

### Sunday, June 3, 2018—Proverbs 8-11

The Intelligent Design movement shares a viewpoint on creation that differs greatly from the common evolutionary model. ID says there is copious scientific evidence to point to an intelligent design of the universe, meaning a person, force, or power set everything into motion.

Proverbs 8 would wholeheartedly agree. God created all things, but before He ever spoke one thing into existence, He gave birth to Wisdom (8:25), and Wisdom, in turn, worked alongside Him as a skilled craftsman (8:30) to bring everything into being. Seeking and finding wisdom, then, allows one to tap into the most ancient source of truth and direction. “For the one who finds me finds life and obtains favor from the LORD, but the one who misses me harms himself; all who hate me love death” (8:37-38).

To fear the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowing Him leads to understanding (9:10). Wisdom, then, isn’t simply gaining lots of information. There are plenty of geniuses who are spiritually dead and many spiritually vibrant people who are mentally simple. Wisdom is the process of knowing Him and then seeing life and truth through His lens.

This viewpoint provides stability that no other worldview can. “The righteous will never be shaken, but the wicked will not remain on the earth” (10:30). Of course, wickedness will remain, but wisdom and righteousness bring joy and flourishing that shame wickedness and folly (11:19). Righteousness and sin each receive repayment on earth (11:31). Pray today to live in the wisdom of the Designer and to enjoy His favor.

### Saturday, June 2, 2018—Proverbs 4-7

Good parenting requires intentionality. Parents choose to spend time with their children and pass along truth and tradition. Good disciple-making within the church is exactly the same. Those with knowledge and skill make the effort to shape those God has entrusted to them.

The Proverbs say to the reader, “Listen and pay attention, for I am giving you good instruction” (4:1-2). Truth unheard or unheeded is as useless as truth unspoken altogether. In Proverbs 4, the wise one wants the young one to avoid the pitfalls so many others have experience. He says, “Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life” (4:23). The heart was more than emotion. The heart was the core of one’s being, and he knew that had to be cultivated well in order to be who God desired.

Abundant life, then, requires choice. “Carefully consider the path for your feet, and all your ways will be established” (4:26). Disciple-makers and parents help their charges realize that things don’t just “happen.” Every success and every failure is the result of numerous choices and results. The wise want the young to avoid coming to the end of life and regretting their choice to forego discipline and correction (5:12).

Wisdom has impact in every area of life—relationships, work, personal growth and health, and finance (to name a few)—providing light, direction, protection, and correction (6:23-24). Wisdom teaches the disciple how to avoid seduction and impulse (7:21-22) that destroy all that is good.

Praise God for wisdom and those who share it.

### Friday, June 1, 2018—Proverbs 1-3

When Solomon became king, God asked him what He should give the new regent. Solomon asked for wisdom to be able to lead well, and God answered that prayer. Years later, Solomon recorded some of his insight in a collection we call Proverbs.

His proverbs were pathways to learning, understanding, teaching, listening, and more (1:1-6). The foundation, however, was the fear of Yahweh (1:7). Fools despised wisdom and discipline, but those with a healthy respect for God had the potential for abundant life.

His first lesson was one common with parents. “Say no to foolish people!” (1:10-19). This is easy to say but harder to do. Children (and adults for that matter) need to know the difference between true wisdom and folly and be able to choose well. Deflecting criticism and avoiding compromise are learned behaviors and continually developed through life. Wisdom will gladly bless those who seek it, but complacency cripples and kills.

A second important lesson is the necessity of choosing wisdom. People do not simply absorb wisdom because wisdom exists. They must search for it like buried treasure (2:4). The task is time-consuming and often exhausting, but the wealth discovered is worth the effort. (3:13-26)

Treating others well is a natural outcome of wise living (3:27-35). Knowing the grace and the fear of the Lord stirs the wise to treat others as God has treated them. Thank God for the wisdom He makes available and the blessings of discovering it. Pray for daily diligence to seek and apply it.

#### Thursday, May 31, 2018—1 Kings 1-4

Graduation ceremonies often include a commencement speaker, someone tasked with sharing something meaningful, often in a short period of time, to graduates who are eager for the ceremony to conclude. These communicators often try to pass along life lessons or wisdom from their own experiences that will benefit the listener.

When David knew his life was near its conclusion, he spoke to Solomon and told him to walk in obedience to God (2:3), and he would find continual blessing and success. While simple to say, the task is much harder to accomplish. David himself was a prime example. He had exhibited numerous flaws in life, yet his heart for Yahweh had endeared him to God and guided him through the valleys of sin’s consequences. He had learned valuable lessons himself, as exhibited by his successful handling of Adonijah’s attempt at leadership compared to his handling of Absalom.

