

# **A God-Fearing Life**

**[Meditation on the Book of Proverbs]**

**Wanting to live the life of the wise**

**Pastor James Kim**

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## Introduction

**“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction. ... Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.” (Proverbs 1:7; 31:30)**

Since about 14 years ago, God has revealed more and more of my own foolishness through His words, and gave me the heart that I should not continue to live like this anymore. So from that time on, I held on to the words of James 1:5, “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him” and started asking God for wisdom. Also I decided to meditate on the “Books of Wisdom” in the Bible. So, the first book I chose was “The Book of Psalms”. After meditating on the Book of Psalms for about four years (Sept. 21, 2005 – Sept. 30, 2009), the next book I meditated on was “The Book of Ecclesiastes” (Oct. 7, 2009 – Dec. 22, 2010). After that, I started preaching “The book of Proverbs” on January 5, 2011 at the Wednesday prayer meeting, and it was finally finished last week on October 9, 2019. I thank God for giving me the grace to meditate on and preach on the words of Proverbs for over last 8 years. Also, I am grateful to the church members who listened to the sermons of the same book, “Proverbs,” for so long.

I believe that someday this book of Proverbs will be made into a book with the Lord's permission, and I have set the title of the book “God-fearing Life”. The reason is because in the beginning of the Book of Proverbs the phrase “the fear of the Lord” appears (1:7) and in the end the phrase “a woman who fears the Lord” appears (31:30). As I meditated on these two phrases, I came to think that “the fear of the Lord” is the theme of the whole book of Proverbs. And I think that the fear of God is really wisdom (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 15:33, Ref. Job 28:28; Ps. 111:10). I hope and pray that the Lord will use this book of meditation on the words of the Proverbs as a tool and give the brothers and sisters in Christ who come into contact with this book to live a life of fearing God.

**“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.” (Mt. 10:16).**

Desire to live God-fearing life,

James Kim

(On October 13, 2019, as I long for wisdom that God gives)

# The Proverbs of Solomon

## [Proverbs 1:1-7]

In the New Year 2011, I was thinking about what to meditate on at every Wednesday prayer meeting, and I chose “The Book of Proverbs”. The reason I chose this Book of Proverbs out of the 66 books of the Bible is because after I meditated on “The Book of Psalms” for about 4 and a half years and “The Book of Ecclesiastes” for about 1 year 2 months, I wanted to continue meditating on the rest of the Books of Wisdom. You may be asking why we should continue to meditate on “The Books of Wisdom”. I have at least two reasons: (1) The first reason is because I am a fool and I feel that I need wisdom. (2) Another reason is because I want all of our church members to be wise. I want all of our church members to become wise people and to become saints who know the time is evil and who know that we need to redeem time. Also, I want all of us to understand what the will of the Lord is and live according to His will (Eph. 5:15-17). So, today, I would like to start meditating on the words of Proverbs, the Book of Wisdom, with all of you in this New Year 2011 first Wednesday prayer meeting.

Before we meditate on the Book of Proverbs, there are two things to note about the Book of Proverbs. First, what are “Proverbs”. When I looked at a church website, I saw that someone wrote about “Proverbs”: The word “Proverbs” comes from the Hebrew word “mashal,” meaning “comparison”. Since the verb form of this word seems to have the meanings of ‘to rule’ and ‘to dominate’, Proverbs means to rule over and governs a person's actions. One thing to think about is the Hebrew word “marshal” translated as ‘箴言’. 箴 means “needle”, and in pure Korean translation, it can be called ‘poking words’. Proverbs are ‘poking words’ that give us not only ‘advice and reproof’, but also ‘wisdom and understanding’ (Internet). I think this is an interesting interpretation. But I think Pastor John MacArthur’s explanation is more appropriate than this: “The proverbs are short, pithy sayings which express timeless truth and wisdom. They arrest one’s thoughts, causing the reader to reflect on how one might apply divine principles to life situations (e.g., 2:12)” (MacArthur). Another thing we need to point out is the author of the Book of Proverbs. In Proverbs 1:1, the Bible says, “The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel.” In other words, the author of the Book of Proverbs is King Solomon. In 1 Kings 4:32, King Solomon said that he left 3,000 proverbs with the wisdom that God gave. But what we need to keep in mind here is that King Solomon didn’t write the entire Book of Proverbs. In other words, the Book of Proverbs has other authors besides King Solomon. For example, if we look at the beginning of Proverbs 24:23-34, the Bible says “These also are sayings of the wise.” Here the word “the wise” is a plural noun and refers to other wise people other than King Solomon. In other words, the partial words of Proverbs were written by other authors besides King Solomon (Yun-sun Park). It isn’t sure



whether the wise ones are “Agur the son of Jakeh”, who wrote Proverbs 30:1-33 and “King Lemuel” who wrote 31:1-31, or they are two other others beside the wise ones who wrote the Book of Proverbs. Importantly, almost all of the proverbs were written by Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, but some of them were written by other wise men. That is, we must keep in mind that one of the Books of Wisdom, Proverbs, was written by the wise men, whether by King Solomon or other authors. So why did they write the Book Proverbs? What was the purpose of King Solomon's writing of the Book of Proverbs? The answer to that question can be found in Proverbs 1:1-7, which is the prologue. If we look at Proverbs 1:1-7, which is the introduction to the Book of Proverbs, we can see the twofold purpose of Proverbs (vv. 2-6) and the theme verse that summarizes the whole Book of Proverbs (v. 7).

First, what is the dual purpose of the Book of Proverbs? Today's text, Proverbs 1:1-7, says in two ways:

**First, the purpose of the Proverbs is to produce the skill of godly living by wisdom and instruction (MacArthur).**

Look at Proverbs 1:2a – “for attaining wisdom and discipline”. Here, the Hebrew word “wisdom” etymologically means to be firm, which refers to knowledge that can be said to be an axiom about the existence and nature of things. And “discipline” means that the Proverbs lead us to acquire a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair” (v. 3). We must receive spiritual wisdom from God through the Proverbs. Then we can act righteously, justly, and fairly before God (Park). That is, we must learn not only the divine principles of living a godly life with the wisdom God-given through the Proverbs, but also the skills of living a godly life how to apply those divine principles in our lives. And because we obey the authority of God's word, our faith must be firmly established on the rock. Also, the Proverbs give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young (v. 4). What does it mean? It means that the Proverbs not only make the foolish to be prudent, but also give the young ones knowledge and discretion. Those who have no control and open mind are susceptible to foreign influences. That is why it is necessary to teach them the wisdom of God (Proverbs) so that they can immediately discern and stand firmly against disputes. And because young people have no experience, they are relatively not cautious and come at. Therefore, young people need to receive God's wisdom and stand firm (Park).

**Second, the purpose of the Proverbs is to develop discernment (MacArthur).**

Look at Proverbs 1:2b – “... To discern the sayings of understanding”. Here, “insight” refers to the discernment of good and evil (Park). The last days we live in are an era of the loss and absence of the ability to discern good and evil. We cannot discern what is good and what is bad. We have already learned during the last Sunday's New Year's Worship that in order for us to live a life of give thanks in everything, we must examine everything carefully and hold fast to that which is good and abstain from every form of evil (1 Thess. 5:21-22). The

problem, however, is that sometimes we lose our ability to measure (discern) the good (good) and the bad, and sometimes we live a life of taking what is bad and throwing away what is good. This is the work of Satan. Satan makes us confused between good and evil. As a result, Satan forces us to abandon good and choose evil. Look at Genesis. When the serpent seduced the woman, he said that even if she would eat the fruit of good and evil, she would never die. On the contrary, the serpent said to her, "... in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4, 5). Satan, who makes us to be confused with good and evil and causes us to sin, is trying to make us commit evil by seducing us and disobeying God's commandments, just as he tempted Eve to commit sin. What is the problem? The problem is that we aren't as prudent as Eve. Just as Eve wasn't prudent and had no discernment about good and evil, and so she eventually fell into the serpent's temptation and committed sin by disobeying the word of God, we are also sinning against God because we aren't prudent and can't discern good from evil. That's why we don't choose good and do good, but choose evil and do evil. What should we do? How can we gain understanding so that we can discern good and evil, take good, and give up evil? Look at Proverbs 1:5 – "let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance." We must listen to God's wise word. We must listen and added to our learning. Why must we do that? The reason is because it will guide us by making us wiser and more prudent. How can the learning that we gain through listening to God's word guide us? It's possible by sharpening our mind (MacArthur). Look at verse 6: "for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise." The more we meditate on the Proverbs, the more we will become wise because our hearts become sharper as we understand the words of the Proverbs. Therefore, with spiritual discernment, we will be able to discern between good and evil, choose good and abandon evil.

The wise listens to God's word, but the foolish one rather despises His word. Because the fools hate to hear God's word, they turn their backs on the holy God who speaks. But the wise longs to listen to God's word, and goes further and hears and obeys His word. We must become wise and listen to His word and obey Him. Therefore, we must become wiser and more prudent, and have spiritual discernment to discern good and evil, so that we can choose good and abandon evil.

Finally, in Proverbs 1:7, King Solomon gives us the theme verse that summarizes the whole book of Proverbs: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction."

The key lesson of this theme verse is that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (wisdom). King Solomon says to us in verse 5 to listen to God's word and add to our learning, and then in verse 7, he teaches us that "the beginning of knowledge," that is, the premise of knowledge or knowledge is the forefront, or the basis of knowledge is the fear of the Lord. What does it really mean to fear God? Dr. Park defines this as: 'To fear God refers to faith in God in the Old Testament times. This doesn't just point to the fear of God, but means fearing with

love for Him (Park). But for me, Pastor MacArthur's definition comes more convincingly to my heart: "The fear of the Lord is a state of mind in which one's own attitudes, will, feelings, deeds, and goals are exchanged for God's (cf. Ps. 42:1)"(MacArthur). The reason this definition came more convincingly to my heart was because it is similar to the heart that God gave me through the last year two Sabbath months. At that time, the heart that God gave me was that He wants me to see what He sees, He wants me to hear what He hears, and He wants me to feel what He feels. I think that fearing God means that I only see the Lord. In other words, those who fear God, everything is Lord-centered, not self-centered at all. Those who fear God will never seek their own will, but only His will. They will embrace the heart of the Lord and live a life that fulfills His will by imitating the thoughts of the Lord, the feelings of the Lord, the attitude and will of the Lord, and the actions of the Lord. If we have this fear of God, we will never choose evil and get close to evil nor can we do so. Rather, we will keep away from evil and love and draw near to good. But the fools despise wisdom and admonition, so they keep away from good and get close to evil. What is the reason? The reason is because the mental state of the fools has no fear of God. In other words, they have no power to choose good because they don't know God's attitude, will, feeling, conduct, and purpose. As a result, they have no choice but to pursue evil attitude, evil will, evil feeling, evil purpose, and evil conduct. In a word, the fools say that there is no God in their hearts (Ps. 14:1). And because they live under the premise that there is no God, they have no choice but to think of evil and do evil.

Today, the first Wednesday prayer meeting of the New Year 2011, we meditated on Proverbs 1:1-7, the introductory part of the Book of Proverbs. As we will keep on meditate on the Proverbs of Solomon at each weekly Wednesday prayer meeting in the future. What we need to remember is the dual purpose and the theme of the Book of Proverbs. The dual purpose of the Book of Proverbs is to develop discernment and to produce the skill of godly living by wisdom and instruction. And the theme verse of the Proverbs is Proverbs 1:7 – "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline." We must keep these two things in mind and continue to meditate on the words of Proverbs. May we, therefore, be able to fulfill the purpose of the Proverbs and be raised up as truly God-fearing, godly and spiritually discerning and wise Christians.

## The young people who fear God

### [Proverbs 1:8-19]

You may have seen the news of gunfire last Saturday (January 8, 2011) in a shopping center in Tucson, Arizona. As I watched the news, I became interested in the news about Christina Green, a nine-year-old girl. When I was watching the news, there was a scene where Christina's parents were interviewed. So I looked at it with a little interest and I saw her father, who said that Christina was born on September 11, 2001, during the 9/11 terrorist incident, showing his tears in his eyes as he was thinking about his beloved daughter who was shot and killed. But about a day or two ago, I was stunned when I saw the news that a Baptist church in Kansas was causing a disturbance by protesting at the Christiana's funeral. The members of this Baptist church were the people who protested and made a great disturbance at the funeral of a soldier who had died in the war few years ago by saying 'God cursed you'. So I heard CNN Internet news that the Arizona legislature even passed a bill that would ban other protesters from within 300 feet at Christian's funeral. It is ridiculous. As I read this news, I really think that this age in which we are living is playing around with the Satan's temptations, whether those who believe in Jesus or those who don't. Although there are many temptations of Satan, I think it is "confusion" and "illusion" to summarize in two. In particular, I think that Satan is making us, the Christians, to commit sins against God by deluding us with sweet illusion, causing us to become confused spiritually, mentally, and emotionally.

How should we, living in this age, resist Satan's temptations and live a life of faith that is right and proper in the sight of God? Like the words we learned in Proverbs 1:1-7 during the Wednesday prayer meeting last week, we learn the skill of godly living (vv. 2a, 3-4) in fear of God (v. 7) and develop spiritual discernment (vv. 2a, 5-6) and live wisely in this evil age. In this evil age, we must save our time and discern what the Lord's will is and live according to His will (Eph. 5:15-17) by receiving wisdom from God (Jam. 1:5-6) and fear Him. What is the fear of God? "The fear of the Lord is a state of mind in which one's own attitudes, will, feelings, deeds, and goals are exchanged for God"(MacArthur). Therefore, those who fear God, everything is Lord-centered, not self-centered at all. Those who fear God will never seek their own will, but only His will. They will embrace the heart of the Lord and live a life that fulfills His will by imitating the thoughts of the Lord, the feelings of the Lord, the attitude and will of the Lord, and the actions of the Lord. Shouldn't we live this life?

Today, I would like to receive three lessons on what the young Christians, who fear God do, based on Proverbs 1:8-19, under the heading "The young people who fear God". I hope and pray that we will give glory to God by obeying God's word as we receive the instruction that King Solomon gives to the young people today, and

pray that God will lift us up and use us.

### **First, the young people who fear God obey their parents' words.**

Look at Proverbs 1:8 – “Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.” When we look at the Children education of the Jewish parents, the parents are obligated to teach their children the law of God (Torah). This is a prerequisite for becoming a member of the Israeli social community. According to one pastor, Jews have their children to recite the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew scriptures, that is Pentateuch) for 3 hours a day when they turn 4 years old (Internet). Where does this Jewish fundamental theological philosophy of education begin? It starts with “Shema” (a Hebrew word that literally means “listen, heed, or hear”). Look at Deuteronomy 6:4-7: “Hear (Shema), O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.” It is said that the word “Shema” is the first spiritual education that a Jewish child encounters in the world. It is said that the Jewish children learns the word 'Shema' from when they can't pronounce it right under their mother's lap. Also their last will in front of all the family and people around them before their last breath in this earth is “Shema”. In addition, the Jewish mothers make their children memorize “Shema” before going to sleep. It is said that the reason is to make “Shema” the last will in case of death while falling asleep (Internet).

We, the parents, must diligently teach our children the Word of God. To do this, we must first listen to His word and engrave it on our hearts as we love the one and only God. Then, we must diligently teach our children the word of God, so that the word of God is deeply engraved on their hearts. To what extent we must engrave the word of God in the hearts of our children is to the extent that our children cannot depart from it. To that extent, we must plant the word of God's truth in our children's hearts. But what is the problem? One of the problems is that the word of God isn't deeply engraved on our hearts. In other words, even though we the parents diligently learn and obey the Word of God and thus the Word should become ours (Ps. 119:56), but it isn't. The key to its cause is disobedience. In other words, even though we diligently listen and learn the Word of God, we cannot keep and do what we have learned, so the learned Word of God cannot be ours. Rather, our possessions seem to seek material things rather than keeping God's Word. In such a spiritual state, we are trying to teach our children the word of God, so the word of God's truth cannot be planted in their hearts. Rather, I worry that the Word of God we are teaching is being planted in their heads, not in their hearts. I think the best way for us to plant God's word deep in the hearts of our children is an example. When we first lead an exemplary life of faith in obeying God's word, our children will follow our example and live a life of obeying His word. Then the word of God will not only belong to us, but also to our children (v. 56).

We young people must fear God (Prov. 1:7) and obey His word that they hear and learn through believing parents. Why should they do that? Look at Proverbs 1:9 – “Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head And ornaments about your neck.” The reason the young people should listen to and obey God's word through their parents is that obeying His word is the graceful wreath to their head and ornaments about their neck. In other words, obedience to the Word is an honor and exaltation for young people. God glorifies those who obey His word (Park). Daniel, who obeyed God's word, was exalted by God, and God made Joseph the prime minister of Egypt. God exalts the young people who obey God's word and uses them as His valuable tools. Therefore, the young people must learn and obey the Word of God through their parents, so they should not depart from it.

### **Second, the young people who fear God don't consent if sinners entice them.**

Look at Proverbs 1:10 – “My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent.” How do the sinners entice the young people? They entice the young people with a trick that promises false happiness. What is that false happiness? Look at verse 13: “We will find all kinds of precious wealth, We will fill our houses with spoil.” The false happiness that sinners promise young people is a lie that they will possess material or something of value. By seducing the young people with this lie, the sinners pressure the young people to ambush the innocent together without cause (v. 11). They say ‘let's hurt them very cruelly’ (v. 12). Then, they propose to take all the possessions of the innocent young people and make the possessions their joint possession (v. 14) (Park). As I meditated on these words, I thought of two Bible stories. The first Bible story that came to mind is the story of a man named Naboth in 1 Kings 21. A man named Naboth was an Israelite who lived in Samaria, and his good vineyard was near the palace of the wicked King Ahab. When Ahab, who was greedy, coveted Naboth's vineyard and tried to make the vineyard his own, Naboth said that it was the land that his ancestors handed over and that he couldn't sell it. It was King Ahab's wife, Jezebel, who came to Ahab who was worried about it. She conceived and perjured Naboth for cursing God and the king, and killed him in front of elders and nobles, and took the Naboth's vineyard. How cruel is this? The second Bible story that came to mind is the story of Joseph from Genesis 37. The Bible says that Joseph's brothers, who hated and envied of Joseph, were herding sheep in a place called Dothan, and they saw Joseph coming from a distance and plotted against him to put him to death (Gen. 37:18). They matched each other's words after they killed Joseph, threw him into one of the pits and say, “A wild beast devoured him” (v. 20). Then they sold Joseph to the Ishmael merchants without their eldest brother Reuben know (v. 28), took Joseph's tunic, slaughtered a male goat and dipped the tunic in the blood (v. 31), and sent the varicolored tunic and brought it to their father and showed it to their father Jacob (v. 32). At that time, the father Jacob rejected the comfort of other children and said: “Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son” (v. 35). How can they lie so cruelly to their father? Satan, the evil devil, is deluding our young people with a trick that promises false happiness. Just as when Eve saw the fruit of good and evil and was deceived, Satan is now deceives our young people with false happiness that seems to be good for food, a delight to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise (3:5-6).

This wicked world we live in now is making us, the young people who believe in Jesus, to love money and self in our hearts, and thus making us slaves of money and of selfish covetousness. Now Satan and his servants, evil sinners, blind us to the momentary happiness in this earth, not eternal happiness, to neglect the eternal and to keep pursuing the momentary things. Therefore, we must listen to the truth of God through our parents and obey it. And by standing firmly in the faith, we must watch and pray carefully so that we don't fall into the temptations of Satan and the wicked. And when Satan and the wicked entice us, we must defeat them with the word of God, the sword of the Holy Spirit as we imitate the example of Jesus. We should never yield our hearts to the enticement of Satan and the wicked.

**Third and last, the young people who fear God don't walk in the way with the wicked.**

Look at Proverbs 1:15 – “My son, do not walk in the way with them Keep your feet from their path.” As I meditated on this word, I remembered Psalms 1:1-2: “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.” As I relate this passage to Proverbs 1:8-19, I learn what we the young Christians should do:

(1) We must not walk in the counsel of the wicked.

Look at Psalms 1:1 – “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, ....” As we have already meditated on in Proverbs 1:10, we must not consent even if sinners entice us. Psalms 1:1 or Proverbs 1:10 are giving us the same lesson. That is, we must not follow the counsel of the wicked.

(2) Then, we will not stand in the path of sinners.

Look at Psalms 1:1 – “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, ....” If we follow the counsel of the wicked, in the end, we will find ourselves walking the path of sinners with them. In other words, if we fall into the counsel of the wicked, eventually we will see ourselves participating in the wicked's sinful acts (Park). Therefore, we must not even stand on the path of sinners. We shouldn't even be with those wicked people.

(3) Then, we will not sit in the seat of scoffers.

Look at Psalms 1:1 – “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!” In the end, Satan makes us to follow the counsel of the wicked, making us to stand in the path of sinners, and thus makes us to sit in the seat of the scoffers. As

a result, we sin against God by disobeying God's word in pride. This is what Satan is aiming for. Therefore, we the young people should not even walk with the wicked at all. We shouldn't even have fellowship with them. When we're young, we have a tendency to impulsively hang out with many people and make a lot of friends. This is the time when we really need discernment.

Why, then, shouldn't we walk with the wicked? The reason is that the feet of the wicked run to evil (Prov. 1:16). In other words, the reason we shouldn't walk with the wicked is that they run to do evil. They aren't inevitably committing sins, but are people who rejoice in evil and do evil without reserve. Such are those who have been hardened by sin and are so depraved that they can say that they are like sin itself. Therefore, those who associate with such people cannot restrain their evil deeds, but rather are pushed into their evil (Park). Therefore, we must avoid fellowship with the wicked, not to walk with them, but rather avoid them. Just as any bird avoid the baited net when the bird sees it (v. 17), so we must avoid when we, too, see the evil ones spread the net of temptation before us. Never should we be caught in the nets of the wicked like the foolish bird.

Today we have received three lessons about what the young Christians who fear God do: (1) They obey their parents' words (v. 8), (2) They don't consent if sinners entice them (v. 10), and (3) They don't walk in the way with the wicked (v. 15). I hope and pray that we and our children will become God-fearing Christians who obey God's word, so that we can all enjoy God's blessings and able to exalt and glorify God.



## **Those who don't choose the fear of the Lord**

### **[Proverbs 1:20-33]**

I remember what my wife said to me one day: 'The church should be more church-like because the world will become more and more evil. Therefore, the church must shine the light of Jesus in this evil world. However, for some reason, it seems that the church loves darkness more than light because the church's deeds is evil (Jn. 3:19). The church is now sick with hurts, wounds and pains because there is quarrels, strife, fights and dissensions in the church. And now, I think the church is preaching our folly (Prov. 12:23) rather than the gospel of Jesus Christ and His love. Obviously, even though the church is the church of God (1 Cor. 1:2), and one of the characteristics of that church is unity, it is difficult for us to see such a church. For some reason, even though the church is the church of God, if we look at Korean churches in Korea these days or immigrant churches in the United States here, the churches look like churches of people. Although the church must be the church that belongs to God, it seems to have been degenerated to the church that belongs to people. What should we do? By fearing God, we must repent our sins, turn away from our sins, and obey the word of God. In that case, the church has hope. Then, the church is no longer the church of people, but the church of the Lord that He builds (Mt. 16:18).

We meditated on Proverbs 1:8-10 under the heading "The young people who fear God" during the last two Wednesday prayer meetings. At the same time, we were taught three things about the young people who fear God: (1) The young people who fear God obey their parents' words (v. 8), (2) The young people who fear God don't consent if sinners entice them (v. 10), and (3) The young people who fear God don't walk in the way with the wicked (v. 15). Today, I would like to meditate on Proverbs 1:20-33 under the heading "Those who didn't choose the fear of the Lord". Look at verse 29: "Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the LORD." I would like to receive the lessons God gives us by meditating on what kind of people don't choose the fear of the Lord, and what their consequences are.

#### Who are those who don't choose the fear of the Lord?

**First, those who don't choose the fear of the Lord love their simple ways, delight in mockery, and hate knowledge.**

Look at Proverbs 1:22 – "'How long will you simple ones love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?" Here, the writer of the Book of Proverbs King Solomon is talking

about three kinds of people who need wisdom. They are none other than ‘the simple ones’, ‘the mockers’ and ‘the fools’. Who are the fools? They are the ones who can’t discern right and wrong and don’t have a consistent point of view. So they are prone to get caught up in the evil movement. The fools spoken in verse 22 are those who are simple ones who love their simple ways and are already swept away by sins. The mockers are those who despise the wisdom of God because they are extremely evil, and the fools are the ones who have been hardened by evil and are morally foolish (Park). These people, who don’t choose the fear of the Lord love their simple ways, delight in mockery and hate knowledge. Therefore, King Solomon exhorts these simple ones, mockers, and fools “How long?” they will love their simple ways, delight in mockery and hate knowledge (v. 22)

One of the reasons the church isn’t shining the light of Jesus is because the church doesn’t have the knowledge of God (Hos 4:6). And the reason why the church doesn’t have the knowledge of God is because the pastors have rejected knowledge of God and have forgotten the commands of their God (v. 6). Therefore, in the end, the church faced a famine of not hearing the word of God (Am 8:11). As a result, we aren’t choosing the fear of the Lord. We love the simple ways, delight in mockery, and hate knowledge. We have become fools and despise wisdom and discipline (Prov. 1:7). Therefore, we are sinning against God by forsaking God's instruction and teaching (v. 8) and by giving in to the sinners’ enticement (v. 10). When we sin habitually, our hearts become hardened. Then not only we don’t fear the Lord, but also we cannot. In this way, we not only don’t fear the Lord, we become fools who cannot fear Him. And we don’t even have heart to regret our sins. What is the reason? The reason is because our hearts are hardened by sins (Park). We must be wary of hardening our hearts. And we must work hard not to become fools who have no heart to regret our sins due to our hardened hearts. How is this possible? It is possible by loving wisdom. We must hate foolishness and love knowledge. Then we can escape from hardening our hearts and, as a result, we will not sin against God. Therefore, we must hear God's word and attain wisdom and discipline (v. 2). Then we will be able to glorify God and shine the light of Jesus in this world by acting wisely, righteously, justly and fairly (v. 3).

