“Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding” (4:6-7). Dads will discuss the importance of spending money wisely and surrounding self with good people, but Solomon told his son clearly the supreme pursuit and most efficient expense was for wisdom. Throughout the proverbs, he equates wisdom with the righteousness of God and contrasts it with the foolishness of the wicked. There are few (if any) parents who hope their children grow up to be foolish and wicked. Parents’ highest calling, therefore, is to point their children toward wisdom and righteousness.

 “For a man’s ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths” (5:21). Thoughts and actions can be secret from everyone except God. The way of wisdom keeps God as the audience of life and the one to please with every desire and action. “Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck” (6:21).

 Thank God for giving wisdom to guide us to Him and fullness of life.

Saturday, June 3, 2017—Proverbs 8-11

 Proverbs 8 and 9 tell the stories of wisdom and folly. Both wisdom and folly are available to man and call out to the world for notice and acceptance (8:1-11; 9:2, 15). The direction and results of life depend upon which one each person chooses and obeys.

 Wisdom dwells with prudence and gives knowledge and discretion (8:12). With wisdom there are riches and honor (8:18) along with righteousness and justice (8:20). Wisdom is able to claim and provide such bounty because wisdom has existed longer than creation, rejoicing in the work of God (8:22-31). “Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, . . . For whoever finds me finds life and receives the favor of the Lord. But whoever fails to find me harms himself . . .” (8:34-36).

 Folly makes many of the same claims as wisdom (9:5, 16), but she suggests shortcuts and secrecy for the results (9:17). Folly has done none of the work of wisdom, so there are none of the payoffs. She is all talk and no action, “all hat and no cattle,” Hers is the way of destruction and death.

 On these foundations, Solomon builds his proverbial sayings, beginning in chapter 10. Having great wealth and wisdom, Solomon could say confidently, “Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death” (11:4). Also, “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise” (11:30).

 Pray for a discerning heart which chooses and enjoys wisdom.

*Read the Bible Through 2017*

Week 22

Sunday, May 28, 2017—Psalms 142-144

 God is not afraid of our troubles and complaints. He does not run away from us when life grows challenging, and His strength and grace are sufficient when our strength and wisdom are failing. When no one else is around, God remains present and faithful, so the Psalmist cried out to Him (142:5). He knew the provision and blessing of God would draw the righteous into his life (142:7), so he prayed with expectation. Sometimes the presence of God is all a believer has, but it will not be that way for long.

 In those moments of despair and weakness, His people can remember what He has done in the past (143:5). His faithfulness and power can encourage the downtrodden, knowing He will act that way again. They can pray, “Answer me quickly, O Lord” (143:7), but they can find strength and endurance to face another day if His deliverance doesn’t arrive with the dawn because He promises to be with them. “Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground” (143:10).

 Ultimately, the prayer to destroy enemies is for the glory of God (143:11-12). Man is but a breath, like a fleeting shadow (144:3-4), so His deliverance is a display of His power and character and draws new songs of praise from the mouths of His people (144:9). “Blessed are the people of whom this is true; blessed are the people whose God is the Lord” (144:15).

 Praise God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do.

Monday, May 29, 2017—Psalms 145-147

 Throughout the Psalms, the writers proclaim the greatness of God for at least two reasons: 1) they are moved personally by His character and cannot remain silent, and 2) they want others to know this soul-stirring greatness. Psalm 145 does both. The writer celebrates the goodness and greatness of God. He revels in the love and compassion of Yahweh and knows one generation will commend His works to the next (145:4). “The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made. The Lord is near to all who call on him . . . He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them. The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy” (145:17-20).

 The trust one places in God is greater than any human relationship can know or merit. “Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing” (146:3-4). As powerful as government seems and as sinister as terrorists are, there is no mortal man or human institution that compares to the all-surpassing power of God Himself. All earthly rulers and nations will end. “The Lord reigns forever . . .” (146:10).

