. The way the world is. And what you are doing.

And then we want to live in harmony with that. We don't want to be cutting against the grain. Or opposing you. And so we humble ourselves.

And. We thank you for this word. We humble ourselves. And we take this word. These three commands.

And we pray that you would give us help. As we put them into practice. We would confess. That this is wisdom. This is life giving wisdom. This is good for our church.

This is good for us. As our. As families. This is good for us. As a community. And as a nation. And it's good for us. As individuals. Your word. Shows us.

[46 : 08] And opens up for us. The way of life. Lord Jesus. Oh give us courage. And give us strength. And give us faith. And give us eyes to see. And to walk in this path.

Lord please help us. The world is. The world can be very frightening. And very dangerous. And very tempting. Full of temptation for us.

And we can envy the wicked. And we can envy. Those who are. Proud. And who can. Take what they want. And I pray that you would.

Incline our hearts. More and more. To the lowly. And humble Jesus. Who. He wouldn't even break. A bruised reed.

Give us more of that heart. Give us. A tighter hold on him. Pray this all. In Jesus name. Amen. Well we are dismissed. Remember. Members meeting.

[47 : 10] In one or two minutes here. Thank you.