**Second, those who don’t choose the fear of the Lord ignore His advice and will not accept His rebuke.**

Look at Proverbs 1:25 – “since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke.” Those who don’t choose the fear of the Lord and who hate knowledge and love the simple ways don’t hear the voice of the wise. In other words, the fools who don’t choose the fear of the Lord turn away from the voice of wisdom. They reject God (v. 24), even though wisdom calls aloud in the streets, and raises her voice in public squares (v. 21), and cries out in the gateways of the city (v. 22). Although God is telling them to respond to His rebuke (v. 23), those who don’t choose the fear of the Lord reject Him (v. 24). Also they don’t give heed to His voice (v. 24). Rather, they ignore all His advice (v. 25). After all, the fools don’t receive God's instruction and rebuke, so they expose their foolishness to everyone. They expose how foolish and arrogant they are. Why don’t these fools receive God's

instruction and rebuke? It's because they hate knowledge and don't choose the fear of the Lord (v. 29). So the Bible says, "Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, For he will despise the wisdom of your words" (23:9). However, the wise who fear the Lord listen to the words of His instruction and add to their learning (v. 5). What is the reason? The reason is because they love knowledge. The wise who fear the Lord are instructed and receive knowledge (21:11) and become wiser (19:20).

The listening ears are beautiful. The ears that hear God's voice is a blessing. And the ears that hear even the reproofs of those who love me with the love of God are truly precious. We must listen to God's instruction and reproof. In particular, we must listen to the reproof of the wise who fear the Lord, believing that the reproof of the wise is like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold (25:12). Therefore, I hope and pray that we can add knowledge and become wiser so that we can be used as God's precious tools.

### **Third and last, those who don't choose the fear of the Lord backslide.**

Look at Proverbs 1:32 – "For the backsliding of the naïve will kill them and the complacency of fools will destroy them" (Tree of Life Version). What does it mean? It means that the fools who don't choose the fear of the Lord turn their backs on God's love and leave Him (Park). If we like the simple ways, delight in mockery, hate knowledge, instruction, and reproof, then in the end our faith is bound to backslide. That means that eventually we will turn our backs on God and leave Him. This backsliding in faith will eventually kill us and destroy us. Therefore, we must listen to Joshua 23:12-13: "For if you ever go back and cling to the rest of these nations, these which remain among you, and intermarry with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, know with certainty that the LORD your God will not continue to drive these nations out from before you; but they will be a snare and a trap to you, and a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the LORD your God has given you." Joshua gave this warning message to the Israelites: So take diligent heed to yourselves to love the LORD your God" (v. 11).

#### Then what are the consequences of those who don't choose the fear of the Lord?

##### (1) The first consequence is that calamity and disaster will overtake them.

Look at Proverbs 1:27 – "when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you." What does it mean? It means that God's judgment will come upon the fools, who don't choose the fear of the Lord, who despise His instruction, reproof, who don't listen to Him and who hate knowledge. God will judge the fools who don't choose the fear of the Lord, hate knowledge, and don't receive His instruction and reproof. The Bible says that God will bring disaster upon them like a whirlwind, so that fools will be deeply overwhelmed in distress and trouble (v. 27). But what is God's judgment more terrifying than this? I think it is God's derision. Look at verse 26:

“I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes.” Can you imagine being derided by God rather than being derided by people (44:13, 119:51)?

(2) The second consequence is that the Lord disregards them.

Look at Proverbs 1:28 – ““Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently but they will not find me.” There are times when we cry out to God when we eventually encounter disaster and calamity due to our foolishness in despising the God’s instructions and reproofs. Only then we ask God to deliver us from calamity and disaster amidst sorrow and tears. However, there are times when we feel that the answer to our prayer isn’t coming for some reason. It is because the Lord is disregarding us. In other words, when we encounter calamity and disaster due to our unrepented sins, there are times when God doesn’t answer our prayers and remains silent. It is because the Lord is disregarding us. Why is the Lord disregarding us? The reason is because we have first disregarded the Lord. If I said like this, some of you may ask, ‘When did I disregard the Lord?’ If we look at Proverbs 1, the simple ones and the mockers and the fools disregarded knowledge (v. 22), the fear of the Lord (vv. 7-9) and God’s counsel and reproof (vv. 23, 25) (MacArthur). Like the Israelites who committed sin by turning their backs against God’s word and committing sins, even though God diligently spoke to them through the prophet Jeremiah, I think there are so many times we are diligently turning our back on God who speaks to us diligently and just go on our own ways. This is the sin of disregarding the Lord. Therefore, we have nothing to say even if we are judged by God for our sins and are disregarded by God in the midst of disaster and calamity. Can you imagine being disregarded by the Lord? Can you really endure the Lord’s disregard?

(3) The third consequence is that they shall eat of the fruit of their own way.

Look at Proverbs 1:31 – “So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way And be satiated with their own devices.” This is God’s final judgment. Here, the Bible says that God will make those who don’t choose the fear of God to eat the fruit of their own way, which means that God will judge the simple ones, the mockers, and the fools who don’t fear Him God. It means that God will punish them for their sins by giving them over to their sins (MacArthur). For example, when we look at Romans 1:24-28 God’s punishment is “God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity” (v. 24), “God gave them over to degrading passions” (v. 26), and “God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper” (v. 28). I think this is truly a terrifying judgment of God. I think it is a more terrifying judgment than a disaster for God to let us live by our sinful nature. The reason is, at least, when we encounter disasters, we seek God and cry out to Him. Even though God disregards us, there is still a possibility that God will pity us and deliver us from our sins and calamities. But if God just give us over to our sinful nature, then we have no chance of being delivered from our sins. In Ezekiel 12:21, God is also speaking to

us like this: "But as for those whose hearts go after their detestable things and abominations, I will bring their conduct down on their heads," declares the Lord GOD." Our God is a God who repays us for our deeds. If we refuse to fear the Lord, hate knowledge, and disregard His instructions and reproofs, God will give us over to the consequences of our sins.

What should we do? We must repent. We must repent of our sins. We must repent of our sins of not choosing the fear of God. And we must repent of our sins of hating knowledge and not listening to (receiving) God's instruction and reproof. We must bear fruits in keeping with repentance (Lk. 3:8). We should choose the fear of the Lord. We should love the knowledge of knowing God, listen to His instruction, and humbly receive His reproof. God promises us in Proverbs 1:33 – "But he who listens to me shall live securely And will be at ease from the dread of evil." I hope and pray that all of us choose the fear of God and listen to God's word so that we may live without fear of disaster and calamity and enjoy the peace that God gives us.

## Let's seek wisdom.

### [Proverbs 2:1-9]

There are certainly consequences to our choice. If we choose to obey God's word, the result is a blessing for us. But if we choose to disobey God's word, it is a curse for us. If we don't choose the fear of God, the consequences are threefold: (1) Calamity and disaster will overtake us (Prov. 1:27), (2) God will disregard us (v. 28), and (3) We will eat of the fruit of our own way (v. 31). But if we choose the fear of God, the result is that Proverbs 1:33 says: "But he who listens to me shall live securely And will be at ease from the dread of evil." If we choose the fear of God, we can live securely and be at ease and live in peace. We must choose the fear of God. We must choose God's wisdom. Then we can walk away from evil and act wisely, righteously, justly and fairly (v. 3). Therefore, we can enjoy safety and peace. But for some reason, it seems that we are choosing foolishness too many times. As a result, the words of Psalms 107:17 are clearly revealed to us: "Fools, because of their rebellious way, And because of their iniquities, were afflicted." Because we choose foolishness, we are often faced with hardships as a result of our wrong choice. It seems that the church is suffering because of choosing foolishness rather than choosing wisdom. What should the church do? We, the church, must abandon foolishness and choose wisdom. We must seek God's wisdom.

Focusing on Proverbs 2:1-9, under the heading "Let's seek wisdom," we will ask two questions and look for answers: (1) Why should we seek wisdom? And (2) How should we seek wisdom?

Why should we seek wisdom? The reason is, in a word, to know and realize. To be more specific, there are three reasons why we should seek wisdom.

**First, the reason we must seek wisdom is to know God that is to discover the knowledge of God.**

Look at Proverbs 2:5b – "And discover the knowledge of God." As we have already learned in Proverbs 1:7, the fear of God is the foundation of knowledge. Therefore, those who fear God love knowledge and hate foolishness. But those who don't choose the fear of God love their simple ways and hate knowledge (1:22). What knowledge is hated by those who don't choose the fear of God? It is the knowledge of God. That is, those who don't choose the fear of God hate the knowledge of God. But we must love the knowledge of God. The reason we seek God's wisdom is to get to know God. I remember the apostle Paul's confession in Philippians 3:7-9: "But

whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.” Even if we lose everything, will we be satisfied with the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord? We must seek the wisdom of God in order to know and realize the truth that the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **Second, the reason we must seek wisdom is to discern the fear of the Lord.**

Look at Proverbs 2:5a – “Thus you will discern the fear of the Lord.” We cannot fear God without the knowledge of Jesus Christ. In other words, only when we learn and get to know the attitude of Jesus Christ, His will and feelings, conduct and purpose, etc. can we discern the fear of the Lord. Then we can turn away from sin. Look at Proverbs 3:7 – “Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.” Those who are wise in their own eyes never fear God. That is why they commit a sin of disobeying the His word without turning away from evil. However, as we seek God's wisdom, we must realize the fear of the Lord and turn away from evil. It was Job who feared God and turned away from evil (Job 1:1). Like Job, we should fear God and turn away from evil. But no matter what adversity and suffering, we must not sin against God with our lips.

### **Third and last, the reason we must seek wisdom is to discern equity and every good course.**

Look at Proverbs 2:9 – “Then you will discern righteousness and justice And equity and every good course.” Satan makes us not to choose the fear of the Lord (1:29) and rather makes us to choose the simple ways (v. 22), and eventually leads us to walk the path of the wicked (v. 15). As a result, we quickly turn aside from the word of God (Exod. 32:8) and run to evil and commit sins quickly (Prov. 1:16). This is the life of fools and the simple ones. We must not live like them. Rather, in seeing God's wisdom and realizing to fear God, we must turn away from the path of the wicked and walk the path of the righteous, the path of justice, fairness, and equity. We must discern equity and every good course with the wisdom of God and walk that course.

How should we seek wisdom? Proverbs 2:1-9 teaches us how to seek wisdom in three ways:

#### **First, we must cry out for God’s wisdom.**

Look at Proverbs 2:3 – “For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding.” In order for us to gain God's wisdom, we must first pray to God. In order to do that, we must thoroughly realize how much wisdom we lack in ourselves. In other words, we must realize more and more deeply how foolish we are while living in faith.

Then we will be more and more earnestly seeking wisdom from God. This is what King Solomon exhorts us in Proverbs 2:3. It is telling us to cry for wisdom and lift our voice for it. This shows the passionate pleading of a believer who desperately needs to know the truth of God and apply it in his life (MacArthur). We must offer these passionate and earnest prayers to God. And when we ask God for wisdom, we must ask in faith. Look at James 1:5-6a – “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting ....” The Bible tells us that if we lack wisdom we must pray to God for wisdom in faith. As we seek heavenly wisdom that we desperately need in faith, God will give us wisdom just as He gave it to King Solomon. A pastor named Charles Bridges said: ‘The wisdom of this world can be obtained by learning. However, heavenly wisdom is obtained by prayer. Academics can make a biblical scholar, but prayer makes a spiritual Christian’ (Park). I agree. Heavenly wisdom can be obtained through prayer. As we ask God for wisdom in faith, we must obtain heavenly wisdom and apply the word of God's truth to all areas of our lives and be raised up as spiritual Christians who fear God.

### **Second, we must seek God's wisdom.**

Look at Proverbs 2:4 – “If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures.” I remember a long time ago when a deacon said, 'We should read the Bible like a miner digging gold.' What do you think? Sometimes I remember hearing the news that the miners were trapped in a deep coal mine through TV or Internet news. In particular, the last news I saw is the dramatic scene in Chile last year when miners were rescued from being locked up in a coal mine. It's the news that just indirectly makes me to think about how much risk the miners work with. When I think of the miners, I think if I sum it up in a word, they risk their lives and work. So why do you think they risk their lives and work so hard? Don't you think they work so hard to work because it's worth something to risk their lives? I think that this era we live in is an era of confusion about values. Now Satan is making us confuse what is valuable and what isn't. Satan is now promising us a sweet vision of false happiness, making us to forsake the eternal and value for the momentary and worldly things and pursue them. When I think of Satan's work, I think of the Israelites in the book of Exodus. When the Israelites, who had been saved from Egypt by the wonderful power of God's salvation, and marched boldly in the wilderness, saw Pharaoh king of Egypt and his army who followed them, they were terrified and changed their minds and grumbled ‘It is better to be slaves in Egypt than to die here in the wilderness’. As I meditated on this story, I wondered how the slavery of sin can be better than everlasting life. I think it is better to be saved in the wilderness, even if the flesh dies, and to enjoy eternal life and freedom from sin, than to return to Egypt and live as a slave. I don't understand why the Israelites wanted to go back to Egypt. What is the problem? I think the problem is because of the confusion of value. I think the Israelites didn't know what was so valuable. But Moses had the right value. It was a value that he could have only by faith. Look at Hebrews 11:24-26: “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to



the reward.” With this value of faith, we must seek the wisdom of God. In other words, we must know how precious God’s wisdom is, and find it as if we are seeking silver (Prov. 2:4). Now King Solomon is saying that in seeking the wisdom of God, we must value it like those who seek the treasure (Park). Just as people are willing to sacrifice when they seek precious treasure until they obtain it (Job 28:1-11), we must be willing to sacrifices when we seek God’s wisdom (Park).

**Third and last, we must open our hearts and listen to God’s word, receive it and treasure it within us.**

Look at Proverbs 2:1 – “My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you.” As we treasure God’s wisdom and are willing to sacrifice anything to seek it, we must open our hearts and listen to God’s word. We must hear His word of wisdom and instruction. And we must obey the word that we have heard. Then we can keep the word of God in our hearts. Look at Proverbs 7:1 – “My son, keep my words And treasure my commandments within you.” The best way to keep God’s word in our hearts is to make it our own. And the way to make His word our own is to keep it. Look at Psalms 119:56 – “This has become mine, That I observe Your precepts.” We must keep God’s word in our hearts by obeying it. Then we can gain the wisdom that God gives us and redeem (save) our time in these evil days and understand what the Lord’s will is and live according to His will (Eph. 5:15-17).

In this wicked and dark age, we, the church, must be wise. Therefore, we must redeem the time in these evil days and understand what the will of the Lord is. And we must obey His will. The church be obedient to the Head of the church, our Lord. In order to do that, we need God’s wisdom. When we are wise, we can know God and fear Him. And we can discern righteousness, justice, equity and every good course and can walk that good course. Therefore, we must make every effort in faith to seek the wisdom of God. We must seek His wisdom as the deer pants for streams of water (Ps. 42:1). We must open our hearts and listen to His word and keep it in our hearts. As a result, I hope and pray that God will give us wisdom so that we can discern the will of the Lord and live wisely according His will.

## The benefits of wisdom

### [Proverbs 2:10-22]

There are countless questions to ask in our lives. For example, 'What is the purpose of my life?', 'What is God's will for me?', 'How should I live in order to glorify God?' and so on. We live day by day asking countless questions. Among these countless questions, Ecclesiastes 1:3 teaches us a question that we must not leave out: "What advantage does man have in all his work which he does under the sun?" By asking the question, 'Is this beneficial for me?' or 'Is it not?' we must live a life of spiritual discernment, taking what is beneficial to us and throwing away what isn't beneficial to us. In order to do that, we need heavenly wisdom. Only with the wisdom that God gives us can we have spiritual discernment, take what is beneficial to us, and throw away what isn't beneficial to us.

These days, as I meditate on the words of Proverbs at every Wednesday prayer meeting, I feel the need for wisdom more and more. God is making me to pursue His heavenly wisdom by revealing the foolishness of my heart. Meanwhile, at last week's Wednesday prayer meeting, we were taught why and how we should seek wisdom under the heading "Let's seek wisdom" centered on Proverbs 2:1-9. Why should we seek wisdom? The reason is to know and realize. In other words, the reason we must seek wisdom is not only to know and realize God, but also to realize all the good paths that God wants us to walk. How, then, should we seek His wisdom? We must not only cry out to God for His wisdom, but we must seek His wisdom just as we seek the hidden treasure. And we must open our hearts and listen to the word of God, receive it and treasure it within us. Why do we have to do this? I find the answer in Proverbs 2:10-22. It is, in a word, because of the benefits of wisdom. I would like to receive some lessons from God by meditating on the three things about the benefits of wisdom.

### **First, the benefit of wisdom is that it is pleasant to our souls.**

Look at Proverbs 2:10 – "For wisdom will enter your heart And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul." What do you enjoy these days? Do you have anything that is pleasant to your hearts these days? Looking back at the word of Ecclesiastes 7:11 that we meditated on last year, the lesson we learned at that time was that the benefit of wisdom gives us eternal values. In other words, the Bible says that wisdom is good, beneficial, and beautiful because it guides us to live forever for the eternity. In particular, as King Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 3:11 that God set eternity in our hearts, wisdom is good, beneficial, and beautiful because wisdom satisfies our longing for eternity. There is happiness in the life of those who realize the truth (Park). That happiness means that those who

realize the truth of God have deep joy in their hearts. Look at 1 Corinthians 13:6 – “does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth.” Our souls rejoice with the truth. In other words, our souls have been recreated to long for eternity in Jesus Christ, and those recreated souls have joy when they come to realize the eternal truth of God. Indeed, our souls are full of joy when we hear the voice of the Lord. And when we hear and understand the voice of the Lord's truth and obey His word, our souls will be happy and our hearts will have peace (Prov.2:10) (Park). How is this possible? This is possible because the living God works in us through His powerful word (Park). Wisdom is good for us because it gives us this peace and joy.

### **Second, the benefit of wisdom is that it protects and delivers us.**

Look at Proverbs 2:11-12: “Discretion will guard you, Understanding will watch over you, To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things.” In Proverbs 2:8, which we have already meditated on, the Bible tells us, “Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones.” In other words, God gives wisdom to us who seek His wisdom (vv. 3-4), and protects us through that wisdom. Further, it is said that wisdom not only protects us, but also delivers us when we are in danger. Then to whom does the Bible say that wisdom protects and rescues us? The Bible says two things:

#### (1) Wisdom protects and delivers us from the way of evil and the man who speaks perverse things.

Look at Proverbs 2:12 – “To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things.” Here, the evil man and the man who speaks perverse things leave the paths of uprightness in order to walk in the way of darkness and delight in doing evil and rejoice in the perversity of evil (vv. 13-14). These are fools who hate knowledge (wisdom) and are fond of foolishness, who don't want to receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity (1:3). Therefore, they leave the upright path and walk the crooked path (2:15). These are people with crooked minds which cannot walk the upright path. As a result, these evil and rebellious people hate us for walking the right or upright path. Therefore, those who walk the dark path not only seduce us, the children of the light, but also put us in danger when we don't fall into their temptation. For example, Joseph in the book of Genesis is a good example. Potiphar's wife constantly seduced Joseph who was serving his master Potiphar at his house. But because he didn't fall into her seduction, she framed Joseph and eventually put him in prison (Gen. 39). Likewise, those who delight in doing evil and rejoice in the perversity of evil (Prov. 2:14), whose hearts and minds are twisted, put us, who fear God and walk the upright path, frame us and put us in danger. However, just as God gave Joseph the wisdom to interpret the dreams [the cupbearer for the king of Egypt (Gen. 40) and the Egyptian King's dream (ch. 41)] and delivered him from prison to make him the prime minister of Egypt, God gave us wisdom to deliver us from danger and go further and exalt us.

(2) Wisdom protects and delivers us from the adulteress.

Look at Proverbs 2:16 – “To deliver you from the strange woman, From the adulteress who flatters with her words.” Here, the Bible provides a supplementary explanation about the adulteress (Park).

**(a) The adulteress flatters with her words.**

Look at Proverbs 5:3-4: “For the lips of an adulteress drip honey And smoother than oil is her speech; But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword.” What a terrifying temptation is this? It is the terrifying temptation that can take away our lives and faith. When I meditate on this word, I think of the words from Proverbs 7:6-20. A foolish young man without wisdom goes into the harlot's alley at night and is heading towards the harlot's house. A cunning woman dressed in a prostitute grabs the young man, kisses him, and tells the young man with a shameless face: “I was due to offer peace offerings; Today I have paid my vows. Therefore I have come out to meet you, To seek your presence earnestly, and I have found you. I have spread my couch with coverings, With colored linens of Egypt. I have sprinkled my bed With myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with caresses. For my husband is not at home, He has gone on a long journey” (vv. 14-19). This cunning and adulteress woman enticed the young man with many persuasions, the young man suddenly followed her (vv. 21-22). He suddenly followed her as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as one in fetters to the discipline of a fool (v. 22). How can we resist and overcome these temptations of the harlot like Joseph? How can we be protected and delivered from the harlot who entices us with her flattering lips and many persuasions? Look at Proverbs 7:1-5: “My son, keep my words And treasure my commandments within you. Keep my commandments and live, And my teaching as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, ‘You are my sister,’ And call understanding your intimate friend; That they may keep you from an adulteress, From the foreigner who flatters with her words.” Only with the wisdom that God gives us can we avoid falling into the temptation of the adulteress who flatters. Only wisdom can protect us and deliver us from her.

**(b) The adulteress doesn't have fidelity.**

Look at Proverbs 2:17 – “That leaves the companion of her youth And forgets the covenant of her God.” The adulteress is the one who has forsaken her marriage partner, her husband, and destroyed the marriage covenant made before God (Gen. 2:24). In a word, the adulteress has no fidelity. The adulteress is the one who has abandoned her purity by sleeping with this man and that man. Proverbs 2:18 tells us that the house of this adulteress sinks down to death and her tracks lead to the dead. What does it mean? Look at verse 19: “None who go to her return again, Nor do they reach the paths of life.”

How, then, does wisdom protect and deliver us from the wicked and the adulteresses? God's wisdom protects and delivers us by preventing us from participating in the path of the wicked and the adulteresses (v. 12) (Park). The wicked or the adulteresses around us constantly seduce us because they want us to leave the upright path and walk the crooked evil path. And their temptations can seem good, delightful, and desirable in the eyes of our flesh (Gen. 3:6). But wisdom allows us to see the way of the wicked and the adulteresses with the spiritual eyes. As a result, wisdom not only makes us aware that the way of the wicked and the adulteresses is the way of destruction, but also it makes us not to participate in their way, and not to walk with them at all. This is the second benefit of wisdom.

**Third and last, the benefit of wisdom is that it makes us to walk in the way of good men.**

Look at Proverbs 2:20 – “So you will walk in the way of good men And keep to the paths of the righteous.” Wisdom enables us to walk the way of the wise, the righteous way, the just way, the way of equity, and every good ways (v. 9). In other words, wisdom allows us to walk on the straight path, not the crooked path. That straight path is “the way of good men” or “the paths of the righteous” (v. 20). Those who seek wisdom don’t associate with the wicked or the adulteresses. Rather, the ones who seek wisdom don’t associate with such wicked and adulteress people. But they leave them to pursue proper fellowship. That right fellowship refers to the wise people associating with the good and the righteous (Walvoord). Hence, the wise people seek uprightness and blamelessness in association with the good and the righteous. Why do the wise people seek uprightness and blamelessness? The reason is because they want to remain in the Promised Land forever. Look at verse 21: “For the upright will live in the land And the blameless will remain in it.” However, because the wicked left the upright path and walked the dark and perverse path (vv. 13-14), they will eventually be cut off from the land and will be uprooted from it (v. 22). What should we do?

We must ask God for wisdom. We must seek God's wisdom. We must cry out to God for wisdom that is beneficial to us while remembering the words “The benefit of wisdom” given in Proverbs 2:10-22. Wisdom is pleasant to our souls. Wisdom protects us and delivers us from danger. Wisdom also helps us to walk in the way of good people, the path of the righteous, the path that Jesus walked. I hope and pray that by walking on the path of the Lord Jesus, all of us may be living together with the Lord forever in Heaven, the true Promised Land, forever.

## Wisdom that is pleasant to our souls

**“For wisdom will enter your heart And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.” (Proverbs 2:10)**

What do you enjoy these days? Is there joy in your heart these days? What about your soul? Is there joy in your soul? What brings pleasant to your soul?