When Solomon became king, he had to make hard decisions from the outset and, while being known as a peaceful king, disposed of several high-ranking people because of their rebellious attitudes. He exhibited tendencies for compromise when he married an Egyptian and sacrificed at high places, yet his heart and mind seemed to be moving in the direction his father instructed. At Gibeon, God asked when He should give Solomon, and Solomon replied, “So give your servant a receptive heart to judge your people and to discern between good and evil” (3:9a).

Pray for wisdom and seek to obey in every area of life.

#### Wednesday, May 30, 2018—Psalms 148-150

With over seven billion people on the planet, there are very few that are known worldwide. When, however, a government official, religious leader, or media celebrity arrives on foreign soil, there may well be welcome, recognition, and applause. Those recognizing him may have no true knowledge of him, but they acknowledge his position. Imagine, then, the blessing that is to those who are very close—family, co-workers, and friends. They are pleased when the one they know is exalted.

Psalm 148 calls on all creation to worship Yahweh. From celestial bodies to earthly animals, everything praises Him. Kings and commoners, young and old are encouraged to exalt Him because He alone is worthy. Those close to Him are strengthened and praised as well (148:14).

Though worthy of praise and unlike anyone else, the LORD takes pleasure in His people (149:4). He is not aloof and unapproachable. He invites celebration and intimacy, and He gives salvation to the humble and uses them to carry out judgment on the wicked and to bind the powerful. He is great, and He is good. What a gift is the knowledge of Him.

The Psalms close with a call once again to praise the LORD. His people are to praise Him in His sanctuary, and they are to praise Him outside the building—in His mighty expanse. His powerful acts and abundant greatness deserve trumpet blast and strident response. He elicits music and dancing. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!

Praise God today. Enjoy knowing Him and His abundance.

Tuesday, May 29, 2018—Psalms 145-147

Some who are unfamiliar with Scripture or who only know a bit about God may come to the conclusion He is harsh, unapproachable, and to be avoided. After all, there are many stories in the Old Testament of His fierce judgment against His adversaries, and His own people suffered under evil dictators. Who would want to be close with One like that?

Psalm 145 speaks from intimate experience. “The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and great in faithful love. The LORD is good to everyone; his compassion rests on all he has made” (145:8-9). How can he speak with such optimism when others feel so different that He? The Psalmist interacts with Yahweh every day (145:2). He knows Him personally and works to pass that intimacy to the next generation (145:4). He grasps the righteousness of God (145:17) and that difficult circumstances do not mean God has been unfaithful. “He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry for help and saves them” (145:19).

Psalm 146 celebrates the powerful provision of Yahweh, who executes justice, feed the hungry, frees the prisoner, opens the eyes of the blind, raises up the oppressed, loves the righteous, protects the alien, provides for the widow and orphan, and frustrates the wicked (146:7-9). What earthly leader could possibly accomplish all of that? There is no reason to trust them (146:3) because they will one day be no more.

“The Lord values those who fear him” (147:11a). Pray for a renewal of your hope in His faithful love.

Monday, May 28, 2018—Psalms 142-144

Before he was king, David was a shepherd boy who had come to great prominence because of his success on the battle field. Despite his “rags to riches” story, he would be the first to say the road was not easy even when he found military success. King Saul threatened him on numerous occasions. Once, when in hiding, David wrote Psalm 142.

Threats and attacks can come verbally, physically, or emotionally. In whatever form, they imprison the victim. David knew that feeling and cried out, “Free me from prison so that I can praise your name” (142:7). Was he unable to praise God while in difficulty? Of course not. Praise is always appropriate, but he knew this was an unjust prison, and he promised to glorify God when He set things right.

David knew, despite his success and popularity, he was totally dependent on God. When he prayed, he relied on the faithfulness and righteousness of God (143:1). He did not deserve God’s hearing and answering. These were results of God’s character, not David’s. He was weak, so he pled with God and remembered what God had done for him in the past, knowing this would be true in the future. He wanted to do God’s will and asked for His Spirit to guide him on level ground (143:10).

When God answers prayer, He leads His people into flourishing—surrounding them with good people (142:7) and bringing abundance (144:12-14). “Happy are the people whose God is the LORD” (144:15). Praise God, even in prison, for His answered prayer and abundant blessing.