 Because He is all-powerful, God has no delight in the strength of man (147:10). He delights in those who fear Him and put their hope in His unfailing love (147:11). Be delightful by trusting Him and passing along that trust to the next generation.

Tuesday, May 30, 2017—Psalms 148-150

 In his book *Orthodoxy*, G.K. Chesterton writes, “Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, ‘Do it again;’ and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, ‘Do it again’ to the sun; and every evening, ‘Do it again’ to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we.”

 The final three Psalms repeatedly command God’s people to praise Him. Why? Chesterton would say this command comes because God exults in the praise of His people. Is this because He is egotistic? No. He is pure and righteous, and He has made His people to worship Him because He is the only one worthy. When His creatures become His children through faith and repeatedly live out their design, God receives their worship and, in fact, enjoys (149:4 their being and doing exactly what He desires.

 To praise Him is to overcome the drudgery of sin and attacks of the enemy (149:56). To praise Him is an honor (149:5, 9). Over and over, praise the Lord!

Wednesday, May 31, 2017—1 Kings 1-4

 The desire to have significance is part of the human condition. Being made in God’s image means we have the capacity to be in relationship with others and to help others flourish through the giving of ourselves. Because of Satan, the world, and our own flesh, this God-designed desire to make a difference can become short-sighted and become selfish pursuit of position, possessions, power, and pleasure.

 King David had grown old, and his son Adonijah decided he should be king. He went through the outward motions—with haunting similarities to his late brother Absalom—but did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, the special guard, or his brother Solomon. He had royal officials there, but he left out vitally important parties, namely King David himself. Nathan and Bathsheba rectified the situation, and Solomon became king. No matter what our personal desires might be, what outer actions we take, and what religious cloaking we use, God’s plan will prevail.

 Solomon became king, and his father charged him to lead well by walking in the ways of Yahweh. Solomon prayed for wisdom (3:9) above all other things as he led the burgeoning nation his father helped establish. Since he asked for wisdom instead of long life or great wealth, God granted him much more. He promised wisdom, wealth, and honor (3:12-13) and, if he obeyed His commands, a long life (3:14).

 Pray for wisdom in your own walk and the willingness to walk in God’s way instead of manufacturing your own.

Thursday, June 1, 2017—Proverbs 1-3

 Most products come with an instruction book or usage guide. The manufacturers know the design and purpose and want the customer to use it to the fullest. Ignoring the instructions can be extremely problematic.

 King Solomon asked God to give him wisdom, and God granted that request. As a result, Solomon was known as the wisest man on earth, and he wrote down a portion of that God-given wisdom in Proverbs. These Proverbs have a purpose—attaining wisdom and discipline; doing what is right, just, and fair; adding to leaning and discernment; and developing the fear of the Lord (1:1-7).

 Like Psalm 1 and Psalm 119, Proverbs 1 talks about the importance of walking with God (1:8-19). Life is a journey, and one’s companions on that journey make a significant difference. Choosing friends is important, and listening to wisdom as she calls out (1:20-33) is imperative. The morally bankrupt are the ones who reject her. In contrast, those who seek her, listen to her, and apply her truth find vast benefit (2:1-22)—understanding, victory, purity, and life.

 Wisdom brings discipline and rebuke (3:11) that can seem discouraging or difficult at first, but the Lord disciplines those He loves because He wants ultimate good for them. This wisdom gives strength and stability and allows its possessor to have no fear of sudden disaster or the ruin that overtakes the wicked (3:25).

 Pray for a heart and mind filled with wisdom. Pray for a life marked by wise choices and fruitfulness.

Friday, June 2, 2017—Proverbs 4-7

 Fathers tell their sons many things, but the tone in those conversations is never more serious and the implications never more heavy than in those conversations about the future and making good choices. Fathers know the consequences of good and bad choices, and they want nothing but the best for their children. To learn by experience is one thing. To learn from another’s experience is wisdom.