Looking at Proverbs 2:10, the Bible says, “For wisdom will enter your heart And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.” What is wisdom that can be pleasant to our souls? In Ecclesiastes 7:11, the benefit of wisdom for us is to give us eternal values. In other words, wisdom is good, beneficial, and beautiful because it guides (helps) us to live forever for the eternity. In particular, as King Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 3:11, God has set eternity in our hearts and wisdom is good, beneficial, and beautiful because wisdom satisfies our longing for eternity. When this good, beneficial, and beautiful wisdom of God enters our hearts, we live for eternal things with eternal values. Since we participate in God’s work of saving the souls that the eternal God loved and predestined from before the foundation of the world, God makes our souls to taste joy. Especially, because God uses us to boldly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have no choice but to rejoice in our souls when a dying soul receives Jesus as Savior and is saved. The apostle Paul had this joy of his soul. Paul, who was striving to save souls by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to dying souls, even referred the members of the Philippian church as “my joy and crown” (Phil. 4:1). Paul, who referred to the fruit of soul salvation as “my joy and crown,” rejoiced in his soul because of Jesus, his joy, his life, and his hope. Do we really have this joy of our souls?

## The wise (1)

### [Proverbs 3:1-10]

In our church membership, there is a “spiritual attitude” section. In that spiritual attitude section, the spiritual attitudes that our church members need are “obedience”, “humility”, “faithfulness”, and so on. There is a phrase written before the contents of this spiritual attitude. The phrase is none other than “The kind of person you are is far more important than the kind of work you do”. I value this phrase. It's deeply engraved on the plate of my heart. That is why I focus more on “Being” than on “Doing” in my own life of faith as well as in the ministry. For example, what I care about is not what we have done for God, but rather what kind of person we are in God's sight. The reason I value this is because I believe that our doing must come out of our being. If we are now being more transformed into Jesus and become a reminder of Him wherever we are and wherever we go, this is more important than what we are doing for Jesus and His church. Therefore, I want to challenge you today. The challenge is 'Am I resembling the character of Jesus right now?' rather than the question of 'What am I doing for the Lord?' When we become more like Him, we will be able to act like Jesus. Likewise, when we become wise, we can walk wisely. Therefore, we must be wise. In particular, as we continue to meditate on the words of Proverbs, we must receive the heavenly wisdom that God gives us and become wise.

We thought about the benefit of wisdom centered on Proverbs 2:10-22 at the Wednesday prayer meeting last week. The benefit of the wisdom is that it is pleasant to our souls (v. 10), protects and delivers us (vv. 11-12), and it makes us to walk in the way of good men (v. 20). Today, I would like to receive 4 lessons from God as we meditate on the wise, centered on Proverbs 3:1-10. The first thing we want to consider together is the attitude of the wise. The Bible Proverbs 3:1-10 teaches us in four ways:

#### **First, the heart of the wise keeps God’s commandments.**

Look at Proverbs 3:1, 3 – “My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; ... Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.” The wise person doesn’t forget God's laws or commands but keeps them. As a result, he engraves the love of God and the absolute truth of God on the plate of his heart. Because this wise man loves God, he obeys His word (Jn. 14:21), and because he obeys the word, he experiences God's love more and more deeply. In other words, the motive for the wise to obey God's word is he loves God, and because he loves God, he has no choice but to dive deeper and deeper into the love of God by listening to and keeping His word. However, a fool cannot

experience God's love. Rather, he has no choice but to experience God's hatred more and more deeply. What is the reason? The reason is because he loves being simple-minded, delights himself in scoffing, and hates knowledge (Prov. 1:22), hates listening to God's word (v. 24), and disobeys His word. Because he doesn't love God, he disobeys His word. And because he disobeys God's word, he cannot experience His love. Rather, he has no choice but to eat the fruits of God's mockery (v. 26), of God's disregard (v. 28), and of their own way (v. 31). However, the wise will experience God's love more deeply by obeying the word of God's truth. Not only that, the wise loves God and loves his neighbors with His deep love. Furthermore, the wise seeks more and more truthful life before God and people. In other words, the wise lives a life of personifying His word by keeping the God's absolute truth. And that word personifying life is truthful life. But the fool lives a false life. The reason is because he hates and dislikes the word of absolute truth (vv. 22, 24), and falls into the temptation of the evil one (v. 10, 2:12) and the adulteresses (2:16). We must be wise. We must obey God's command and act with our hearts. Therefore, we must inscribe the love and truth of God more and more deeply on the plate of our hearts. And we must give glory to God by living truthful life and love by keeping His word.

### **Second, the wise trusts God with all his heart.**

Look at Proverbs 3:5-6a: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him ...." The wise person who engraves God's commands on the plate of his heart by keeping them trusts God whom he loves with all his heart. Here, to trust in the Lord with all your heart means 'exclusive trust.' This trust is called "childish confidence" (Park). Believing in God like a child and completely relying on Him with simple trust is to trust in God with all your heart (Park). In order to trust God with this kind of trust, we must not rely on our own understanding. The more we rely on our own understanding, the more we cannot trust God with simple heart like a child. An example is Elijah. In 1 Kings 17, God commands Elijah to hide himself by the brook Cherith, which was east of the Jordan (vv. 3-4) in a situation where there would be neither dew nor rain (v. 1). What do you think about this God's command? Do you think this God's command is a command that our minds can understand? Does it make sense? How could God command Elijah to go to the brook and drink the water of the brook where there was no rain? Isn't it obvious that if it didn't rain, the water of the brook would dry up? Of course, God is the Almighty God who can perform a miracle even when it doesn't rain, so that the brook wouldn't dry up. God, who dried the Red Sea and made it like land, is the Almighty God who can keep the brook flowing so that it doesn't dry up in the situation where it doesn't rain. However, God didn't perform such a miracle for Elijah. As a result, the water of the brook Cherith dried up (v. 7). Would Elijah be able to obey the God's command to hide himself by the brook Cherith if he relied on his own understanding since the water of the brook would dry up due to no rain? Eventually, the brook dried up after a while because there was no rain in the land (v. 7). Then, God sent Elijah to a widow who lives in Zarephath. God commands Elijah to arise, go to Zarephath, which belonged to Sidon, and to stay there (v. 9). God made the widow there, who was about to make a last meal for herself and her son and then die (v. 12), to provide for Elijah (v. 9). Is this command of God really



understandable through our human minds? No. How could God command Elijah to go to the house of the widow who was about to prepare the last meal for herself and her son and then die? If Elijah relied on his own understanding, I am sure he couldn't obey the God's command. I remember Isaiah 55:8-9: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts." Despite the difference between God's thoughts and our thoughts, there are countless times when we live on this earth by putting Creator God's higher thoughts into the frame of our creatures' lower thoughts. As a result, we often fail to trust God completely and rely on ourselves in doubt. But the Bible commands us not to lean on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5). Therefore, we should not lean on our own understanding. Rather, we must trust God with all our hearts. We must acknowledge Him in all our ways. We must commit our works to Him. Then our plans will be established (16:3).

### **Third, the wise fears God and turns away from evil.**

Look at Proverbs 3:7 – "Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil." When we rely on our own understanding, in the end we become wise in our own eyes. In particular, we manage our work by relying on our own understanding and often think that the work went well because we are wise. We who rely on our own understanding in this way consider ourselves wise. That is why King Solomon is telling us, "Do not be wise in your eyes" (v. 7). How is this possible? This is possible when we fear God. In other words, when we fear God, we can turn away from evil. Just as when we love God and love the truth (3:3), we turn away from hatred and lies, when we fear God, we can turn away from evil of considering ourselves wise (v. 7). If we don't trust in God and don't acknowledge Him in all our ways, it is evidence that we trust in ourselves and acknowledge ourselves. This is also evidence that we are considering ourselves wise. This is the vain faith of a fool who doesn't fear God (14:16). And the cause of this vain belief that he believes himself to be wise is haughty in mind (Rom. 12:16). Why is our mind in haughty? The reason is because we don't know the great God intimately. When we don't have the knowledge of God intimately, we consider ourselves wise (Prov. 3:7) and be wise in our own estimation (Rom. 12:16). When we fall into such pride, we don't glorify or give thanks to God even though we know Him. Rather, we become futile in our speculations, and our foolish heart is darkened, professing to be wise, we become fools (1:21- 22). Therefore, we should not be wise in our own eyes. Rather, we should fear God and turn away from evil. We must fear God, so that we don't be haughty in our mind, but associate with the lowly. In a word, the wise who fears God is humble. We must fear God, be humble and turn away from evil. God will raise up these humble people and use them greatly.

### **Fourth and last, the wise honor God with his wealth.**

Look at Proverbs 3:9 - "Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops." He who leans on his own understanding to gain wealth is wise in his own eyes and gives glory to himself. He may glorify

God with his lips, but with his heart he never glorifies God, nor can he do so. He strives to fill his stomach amidst his pride, never humbly and gratefully give his wealth to God. However, the wise who completely trusts in God and turns away from evil by fearing God is as if wise children (Eph. 5:15), who obey their parents in the Lord and honor them (Eph. 6:1-2), obey and honor God (Prov. 3:9). He honors God with his wealth and the firstfruits of all his crops (v. 9). Why does the wise do that? It is because he knows that God gave him all his wealth and crops. Because he wants to express his gratitude to God (Deut. 26:1-3, 9-11), he honors God with his wealth. This is how the wise acknowledges God and His help (Walvoord). Offering God with wealth is an important act in the life of faith (Park). Both Exodus 34:20 and Deuteronomy 16:16 say we shall not appear before God empty-handed. If the wealth that is the price of our effort is precious, then we must give it to God. Let's not forget. "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7) (Park).

The heart of the wise keeps the commands of God. The wise doesn't lean on his own understanding, but he trusts God with all his heart. Also, the wise isn't wise in his own eyes. Rather he fears God and turns away from evil. And the wise honors God with his wealth. May we become wise in God's sight.

## The wise (2)

### [Proverbs 3:1-10]

The wise keep God's command (Prov. 3:1, 3) because he loves God. And as he obeys the word of God, he experiences God's love more and more deeply. In addition, the wise man obeys the word of God's truth, so he lives a more truthful life before God and people. The wise trusts in God with all his heart (vv. 5-6). The wise doesn't lean on his own understanding. Rather, he relies on God with a simple heart like a child. The wise turns away from evil because he fears God (v. 7). He turns away from evil of considering himself wise. He honors God with his wealth (v. 9). What are the blessings of God to the wise who obey God's command, trust in Him with all his heart and fear God, and honor Him with his wealth? Proverbs 3:1-10 says four things:

**First, the blessings enjoyed by the wise are longevity, peace, favor and good repute in the sight of God and man.**

Look at Proverbs 3:2, 4 – “For length of days and years of life And peace they will add to you. ... So you will find favor and good repute In the sight of God and man.” When I think of the blessing of longevity, I think of Ephesians 6:1-3. The Bible says that the blessings God gives when we obey and honor our parents in the Lord is that it may be well with us and may live long on the earth. Even in Proverbs 3, the Bible says that the children must keep their parents' teaching and commandments (v. 1) and honor God with wealth (v. 9). In that case, the blessing God gives us is that the length of days and years will be added to us (v. 2). And God also gives the blessing of peace to the wise who obey God's word (v. 2). As we obey God's word, God gives us the blessing of peace when we engrave God's lovingkindness and truth on the plate of our hearts. However, the fool doesn't have peace in his heart because he disobeys the word of God. How can we enjoy peace while disobeying His word? Rather, when we disobey God's word, we cannot enjoy peace in conscience piercing and guilt. However, the wise man enjoys peace that the world cannot give because he obeys the commands of God. We must become wise and obey God's commands. As we keep the word of God and live a life of love and truth, we will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man (v. 4).

**Second, the blessing that the wise enjoys is that God makes his paths straight.**

Look at Proverbs 3:6b – “... And He will make your paths straight.” The wise man not only obeys the word of God, but he trusts in Him with all his heart and acknowledges Him in all his ways. The wise never leans on

his own understanding. As a result, the blessing that God gives to the wise is that He makes his paths straight. We should not lean on our own understanding but acknowledge God in all our ways. In doing so, God will make our paths straight. What a contrast with the paths of the fool? In Proverbs 2:15, the Bible says that the paths of the wicked and the man who speaks perverse things (v. 12) are crooked (v. 15). The paths of the fool are crooked. The path of the fool who disobeys God's word and who leans on his own understanding is crooked. But the Bible, in contrast, says that God will make the paths of the wise straight. We must be wise. We must trust God with all our hearts like a child who has simple heart. In doing so, God will make our paths straight. Then we can walk the right path. God will not let us turn left or right, but will guide us to walk the right path.

### **Third, the blessing that the wise enjoys is health.**

Look at Proverbs 3:8 – “It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones.” When we read the Old Testament, we often see God using disease as a tool in punishing the Israelites for their unrepentant sins. For example, in Deuteronomy 28:59, the Bible says: “then the LORD will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, even severe and lasting plagues, and miserable and chronic sicknesses.” However, when the Israelites feared God and turned away from evil and obeyed God's commandments completely, God gave them this promise: “And He said, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer.” The Bible says that when we listen to God's word and obey it, God will not bring any disease on us. However, if we don't enjoy fearing God but rather rejoicing in evil (Prov. 2:14), we are bound to get sick because of our sins. Look at King David. When he committed adultery with Bathsheba and didn't repent of his sins, he said, “When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer” (Ps. 32:3-4) (MacArthur). Dr. Park Yun-sun said: ‘Many diseases are caused by not trusting in God. In the psychology of unbelief, there are so many doubt, anxiety, hatred, envy, and worry and so on. These things are harmful to human life. Most of gastrointestinal diseases are caused by anxiety and worry’ (Park). We must fear God and turn away from evil. Then God will bless us with health.

### **Fourth and last, the blessing that the wise enjoys is wealth.**

Look at Proverbs 3:10 – “So your barns will be filled with plenty And your vats will overflow with new wine.” The wise honors God with the firstfruits of his wealth and produce (v. 9). He honors Him by giving back what the Lord has given him because he knows that God has given him the power to obtain wealth (Deut. 8:18) and that he has obtained wealth and products. Why does he do that? The reason is because he loves God. And the wise who loves God fears Him and keep His commandments. To such a person, God blesses him with wealth (Ps. 112:1-3). And God allows him to enjoy the blessing of wealth (Eccl. 5:19).

We must be wise. The wise keep God's commands. The wise doesn't lean on his own understanding, but trust in God with all his hearts. He turns away from evil because he fears God. And he honors God with his wealth. Then there are blessings that the wise enjoys. It is longevity, peace, favor and good repute in the sight of God and man. And God will make his paths straight. God will bless him with health. And the blessing that the wise also enjoys is wealth, that is, the blessing of material things. I hope and pray that we can become wise in God's sight and enjoy the blessings that God gives.

## **Do not lean on your own understanding.**

**“Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.”(Proverbs 3:5)**

There are so many things in this world that we can't understand with our own understanding. To say one of them, I would like to say "the heart of a person." The reason is because the human heart is not really understandable by our own understanding. In particular, when we look at our hearts as Christians, we see that sometimes we seem to love God with all our hearts, but at other times, when our hearts of love for God cools down and faces adversity, we see that we complain and resent against God with our hearts and lips. It doesn't make sense with our understanding. What makes it more difficult to understand is that our heart become proud and consider ourselves wise (Prov. 3:7) when we receive praise and approve from people as we humbly serve God, give glory to Him and boast Him. We really don't understand. As such, our hearts are so easily altered that we are thinking evil in the sight of God, taking an evil posture, and doing evil words and actions. Nevertheless, we don't view evil as evil. What we really don't understand is our hearts. Another thing that I don't understand from my understanding is our Christian faith. We say that we love Jesus but we aren't obeying His word. We say that we believe in Jesus, and that Jesus is our shepherd who makes us lie down in green pastures and leads us beside quite waters (Ps. 23:2). But we don't even think about the fact that He allows us to walk through the valley of the shadow of death (v. 4). Also, while our hearts like to be blessed by God, they hate adversity (Job 2:10). Our hearts, which cannot be understood by our own understanding, are spiritually picky. Our hearts like prosperity but hate pain. We like abundance, but we hate poverty. We love blessings, but we hate disaster. Our spiritually picky heart likes God, who is rich in love and grace, but doesn't like God who is holy and just. Our hearts like God who is merciful, compassionate and good, but doesn't like God who pours out His wrath and disciplines. With this mind and faith, should we continue to lean on our own understanding?

It is God's will or God's command that we don't understand more and more with our own understanding. In 1 Kings 17, God commanded Elijah to go and hide himself by the brook Cherith and drink of the brook (vv. 3-4) in a situation where there is no dew and rain. This God's command is a command that we can't understand with our own understanding. How could God command Elijah to go to the brook and drink of the brook when there was no rain? If it didn't rain, then the brook would dry up. This God's command would have been a command that Elijah couldn't obey if he had relied on his own understanding. Eventually, since it didn't rain on the land, the brook dried up after a while (v. 7). Then, God sent Elijah to a widow who lives in Zarephath. God commands Elijah to arise, go

to Zarephath, which belonged to Sidon, and to stay there (v. 9). God made the widow there, who was about to make a last meal for herself and her son and then die (v. 12), to provide for Elijah (v. 9). Is this command of God really understandable through our human minds? No. How could God command Elijah to go to the house of the widow who was about to prepare the last meal for herself and her son and then die? If we lean on our own understanding, we can't obey this command of God. Despite the difference between God's thoughts and our thoughts, there are countless times when we live on this earth by putting Creator God's higher thoughts into the frame of our creatures' lower thoughts. As a result, we often fail to trust God completely and rely on ourselves in doubt. Also, we aren't acknowledging God in all our ways (Prov. 3:6). What should we do? I would like to take three lessons from Proverbs 3:1, 3, 5:

### **First, we must obey God's commandments with our hearts.**

Look at Proverbs 3:1 – “My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments.” We must remember God's teaching and keep God's commandments with our hearts. Although God's commandments cannot be understood with our own understanding, we must obey His commandments by faith and act. Although we cannot understand why God has given us an incomprehensible commandment with our own understanding, how deep, broad, and high the incomprehensible will of God, we must obey His commandment.

### **Second, we must engrave God's love and truth on the plate of our hearts.**

Look at Proverbs 3:3 – “Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.” The more we obey God's command by faith, the more God's truth will be engraved on our hearts. The more we obey God's word with faith in the God of truth, the deeper the word of God is engraved on our hearts. And the more we obey the word of truth by faith, the more we will experience God's love in obedience. Not only we realize God's love in the very fact that God gave us the word of truth, but also as we obey the word of truth we engrave His love on our hearts. And when God's love and truth are engraved on our hearts, we can trust God with all our hearts.

### **Third and last, we must trust in God with all our hearts.**

Look at Proverbs 3:5 – “Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.” As we obey God's commandments in our hearts (v. 1), and as we engrave God's love and truth on the plate of our hearts (v. 3), we realize how foolish it is to lean on our own understanding. Therefore, we don't lean on our own understanding and trust in God with all our hearts (v. 5). And we acknowledge God in all our ways (v. 6). Then we will experience the God who makes our paths straight (v. 6).

In all things in the world, there are more countless things that we don't and can't understand with our own

understanding than we understand. Especially among the countless things that don't understand, there are so many times when we don't understand God's will. Nevertheless, when we obey God's commandments with all our heart, believing that we are in God's will, then God will engrave His love and truth on our hearts. And when God engraves God's love and truth on our hearts, we will be able to trust in God with all our hearts. By acknowledging God in all our ways, I hope and pray that He will make our paths straight.



## **Let us trust in the Lord and let us not lean on our own understanding.**

If we lean on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5), we cannot obey God's commands.

The reason is because we can't understand God's command with our own understanding.

How could God command Elijah to hide himself by the brook Cherith when there was no dew or rain (1 Kgs. 17:1-4).

If it didn't rain for these years, of course the brook would dry up (verse 7).

And if the brook would dry up, of course Elijah would be unable to drink water from the brook.

How could God command Elijah to arise and go to Zarephath and tell her that He commanded a widow, who only had a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar

and was about to prepare a food for her and her son and then die, there to provide for him? (vv. 9, 12)

If God had a little rich Christian widow prepared,

then it would be nice to eat abundantly and receive generous support for ministry.

How could Elijah command her to bring him a piece of bread that she and her son was about to eat? (vv. 11, 13)

After that, Elijah told her to make one bread cake for herself and her son (v. 13).

No matter who Elijah was, a prophet, would he love her son as much as her?

It's human instinct that the widow wanted to feed her son first even if she couldn't eat herself.

How could she go and serve the food to the prophet Elijah?

With our own understanding, we cannot understand Elijah's command to the widow.

Also, we cannot understand God's command to Elijah.

But this widow obeyed the command of God's man Elijah (vv. 15, 18, 24).

But the prophet Elijah, the man of God, obeyed God's command (vv. 5, 10).

How could they be obedient?

It is because they trusted in God with all their hearts rather than lean on their understanding (Prov. 3:5).

It was because they believed in God's promised word (1 Kgs. 17:4, 9, 14).

Even Elijah obeyed God's promise by holding on to the word of God's promise,

"I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there" (v. 4),

even though there was no promise that the water of the brook would not dry up (v. 5).

Isn't this amazing?

What was the result of the obedience of Elijah and the widow?

They experienced the miracles of the fulfillment of God's promised word (vv. 6, 16).

But what happened after?

How could the widow's son die when she obeyed God's command? (v. 17)

Why did God let the son of the widow, who obeyed God's command, die?

Why do we face the greatest crisis in our lives when we obey God's command?

Is God trying to make us to repent our hidden sins by revealing them? (v. 18)

Is He trying to make us to cry out to God? (v. 20)

Does He want us to experience the power and glory of God's resurrection? (v. 22)

Is He trying to make other(s) to know

that we are God's people and that the word of God in our mouths is truth? (v. 24)

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.”

(Proverbs 3:5-6)

## The wise children

### [Proverbs 3:11-26]

At the Morning Prayer meeting yesterday, I prayed to God for my three children, and my heart was broken. I think there were two reasons. One was because I felt that God loves Dillon, Yeri, and Karis, the gifts that God gave to my wife and I, and the other was because I, who lack so many things but as their father, love those three children. Especially last Saturday, when I prayed for Yeri, who wore earrings with her dedication to God, I gave thanks to God and prayed to Him for her whom I love. My heart was moved. I prayed to God as I acknowledged the fact that it is only through God's grace that God would bring forth 'the work of Ephraim', twice fruitful through his beloved daughter Yeri. And when I prayed for Karis, I prayed that God made her to realize His grace, so that she could be gracious to others and share with them as she cares for them. And when I prayed to God for my beloved oldest son, Dillon, I prayed to God by crying out in my heart that he may be truthful and faithful to God as a man of God. I know that there are earnest prayer topics for you to pray to God for your children or descendants. How do you feel when you pray for your beloved children and descendants?

While meditating on Proverbs 3:11-26, I saw King Solomon's words "My son" in verses 11 and 21, and I started meditating on the words of Proverbs 3:11-26 around that word "My son" under the heading "The wise children". The essence of that meditation was who the wise children are. So, I would like to have time to pray for our children (or descendants) by meditating on three kinds of wise children in the sight of God, focusing on Proverbs 3:11-26.

#### **First, the wise children experience Heavenly Father's love through God's discipline.**

Look at Proverbs 3:11-12: "My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD Or loathe His reproof, For whom the LORD loves He reproveth, Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights." Why do we, fathers, discipline our children? Isn't it because our children disobeyed us? Not long ago, my two daughters were fighting over something very small, so I had to discipline both of them. At that time, after disciplining the children, I said to them to write what they did wrong. Then one daughter wrote a long piece of text, drew a picture, and brought it to me. When I read the contents, it was a regretful writing saying that she learned that she shouldn't fight over small things, and that she didn't know why she fought. Then, looking at the child's writing, she said that she had prayed to God for forgiveness, and asked me for forgiveness. What would I do? Wouldn't I forgive her? How could I not forgive my beloved daughter when she prayed to God for forgiveness? Who am I not to forgive her since God

already forgave her? Our Heavenly Father is a God who disciplines us as a man disciplines his son (Deut. 8:5). God disciplines us when we forsake the way or leave the path (Prov. 15:10). Why does God discipline us when we forsake His way? The reason is because He loves us. Since God loves us and is pleased with us, He reproofs us and corrects us when we forsake His word and live a life of disobedience (3:12). Also, because God considers us to be His sons and daughters, He disciplines us (Heb. 12:6-8). Then what are the purposes of God's discipline? Here are three things: (1) To remove foolishness that is bound up in our hearts (Prov. 22:15). (2) To make us repent (Rev. 3:19) so that we will offend no more (Job 34:31) and live in submission to our Heavenly Father (Heb. 12:9), and (3) To enable us to share in the holiness of God (Heb. 12:10) and also to enjoy peace (Isa. 53:5).

In Proverbs 3:11, King Solomon says, "My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD Or loathe His reproof." I think it has two meanings:

- (1) In Proverbs 3:1, King Solomon said, "My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments." And, as we come to 3:11, he said, "My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD Or loathe His reproof." I think there is meaning that children may forget the father's law and fail to obey the father's command. Isn't that why the father discipline his children? What is interesting, though, is that King Solomon comes to verse 11 and speaks of "the discipline of the Lord" rather than his father's discipline. When I meditate on this fact, I think King Solomon, as a father, was trying to teach his children to fear God. In other words, he points to the fact that God will discipline his children when his children don't obey his laws and commands. So he says that his laws and commands are God-centered. I think he was trying to instill in his children that he would discipline them if they don't obey his laws and commands.
- (2) The reason King Solomon said, "My son," and told him not to reject the discipline of the Lord or loathe His reproof is because God's discipline can be hated from our people's point of view, but from God's point of view it is beneficial to us (Park). What are the benefits of that God's discipline? Of course, as we have already meditated on the three purposes of discipline, the benefits of discipline are to remove foolishness that is bound up in our hearts, to make us repent so that we will offend no more and live in submission to our Heavenly Father, and to enable us to share in the holiness of God and also to enjoy peace. But I think that King Solomon summarizes the benefits of all these disciplines in one word in Proverbs 3:12. In short, the benefit of discipline is to experience Heavenly Father's love. More specifically, the benefit of discipline is to feel (know) the heart of Heavenly Father. It is the benefit of discipline to learn how much Heavenly Father loves us, and how delightful Heavenly Father is with us. What do you think? Have we ever benefited from this divine discipline? Have we ever realized with our hearts how much Heavenly Father loves and delights us through His discipline?

The wise children learn the heart of Heavenly Father through His discipline. They realize how much Heavenly Father loves and delight them through God's discipline. We must become these wise children of God. We should regard it as a blessing that we are disciplined by God when we sin against Him for forgetting and not obeying His commands (Job 5:17). What is that blessing? It is a deeper understanding of Heavenly Father's love for us. I hope and pray that we will learn the loving heart of our Heavenly Father through God's discipline.

### **Second, the wise children enjoy the blessing of wisdom.**

Look at Proverbs 3:13-15: "How blessed is the man who finds wisdom And the man who gains understanding. For her profit is better than the profit of silver And her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her." What is true blessing? Does the world's silver and gold-like material really give us true happiness? Last week, I read an article on a Korean Christian Internet website titled 'Hangi-chong must be dismantled' (here "Hangi-chong" stands for 'Korean Christian Federation', an organization representing Korean Protestants) (Internet). The reason why I read this article is because there were articles that one or two pastors belonging to Hangi-chong confessed to paying and receiving money in the election to become the president of the Hangi-chong and the article was an interview with Professor Son Bong-ho. Among the interview, the reporter asked the question to Professor Son: 'Is the excessive desire for fame of religious leaders revealed in the elections for money is just a matter of Han Ki-Chong?' Professor Son's answer to this question was this: 'The fundamental cause is the pursuit of good standing and success in Korean culture. In this culture, the beliefs of Korean Protestants have turned into 'faith for blessing. The church teaches that it is a blessing to make money and become famous. Pastors cannot gain power by doing politics, nor can they make money by doing business. In the end, the only thing left is honor, so they become obsessed with it' (Internet). What do you think of Professor Son Bong-ho's words? Do you also think that the faith of Protestants in Korea has changed into faith for blessing? Do you think 'It's a blessing to make money and be famous'? Personally, I agree with Professor Son. Our Korean Protestant beliefs have been changed into faith for blessing. This faith for blessing believes that God must exist for me and that God must help me whenever I need. This faith for blessing believes in God just to be blessed. In particular, is it really the right faith that the Bible says to believe in God to receive just material blessings?

In Proverbs 3:13-15, King Solomon says that those who gain wisdom and understanding are blessed (vv. 13, 18). At the same time, it tells the value of wisdom how precious it is to obtain wisdom. In a word, the value of wisdom is incomparable to gold and silver treasures. Why is wisdom more valuable than gold and silver treasures? In other words, what blessings are to those who obtain wisdom that cannot be compared with gold and silver treasures? Look at verses 16-18: "Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways And all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who hold her fast." The Bible says that the blessings of wisdom are not only longevity and wealth, joy and peace, but

also “the tree of life,” that is, eternal life. In other words, the blessing of wisdom is to be guaranteed the blessing of salvation in the future life (Park). We who have gained eternal life by trusting in Jesus, who is the true wisdom, are already enjoying the joy and peace that God gives us. And we are living by accumulating eternal life, the true meaning of longevity on earth, and the treasure of heaven, which is true wealth. However, those who don’t believe in Jesus, who is the true wisdom, will not be able to enjoy true joy and peace even if they live a long life in this world and enjoy the riches and glory. And they will not have any blessings of the eternal life to come. Rather, only the eternal curse remains on them. Dr. Park Yun-sun said that the most unfortunate thing is that they don’t believe in God because of gold and silver treasures (Park). I cannot disagree. A life that doesn’t believe in God because of materials and doesn’t live with God is first is truly a life of pity and unfortunateness. How many people around us are living this unfortunate and unhappy life? In Proverbs 3:19-20, the Bible says that God created heaven and earth with wisdom. At the same time, the Bible speaks of the greatness of God’s wisdom (Park). What can this great wisdom of God be compared to? Can it be compared to the gold and silver treasures of this world? King Solomon says that the wise children are blessed by gaining the wisdom of this great God. The Bible says that they will enjoy blessings that the world cannot give. How can we, who are enjoying this eternal blessing, not thank God in all things?

### **Third and last, the wise children keep sound wisdom and discretion.**

Look at Proverbs 3:21 – “My son, let them not vanish from your sight; Keep sound wisdom and discretion.” King Solomon is commanding his children to keep perfect wisdom and integrity. What does it mean? It means to preserve sound judgment and discernment. In a word, it means to fear God (Park). The word “let them not vanish from your sight” while in fear of God means that we should not leave God and always follow Him as we see Him in front of us (Park). In that case, there are blessings that are given to the true wise children of God who fears Him. What are those blessings?

#### (1) It is life to our soul.

Look at Proverbs 3:22 – “So they will be life to your soul ....” We must value the life of the soul rather than the life of the body (Park). King Solomon is saying that if we keep sound wisdom and discretion, that is, when we live a true life in fear of God, it will be life to our souls.

#### (2) It is security.

Look at Proverbs 3:23 – “Then you will walk in your way securely And your foot will not stumble.” When we live a truthful life in fear of God, Satan deceives and entices us so that we may leave the upright path and walk the crooked path and the dark path (2:13, 15). Even so, God will protect us so that we can keep walking on the safe and upright way, the way of good men, and the paths of the righteous (v. 20).

(3) It is sweet sleep.

Look at Proverbs 3:24 – “When you lie down, you will not be afraid; When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.” When we are safe because God protects and keeps us, we can have sweet sleep that God gives us. Just as Jesus fell asleep in a boat even in the midst of a storm, God gives the truthful believers who fear God sweet sleep even in tribulation.

(4) It is confidence.

Look at Proverbs 3:25 – “Do not be afraid of sudden fear Nor of the onslaught of the wicked when it comes.” Those who have gained wisdom and who live truthful life because they fear God aren’t afraid but rather bold in the face of the tribulation that God sends to punish the wicked (Park). The reason is because the Lord is their confidence (v. 26).

We must become wise children of God. Even through God's discipline, we must experience Heavenly Father's love. Also, we must recognize and understand the value of wisdom that God gives to us, and humbly receive and enjoy the blessings of wisdom while pursuing that wisdom. We must keep sound wisdom and discretion. In other words, since we fear God as His wise children, I hope and pray that we will enjoy the life of the soul, security, sweet sleep, and confidence, which are the blessings of God.

## The human relations of the wise

### [Proverbs 3:27-35]

Are you having good relationship with others? Just think about it. Just think of the people whom you have good relationship with now. Who comes to your mind? Then think about a person whom you have a bad relationship with now. Who comes to your mind? One day, a member of the church shared that it was too difficult to have relationships with other members of the church. So from that time on, I started posting articles about human relationships on my personal Cyworld homepage. As I reread the article written on December 1, 2010 under the heading ‘Accept others,’ what I still agree with is that there are people around us who are very hard to accept in our relationships. How are we supposed to have relationship with those people who make us difficult and hurt our hearts? The Bible tells us to accept such people as well. How is this possible? I think the answer is in Romans 15:7 – “Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.” The more we realize that the Lord has accepted such sinners like us, the more we can accept even those who sin against us. In the end, when we get to know ourselves as we get to know God in our relationship with Him, the more we deeply realize the grace and love of God who accepted the chief sinners like us in Jesus Christ, the more we can accept and love even our enemies.

In Proverbs 3:27-31, King Solomon says five times with the command “Do not” (vv. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31). These five verses teach us how the wise are in relationships. We can summarize the words of these five verses into three groups (Walvoord). These three groups of words give us three principles of how we should build relationship with others. I hope and pray that we all receive God's lessons as we meditate on those three principles and apply them wisely in each of our lives to give glory to God.

**The first principle of human relations of the wise is that we shouldn't withhold good from those whom it is due.**

Look at Proverbs 3:27-28: “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you.” When I read an e-mail sent by one of the church members, a person who is about to die generally regrets three things. The first of them is regret for not giving: ‘Whether those who live poorly or richly, when the time came to die, they regret that 'I could have lived by giving little more.’ Why couldn't I share more and give more? Why did I try to gain more and grab more even though it was nothing? I lived so foolishly. When I keep thinking like this,



this is my biggest regret' (Internet). What do you think? Are you having these regrets right now? Dr. Jang Ki-ryo, who was also called Schweitzer in Korea, has dedicated his life to the Lord's love and service, and love and service of neighbors. It is said that he died in the arms of God at the age of 85 at around 1:45 a.m. on Christmas Day on December 25, 1995. At that time, the Korean media said that he was called 'Living Little Jesus' (Internet). As a doctor, he said, as he promised, 'I will devote myself to those who are dying without seeing a doctor,' his life was full of caring for the poor, abandoned, and neglected. From Pyongyang to Busan, at the hospital where he stayed, poor patients were said to have been able to meet him at any time. It is said that it was not once or twice that the Busan Gospel Hospital tried to operate as a free medical institution. But even after switching to a fee because there was no financial capacity to handle the influx of patients, he left the back door open so that the poor patients openly left the hospital. By doing so, he had troubled the hospital staff many times. In a word, the late Dr. Jang Ki-Ryeo lived a life of endless giving. What a beautiful life is this? Don't you want to live like this?

In Proverbs 3:27-28, King Solomon says that if we have power to do good, then don't withhold good to those who are in need, those to whom it is due. In other words, we who can afford should help the poor in need. What is the reason? This is because God's purpose is to help others (Park). Therefore, we must quickly help our poor neighbors who are in trouble by realizing this purpose that God has made us to afford. In other words, we must not say "Go and come back, And tomorrow I will give it" (v. 28) to someone who is in trouble even though we have the power to help now. Think about it. How urgent is it when someone in need comes to us, who can afford to do good, and asks for help? Although we may be able to afford ourselves, our neighbors in trouble don't. Therefore, the Bible is telling us not to withhold good from those who are in need and help them quickly from their standpoint. I have applied this lesson to the relationship between an employer and an employee. For example, from the standpoint of a store owner, when there is financial margin, I think that he must stand in the position of the employee he hired and pay the employee at that time, whether it is weekly or monthly salary. What is the reason? The reason for this is, first, because the employee is the one who deserves his salary. In fact, the literal translation of Proverbs 3:27 is: "Do not withhold good from its owners" (Walvoord). What does it mean? It means that the employer must pay the money that his employee earns from working for a week or a month because that money is no longer his but his employee's. Another reason is that the employer who can afford to live should pay his employee's wages at the time when he supposes to, whether weekly salary or monthly salary because his employee cannot afford to live weekly or monthly with his salary. If you are an employer, think in terms of an employee. If your employee worked hard, whether it was a week or a month, and he didn't receive the wages at that time as much as he worked, how would you react if you were the employee? If you don't get the wages you deserve from your employer and you have to continue working, will you still work for your employer? If you are struggling with the wages you received for a week or a month, what would you do if you knew that the weekly or monthly salary was not paid by the employer who could afford it? That is why Deuteronomy 24:15 tells us this: "'You shall give him his wages on his day before the sun sets, for he is poor and sets his heart on it; so that he will not cry against you to

the LORD and it become sin in you.”

This is what the Bible Proverbs 19:6 says, “Many will seek the favor of a generous man, And every man is a friend to him who gives gifts.” We must give to our neighbors with generous heart, especially to those who deserve it. But when I look at myself, I cannot get rid of my thought that I am truly stingy in giving. And when I reflect myself why I am so stingy, I admit that the cause is my selfishness. And I admit that the cause of my selfish heart is because I am not experiencing and deeply understanding God's grace and love. Filled with God's grace and love, God's love should flow through me to my neighbors. But I asked God for forgiveness at the prayer meeting because my selfish heart hides the glory of God. I want to live a life of giving like Dr. Ki-Ryeo Jang. I want to serve my neighbors who are in need, in pain and suffering with the heart of Christ. I want to dedicate myself to making eternal friends in the Lord by living a life of generosity.

**The second principle of human relations of the wise is that we must not harm others without cause.**

At last week's Wednesday prayer meeting, we learned the first principle of how to wisely build relationships based on Proverbs 3:27-28. The first principle is, ‘We shouldn't withhold good from those whom it is due.’ Look at Proverbs 3:27-28 again: “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you.” I would like to go over three important points here once again. The three points are (1) We all have the power to give, (2) We must know who are those to whom it is due, and (3) We must not withhold good but give quickly. After meditating and sharing these three points, I lived for a week and God helped me to apply them in my life in many ways and gave me some understanding. There are three examples. The first example is the realization that when we all consider the point that we all have the power to give, we mainly think that we give financially. But besides that, we can give a word of warm comfort to our neighbors with the love of God. In my life for a week, God made me to receive e-mails and phone calls of consolation with God's love, making me realize that we all have the power to give the warm words of comfort. Another example is that in marital relationships, I have come to realize that a wife deserves love from her husband, and that the husband deserves respect from his wife. This realization came to me through a brother's reply of my meditation sharing of the word of God that I meditated after last Wednesday prayer meeting via e-mail. And it's a realization that applies to my own marital relationship. The third and final example is about speed. It is true that there are lots of things that require patience in relationships. But after living for a week, I came to realize the lesson that sometimes I should be quick in loving others. In a word, I learned a little bit about Proverbs 15:23: “... How good is a timely word!”

Look at Proverbs 3:29-30: “Do not devise harm against your neighbor, While he lives securely beside you. Do not contend with a man without cause, If he has done you no harm.” When we enter into human relationships,

there are many times when we misunderstand each other and the relationship gets worse due to the misunderstanding. One of the things that happens then is the breakdown of trust in each other. When trust in each other is broken in a relationship, we no longer open our hearts and don't share our hearts with the other person. Therefore, we can no longer have deep relationship. Another phenomenon is that as the misunderstandings deepen, we don't end up breaking trust. But by becoming enemies, we may slander each other and even plot to harm each other. That's why King Solomon says, "Do not plot harm against your neighbor, who lives trustfully near you" (v. 29). The phrase "lives trustfully" here refers to the neighbor who lives by our side and gives us sense of trust. The Bible says that we should not plot harm to this trustworthy neighbor. Also, the Bible tells us not to accuse a trustworthy neighbor for no reason when he has done you no harm (v. 30).

As I meditated on these words, I remembered what King Ahab in 1 Kings 21 had done to his neighbor Naboth, who was living near his palace. Although Ahab, king of Samaria, told Naboth that he would give him a better vineyard than Naboth's in its place or give him the price of it in money (v. 2), because Ahab wanted a Naboth's vineyard which was near his palace, Naboth refused. The reason why Naboth refused was because "The Lord forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers" (v. 3). So Queen Jezebel, Ahab's wife, conspired and killed Naboth, a reliable neighbor who was living according to God's will (vv. 8-13). Queen Jezebel, a helper for her husband, helped King Ahab by killing Naboth, a faithful man of God, in order to satisfy her husband's greed. How evil is this sin in the sight of God? What do you think of the sins of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel who killed their neighbor Naboth, who was obedient to God's word and faithful, and took away his vineyard? Was this sinful incident of conspiring and killing a trusted neighbor, Naboth, happened only in the days of King Ahab? Not at all. Even now, this thing is common. Satan doesn't want us to live in a trusting relationship with our close neighbors. The reason is because Satan doesn't want us to obey Jesus' commandments and love one another. Therefore, Satan is striving to somehow break the trust relationship between us and our close neighbors. One of those ways is that Satan deceives a third person and uses him to separate our relationship. Satan is breaking the relationship of trust by putting lies in him. What should we do? Shouldn't we continue to be truthful and faithful because we trust God completely?

We must be Christians who give confidence to our neighbors. More broadly, we should be trustworthy people who give them sense of trust in all relationships. In order to do this, we must become true Christians who live according to God's will (word). We should not be the ones who say to other that we go to church but who misunderstand the people around us, harm them, and blame them and blaspheme them. In particular, we should not make foolish words and actions that break our trust with our relatives, friends, or co-workers who know that we are Christians and who trust us. We must be very careful. In particular, we must not forget that this is a spiritual war, recognizing that there is a constant delusion of Satan in the process of loving our neighbors. And in order to win this spiritual war, we must fully trust in God. And we must commit ourselves to trust our close neighbors as we trust in God. We must devote ourselves in trusting them by trusting God even if our neighbors later misunderstands

us, scolds us behind us, and condemns us and even betray us. God will direct and guide our relationships. As believers in Jesus, I hope and pray that all of us can give confidence to our neighbors.

**The third and last principle of human relations of the wise is that we should not envy a man of violence.**

I think the most enjoyable, joyful, and happy relationship among human relationships is a husband and wife relationship. At the same time, I think that the most sad, distressed, and unhappy relationship among human relationships is the husband and wife relationship. So, while the couple is the best encourager to each other, they are also the worst discourager. What should be done in the marital relationship? How can we become the married couple who glorifies God? As I meditate on the words of Proverbs 3:27-31, I would like think about the third principle of human relations to marital relations in addition to the two principles that have already been meditated on. I hope and pray that all the married couples who obey the word of the Lord and build the Lord-centered relationship so that we can glorify God.

(1) We should not withhold good from those whom it is due.

Look at Proverbs 3:27-28 again: “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you.” I have already applied this lesson to the relationship between employers and employees. Today, I would like to apply this lesson to marital relationships. We, the husbands, should not withhold good from our beloved wives who are worthy of our love. In particular, we should abandon the idea that since our wives are our closest wives, we can show more love to others than our wives. How can we say that we love our neighbors when we don't even love our wives properly? Another of our many excuses, I think, is that our wife should respect us to be loved by us. But obviously, Ephesians 5:25 says, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.” It is not that we love our wives because our wives deserve to be loved by us. Rather, we should love our wives just as Jesus loves the church. Our wives are the ones who deserve our love. Therefore, we should know our wives as the one who deserves to be loved and should not withheld good from them. Then what should wives do to their husbands? They must respect their husbands. They should give respect that their husbands deserve. Of course, the reasons why wives don't respect their husbands could be: ‘How can I respect my husband when he doesn't use words and actions that deserve me respect?’ Ephesians 5:24 tells wives to obey or respect their husbands in everything, just as the church does to Christ. Therefore, the Christian wives should respect and obey their husbands as they do to the Lord.

(2) We should not harm others without cause.

Look at Proverbs 3:29-30 again: “Do not devise harm against your neighbor, While he lives securely beside you. Do not contend with a man without cause, If he has done you no harm.” The closest neighbor who gives us confidence near us is our husbands or our wives in marital relationship. However, the problem is that in marital relationship, Satan instills doubt and distrust in each of us to break the trust rather than give each other trust. Therefore, we, the couples, often quarrel and fight over small things. It all starts because we misunderstand each other for a little thing. And while we misunderstand each other, I think we don't know how to talk to resolve the misunderstanding. As a result, we no longer open up our hearts and share our hearts with the other, as our misunderstandings break our trust in each other. Therefore, we can no longer have deep relationship. However, the problem doesn't end there. When misunderstandings accumulate in our hearts, the accumulated misunderstandings grow and lead to dissatisfaction, complaining, and distrust. Therefore, even the smallest things, we quarrel and fight with the explosion of anger accumulated. Eventually, the husband and the wife develop into an enemy relationship, not a marital relationship. What should we do? What should we do to our wives, and wives to us? We should not quarrel with one another without cause (v. 30). Also, we should not be such a couple who conspire and harass each other without cause. Rather, we should be the closest neighbors that give each other trust. In order to do this, we must obey the will of the Lord, who is the Lord of our marital relationship, and live uprightly. Then the wife can trust her husband and the husband can trust his wife. Even if we don't, we trust the Lord, so we must commit ourselves to trust each other.

(3) We should not envy a man of violence.

Look at Proverbs 3:31 – “Do not envy a man of violence And do not choose any of his ways.” As we live in this wicked world, there are times when we are envious of the prosperity of the wicked, sinners, and wicked people (Prov. 23:17; 24:1, 19). As a result, we may stumble while envying the prosperity of the wicked (Ps. 73:1). By asking the question, ‘How can we who believe in Jesus suffer, but the violent, sinners and wicked people can prosper?’, we can stumble enough and commit sins against God by following the wicked. However, in Proverbs 3:3, King Solomon tells us not to be envious of the violent man, and not to follow any of his action. Why should we not be envious of the violent man, nor should we follow any of his actions? What is the reason? In Proverbs 3:32-35, the Bible tells us four reasons (Walvoord). Considering these four reasons, I would like to apply them to marital relationships.

**(a) This is because God detests a perverse man.**

Look at Proverbs 3:32 – “for the LORD detests a perverse man but takes the upright into his confidence.” The first reason we should not be envious and follow the deeds of the perverse man while seeing the prosperity of the violent man and the wicked is because God detests him. What excuses do we have for this

obvious reason? That's why it's simple and obvious. Because God detests the perverse man, we don't follow his deeds and be envious of the wicked. Rather, we must be upright. What is the reason? The reason is because God loves the upright. And it is because only the upright can have deep fellowship with God.

We face a crisis of honesty. Not to mention other relationships, we have faced the crisis of honesty in our marital relationship that we have become one body in the Lord. The reason is because we are envious of the rebellious and treat each other with rebellious heart rather than honestly. That is why we don't have deep fellowship with the Lord, and cannot share deep fellowship with each other. This is by no means the marriage relationship the Lord wants us to have. The relationship that the Lord wants for us is a relationship of deep fellowship in the Lord. In order to do that, we must abandon rebellion and choose honesty. In other words, we should be honest with our wives as we are with the Lord. The same goes for the wives. Just as we are honest with the Lord, our wives should be honest with us. Then we can have deep fellowship in the Lord.

**(b) It is because God curses the wicked.**

Look at Proverbs 3:33 – “The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous.” In Proverb, King Solomon repeatedly urges us not to be envious of the prosperity of the wicked (Prov. 23:17; 24:1, 19). What is the reason? The reason is because God cursed the house of the wicked (3:33). Although the wicked seem to eat well, live well, and prosper on this earth from our human point of view, the Bible says that their end is ruin and destruction (Ps. 73:18-19). But the Bible tells us that God blesses the righteous (Prov. 3:33). Therefore, as those who have been justified by believing in Jesus Christ, we should rejoice in the suffering of the righteous rather than envious of the prosperity of the wicked. What is the reason? The reason is because our Jesus suffered too. And the reason is because it is the grace of God that we suffer with Jesus (Phil. 1:29).

We hate pain. Which couple would like to suffer? Therefore, there are times when we envy the prosperity of the wicked. But the Bible says clearly that God not only detests the wicked, but also curses them. However, the Bible says that God not only loves the upright, but also blesses the righteous. Therefore, we, the couples, should share in the suffering of one righteous man rather than envy and pursue the prosperity of thousand wicked people. What is the reason? The reason is because it is grace to share in the sufferings of the Lord as one body (v. 29). God will bless us if we can use God's grace as one body and live the lives of the righteous and suffer for the Lord.

**(c) It is because God mocks proud mockers.**

Look at Proverbs 3:34 – “He mocks proud mockers but gives grace to the humble.” As we have already meditated on in Proverbs 1:26 and learned that when we hate to be reproved by God (v. 24) and, on the contrary, neglect all His teachings and don’t want His reproof (v. 25), we will face disaster (v. 26) and God will laugh at our calamity and when our dread comes (v. 26). In this way, when we are proud and hate to hear God's rebuke and despise it, God will laugh at us. In Proverbs 3:34, King Solomon makes a similar statement. God laughs at the proud. The Bible says that God laughs at the proud who don’t receive God’s rebuke, but rather despise it, and seek their own glory, not God's glory. Therefore, we should never be proud. Rather, we should be humble. Why? The reason is because God gives grace to the humble.

We, the couples, should be wary of pride. Satan puts pride in our hearts, turning us into selfish people who demand love or respect from each other at a higher position rather than to serve each other humbly. We must fight this Satan’s temptation. In order to triumph in this spiritual battle, we must look to Jesus, who is humble and obedient to Heavenly Father's will until He died on the cross (Phil. 2:5-8). Therefore, we should consider each other better than ourselves (v. 3). And not only should we each look out for our own interests, but also for the interests of our spouses (v. 4). Then the Lord, who is our joy, will make our joy complete (v. 2).

**(d) It is because God holds up the fools to shame.**

Look at Proverbs 3:35 – “The wise inherit honor, but fools he holds up to shame.” The violent man and the wicked are guilty of sin, but they don’t feel shame. The reason is because their conscience is paralyzed, and their faces are also a brazen face. But the problem is that we Christians who are committing the same sin over and over again are increasingly unaware of shame. Not long ago, when I read an article on Christian Internet news, I saw an article and a photo where a pastor was working together in a large Christian group, exposing the money election of an older pastor of the same denomination, and presenting a tape recorded as evidence. I saw it and lost a word to say. But what made me more not to say anything was the appearance of the pastor who reveals that fact, sitting in a chair holding an evidence recorder. It was never a humble form that feels shame. A foolish and stupid person is not only unable to regard sin as a sin while he is sinning against God, but also he isn’t ashamed after committing shameful things. We should not be like this. We Christians need to be ashamed. We must not become such a foolish Christian who is unable to feel shame after committing a sin. Rather, we must all become wise Christians. When God rebukes us, we must humbly become wise men who are rebuked by God. And when God reveals our sins, we have to be shameful. Therefore, we must be all those who repent of our sins and return to God to receive glory as an inheritance.

We, the couples, should be people who can feel shame in front of God and our children. It is truly a shame

that we don't love each other, hate each other, don't respect each other, disobey each other, and don't feel shame before God and our children. We must be ashamed. Particularly, the reason why we feel no shame when we quarrel and fight in front of our children is because our conscience is truly paralyzed and our faces are brazen faces. Realizing this, we must humbly come before our Heavenly Father to confess and repent of our sins. The wise people hear the Spirit's rebuke with the word of God that pierces our conscience and obey it and goes to Heavenly Father to repent of our sins. Then we will inherit honor (v. 35).

We learned the three principles of human relations given in Proverbs 3:27-25 under the heading "The human relations of the wise". The first principle is that we shouldn't withhold good from those whom it is due. The second principle is that we must not harm others without cause. And the third principle is that we should not envy a man of violence. The reason why we should not be envious of the violent man is that not only does God detest the violent man and curses him, but also God mocks proud and holds the fools to shame. Rather, we must be upright whom God loves, and we must be righteous who are blessed by God. And we must be humble and wise who inherit honor. In particular, I applied these three principles to our marital relationship. The reason for doing so is because many couples around us suffer from marital conflict. The couples quarrel and fight each other, and even say words in anger and hurt each other's hearts. The married couples aren't honest with each other, envious of the prosperity of the wicked in the world, and even try to control each other in arrogance rather than humbly serving each other. Also, the couples are foolish that they aren't only refuse to listen to the Lord's reproof, but also refuse to listen to each other's reproof of love. What should we do? We, the couples, should generously show each other the love and respect we deserve. The husband deserves respect from his wife, and his wife deserves love from her husband. Also, we should be trustworthy people to each other. And we should be honest with each other. Also, rather than envious of the prosperity of the wicked, we should share with each other in the suffering of the righteous. We should consider each other better than ourselves and serve each other humbly. And we must be wise couples. Therefore, we should all dedicate ourselves to establishing the Lord-centered marital relationship. We pray that we will become couples who can reveal the aroma of Jesus' love, how different couples we are who believe in Jesus in this age of soaring marital divorce rates.



## **Wisdom is supreme.**

### **[Proverbs 4:1-9]**

What do you think of the saying, ‘You must do your best but not try to be the best’? This is the word from Pastor Kyungwon Kim, the author of ‘9 Principles Pastors Must Know’. Of course, the context of this statement is to prevent a pastor like me to be burnout by trying to be the best instead of trying to do best. As much as that, we, the pastors, should be wary of is the supreme consciousness (Kim). I personally think that this makes sense. It is precious to do our best for the glory of God in our work. But if the supreme consciousness of being the best is latent in us, in the end I think it will lead us to not only pursue perfectionism, but also risk falling into pride for our own glory. In other words, I think we should do our best to pursue the best that God tells us rather than to pursue the best we think of. What is that? In Proverbs 4:7, the Bible says that it is “wisdom”. Look at Proverbs 4:7 – “Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.” What does it mean? It means ‘wisdom is the best’. Today, I would like to humbly receive God’s grace while meditating on the supreme wisdom in God’s eyes under the heading “Wisdom is supreme” based on Proverbs 4:1-9.

**First of all, what I want to think about is what we must do in order to obtain the supreme wisdom.**

In Proverbs 4:7, King Solomon says that we must get wisdom though it costs all we have. That’s how much wisdom is worth it to us. Then what must we do to obtain the wisdom that is worth putting on all possessions? We must listen to Heavenly Father’s instruction. Look at Proverbs 4:1 – “Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding.” The reason why we must listen to Heavenly Father’s instruction in order to gain the supreme wisdom is because Heavenly Father gives us sound teaching (v. 2). Our Heavenly Father’s instruction is good. The reason is because our Heavenly Father is good. Therefore, the lesson (law) that the good God teaches us is bound to be good. Therefore, we must receive the good teachings of our Heavenly Father and not abandon it (v. 2). In order to do that, we must hold fast God’s good teaching in our hearts (v. 4). And we must not forget the good word of God (v. 5) and keep it (v. 4).

As I meditated on today's text, I discovered an interesting thing. Look at verse 3: “When I was a boy in my father's house, still tender, and an only child of my mother.” Now King Solomon is telling his sons sound teaching, saying that he is the “only child” of his parents, David and Bathsheba (vv. 1-2). Perhaps this King Solomon's lesson was written when he was an only son to his parents. The reason I think this way is because the sons of David and

Bathsheba were not only Solomon, but three more sons (1 Chron. 3:5) (Walvoord). As I meditate on this word, it is interesting and precious that the wise King David, who feared God taught his son Solomon, and his son Solomon, who became king later taught his sons sound teachings. How precious is it for my father to preach the good word of God to me and I to my children? Unfortunately, as we already know, even though “David had done what was right in the eyes of the LORD and had not failed to keep any of the LORD's commands all the days of his life--except in the case of Uriah the Hittite” (1 Kgs. 15:5), his son King Solomon’s heart wasn’t fully devoted to the Lord as the heart of his father David because his Gentile wives turned his heart after other gods when he grew old (11:4). In other words, even though King Solomon told his sons to listen to the father’s instruction (Prov. 4:1), to lay hold of his words (v. 4) and don’t forget them or swerve from them (v. 5), he himself didn’t live as he taught his sons, and sinned against God by worshipping idols when he was old. In a word, King Solomon’s heart wasn’t fully devoted to the Lord his God (1 Kgs. 11:4). What about King Rehoboam, Solomon's son, who succeeded Solomon as king? He must have received good instruction from his father, Solomon. But Rehoboam became proud and abandoned the law of the Lord because his position as king established and he had become strong (2 Chron. 12:1). Therefore, all the Israelites imitated Rehoboam (v. 1) and sinned against God with him (v. 2). How sad is this? The faith of David, his grandfather, should have continued to be passed on to his son Solomon and his grandson Rehoboam. But even King Solomon, who said to listen to the father's instruction left the instruction of his father King David and committed the great sin of idolatry against God, and his son, Rehoboam, also abandoned the law of God. How sad is this?

We must not forsake our Heavenly Father's law and sin against Him. We must keep our Heavenly Father's sound teaching as we put it in our mind and don’t forget it. Then we can taste God's goodness (Ps. 34:8). In other words, when we keep the sound teaching of our fleshly grandfathers and/or fathers who fear God, we will taste the goodness of God, who works together for good (Rom. 8:28). In order to do that, we must believe in our good God. The reason is because without faith we cannot obey God's sound teaching (Prov. 4:2). And if we don’t obey, we cannot taste God's goodness. Therefore, since we trust in our good God, we must hope only in Him and obey His good commandments with faith (Ps. 34:8). Then, we will be able to experience God and goodness of God, who causes all things to work together for our good (Rom. 8:28).

**The second and the last thing that I want to think about is what blessings God gives us when we gain the supreme wisdom in God's eyes.**

King Solomon tells us three things:

(1) When we gain the supreme wisdom, we will be protected.

Look at Proverbs 4:6 – “Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over

you.” Looking at Proverbs 2:7-8, which we have already meditated on, the Bible tells us that when we walk the path of just by walking blamelessly (v. 7) with wisdom we receive from God (v. 6), God will protect us. In a word, the Bible says that wisdom protects us (2:11). In addition, in Proverbs 3:23, the Bible says that when we preserve sound judgement and discernment (v. 21), God makes our way safe and our feet will not stumble (v. 23). In this way, wisdom protects and keeps us. Do you believe these words of the Bible? There is one thing in my mind that I feel more and more convinced when I ask this question to myself. It’s dangerous without wisdom. In other words, when I become foolish because I don’t believe and obey the sound teachings of Heavenly Father, my faith and heart are exposed to Satan’s attack and are in danger. And what’s even more dangerous is that I am not only foolish but consider my actions to be right (12:15), but also enjoy doing foolish things over and over again (15:14; 26:11). Without this wisdom from God, we are truly in danger. I remember the words of Ecclesiastes 7:12 – “For wisdom is protection just as money is protection, But the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its possessors.” The Bible says that wisdom preserves our lives. So what should we do? Shouldn’t we try to get this supreme wisdom to our best?

(2) The supreme wisdom will exalt and honors us when we embrace and esteem the supreme wisdom.

Look at Proverbs 4:8 – “Esteem her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you.” Wisdom will exalt us when we esteem it. But if we esteem our own stupidity, that stupidity will lower or humble us. I’m having serious concern these days. And I am nervous and a little heavy because of that concern. And that serious concern is “the pastor’s deterioration.” I am afraid that without knowing myself, I will be perverted, and in my pride, I will cover the glory of God and commit a sin against Him. As I meditated on Proverbs 4:8, I thought that I was in danger of falling into the pride of self-exaltation rather than exalting God’s wisdom and exalting myself rather than God. And in the midst of such pride, I thought that trying to exalt myself in front of God and people was only exalting my own stupidity. The result is that God has no choice but to humble me. Therefore, in today’s text, I would like to obey King Solomon’s words to exalt and embrace the wisdom that is supreme in God’s sight. Rather than esteeming and honoring myself, I pray that God will exalt me and honor me.

We must obtain the supreme wisdom in God’s sight. In order to do that, we must humble ourselves and obey God’s sound teaching with our hearts that fear God. Just as Jesus obeyed Heavenly Father’s will until death on the cross, we must obey the will of the Lord until death. Then God will exalt us, just as God exalted Jesus to the highest level and gave us a name that is outstanding above all names (Phil. 2:9).

(3) The supreme wisdom will beautify us when we embrace it.

Look at Proverbs 4:9 – “She will place on your head a garland of grace; She will present you with a crown of beauty.” Here King Solomon personified wisdom as a woman. It is said that when we embrace the wisdom that is like woman, it will make us beautiful. Look at Ezekiel 16:14 – “Then your fame went forth among the nations on account of your beauty, for it was perfect because of My splendor which I bestowed on you," declares the Lord GOD.” In the end, when we gain the supreme wisdom in God's sight, God will present us with the crown of beauty so that our reputation spreads among unbelievers. What a precious blessing this is?

We must do our best to gain the supreme wisdom in God's sight. In order to gain this wisdom worth as much as we all have, we must listen to our Heavenly Father's sound teaching and put it in our hearts and keep it. Then that wisdom will protect us and not only exalts us up, but also will give us the glorious crown of beauty. May this blessing be for all of us.

## The way of wisdom

### [Proverbs 4:10-19]

If you had two choices, the path of life and the path of death, which path will you teach your children to choose to walk? Perhaps no one will ever teach a loved one to choose the path of death. I remember hearing a column from a counselor through a Korean radio broadcast a while ago. The content of that column was that many of the Korean immigrant children are living with alcohol and drugs. But the problem is that many of their parents are helpless. What should the parents do?

In Proverbs 4:10, King Solomon is saying to his son: “Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many.” Now King Solomon is teaching his son the way to life. What is the way of life? It is the “the way of wisdom”. Look at verse 11: “I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths.” What is the way of wisdom that King Solomon taught his son here? It is upright paths (v. 11).

We are living in an era of honesty crisis. In this age we are living in, we are in a state of confusion that we cannot discern what is true and what is false. This cannot be but the work of Satan. Satan, the father of lies, deceives us with a lie and says the lie is truth. Therefore, Satan continues to tempt us with falsely wrapped “truths” to make us leave the path of wisdom and walk the path of the wicked, that is the way of evil men (v. 14). What should we do? Look at Proverbs 14:14-15. This is what the Bible instructs us: “Do not enter the path of the wicked And do not proceed in the way of evil men. Avoid it, do not pass by it; Turn away from it and pass on.” We must avoid. We must not even go through the path of the wicked. The reason is because the wicked cannot sleep unless they make us stumble (v. 16). They are those who eat the bread of wickedness and drink wine of violence (v. 17). In other words, their main food is sin. Therefore, the wicked who eat sins are tempting us today to make us, the believers, to leave the path of wisdom and walk the path of the wicked. But the unfortunate reality is that we are constantly falling into the temptations of the wicked. Therefore, there are many times when we walk the path of the wicked rather than the path of the wisdom, the path of the upright, and the path of the righteous. Look at verse 19: “The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know over what they stumble.” Isn't that true? When we fall into the Satan's temptations and walk the path of the wicked, aren't there many times we don't know where we fall and are walking on this dark path? When I think about the reason why we are constantly falling into the Satan's temptations, I think the reason is because Satan's subtle work of lies is mixed with God's word of truth and is whispering to us as truth. Therefore, many times we have hard time distinguishing between the truth that is the word of God and the false “truth” that is Satan's lie. So we are confused and choose the false “truth” that is Satan's

lie. I think there are many times when we find ourselves walking the path of the wicked. What should we do?

The way to distinguish between this satanic false “truth” and the truth of the true God is to meditate on the word of God’s truth day and night. If we meditate on the word of God day and night, we can distinguish Satan’s lie. That is why King Solomon exhorts us in verse 13: “Take hold of instruction; do not let go Guard her ....” Heavenly Father wants us to give us the supreme wisdom. And He continues to instruct us with the word of truth. We must take hold of it and don’t let it go. And we must obey that instruction. Then our steps will not be impeded and will not stumble (v. 12).

We must walk the path of wisdom. The path of wisdom is the upright path, and the upright path is the path of the righteous. Look at Proverbs 4:18 – “But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.” What does it mean? A wise child of God, who listens to Heavenly Father’s instruction and holds firmly and keeps it without losing it, let the light of purity (Park) to shine brightly in this dark world like the sunlight that rises in the morning. It’s like the sunlight shines more and more in the daytime. It means that the light of the holiness of the wise children of God shines brighter in this dark world. As I meditated on this word, I remembered Daniel 12:3 – “Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” And when we meditate on this verse in connection with Proverbs 4:10-19, I thought that we should shine the light of the gospel in this dark world. In order to do that, we must walk the path of wisdom according to Heavenly Father’s instruction. We must walk the upright path and the path of the righteous. In order for us to shine the light of the gospel in this dark and sinful world, we must shine the light of uprightness and the light of righteousness. Therefore, because God uses us to bring many people back to what is righteousness, we must shine forever, like the light in the expanse, like the stars in the sky.

Now, many of our second generation Korean-American children are walking the path of sin in this dark world without listening to the wise words and instructions of their parents. The people of this dark world who sin are causing our children to stumble, leaving the upright path and the path of righteousness and walking the path of lies and the path of the wicked. What is truly serious is that our children have lost the ability to resist the temptations of the wicked. Therefore, when the people of this world tempt us, we must neither enter nor walk the path of the wicked. But our children have entered that path and are now walking the path of the wicked. What should we do? We must teach our children the wise way of life. We must instruct and guide them to walk the upright path, the path of the righteous. In doing so our children will not stumble. Rather, our children, like the stars in the sky and the light in the expanse, will become wise people who lead many people to righteousness, and they will become God’s people who give glory to God. May this blessing be upon our families.

## **Let us pay attention to the word of God!**

### **[Proverbs 4:20-27]**

Have you ever heard the word “attention deficit hyperactivity disorder” (ADHD)? This disorder is a psychiatric disorder in children and adolescents with distraction, hyperactivity, impulsivity, and learning disabilities. The symptoms of this disorder are characterized by poor concentration and impulsive behavior. There is large change in emotion and symptoms of poor memory. It is also difficult to predict behavior and difficult to control anger. Also, because they are weak against stimulation, they are good at interfering. It is reported that 75% of children with this disorder consistently have behavioral problems such as hostility, anger, aggression, and rebellion (Internet). When I think of this attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, I thought that among us Christians there is a spiritual attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. A characteristic feature of this disorder is that we Christians not only don't focus well on Jesus, who is the author and perfecter of our faith, but also don't focus well on the word of God. Rather, we who have this disorder often speak and act impulsively because of our emotional changes. How can we overcome these obstacles? How can we focus well on Jesus and focus on His word?

If we look at the first half of Proverbs 4:20, God is telling us this: “My son, give attention to my words ...” I would like to learn 5 lessons from today's text on how we should pay attention to the word of God:

#### **First, we must listen closely to God's words.**

Look at Proverbs 4:20b – “... listen closely to my words.” King Solomon has already said in Proverbs 2:2, “Turning your ear to wisdom ...”, and in 5:1, “... listen well to my words of insight”. I think this age in which we live is a flood of information. There seems to be so many things that our ears can also hear due to the information pouring out here and there. The problem is that the more we hear in this information age, the more difficult it is for our ears to hear God's voice quickly. As a result, it is easy for us to make unwise and improper choices. The unwise and inconspicuous choice is that we “will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their (our) own desires, they (we) will gather around them (us) a great number of teachers to say what their (our) itching ears want to hear” (2 Tim. 4:3). We must listen to the “sound doctrine”. We must listen to God's word. The reason is because as we listen to His word, we will become wise and understanding. Then we will be able to discern and hear the information and words pouring out like the flood in this world with wisdom and understanding of God. Jesus said in John 10:27 that the Lord's sheep hear the Lord's voice. As the Lord's sheep, we must listen to the voice of the Shepherd. This is the life of paying attention to the word of God.

## **Second, we must not let God's word out of our sight.**

Look at Proverbs 4:21a – “Do not let them out of your sight, ....” King Solomon has already said in Proverbs 3:21, “My son, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight.” However, I think we are breaking this word and causing God's sound judgment and discernment to let them out of our sight. The reason is because Satan is constantly tempting us to live and make us driven by the lust of the eye (1 Jn. 2:16). As a result, we often walk by sight rather than by faith. How can we walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7)? In order to do this, it is important for us to look at and read the record of God's word and ponder it (Park). Why is this important? The reason is because by doing so, our faith is strengthened (Acts 17:11-12) (Park). When we fail to focus our eyes on the Lord and keep turning to difficult situations or people around us, we are bound to shake. Even in the Bible, the disciples of Jesus looked at the storm. They were afraid because their faith was shaken. It was because they couldn't see the Creator God who controls the storm. In order for us not to make this mistake, we must open our ears and listen to Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:17). The reason is because faith comes from hearing the words of Christ. Not only our ears but also our eyes should pay attention to the word of God. We must see, read, and meditate on the word of God, so that our faith can be strengthened. Also, we must keep the Bible next to us and read it all the days of our lives (Deut. 17:19). Therefore, we must learn to fear God so that our hearts are not prideful over others, and we must not turn aside from His commandment, to the right or the left (v. 20). And we must walk with solid faith, seeing with our own eyes and looking straight at the Lord (Prov. 4:25). I remember the words of Hebrews 12:2 – “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” We should pay attention to Jesus, who perfecter of our faith. This is the life of paying attention to the word of God.

## **Third, we must keep God's word within our hearts.**

Look at Proverbs 4:21b – “... keep them within your heart.” We cannot end by just hearing the word of God with our ears and see with our eyes. We must keep His word well within our hearts. What is the reason? Look at verse 22: “for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body.” The reason we must keep God's word well within our hearts is because it not only becomes life to us, but also health of our whole body. In the end, both our life and our health are under the sovereignty of God. When we hear, see, and keep the word of God within our hearts, “God of the spirits of all flesh” (Num. 16:22) will also protect our lives and our health. So, King Solomon says in Proverbs 4:23 – “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”

I personally believe that we Christians, especially church leaders, should be good at managing. The basis for this is 1 Timothy 3:4 – “He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity.” The apostle Paul is saying this as one of the qualifications of an overseer. Then, when we asked what we should manage well, I thought about 6 things: Healthcare, time management, financial management, crisis management, heart management, and soul management. Among them, when I think about heart management,



I really thought of two things that could help us keep our hearts well:

(1) We must diligently reflect on our hearts.

Look at Hebrews 4:12 – “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” We must diligently examine the thoughts and will of our hearts with the living and active word of God. The reason is because “What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean'” (Mt. 15:11). This is what Jesus says: “But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean'” (vv. 18-20). We must fight spiritually in the realm of thought. We must have good thoughts not evil thoughts. We must fight with hate (murder) thoughts (1 Jn 3:15), sexual immorality, theft, false testimony and we must think about love and the truth. Look at Philippians 4:8 – “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-- think about such things.”

(2) We must break up our hearts diligently so that our hearts will not be hardened.

We must soften our hearts. Look at Hosea 10:12 – “Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; ....” How shall we break up our hearts? We can find the answer in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

**(a) We must receive teaching through the word of God.**

The time has come, as it is said in 2 Timothy 4:3. It is the time when men will not put up with sound doctrine but to suit their own desires, they gather around them the great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. But we must listen to the sound doctrine. We must listen to the extent that our hearts instruct us (Ps. 16:7).

**(b) We must receive rebuke through the word of God.**

Look at Ephesians 5:11 – “Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.” The indwelling Spirit reveals our sins through the word of God when we participate with the fruitless deeds of darkness. When the light of God's holy word, the sword of the Holy Spirit, shines on our dark hearts, we

have conscience stricken. And our hearts are broken by the word of God that is like a hammer (Jere. 23:29). Then, like the 3,000 believers in Acts 2, we have no choice but to listen to God's word through God's servant and respond like this: "Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). At that time the apostle Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (v. 38). We must be rebuked by the word of God and repent of our sins.

**(c) We must receive correction through the word of God.**

Satan twists our minds and makes us walk on a crooked path. But God makes us think the right way with the word of God and also enables us to walk the right path. If our hearts are not on the right path, we must take instruction and rebuke from God's word and walk on the right path.

**(d) We must receive training in righteousness through the word of God.**

We are the righteous who have been justified by believing in Jesus Christ with the exclusive grace of God. Therefore, we must live righteous life. In order to do that, we must be trained in righteousness through the word of God. We must keep our heart, which is the wellspring of life more than anything. But in order to keep our heart well, we must keep the word of God in our hearts. This is the life of paying attention to the Word of God.

**Fourth, we must speak the word of God with our lips.**

Look at Proverbs 4:24 – "Put away from you a deceitful mouth And put devious speech far from you." King Solomon advises us to keep God's word well in our hearts, so not only should we keep our hearts, but also our lips. His admonition message is to put away "a deceitful mouth" and "devious speech" far from us. When I meditate on the words of this exhortation, the thought is that if our hearts are crooked and deceitful because we have not been able to keep our hearts well with the word of God (right instruction), then what comes out of our hearts can only be crooked and deceitful words. is. I think the same goes for ears and eyes. If our hearts are not paying attention to God's right instruction, we will have no choice but to listen to the crooked and deceitful ears, eyes, and lips, look at them with our eyes, and speak with our lips. This is what Proverbs 26:24 says: "He who hates disguises it with his lips, But he lays up deceit in his heart." We should not disguise deceit in our hearts with our lips, like our adversaries and hypocrites. Rather, our hearts must be true and we must speak truthfully with our lips. This is what the apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 3:10 – "For, 'Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.'" If we love life, we must control our lips. By no means do we speak evil words and deceit with our lips. In order to do that, we must keep our knowledge with our lips (Prov. 5:2). We must keep the knowledge of the Bible and the knowledge of God with our lips. And we must speak the word of God. We must testify the word of God. This is the life of paying attention to His word.

**Fifth and last, we must make sure that our feet do not turn away from the word of God.**

Look at Proverbs 4:26-27: “Watch the path of your feet And all your ways will be established. Do not turn to the right nor to the left; Turn your foot from evil.” King Solomon recommends that the path to be taken by our feet should be measured. This means to think deeply about what we are trying to do and whether it is in danger (Park). I am sure there is on one among us who will walk to take our steps forward, knowing that it's a precarious road. In particular, no one will walk down that road knowing that it will endanger our lives. Rather, we will choose the established path and try to walk that path (v. 26). Therefore, King Solomon is now encouraging us to strengthen all our ways. In order to do that, the Bible says that we must turn our feet away from evil (v. 27). In other words, because feet that don't turn away from evil can endanger not only our physical life but also our spiritual life, we must make our feet turn away from evil.

As I meditated on these words, I remembered the “A young man lacking sense” in Proverbs 7:7. He approached the corner of an adulteress' street (v. 8), fell into her temptation and followed her like an ox goes to the slaughter, or as one in fetters to the discipline of a fool (v. 22). Because this foolish young man didn't heed the word of God, his heart turned to the adulteress' path and was deceived by that path (v. 25), and his feet turned to the perilous adulteress' path. And what was the result of the foolish young man on his way to that perilous adulteress? Look at Proverbs 7:23 – “Until an arrow pierces through his liver; As a bird hastens to the snare, So he does not know that it will cost him his life.” The result is the loss of life. Therefore, we must pay attention to the word of God so that our feet don't turn away from His word. In doing so, we will reinforce our path and not lean left or right. And we will be able to walk the right path. This is the life of paying attention to the word of God

We must live a life of paying attention to the word of God. We must develop our spiritual concentration and listen to what God is saying to us though His word. Also, we must not let the word of God to depart from our sight. And we must keep the word in our hearts. In the midst of that, we must speak the word of God with our lips. And we must keep our feet not to turn away from the word of God.

## **Christian heart management**

**“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” (Proverbs 4:23)**

There is still an unforgettable event. A mother, whom I know, was shot to death when she ran out of her store in following a robber who came into her store and stole her money. The money the robber stole from the store was \$100. It was an absurd event. Of course, I don't think she went after the robber to keep \$100 because it could be a momentary reaction. However, one precious life died for just \$100.

Too many people seem to give their whole strength, heart, and sincerity to keep money. I think we are doing whatever we can to protect money in this materialistic world. What's even more frightening is the fact that we are throwing away our hearts to protect our money. I am thinking about what we Christians are doing in this world where people try to protect money even while throwing away their conscience. Are we different from them? Aren't we trying to control the Lord's church with money by strengthening our neck in the church with money, boasting in front of the church members? Why are we throwing our hearts? Why aren't we any no longer committed ourselves to protect our hearts? Our hearts are getting dirty. What is even more frightening is that even the faith to rely on the blood of Jesus' cross is fading in our dirty hearts. It seems that we are living by showing people our form of godliness in our proud instinct to save our hearts that are being polluted by law. Our hearts are full of doubts, not faith. And such hearts test God (Acts 15:10). It is our hearts that doubt about the salvation plan of grace that God has established (Park). In short, our hearts don't know "the grace of the Lord Jesus" (v. 11).

God is giving us the word of life today. Above all else, we must guard our hearts because “it is the wellspring of life” (Prov. 4:23). We should not take this fundamental lesson lightly. We should not waste time focusing on other things while ignoring the wellspring of life. Specifically, how should we proceed to guard our hearts? We must keep it by faith. We must cleanse our hearts by faith (Acts 15:9). We must do our best to cleanse and prioritize guarding our hearts amidst Satan's devilish schemes and many temptations. Although it may be difficult, painful, lonely, and exhausted, we must guard our hearts with all our lives. In order to do that, we must claim only Christ's righteousness by faith. We must consider our righteousness rubbish. We can boast only our sins and our weakness. We must hold onto the truth, saved only through the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, with all our heart, mind, and soul. In addition, since we are sanctified through the work of the truth of the Holy Spirit in our life of faith, we must live a sanctified life. “Create in me a clean heart, O God ...” (Ps. 51:10).

## Why should we pay attention to God's wisdom?

### [Proverbs 5:1-14]

Do you know anyone who has been raped around you? When I looked at one of the Korean Internet News last week, I read the article under the heading 'Collective sexual harassment medical students, a large number of influential law firm lawyers' which was a hot debate article (Internet). The content of the article is that three Korean K University medical students, who are in their early and mid-20's, were convicted of sexual assault on a young girl who fell asleep while drunk. And they have appointed lawyers for their law firms on a large scale. But I guess there are about 10 lawyers appointed by those three students. I think they are famous lawyers too. The question is how the students hired so many famous lawyers to cover their attorneys' fees. It is said that sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape are often encountered by people very close. In fact, according to the statistics of sexual crimes from a group called RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network), which is called an anti-sexual violence organization in the United States, about two-thirds of sexual assaults are people the victims know. And 38% of rapists say they are friends or acquaintances. And the statistics show that every two minutes someone living in the United States is sexually assaulted (internet). It must be a serious phenomenon. I think that there are so many sexual temptations in the world, and there are so many people who fall into them. What should we do?

During the Wednesday prayer meeting in the last two weeks, we were taught 5 lessons on how to pay attention to the word of God, focusing on the words of Proverbs 4:20-27. We must pay attention to what God is saying to us (v. 20). And we must not let God's word out of our sight (v. 21). And we must keep His word in our hearts (v. 21) and speak His word with our lips (v. 24). In the meantime, we have learned that we must not let our feet to turn away from the word of God (vv. 26-27). Today, focusing on Proverbs 5:1-14, I would like to learn the reason why we should pay attention to God's wisdom (v. 1). King Solomon gives the reason in verse 2: "That you may observe discretion And your lips may reserve knowledge." The reason we need to pay attention to God's wisdom is to gain knowledge and discretion (1:4) to protect and guard us (2:11; 3:21-24). Then, from what does that knowledge and discretion protect and guard us? It is the adulteress, a prostitute. In other words, when we pay attention to the wisdom of God and gain knowledge and discretion, that knowledge and discretion protects us from the adulteress' temptation and saves us [(2:16) "It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words"]. Here, what is the adulteress' temptation? Look at Proverbs 4:3 – "For the lips of an adulteress drip honey And smoother than oil is her speech." What is the temptation of the adulteress here? It is the temptation of the lips. The lips of the adulteress drip honey and her speech is smoother than oil (v. 3). This means that the adulteress' temptation with her lips is so subtle and skillful that not only does it sound sweet to our ears, but

it is threatening because it makes people to fall into the temptation and slip away from their faith (Park). So the Bible says that even though the lips of the adulteress are sweet and charming at first and seem to offer us pleasure, at the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword (v. 4), eventually killing us spiritually, leading us to death and straight to the grave (v. 5) (Park). This is the purpose of the adulteress to lure us with her lips. She leads us into hedonism and makes us unable to think about the way of life (v. 6), which in the end causes us to leave God forever and to perish forever. What should we do? What must we do to overcome the temptation of the adulteress?

### **First, in order for us to overcome the adulteress' temptation, we must listen to God.**

Look at Proverbs 5:7 – “Now then, my sons, listen to me; do not turn aside from what I say.” In order for us to overcome the temptation of the harlot's lips, we must hear the word from God's mouth. In other words, we must overcome the temptation of the harlot's lips with the word of God, the sword of the Holy Spirit coming out of God's mouth. In order to do this, the word of God must be sweet to us like honey. We must hear the voice of the psalmist confessing in Psalms 19:10, and we must have such confession as well: “They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.” If we are enjoying the sweetness of God's word, we would never listen to the voice of temptation flowing out of the adulteress's mouth. And we will not fall for her temptation, no matter how sweet the temptation voice of the adulteress may sound. However, if we do not taste the sweetness of God's word, we will gradually move away from the word of God's mouth and eventually depart from it. The reason is because we are listening to the honey-like voices of delusion dropping from the mouth of the adulteress which is already slippery than oil than the words of God's mouth. It's like not having the cluster of honey of God's word planted in our heart but the cluster of honey of the adulteress. Not long ago, couple of men who get rid of bees came to my house. They came and went up to the roof of the house with a ladder and sprayed some chemical to kill those bees. After a while, many of the bees died and fell to the ground. Then another man climbed the roof. After removing all the honeycomb from the roof, he covered the roof well, and between the roof and the wall to prevent bees from penetrating into the roof again. He closed all the gaps and went. Hearing about the bee-killing experts, it is said that if we don't remove the honeysuckle, the honey will melt and cause insects and rats to appear. And since bees are said to be gathering again, we had no choice but to get rid of the cluster of honey even with a large amount of money. When I think of this, I think that Satan is trying to make a sinful bunch of honey in our hearts that follow the pleasures of the flesh through the adulteress. However, the saints who consider the word of God sweeter than the honey of the cluster are blocked from hearing the voice of the Satan's and the adulteress' temptation because the word of God lives and works in their hearts. On the other hand, the saints who don't enjoy the taste of God's word are exposed to the Satan's and the adulteress' temptation because there are many gaps here and there. Like the psalmist, we should treat God's word as sweeter than a bunch of honey. To that extent, we must yearn for and love God's word. Therefore, we meditate on the word of God day and night, listen to and obey His voice heard through meditation on the word, so we must prevent any temptation from the mouth of the adulteress from penetrating our hearts.

**Second, in order for us to overcome the adulteress' temptation, we must keep our path far from the adulteress.**

Look at Proverbs 5:8 – “Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house.” This is what Dr. Park said: ‘Since sexual temptation is something that has charm, anyone can overcome it only by avoiding it’ (Park). One of those good examples is Joseph in the book of Genesis. A Potiphar's wife looked at Joseph with desire, who was handsome in form and appearance, asked him to lie with her day after day (Gen. 39:6, 7, 10). But not only did Joseph refuse to sleep with her because he feared God, but also he wasn't even with her (v. 10). But one day, when Joseph went into the Potiphar's house to do his work, there were nobody except the Potiphar's wife (v. 11). She caught him by his garment and said, “Lie with me!” (v. 12) So Joseph left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside (v. 12). Although Joseph was accused of wrongdoing and imprisoned, he was able to resist the temptation of the Potiphar's wife. But these days, many young Christians aren't able to resist sexual temptation like Joseph, and they sin against God and are living in prison of heart. They are bound by the chains of sexual sin and living a sexual slavery. Unlike Joseph, if someone tells us to choose someone who has been tempted by a woman, we will probably say Samson besides David. Not only did he see one of the Philistine daughters at Timnah and made her his wife (Jdg. 14), at Gaza he saw a harlot there and went into her (16:1). After this, he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah (v. 4). He fell into her temptation, was taken over by the Philistines, and eventually died with them. What should we do? We must stay away from things that tempt us sexually. It is foolish that we try to overcome sexual temptation by getting close to them. I remember hearing the story a long time ago that a pastor who did a prostitute ministry eventually committed sexual sin. And after that, I remember hearing firsthand that a female missionary I know is interested in doing the prostitute ministry in the mission field. I think it will not be easy. I think it will be a huge challenge. The apostle Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:22, “Now flee from youthful lusts”. And he said in 1 Corinthians 6:18, “Flee immorality... “. We must avoid immorality and lusts. We must not even go to the door of the prostitute's house at all. We must stay away from the prostitutes. We must stay close to the word of God, but stay away from the words of prostitutes. And because we are close to God, we must stay away from prostitutes.

But the Bible says that if we refuse to hear the voice of God spoken to us through King Solomon, we will experience some unfortunate ending as we approach the door of her house without taking our way away from the adulteress. What are those unfortunate endings? Dr. Park describes the five unfortunate endings (Park):

(1) We will give our vigor.

Look at Proverbs 5:9a – “Or you will give your vigor to others ...”. The first unfortunate ending when we refuse to listen to the word of God and get our way closer to the door of the adulteress's house, the Bible says, we will lose vigor. Here, “vigor” can mean “strength or vigor” or “honor”. I think both

interpretations make sense. It is true that we lose our strength when we eventually fall for the adulteress' temptation. But we also lost honor when don't keep ourselves away from the harlot and are close to the door of her house. I think that a good example is the person named David in the Bible. When he was under King Saul, he was praised and honored by the Israelites for taking care of all things wisely. But when he became king and committed adultery to Bathsheba and killed her husband Uriah, he lost his honor and splendor when God revealed his sins through the prophet Nathan. So, in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:6, the Bible says, "David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife." The word "Uriah's wife" means that David gave birth to Solomon through another man's wife and it was recorded in the genealogy of Jesus. Then, wasn't David's sin of fornication known to all the Jews? How embarrassing is this? The same is true of Jacob's son Judah. Because of his sexual immorality, he is recorded in the genealogy of Jesus, "Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar (Mt.1:3) (Park). Who is Tamar? She was Judah's daughter-in-law. How embarrassing is this?

(2) We will give our years to the cruel one.

Look at Proverbs 5:9b – "... And your years to the cruel one." What does it mean? This means that when we disobey God's word and come close to the adulteress, we will waste our youth, which is our golden age, to the cruel adulteress. In Ecclesiastes 12:1, King Solomon tells us: "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no delight in them." The golden age of a young man is a good time to remember God the Creator and serve Him. But what would happen to the young man's life if he wasted by the adulteress, not God, at that golden age? The reason the adulteress is a cruel because it makes young men to waste their youth.

(3) We will lose our property and income.

Look at Proverbs 5:10 – "And strangers will be filled with your strength And your hard-earned goods will go to the house of an alien." When we fall into the adulteress' temptation, we don't lose only honor or time. We also lose material. Obviously, the Bible says that we have to serve God and give glory to Him through our material as well. But those who fall into the adulteress' temptation don't give money to God but they satisfy their passions with it. How absurd is this in the sight of God? If God gives us the blessing of material things, and the blessing we receive is giving it to the adulteress, how absurd is this from God's point of view? Rather, it would be better to lose all of the material. This is because there is no way going to the adulteress.

(4) We will regret it because we also lose our health.

Look at Proverbs 5:11 – "And you groan at your final end, When your flesh and your body are consumed."



How many people now lie with prostitutes, so they contract venereal diseases, weaken their bodies, and even die? There is no way to cure the disease of AIDS still. What is terrifying is that even though some people know that they have AIDS, they have sex with others, spreading sexually transmitted diseases. Seeing such news, how cruel and wicked people are. The end of those who sleep with prostitutes lose their health, and at the end they regret their action.

(5) We will suffer in our conscience.

Look at Proverbs 5:12-14: “And you say, ‘How I have hated instruction! And my heart spurned reproof! I have not listened to the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined my ear to my instructors! I was almost in utter ruin In the midst of the assembly and congregation.’” At the end, after losing fame, wasting time, losing wealth, losing health, and regretting, what's the use? Even though the Israelites were admonished and rebuked by their teachers, they hated the admonition and rebuke, and didn't listen to it. So, even though they belonged to the Holy Assembly of Israel, they committed many sins unscrupulously (Park). In the eyes of God, how does God think about those who still go to church and receive a lot of instruction from church pastors or teachers and receive rebukes, but still straighten their neck and commit sexual crimes according to their stubbornness and sinful instincts? This is Dr. Park said: ‘Even after learning a lot of truth, the sins of those who go against it are punished even more’ (Lk. 12:47-48).

We must pay attention to God's wisdom. What is the reason? The reason is because we gain knowledge and discretion to protect and guard us from the adulteress' temptations. We must fight and overcome the temptation of the prostitutes. In order to do that, we must listen to the word of God's mouth without throwing it away. And we must keep our way away from the adulteress. We should never fall under the prostitutes' temptations, lose all of our honor, time, wealth, and health, and live a life of regret in pain in our conscience. May God give us His wisdom.

## Why do you have an affair?

**“Keep your way far from her And do not go near the door of her house.”  
(Proverbs 5:8)**

I still remember that when I was leading a premarital counseling class, one sister in Christ said that she expected her future husband would have affair once when they would get married. I was shocked when I heard that. I couldn't understand how she could say that she would not only expect her future husband to have an affair but also she would accept that reality. Maybe she might have thought that such a thing could happen to her future marriage because having affair was so prevalent in those days. On the one hand, I was surprised to hear her word, but on the other hand, when I wondered why she said such thing, I thought that too many people had an affair. Why does a man have an affair with another woman? Why does a woman have an affair with another man?

I found one of the reasons in Proverbs 5:8 – “Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house.” The reason is because the man is close to the woman whom he should be far away. In Proverbs 5:8, the Bible tells the man to keep to the path far from “her”. Who is “her” here? She is “an adulteress” (v. 3). Why is the Bible telling the man to keep the path far from the adulteress? The reason is because if he gets close to her, “she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword” (v. 4). Of course, it is not like that at first. Who will have an affair from the beginning, thinking of bitterness and pain? However, what he doesn't know is the fact that only bitterness and pain will remain afterwards. If he knows this fact (only with his head) and still starts having affair, he will be awakened later when he taste its bitterness and pain. Another reason to stay away from the adulteress is because if not, then “you will give your vigor to others And your years to the cruel one; And strangers will be filled with your strength And your hard-earned goods will go to the house of an alien” (vv. 9-10). In fact, don't we hear the news that those who had affair lost their honor and riches, and even got killed? The man who sleeps with another man's wife (6:29), that wife's husband will show no mercy when he takes revenge because jealousy arouses his fury (v. 34). “He will not accept any compensation; he will refuse the bribe, however great it is” (v. 35). What would the jealous husband do to the man who had an affair with his own wife? Will he not try to kill him? Isn't this thing actually happening? Another reason why the man should not be close to the adulteress is because when he is close to her, at the end of his life he will groan, when his flesh and body are spent (5:11): “... How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors. I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly” (vv. 12-14). Do you think someone who is having an affair will listen to your rebuke and admonition? Look at Proverbs 6:27-28 – “Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes

being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?" The man who is having affair with another man's wife is like a man who scoop fire into his lap. He may say that the fire is his love for another man's wife. But he doesn't know that he is destroying himself, blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away (vv. 32-33). Nevertheless, the foolish man with no wisdom gets close to another man's wife, whom he should be far away (cf. 7:7-8). He keeps going to her house (v. 8). It is also in deep dark night (v. 9). But the wise man doesn't go close to another man's wife. He doesn't go to her house. Rather, he is far from her.

I have found in Proverbs 5:15-19 the reason why the foolish man has an affair with another man's wife. To summarize the reason in one word, it is that he doesn't love only his wife (v. 15). To be more specific, it's because he isn't making his wife happy, nor does he rejoice with her (v. 18). If he considers his wife loving and beautiful and is satisfied her breasts always and is captivated by her love (v. 19), he will never give another woman his affection, embrace her and have kids with her (vv. 16, 20).

We must become wise men. We must love only our wives. We should make our wives happy and should rejoice with her. We should keep her loving and beautiful and be always satisfied with her. And we must be always captivated by her love. Then we will not have an affair.

## **I am afraid when I think about my children.**

**“At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent. You will say, "How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors. I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly.” (Proverbs 5:11-14)**

I am a father of three children and I have fear. The fear is that when my three children whom God gave to my wife and I as the gifts grow up and become teenagers, they may go astray. The reason I have this fear is probably because I went astray when I was a teenager. But a greater fear that I have than this fear is that my three children betray Jesus, leave faith and the church. Although I cannot imagine this fear being actualized, I only look at the Lord since I don't know the future and only God knows.

When we look at Proverbs 5:11-14, we see the author of the Proverbs had fear. His fear was that when he died, his son (v. 1) aged and at the end of his life his flesh and boy are spent (v. 11), he might regret his life as he looks back at his life. What was the image of the regretful life of the son that the author of the Proverbs feared? I can summarize in two ways: (1) 'Why did I hate my parents' instruction and my heart spurn reproof?' (v. 12) and (2) 'Why didn't I listen to the voice of my teachers?' (v. 13). If we have really an important meeting in our life's journey, it is the meeting our parents and our teachers. These two meetings are important because our parents and our teachers have the greatest impact on our lives. Especially, the influence of our parents on us is bigger than the influence of our teachers. Of course, our teacher's teaching affects us, but our parents' instruction and reproof has much bigger impact on us. The problem, however, is that our children reject the influence of their parents and teachers. They hate their parents' instruction and reproof at home, and they don't listen to their teachers at school. As a result, our children go astray and fall into evil unlike the wish of their parents who have raised them with instruction and reproof and the expectation of their teachers who have taught them. Which parents and which teachers would like to see their children and their disciples walking in the way of sin? The author of Proverbs was afraid of this. After he died, when his son aged he might regret his life at the end of his life by the fact that he hated his parents' instruction and reproof and that he didn't listen to the voice of his teachers and was in utter ruin (vv. 12-14). As a father, the author of Proverbs was afraid that his beloved son would come to an unwanted conclusion because he hated his parents' instruction and his reproof and his teacher's teaching. Aren't you afraid too? Don't you have fear like the author of Proverbs when you think of your beloved children? Or are you already experiencing the reality that you were afraid of?

What must I do as a father of three children? What I can do is to teach my three children "my wisdom" and "my understanding" (v. 1) like the author of Proverbs. How should I impart my wisdom and understanding to my three children? Of course I must teach the Word of God with my lips and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to them. But before that, I myself must obey the Word of God and live a life worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ in front of God and of three children. My heart eagerly prays and hopes in God that my fear of the three children will not be actualized.

## Let your wife be blessed!

### [Proverbs 5:15-23]

What is a most valuable thing to you? Who is the most valuable person in your life? The Bible says in Proverbs 5:18, "Let our fountain be blessed ...." Here the word "fountain" refers to a wife. In other words, the Bible commands us to let our wives to be blessed. How can we, the husbands, let our wives to be blessed?

#### **First, we must regard our wives as the blessing God has given us.**

Look at Proverbs 18:22 – "He who finds a wife finds a good thing And obtains favor from the LORD." Of course, the wise King Solomon is not talking about any wives. How can you know it? We can know this by looking at what he said in Proverb: "It is better to live in a corner of a roof Than in a house shared with a contentious woman" (Prov. 21:9), "It is better to live in a desert land Than with a contentious and vexing woman" (v. 19), "It is better to live in a corner of the roof Than in a house shared with a contentious woman" (25:24). In Proverbs 18:22, King Solomon is not talking about "a contentious woman" or "a vexing woman". Rather, he is talking about "an excellent wife" (12:4), "prudent wife" (19:14) or "A wife of noble character (31:10). Look at Proverbs 12:4 – "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who shames him is like rottenness in his bones." Look at Proverbs 19:14 – "House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the LORD." Look at Proverbs 31:10 – "A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies." The Bible says that those who acquire such a wise, excellent and virtuous wife are blessed and have received favor from God. In other words, a husband who has this wife as spouses is blessed. The reason is that such a wise, excellent and virtuous wife is blessing to him.

Do you consider your wife a blessing? Or do you consider her a curse? The reason I ask this question is that the word "be blessed" in Proverbs 5:18 in Hebrew has not only the meaning "bless" or "be blessed" but also "curse" (Vine). We, the husbands, should consider our wives as a blessing. The reason is because the wives of our youth are from God. And the wives whom God has given us is blessing for us (Mal 2:14) (Park Yun-sun). Therefore, we must not only think that our wives are the blessed ones but also express in words to them "You are my blessed one". But if we do not regard our wives as our blessing, it is the same as denying that our wives are from God. This is the sin of unbelief and the sin of pride. Maybe some of men want to make excuse like this: 'How can I regard my wife as blessing to me when God didn't give an excellent wife but a contentious or vexing woman?' Isn't this sound a good excuse? If I hear such a statement, I would like to say to that man like this: 'God has not

given you the contentious or vexing woman but you have chosen such a woman. So you have responsibility to nurture her as a virtuous woman.' In many cases, it seems like the men are rejecting the wise, excellent and noble women God gives to them and choose to marry the women whom they think they are pretty and charming in their own eyes, but who are aggressive and contentious later. If we have made such a choice, shouldn't we commit ourselves to nurture our wives to be the excellent wives with a sense of responsibility? Too many men are now saying and doing irresponsible things to the women who we have chosen to marry. They are not afraid to speak cursed words to their wives, nor are they acting to make their wives feel cursed. So many wives now live without being loved by their husbands. What a miserable woman's life? We must consider our wives as blessing from God. And we must faithfully endure the responsibility to our wives whom we have chosen.

### **Second, we must rejoice with our wives in order to bless them.**

Look at Proverbs 5:18 – “May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.” How should we, the husbands, rejoice our wives? We should let our wives' breasts satisfy always. Look at verse 19: “A loving doe, a graceful deer-- may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.” Here, the word “may her breasts satisfy you always” means that we must be captivated by our wives' love. In particular, we must be captivated by their virtue rather than their beauty. This is the meaning of the word “A loving doe, a graceful deer” (Park Yun-sun). In doing so, we will only rejoice the love of our “cistern” and “well” (v. 15) and we will not let ourselves to be captivated by an adulteress (v. 20). In other words, when we get satisfying refreshment sexually and affectionately from our wives (MacArthur), we will never be captivated by an adulteress or another man's wife (v. 20). This is what King Solomon says in Proverbs 5:16-17: “Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers.” But now how many husbands are letting their spring overflow in the streets and are sharing with strangers? How many men are leaving their wives and going to other women? Now so many husbands are not always satisfied with their wives, nor are they rejoice in their wives. They are not letting themselves to be captivated by their wives' love (v. 19). Rather, they are letting the adulteresses or another man's wife to captivate them (v. 20).

Marital counselor M. Gary Newman conducted a research and analysis on 200 men why men are cheating, and the results are (Internet): 48% of men said that the reason for their affair is that they cannot feel emotional/mental love from their wives /lovers. We think the main reason for the men's affair is that there is no physical affinity from wives, but only about 8% of men say “yes.” Men also want emotional/mental intimacy from their wives. They want to hear from their wives “Thank you” and “I love you” more than physical affinity. However, the difference between men and women is that while women express their emotions, the men are not express emotions in them. 77% of men say they have a friend or acquaintance around them who had affair. 40 % of the men say they meet their object of affair at work. Most men have affair with a woman whom they met at the work place because they receive praise and respect from her. That is, men are interested in the woman who

acknowledges (and respect) them.

If men leave their wives and have affair with other women, they will experience the consequences of their sinful choices (Prov. 5:7-14). The consequences are giving their vigor to others (v. 9), time lost (v. 9), loss of their hard-earned goods (v. 10), loss of their body (v. 11) and suffering in their conscience (vv. 12-14). Therefore, we must know the consequences of this adultery and do not give in to a harlot. But the Bible verses 21-23 talks about the higher motives. There are three motives (Walvoord):

(1) The first is that God is watching all our paths.

Look at Proverbs 5:21 - “For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He watches all his paths.” What does this mean? It means that God is alive and He watches all the acts of the wicked (Park Yun-sun). God is watching over all the things we do in secret. If our hearts are not captivated by our wives’ love but are captivated by another man’s wife, God will know our hearts and He will discipline us.

(2) Second, since sin causes us to be caught in a snare (1:17-18) and make us to be bounded by the cords of sin, we must not be captivated by an adulteress.

Look at Proverbs 5:22 – “The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast.” Though we like to talk about enjoying freedom from sin, sinning in fact makes us slaves and makes us not enjoy true freedom.

(3) Third, we should let the consequence of living however we want without any rule in our moral life, which is death, to make us not to be captivated by the adulteress or another man’s wife.

Look at Proverbs 5:23 – “He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly.” We must not be captivated by foolishness, and thus not receiving the instruction of God. We should never let our hearts to be captivated by the adulteress or another man’s wife. The reason is that the result is death.

The wise children of God who pay attention to the Word of God and who have the wisdom of God bless their wives or their spouse. The wise husbands bless their wives whom God has given them. And they rejoice in their wives. They are satisfied with their wives always. This refers to the relationship of the Groom Jesus, who is the Giver and the Source of blessings and His Bride, the Church. In other words, we the church should regard Jesus as our blessing. And we must rejoice in the Lord. We must always be satisfied with the Lord. May we be able to love Jesus with all our heart, with all our souls and with all our mind.



## “Deliver yourself”

### [Proverbs 6:1-5]

Have you ever made a guarantee for someone? For example, here in the US, when you buy a car, you co-sign with a bank loan. In other words, the obligation to pay off what one owns is the same as the debtor. So, if the debtor fails to faithfully pay off what he owes, the joint guarantor is obligated to pay the debt. Have any of you ever done that co-sign? Have you ever paid the bank for a car price a month or two because you co-signed? I was in trouble few years ago when a church member asked me to co-sign a car. At that time, he seemed to be kind and faithful, but I politely refused that I couldn't co-sign. Of course, he had a stable job at that time, and his wife was considered a very good person, and I think there was little reason to refuse. However, one thing that stuck in my mind was that I cannot guarantee for someone in the church and don't guarantee other church member. So I thought it was better not to make the guarantee for everybody in the church. At that time, even though I didn't co-sign that church member, he came to church shortly after with his new car. So I thought maybe someone else co-signed. Then, when the couple moved to another city, they had no choice but to leave our church. But later I heard that the couple broke up. And the news was cut off with both of them. Of course, this is my personal experience and my personal thoughts about making guarantee for others. Your thoughts could be different with me. The more important thing is whether our thoughts are truly biblical or not. In other words, what the Bible says about guarantees is the most important thing.

In Proverbs 6:1-5, King Solomon is talking about taking a guarantee for his neighbor. The point of his words is that if we made the guarantee for our neighbor (v. 1) and then when we fell into the hands of that neighbor (vv. 2-3), that is, when we took on the responsibility of fulfilling the debt of that neighbor, the Bible says to deliver ourselves (v. 5). What does it mean? Now, the Bible warns us against doing the foolish thing. Here, the foolish act refers to promising, i.e., a guarantee, for the person who defaults, knowing that the other person owes it beyond repayment (MacArthur). Dr. Park Yun-sun, of course, doesn't seem to think that the Bible warns that making a guarantee here itself is the foolish act (Park). The reason is because when our neighbor is in trouble financially, acting as a guarantor for him can also be the practice of Christ's love for our neighbor. However, the foolish act that King Solomon warns here is that, according to Dr. Park, if the guarantor was not prepared to be actually responsible in the event of an accident, the guarantor who was deceived by others and became the guarantor, or the guarantor who did not have the financial ability to fulfill the responsibilities (Park). Of course, if we have the financial ability to pay off the debt and are willing to make that guarantee for our loved ones, it is fine. But even better, the Bible

says that we give financial assistance to our loved one in need of financial assistance rather than guarantee for that loved one (cf. Deut. 15:1-15; 19:17) or lending money without interest (cf.: Lev. 25:35-38; 28:8) (MacArthur).

As you may have heard through the news this time that the United States, which is an economic powerhouse, has been pushed to default situation. Of course, it's fortunate to have a dramatic settlement between the Republicans and the Democrats. But what would have happened if the United States went to default? As a result, if the US economy was hit hard, which country would realistically promise to repay that much debt? Would rich China do that? As if there is no country that will try to secure or guarantee it even in such a national debt default, it will not be easy to find a person who personally owes too much debt to pay off the debt. In particular, it is a foolish act to stand up for a guarantee without the financial ability to pay the debt. But what would be the consequences if we were not able to afford it, but made the guarantee that promised responsibility for paying the debts of another person? The result is, as we say in Proverbs 6:5, as if we, who had the guarantee, will be captured in the hand of a money lender and will be in his control like being in the hands of the hunters and in the hand of the fowler. I think this is like borrowing money from a lender and playing out of the hands of the lender after using it up without being able to pay for it. How foolish is this? Why do people lend money from the lenders even though they obviously know the results when they don't have ability to repay anything? That's why the Bible Proverbs 22:26b says, "Do not be a man who puts up security for debts." The Bible says that "a man lacking in sense" pledges and becomes guarantor in the presence of his neighbor (17:18). That's why we should never be those who lack in sense and without wisdom. In other words, we shouldn't be fools. We will never be in the lender's control of the lender's hand, as if we were in the hands of the lender as a hunter and as a bird in the hand of the fowler, as if we were in the hands of others' debts.

But what should we do if we are foolish and make the guarantee for our neighbor, and then we assume responsibility for paying that neighbor's debts? This is the core lesson of today's passage. That core lesson, in a word, is 'Deliver yourself' [(6:3) "deliver yourself", (v. 5) "Deliver yourself"]. Then how can we deliver ourselves? Look at Proverbs 6:3 – "Do this then, my son, and deliver yourself; Since you have come into the hand of your neighbor, Go, humble yourself, and importune your neighbor." The Bible tells us to go to our neighbor and humble ourselves and press our pleas with him. Here, what does the phrase 'humble ourselves and press our pleas' mean? According to a scholar named Walvoord, that means to crush ourselves and be crushed by stepping on ourselves, to lie down to the point of damaging our own prestige or dignity and to plead with our neighbor (Walvoord). Sometimes when I watch Korean dramas, I remember seeing a scene where someone was dragged by a loan shark and fell down on his knees to the point where he felt humiliated, bagging with both hands and asking for a longer period of debt payment. If it was us, would we humbly and earnestly bag the lender who lent us our money while feeling so humiliated? The lesson from verse 3 is that if we become guarantors of others without a sense of responsibility, then we should ask our creditors or those who have benefited from them to revoke that guarantee (Park). The Bible says that the guarantee should be revoked, but until it is canceled, we should not take our time and

rest. Look at verse 4: “Allow no sleep to your eyes, no slumber to your eyelids.” How can we stop sleeping? What Dr. Park is talking about here is that since this is important and urgent work, we should make an effort to cancel the warranty with a sense of urgency. Just imagine. What if we are now in such an urgent situation, as if a roe deer was in the hand of the hunter, or as a bird in the hand of the fowler? Would we just be able to stay still? I am sure we will not. If we were caught in the hands of the hunter and the fowler, how would we not struggle to survive there anyway? Likewise, if we become guarantors of others without the sense of responsibility and are suddenly in a situation where we have to pay our debts, we should try to cancel the guarantee with the sense of urgency. We must go and humbly and earnestly beg the lender to cancel the debt. Therefore, in the situation of economically enslaved, we must save ourselves and enjoy freedom.

As of the end of January, as of the end of January, the U.S. debt was 14.60 trillion dollars, which was 5 times the US budget in 2010, which was 3 trillion dollars. It is said to be an astronomical amount, which is 54 times the 2011 Korean budget. Surprisingly, the fiscal problem of the US federal government is that the US state debt is increasing by \$100,000 every 5 seconds. And it is said that 390 million people in the United States, including newborn babies in their cradle, owed \$45,390 per person (Internet). It seems we can't imagine how serious this is. So, some people have seen an article that refers to the United States as ‘The debt empire on the verge of bankruptcy.’ Would it be the only American country now? I know that the US federal government as well as the California economy is also serious. The city of Los Angeles has also faced an economic crisis, and many companies are facing economic hardship. Isn't that the case with the immigrant church now? Isn't there a church that built a chapel “by faith” (?) when it's economically good, and is now facing bankruptcy due to economic difficulties? Why did it go so far? As Dr. Park is on the alert, isn't it because the church now has an economic adventure under the word "faith"? What about our families? There seems to be too much debt. The Bible clearly tells us not to owe anything to anyone except the debt of love (Rom. 13:8). But I think as stewards of God, we aren't managing our finances well faithfully. In the midst of that, we are also giving guarantees to our neighbor under the name of “love our neighbors” (?). Then we are in a situation where we owe money to the lender because of the default, and we have to pay it back. What should we do? The Bible says “Deliver yourself” (Prov. 6:3, 5). If we aren't wise and make a wrong guarantee, we must save ourselves even by begging to the extent that we feel humiliated at the lender to cancel the guarantee. We ought to beg, but knowing the importance and urgency of the problem and knowing it, we should not take it easy. We must save ourselves with urgency and enjoy freedom. However, we can't help but question whether the lender will cancel our guarantee. Which lender will do that? Can we really save ourselves? Couldn't only the Savior the Lord deliver us from such situation? We must pray earnestly as we beg the Savior Lord. Since we cannot save ourselves, we must long for God's saving power in our incompetence. And we must ask God, who gives to all generously and without reproach (Jam. 1:5). Therefore, we shouldn't guarantee that promise responsibility for paying the debt on our own for the person who defaults to knowing the condition in which the debt is owed beyond the repayment of others.

## A person worse than an ant

### [Proverbs 6:6-11]

What do you think of “laziness”? Do you really think laziness is a sin? Laziness is a sin because it is disobedience to God's commands. In particular, not using God-given talents and digging a hole in the ground and hiding his master's money” (Matt.25:18) is a sin of being reproved by the Lord as “You wicked, lazy slave” (v. 26). Rather than the Ten Commandments, I share more sympathy with the article ‘Four major things are important to escape from laziness’ so I want to share some of the points (Internet):

(1) The first is the bottom experience.

People have a bottom of life that they think shouldn't be there anymore. Usually the beginning of change occurs when we feel that our real life is nearing the bottom of our own thinking. This often comes only after suffering serious misfortune, but we can experience it in advance. When we look at today from the future, life through death, or our lives through the eyes of others, the bottom is also moving. It is to make a decision, ‘I can't live like this anymore!’

(2) The second is long view and big picture.

It's not about making plans for the year and tomorrow. It's about drawing the big picture of life in the long run. At this time, the big picture should be drawn on the canvas of the heart with the brush of talent and strength given to him. We often try to fight laziness. But when it comes to solving habits such as laziness, it requires a vertical approach. We have to find the reason and purpose of life from a higher point of view.

(3) The third is small actions.

To get out of our laziness, we have to set a good stepping stone to reach our vision or goal. No matter how much we think about it, we have to break up our goals and break them down until we are convinced that it is not too much and make small actions into small victories and build them up.

(4) The fourth is continuous self-check.

If the quality of self-check cannot be improved, efforts to escape from laziness will inevitably fail. We have to wind up the loosened heart just as we wind up the unwrapped spring of the wall clock every day.

In order to do this, we need to secure time for self-examination based on our favorite positive habits and ritualize it. What do you think of this statement?

If we look at Proverbs 6:6, the Bible says: “Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!” What does it mean? Are we humans worse than ants so that we have to go to ants to learn? Today, I would like to receive some lessons from God under the title of “A person worse than an ant” based on Proverbs 6:6-11.

Who is worse than the ant? It is the sluggard (v. 6). So who is the sluggard? Looking at the Naver Dictionary, the sluggard is a person who is slow in action and has a temper or habit that hates to move or work’ (Naver Dictionary). In the original Hebrew, the sluggard is “a person who is habitually lazy and inactive, suggesting he has no discipline or initiative, as a moral failure (Swanson). But when we look at the Proverbs, “the sluggard” doesn’t seem to mean just this. For example, Proverbs 15:19 says, “The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway”. The Bible contrasts "the sluggard" with "the upright". And in Proverbs 21:25-26, the Bible contrasts “the sluggard” who hates to work with the “the righteous”. Also, in Proverbs 19:15, the Bible describes “the laziness” as an “an idle man” or ‘a person playing in idleness’ (Walvoord). In view of this, I think that the sluggard is simply a habitually lazy person. And in addition to the meaning of a person who is inactive and has no discipline and has no plan, a moral failure, but also a person who isn’t honest in front of God or an unrighteous person. Therefore, the Bible Jeremiah 48:10 says, “Cursed be the one who does the LORD’S work negligently.” Proverbs 6:6 says that such the sluggard should go to the ant and observe it and gain wisdom. What is the reason? Why should the sluggard go to the ant and observe what it does and gain wisdom? Doesn’t that in itself mean that the sluggard is more foolish than the ant? What wisdom should the sluggard learn from an ant? There are 2 things (Park):

**First, the ant works diligently and cooperatively, voluntarily, even without a supervisor.**

Look at Proverbs 6:7 – “Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler.” What comes to your mind when you think about the ant? I think of a group of ants walking vertically side by side. Also, I think of the ants walking in the group with something like food. Sometimes I look down at the ants moving in the group with my head down, I remember seeing some of the ants carrying something like food. I read an article on the Internet to learn about ants. And I have some interesting points about ants (Internet):

(1) The ants are said to be thoughtful to each other.

When we mainly think of “the ant”, we think of it as a queen ant and a worker ant, but there is a “patrolling ant”. In general, the ants are said to send out the patrolling ant to find food. After finding it, the patrolling ant is said to take an inexperienced companion and slowly go vertically (parallel) and lead it to the place

where the newly discovered prey is. And it is said that the following ants gain knowledge thanks to the leader ant. It is said that both the guide ant and the ant following are very considerate enough to slow down the guide if the ant following it procrastinates, and move quickly again if the rear ant catches up again.

(2) The ants are said to help each other.

The ants' mutual help can be seen by looking at their communication. The ants are said to communicate with each other by means of pheromones (a chemical signal used to communicate between animals of the same species). The ant's chemical cues are much more advanced than other logging insects. And like other insects, the ants are said to smell as long, thin, and moveable antennae. It is said that the pair of antennae can convey information about the intensity or direction of the smell. Most of the ants live on the ground, so it is said to leave a path with pheromones on the surface so other ants can follow. It is said that among species that scout in groups, the patrolling ant who is scouting for food display traces from its prey to the anthill. Other ants follow this trail, and each time they return home with food, they are said to reinforce the odor path. When all the food is gone, the returning ant marks it, and the smell slowly disappears. This behavior is said to help the ants adapt to changes in their environment. For example, it is said that if the scent trail that leads to the prey is blocked by an obstacle, the ant behind the fence goes off the road and finds a new path. When the ant finds the new path, the ant returns and marks the shortcut with smell. It is said that as the ants flock to the good path, the smell of the shortcut increases and gradually finds the best path.

(3) The ants divide professional occupations according to their size.

Looking at the ants' food cultivation, most ants are omnivorous predators and deal with dead creatures. But there are other ants that have developed special nutritional methods. Such ants are called 'scissor ants,' and they are said to grow mushrooms only in their ant nest. They continue to collect leaves, bring them to their colonies, cut them into small pieces, and place them on mushroom farms. The largest ants are said to cut the stem, the smaller worker ants chew the leaves, and the smallest ants care for mushrooms.

Isn't it interesting that the ants work endlessly in cooperation with each other in a spirit of mutual aid? But what about the sluggard? Even if there is a supervisor, he doesn't listen to the supervisor and waste time without working irresponsibly. Proverbs 19:24 says, "The sluggard buries his hand in the dish, But will not even bring it back to his mouth." Can you imagine that such sluggard gather to work? Will he work by helping each other? That is why the Bible tells the sluggard should go to the ant and observe what it does and gain wisdom. Therefore, the sluggard must go and observe the ant, that voluntarily cooperate with each other in mutual help, even without the supervising ant, and gain wisdom.

## **Second, the ant prepares ahead for the future.**

Look at Proverbs 6:8 – “yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.” Do you know the Aesop’s fable “The ant and grasshopper”? According to that famous story, the grasshopper sang and mocked the ant which worked hard in the summer: ‘Hey ant, is something wrong with your head? Why are you preparing food in summer for winter?’ Despite such ridicule, the ant worked very hard for cold winters, even in hot summer days. However, the grasshopper didn’t work every day and only sang. As a result, he had no food to eat in the winter so he begged for food. When I read this fable story as a child, I was taught that I should be like the ant, not the grasshopper. I learned that I must live diligently like the ant, not lazy like the grasshopper. However, as I grew older when I thought about this story, not only that I learned the lesson of being diligent like the ant, but also being wise in preparing for the future. When we are young, who cares about the future and prepares for it? In Proverbs 6:8, the Bible urges people who are worse than the ant to go to the ant and learn the wisdom to prepare for the future. Even in Proverbs 30:25, the Bible introduces the ants as “they prepare their food in the summer”. Why do the ants prepare winter food ahead of time in summer? According to Dr. Park, summer is the harvest time in Palestine. So, at this time, the ants are said to collect food for winter (Park). In this way, the ants prepare their winter food in advance at the time of harvest, but the sluggard says, “A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest” (Prov. 6:10). What does the Bible say when we sleep little more and slumber little more? Look at verse 11: “Your poverty will come in like a vagabond And your need like an armed man.” What does it mean? The inevitable poverty comes to the sluggard as a victim was overwhelmed by a robber (24:34) (MacArthur). So, in Proverbs 6:9, the Bible rebukes the sluggard: “How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?” And this is what Proverbs 21:25 says: “The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, For his hands refuse to work.” What does it mean? It means that the sluggard hates to work with his hand. Rather, he often makes problems. Look at 1 Timothy 5:11-13: “But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married, thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge. At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.” Rather, a lazy young widow goes from house to house, gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. However, the sluggard has a more serious problem. That’s the fact that the sluggard is wiser in his own eyes [(26:16) “The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes Than seven men who can give a discreet answer”]. In Proverbs 3:7, which we have already meditated on, the Bible says, “Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.” Therefore, the sluggard should not consider himself wise, but fear God and should turn away from the evil of laziness. And, like the ant, in the time of harvest, he must prepare diligently for the future.

The time we are living now is the time when the Second Coming of Jesus is imminent. Therefore, we must prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus. Like the ant, we must cooperate in a spirit of mutual support and diligently do the work the Lord will entrust to us. In particular, when there is much to be harvested, we should diligently

cooperate with each other and strive to save souls. In doing so, we must prepare to greet Jesus, the Bridegroom, by preparing oil and lamps like the five wise virgins in Matthew 25. As a result, when we stand before the Lord, no one will ever be rebuked, “You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed” (Mt. 26:26). Rather, I hope and pray that we will be praised, “Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master” (v. 23).



## **“A worthless person, a wicked man”**

### **[Proverbs 6:12-15]**

Do you think relationships are easy or difficult? Of course, the answer will be different depending on who you have a relationship with. For example, it won't be that difficult to establish relationships with these people, such as having many similarities with you, communicating with each other and making you comfortable. However, the problem is not only very different from you, but also weird and tricky personality, not only making you very uncomfortable, but even stressing you a lot. You want to stay away from such a person, and you probably don't want to be in a relationship. But what should we do about someone who is more than that, who is willing to contempt, harass, quarrel, hurt, etc.

In Proverbs 6, which we continue to meditate on for two weeks, King Solomon talked about the one who made guarantee financially for the unwise neighbors who destroy us (vv. 1-5) and the sluggard who destroys us morally (vv. 6-11). Then, in Proverbs 6:12-15, he is talking about “A worthless person, a wicked man” who ethically destroys neighboring relationships. So, I would like to receive some lessons from God as I think about who is a worthless and wicked man is based on Proverbs 6:12-15, under the title of “A worthless person, a wicked man”.

First of all, who is the worthless and the wicked man? Naver's dictionary defines “a worthless person” as ‘a person with bad conduct or character.’ And “a wicked man” is defined as ‘a person who does evil things (Naver Dictionary). However, from the Hebrew meaning of the original language, “a worthless person” is defined as “useless” or “worthlessness” (Brown). And “the wicked man” is defined as “the man of trouble” or ‘the tormenter’, “the troubler” (Brown). When you think about “a worthless person”, who comes to your mind in the Old Testament character? Have you ever remembered Abigail's ex-husband, “Nabal,” in the days of David? In 1 Samuel 25:25, the Bible says: “Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him; ....” In addition to Nabal, in 1 Samuel 2:12, the Bible says, “Now the sons of Eli were worthless men; they did not know the LORD.” The Bible refers to people like Nabal and two sons of Eli as “a man of Belial” (v. 12). Here, “belial” is ‘a word used to give character to evils such as immorality or worthlessness,’ which in Hebrew means “wickedness” or “worthlessness”. Originally, this word was a common noun, but soon it came to be considered the devil itself. The apostle Paul used this word in the same way as Satan (Internet). Look at 2 Corinthians 6:15 – “Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?” In Proverbs 6:12-15, King Solomon says three things about “A worthless person, a wicked man”:

## **First, the worthless and the wicked man walks with a perverse mouth.**

Look at Proverbs 6:12 – “A worthless person, a wicked man, Is the one who walks with a perverse mouth.” Here, the word “a perverse mouth” literally means twisted mouth, and the words that come out of it are only false and deceptive words (Walvoord). In other words, the worthless, the wicked man speaks lies and deceitful words with his perverse mouth. Therefore, what is developed for him is his eye gestures, foot gestures, and finger gestures. Look at verse 13: “Who winks with his eyes, who signals with his feet, Who points with his fingers.” What does it mean? It means that the worthless, the wicked man who speaks lies and deceitful words with his mouth is afraid that his hidden intentions will be detected by the victim during the conspiracy. So he gives a signal to his conspirator while using all his eyes, hand and feet gestures without letting the victim to notice. According to Pastor John MacArthur, this practice was common in the East (MacArthur). So Solomon said about the eye gesture in Proverbs 10:10 and 16:30 – “He who winks the eye causes trouble ...” (10:10, “He who winks his eyes does so to devise perverse things” (16:30).

Personally, I value honest and sincere dialogue between heart and heart in the Lord when it comes to relationships. In the meantime, when I meet and talk with people, I also look closely at their body language. For example, when I have a serious conversation, I look into the other person's eyes and try to talk. And I often talk while looking closely at the other person's facial expressions and gestures. And sometimes I look at the other person's hand. The reason I do that is because I think we humans speak not only with our mouths but also with our gestures. In other words, it is because we use lots of non-verbal elements in our communication, and many messages are transmitted by the other party through these non-verbal elements. For example, a while ago, when I met a person and had a conversation, he opened his heart to me and had serious talks about a person he loved. At that time, I noticed that the person's voice was a little trembling and the tears around his eyes a little, and what I still remember vividly was looking at the person's neck. At that time, he was speaking while swallowing, and I could feel that the person was trembling. In that feeling, I could feel how much he loves his spouse. I had no doubts that that person was truly open to me and talking about his loved one. But sometimes, when I talk to someone, there are people who talk so much that I can't figure it out the other person's heart at all. Such a person, for example, has a loud, bright, and welcoming voice when he speaks to me. But when I see the content of his speech or his body language, I feel that he is too wrapped up in his heart and is exaggerating. When I talk with such person, I feel like he is trying to hide his own heart, so I can't feel the sincerity of his heart. The reason I give these personal thoughts and examples is to emphasize the importance of consistent words and actions as well as the integrity of the heart in human relationships. If we aren't sincere to each other and our words and actions are not in harmony, it will be difficult for us to continue to maintain and develop trustworthy dialogues and relationships. In order for us to share the beautiful fellowship of saints in the Lord, we must speak the truth with our mouths. We should never speak lies and deceitful words with a deceitful mouth like the worthless and the wicked man.

## **Second, the worthless and the wicked man plot evil with deceit in his heart.**

Look at Proverbs 6:14a – “who plots evil with deceit in his heart ...” The reason why the mouth of the worthless and the wicked man speaks deceit is because his heart is deceitful. In other words, the reason the worthless and the wicked man's mouth is perverted and the truth is perverted (distorted) to speak lies and deceit is because his heart is perverted. In the end, the perverted words come out of the perverted heart. To put it more understandably, the reason the worthless and the wicked man has no choice but to speak lies and deceit with his mouth is because his heart is false and he is deceiving himself. Why is the heart of the the worthless and wicked man false and self-deceived? What is the cause? It is because he distorts the truth. According to the words of 1 John 1:8, the reason the heart of the worthless and the wicked man is lying and being deceived is because the truth is not in him. Therefore, the worthless and the wicked man believes that he himself is innocent. The reason is because the distorted truth of the heart not only does not regard sin as a sin, but it cannot.

Satan likes to distort God's truth. In other words, Satan distorts God's word and makes us confused. One of those terrifying works of Satan is that he makes us believe in ‘mixed truth. In other words, by adding lies to God's word of truth, Satan makes us to believe in the mixed truth. What a terrifying and subtle work of Satan? Obviously, Revelation 22:18 says, “if anyone adds to them (the words of the prophecy of this book), God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book”. Now Satan and his servants, the heretics are adding to the Word of God. And as if Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness by quoting the Old Testament words, and in addition to the words, he perverted the truth and tempted Jesus (Mt. 4), so Satan and his servants, heretics, quote the truth of God and tempt us with the mixed truths by adding lies to His words. As in Proverbs 6:14, Satan and his servants, the heretics, are always plotting evil with deceit in their hearts. And the worthless and the wicked people who have no truth in their hearts, but full of lies and deceit, which are distorted truths, will defeat true Christians who love and obey the truth, are constantly devising evil and make them to commit sin, and lead them to apostasy from God. What should we do? First we must have the truth in our hearts. Look at Psalms 119:11 – “Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.” When we cherish the word of God's truth in our hearts, we will not sin against God. And as we obey the word of God and write it down in our hearts, we will be able to fight and win when Satan and the heretics tempts us with distorted lies. Also, we must keep the truth in our hearts and always strive for good. The reason is because we are created in Jesus Christ for good works (Eph. 2:10).

## **Third and last, the worthless and the wicked man always stirs up dissension.**

Look at Proverbs 6:14b – “... he always stirs up dissension.” Don't you think it's natural for a quarrel amid discord if we always devise evil with our rebellious hearts, tell lies with our rebellious mouths, and deceive others? King Solomon talks about quarrels several times in Proverbs, and he describes the cause of the quarrels: hatred (10:12), hot-temper (15:18), perversity (16:28), and a fool's lips (18:6; 20:3), mockery (22:10), greed (28:25), and

anger (29:22, 30:33). What do you think? What do you think King Solomon said about these factors causing quarrel? I can't help but agree with King Solomon's words. I think that hatred, hot-tempered, or greed, etc., causes quarrels in human relationships. Especially, among the causes of quarrels, the one that comes to my heart is the words of 16:18 that "A perverse man stirs up dissension ...." Do you know the saying in Korean proverb, 'Even if your mouth is twisted, speak what is right'? What does it mean? Doesn't it mean that we should always speak what is right no matter what? However, when we quarrel with each other, there are times when we cannot speak what is right and bend our words. Then we have no choice but to quarrel with each other. But when we think about why we do that, the answer is simple. It is because our hearts are crooked. In the end, if our people are crooked in human relations, they have no choice but to say crooked words out of that crooked mind, and then the relationship will be perverse. This is what Satan wants and likes. It is nothing but discord and strife. Satan likes us to fight and quarrel with each other in our homes and churches, resulting in strife and separation. That is why Satan is striving to keep us fighting by putting hatred, anger, perversity, foolishness, mockery and greed in us. In particular, Satan is causing us to quarrel by stimulating our desires that battle within us (Jam. 4:1). As a result, even Satan caused Jesus' disciples to cause a quarrel over who is great (Lk. 22:24). The reason why this quarreling work of Satan is dangerous is because where there is envy and selfish ambition, there we find disorder and every evil practice (Jam. 3:16). What should we do?

We must avoid contention and seek peace. In order to do this, we must speak the right words with the right heart in the sight of God. In other words, we must keep God's truth in mind and follow the right instruction and speak correctly. And we must stay alert and stay away from anyone who speaks wrongly and not correctly. In particular, we must be on guard against and away from those who are not right and have perverse heart. The reason is because those who are perverse and crooked will cause quarrels. No matter how right you say to such a person, unless God corrects their twisted hearts, not only will they not listen to you, but they will hate you and get angry at you.

The worthless and the wicked man is worthless and the trouble-causing wicked. Such a person has a deceitful mouth and a perverse heart, and always devises evil, stirring up dissension. We must learn from him or her that we should never be the worthless and the wicked people. Rather, we must realize that we must always be peace seekers and peace makers with a truthful mouth and a right heart. Therefore, we should be worthy people in the eyes of God and edifying in the home, church, and society.

## **In the sight of God ...**

### **[Proverbs 6:12-14]**

Those who are worthless in the sight of God  
speak lies and deceitful words with a perverse mouth (Prov. 6:12).

Those who are worthless in the sight of God  
devise evil with perversity in their hearts (v. 14).

Those who are worthless in the sight of God  
Spread strife (v. 14) and twist human relationships.

Those who are worth in the sight of God  
speak the right words with the right mouth.

Those who are worth in the sight of God  
always pursues goodness with their upright hearts.

Those who are worth in the sight of God  
are the ones who make human relations right through reconciliation.

## Seven evils that God hates

### [Proverbs 6:16-19]

Have you ever heard of "SEVEN DEADLY SINS"? When I think about "SEVEN DEADLY SINS" it reminds me a movie "Seven"(1995). The film then featured famous actors such as Brad Pitt, Morgan Freeman and Kevin Spacey, and the plot of the film showed a series of murders with the motif of original sin. The theme of the film is that human cannot escape from the seven original sins such as, lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, and pride. These seven sins were classified by the Catholic Pope Gregory I and can be explained as follows (Internet): (1) Pride is having a sense of superiority beyond what one has, (2) Greed is attachment and demand for matter, (3) Lust is a disorderly desire for physical pleasure, (4) Gluttony dulls thinking of the disorderly intake of food, weakens the control of reason and degrades human dignity, (5) Envy criticizes others' possessions, (6) Wrath is a crime that can harm not only others but also yourself by hating others, (7) Sloth is the attitude of refusing the given mission without exerting the given ability. Catholics say that these seven evils are based on Proverbs 6:16-19. However, in today's passage, King Solomon doesn't speak of the seven evils that God hates like that. In other words, the seven evils that the Catholics say based on today's text is different from what the Bible says. We want to learn the lessons God gives us as we meditate on Proverbs 6:16-19 together to see what the Bible says what the seven evils that God hates are.

Look at Proverbs 6:16 – “There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him.” Here, King Solomon says, 'Six things God hates, seven things that are detestable to God.' Isn't the numbers little confusing? Isn't it little bit confusing whether there are six or seven sins that God hates and detests? Why is King Solomon using both numbers six and seven? What does it mean? There are two interpretations by commentators: (1) The first interpretation is that the purpose of the author's use of the number six and seven is not to give us a complete list of sins, but to emphasize that the seventh sin is a product or culmination of all six sins before (Walvoord). If we follow this interpretation, the seventh sin, that is 'stirring up dissension among brothers' (v.19) is the product or culmination of “haughty eyes”, “a lying tongue”, “hands that shed innocent blood” (v. 17), “a heart that devises wicked schemes”, “feet that are quick to rush into evil” (v. 18) and “a false witness who pours out lies” (v. 19). (2) The second interpretation is that these numbers in the sequence of six or seven are numbers used to capture our attention and focus while describing totality (Refs: 30:15, 18; Job 5:19, Am 1:3) (MacArthur). One of the examples can be found in Job 5:19 – “From six troubles He will deliver you, Even in seven evil will not touch you.” Of these two interpretations, I think the second one is more appropriate. One of the reasons is because if we

follow the first interpretation, we should see that among the seven sins, ‘stirring up dissension among brothers’ should be the culmination of the six previous sins, but I don’t think it is. The reason is because I think that the climax of the seven sins that King Solomon lists is the fourth sin, “a heart that devises wicked schemes” rather than ‘stirring up dissension among brothers’ based on the Hebrew grammar chiasm. Rather, the reason the second interpretation is more persuasive to me is because of Job 5:19. The use of the number six or seven together is thought to be a number used to capture our attention while describing the whole rather than giving the meaning of the number itself. Then, what are the seven evils (seven sins) that God hates and detests that King Solomon talks about in Proverbs 6:16-19?

### **The first evil that God hates is “haughty eyes”.**

Look at Proverbs 6:17 – “haughty eyes ....” When we think of the “eye” we can think of the winks of the worthless and the wicked man already meditated on in 6:13. When the worthless and the wicked man conspire with other wicked people to harm others, he winks with his eyes in fear that the other person might notice (v. 13). The man who has haughty eyes also harms others by stirring up dissension another brothers (v. 19). On that basis, I suggest Psalms 101:5 – “Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure.” In this word, it is said that those who are haughty in their hearts that God doesn’t tolerate have haughty eyes and secretly slanders his neighbor. Therefore, the man with haughty eyes and haughty heart can eventually separate his brothers. That’s why God hates “pride” in Proverbs 8:13. And in Proverbs 6:17, the Bible says that God hates and dislikes “haughty eyes”. Those haughty eyes are the ‘lofty eyes’ as Proverbs 30:13 says. Psalms 18:27 says that God surely bring low the haughty eyes. What should we do? We must lower our haughty eyes. We must have humble eyes. Who has humble eyes? He is the one who estimates others better than himself (Phil. 2:3). God shows grace to the humble (Prov. 3:34) to tolerate one another in love” (Eph. 4:2). In other words, the haughty-eyed man separates brothers, but the humble-eyed man reconciles brothers.

### **The second evil that God hates is a lying tongue.**

Look at Proverbs 6:17 – “... a lying tongue ....” Proverbs 6:12 says that the worthless and the wicked man goes about with “a corrupt mouth”, and this means that the worthless and the wicked man walks with the perverse words. That means that the worthless and the wicked man speak lies and deceit with his perverse mouth. Especially in business, a person who speaks lies and deceitful words with the perverse mouth, as Proverbs 21:6 says, makes a fortune by the lying tongue. So at first, even though it may seem prosperous with a lot of wealth, Proverbs 21:6 clearly says, “A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare.” And the lying tongue has hate involved in human relationships. Look at Proverbs 26:28 – “A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.” What does it mean? It means that the liar hates the other person who has been hurt by his lying tongue. And because he hates the other person, he tries to hurt the other person because he lied. That is why there is

“a false witness who utters lies” (6:19). Because of the false witness, who will not hesitate to lie to harm the other person he hates, the other person is bound to be in trouble. The lying lips are hated by God (12:22). And the false tongue doesn't last long. Look at Proverbs 12:19 – “Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.” The Bible says that the lying tongue only exists in the blink of an eye. But it is said that truthful lips are preserved forever. We must have truthful lips. That is why we must speak the truth with our truthful lips (Job 33:3). Then we will please God (Prov. 12:22)

### **The third evil that God hates is hand that shed innocent blood.**

Look at Proverbs 6:17 – “... And hands that shed innocent blood.” Who do you think of when the Bible says “hands that shed innocent blood? I remembered Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab in 1 Kings 21. The reason is that she shed the blood of the innocent Naboth. In a way, I think that all of these things, such as the sins we have already meditated on and hated and detested by God, such as haughty eyes, the lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, all apply to Queen Jezebel. She was worried and frustrated because her husband, King Ahab of Samaria, wanted to have the vineyard of Naboth, an Israelite near King Ahab's palace, as his field, but Naboth said “The Lord forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers” (1 Kgs. 21:3). Seeing this, Jezebel saw Naboth with her haughty eyes for Ahab (vv. 1-4), wrote a letter with a lying tongue, and ordered the elders and nobles who lived in the city (v. 11), and eventually killed Naboth (vs. 12-13). And she took Naboth's vineyard and gave it to her husband, Ahab (v. 16). Eventually, the evil queen Jezebel killed Naboth who was obeying the word of God and an innocent neighbor who was trustworthy. When I thought of the New Testament, I remembered the Jews who crucified the innocent Jesus, who had no sin at all and shed blood to death. They couldn't recognize Jesus Christ, the Son of God with their haughty eyes, and they accused Jesus with their lying tongues and shouted, “Crucify! Crucify!” (Jn. 19:6). And finally, when I thought of those Jews who crucified Jesus, I remembered the Korean hymn ‘What sin is the crucifixion? Those ignorant men killed the Messiah.’ When I thought of ignorant Jews, those who crucified innocent Jesus, the tree of curse, without knowing that Jesus was their Savior, I remembered the hand of Jesus crucified. I also remembered Jesus' feet crucified. Perhaps the reason is because the hands that shed innocent blood that God hates and detests is with “Feet that run rapidly to evil” (Prov. 6:18). So when I think about the hands and feet of the worthless and the wicked man, I remember the hands and feet of Jesus, who was innocent and crucified to death. By no means should we shed the blood of the innocent with our hands. Rather, we must devote ourselves to building up the church that became the body of the Lord by offering our hands on the Lord like the Israelites in Nehemiah's day. Although Satan and our adversaries will scare us and make us wear out our hands and try to stop the work of the Lord, we say to God, like Nehemiah, “But now, O God, strengthen my hands” (Ne 6:9), we must offer our hands to accomplish the work of the Lord.

### **The fourth evil that God hates is a heart that devises wicked plans.**



Look at Proverbs 6:18 – “A heart that devises wicked plans ....” In Proverbs 6:14, the Bible says that the worthless and the wicked man continually devise evil. In other words, the worthless and the wicked man always devise evil and stirs up dissension (v. 14) while speaking perverse words with his perverse mouth (v. 12). The reason is because Satan, who always devises evil, distorts the truth of God and twists the heart of the worthless and the wicked man. In other words, the reason the heart of the worthless and the wicked man is distorted is because of Satan, who always devises evil schemes. Satan is evil. And evil Satan only devises evil schemes. There is also a plan to twist our hearts in Satan’s evil shemes. In putting the plan into action, Satan mixes truth with lies by adding or subtracting from the word of God's truth. Therefore, Satan deceives us and twists our hearts first. Satan stimulates and pulls out all the wicked thoughts (Mk. 7:21) that come out of our hearts, and causes them to take control of us, causing us to sin against God. What are those evil thoughts? In the Bible Mark 7:21-22, Jesus says, “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.” What is Satan's evil scheme? Isn't Satan making us sin by breaking God's commandments? Even looking at Genesis 3, didn't Satan use his lying tongue to make Adam and Eve's eyes haughty and eventually eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? And their son Cain, didn't he shed the blood of his innocent brother Abel? (Gen. 4) Therefore, we must listen to the words of God that King Solomon is saying in Proverbs 4:23 – “Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.” And, as the apostle Paul says in Philippians 2:5, we must embrace the heart of Christ Jesus. We must be humble, faithful, serve, and love our neighbors.

### **The fifth evil that God hates is feet that run rapidly to evil.**

Look Proverbs 6:18 – “... Feet that run rapidly to evil.” In Proverbs 6:13, the Bible says that the worthless and the wicked man not only winks with his eyes, but also signals with his feet. I don't know how the worthless and the wicked man conspires evil with his own feet, but what is clear is that his feet are used as instruments to do evil. When I think of the feet used to do this evil, I think of Proverbs 1:15. In that verse, King Solomon is telling us not to walk with the sinners (v. 10) and keep our feet from their path (v. 15). What is the reason? The reason is because the feet of the wicked run to evil and hasten to shed blood (v. 16). The wicked man with a heart for devising evil scheme not only has hands that shed the blood of the righteous who are innocent (v. 17), but also has feet that run rapidly to evil (v. 18). In short, the wicked's hands and feet are quick to do evil. But we must have the hymn “Take My Life, and Let It Be” verse 2 be our prayer of devotion: “Take my hands, and let them move/ At the impulse of Thy love/ Take my feet, and let them be/ Swift and beautiful for Thee.” Especially when I thought about the feet, I thought of Romans 10:15 – “And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’” Feet that are beautiful in the sight of God are those who preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, our feet must be agile to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Although the feet of the wicked quickly run to evil, the feet of us who have been justified in faith in Jesus will have to run quickly to preach the Gospel.

### **The sixth sin that God hates is a false witness who utters lies.**

Look at Proverbs 6:19 – “A false witness who utters lies ....” The second sin that God hates is “a lying tongue,” we learned in verse 17. And here in verse 19, King Solomon says that the sixth sin that God hates is “a false witness who utters lies”. When we look at the words we have already meditated on in verse 12, King Solomon says that the worthless and the wicked man “walks with a perverse mouth”. In other words, those who are useless and only cause problems will speak out lies and deceitful words with his perverse mouth. And in verse 19, King Solomon says that God hates the false witness who utters lies with his lying tongue. One of the reasons is because the false witness who utters lies is a witness against his neighbor without cause (24:28) and accuses his neighbor falsely (Deut. 19:18). What is the reason? The reason is because there is a “hate” in the heart of the false witness. However, he conceals hatred (Prov. 10:18). As for such a person, Proverbs 10:18 says, he has lying lips. As a result, the false witness can spread strife among brothers (6:19) with his false witness. So Moses told the Israelites at the time of the Exodus not to preach false reports and not to become a malicious witness in association with the wicked (Exod. 23:1). If we become the false witness who utter lies with our lying tongues, Proverbs 19:9 says: “A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who tells lies will perish.” We must be truthful witnesses. We should never be false witnesses who utter lies. What is the reason? The reason is because “A truthful witness saves lives, But he who utters lies is treacherous” (14:25). We are witnesses of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8). Therefore, we must testify of Jesus Christ. We must bear witness, but we must testify of Jesus Christ truthfully and faithfully.

### **The seventh and the last sin that God hates is stirring up dissension.**

Look at Proverbs 6:19 – “... and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.” If we look back at verse 14, which we have already meditated on, the Bible says that the worthless and the wicked man “always stirs up dissension”. Those who are useless in God's sight and cause problems cause dissension. In verse 19, Solomon says that the sin that God hates is the one who stirs up dissension among brothers. In other words, Solomon is saying that God hates those who cause strife and quarrels between brothers. What is the relation between the man who stirs up dissension, who causes strife and quarrels with the first sin that God hates, that is the haughty eyes (v. 17)? Look at Proverbs 13:10 – “Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.” The proud man doesn't listen to counsel. And the proud man secretly slanders his neighbor (Ps. 101:5). Hence, the proud person separates the brothers from one another in the middle, causing dissension among them. However, the humble man plays a good role as a stepping stone between brothers in the middle. He is a peacemaker, not a peacebreaker. Therefore, he who is humble, whom God shows grace, obeys the word of God and faithfully keep the unity of the church.

Today we have learned about the seven sins that God hates. Those seven sins are haughty eyes, the lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, the heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil,

the false witness who utters lies and the man who stirs up dissension among brothers. As we meditate on the seven evils that God hates, we learned what kind of eyes, tongue, hands, hearts, and feet we should have. It is none other than the humble eye, the truthful tongue, hands given to accomplish the work of the Lord, the heart that embraces the heart of Christ Jesus, the beautiful feet in preaching the gospel, the witness who speaks truth, and the person who makes reconciliation between brothers. May we become God's people who have these seven goods that God loves.

## **We should not lust in our hearts after the beauty of the prostitute.**

### **[Proverbs 6:20-35]**

When I post my meditation centered on Proverbs 6:16-19 under the title ‘Seven sins that God hates’ on my personal Facebook, a pastor replied, ‘This reminded me the seven reasons a husband can kick out his wife in the Joseon Dynasty era. So I tried to browse the Internet to find out those seven reasons and I found out that this was prevalent in China, Korea and other countries with the Confucian culture. The seven reasons are: (1) Because she is not obedient to her mother-in-law, (2) Because she has no son, (3) Because she is lustful, (4) Because she is jealous, (5) Because she has bad disease, (6) Because she talks too much, (7) Because she steals (Internet). Although I don’t completely agree with these seven reasons why the husbands can cast their wives out of, that is, divorce, I thought about the third reason “Because she is lustful” because the Bible also speaks about divorce when a husband or a wife has committed adultery (Mt. 5:32). I read an article saying that Korea was voted for the world's most sexual sins (Internet). According to the BBC Worldwide Sex Evil Survey Report by the seven felonies, Australia is the most sinful country in the world. Here, the seven felonies are seven kinds of traditional criminal offenses: pride, jealousy, anger, sloth, greed, gluttony, and lust. Australia has been voted the most sinful country in the world with scores of three major crimes: lust, greed, and pride. The United States was ranked number one crime sector in gluttony, Iceland for pride and sloth, Mexico for greed and Korea for lust.

According to Proverbs 6:25, King Solomon says: “Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes.” He is exhorting us to do this: ‘Do not lust the beauty of the prostitute. Don’t let her obscene eyes to captivate your heart.’ Based on this exhortation, I want to think about Proverbs 6:20-35 and receive lessons from God.

### **First, what is the beauty of the prostitute?**

It is "outward adornment". Look at 1 Peter 3:3 – “Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes.” The beauty of the prostitute is that she looks beautiful with her braided hair, wearing gold jewelry and fine clothes and her appearance is beautiful, so men feel attraction to her. Since she decorates her outward adornment flashily, her outward appearance is enough to attract those men who are driven by the lust of eyes. I saw Internet news before that talked about some mothers in

Cameroon, the westernmost country of the continent of Africa, who solder their daughters' breasts in order not to be raped and be pregnant. And the reason why the mothers do that their own daughters is because when the men see the girls' breasts their sexual desire is being stimulated and they tend to have sexual imagination (Internet). According to the data from the International Association of Cosmetic Surgery (ISAPS), the "breast augmentation" comes after "liposuction" in the frequency of many kinds of plastic surgery (Internet). This is what King Solomon said in Proverbs 5:20 – “Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife?” The men must rejoice in the wife of their youth, be satisfied her breasts always and always be captivated by her love (vv. 18-19). However, the prostitute seduces the men, especially those who are not satisfied with their wives, with her own appearance and make them to embrace the bosom of the adulteress (v. 20). In addition to her appearance, the lips of an adulteress drip honey (v. 3) in which her smooth tongue (6:24) and her seductive words (2:16) is very tempting. Her tongue is very successful in attracting and seducing men. In particular, her tongue is very successful in seducing the simple who lacks judgment (7:7) and the married men who are not considering their wives as loving does, graceful deer and satisfied with their wives' breasts (5:19). In addition to her appearance and tongue, the adulteress woman attracts many men's hearts and fall into temptation with her eyes (6:25). How do her eyes tempt the men's hearts? She does so with her flirting eyes (Walvoord). How many men are being tempted by the voluptuous eyes of the prostitute?

This is what King Solomon said in Proverbs 31:30 – “Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.” He said that the beauty of a woman who does not fear God is vanity. In other words, the beauty of the woman who does not fear God vanishes like smoke (Ps. 37:20). Thus, this is what Apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 3:4 – “Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.” In the sight of God, the beauty of a woman is her “inner self” and never her outer appearance. The beauty of the outer person will be for a moment and will be perishable, but the beauty of the inner person is not perishable. Peter is exhorting the women to pursue this unfading beauty of the gentle and quite spirit. Why is Peter encouraging this? It is because it is great worth in God's sight (v.4).

The woman who is great worth in God's sight and who is praised by God is the woman who fears God and the daughters of God who seek inner beauty that will not perish. Therefore, the daughters of God, whose appearance seems to be good by others [Ex. Queen Vashti (Esth. 1:11)], should not trust their own beauty and use their fame to become a prostitute (Ezek. 16:15) and commit sins against God. Of course, the sons of God should not fall into the temptation of such woman who believes in her own beauty and commit adultery. We must keep in mind that the beauty of such woman is vanity (Prov. 31:30).

## **Second, why shouldn't we lust in our heart after the beauty of the prostitute?**

Look at Proverbs 6:26 – “for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon

your very life.” What does it mean? It means that when we fall into a temptation of the immoral woman (v. 24) and let the beauty of the prostitute to captivate us with her eyes (v. 26) we are finally going to bankrupt and lose our lives (Park Yoon-sun). How many men are searching for the beauty of the prostitute and dating her so that they are squandering their wealth? Look at Proverbs 29:3 – “A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.” I remember talking to the tow truck driver who came to tow my broken car. He told me that when he met many pretty women after divorce, they usually kept on asking to buy stuffs for them. He said that those women dated him because of money. So I kind of suggested him to remarry and have his own family instead of keep on meeting many women and keep on buying stuffs for them. When we look at Proverbs 6:29-31, King Solomon said that the sin of him sleeping with another man’s wife is greater sin than the sin of stealing and “if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold, though it costs him all the wealth of his house.” What does it mean? It means that in order to pay for the sins of adultery, all the wealth of his house will be given. That’s how great the price of paying the sin of sexual unfaithfulness is. What should we do?

Now many men (and women) are playing with love. In other words, many men and women are scooping fire into their lap and walking on hot coals (vv. 27-28). As King Solomon said, no man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned and walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched (vv. 27-28). In a word, many men and women are committing adultery outside of their marriage. This is what King Solomon said about those who are committing adultery outside of their marriage: “But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself. Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away.” When we commit the sin of adultery, we will not only find wounds, disgrace and our reproach will not be blotted out but also we will be ruined. And when a man commits adultery to another man's wife, jealousy will arouse her husband’s fury and her husband will not spare in the day of vengeance and will not accept any ransom though the man gives him many gifts (vv. 34-35). What should we do?

### **Lastly, what should we do in order not to lust in our heart after the beauty of the prostitute?**

Look at Proverbs 6:20-24: “My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life, keeping you from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife.” In order for us not to lust in our hearts after the beauty of the prostitute, we must desire the word of God in our hearts. That’s why King Solomon exhorts us to always keep the commands and the laws of God and write them on the tablet of our hearts (3:1-3; 7:1-3). The reason is because the Word of God will not only guide us and watch over us, but will also speak to us (6:22). In other words, God's commands are a lamp that guides us, and it protects us from the forces of darkness. They are “the corrections of

discipline” which are the way to life (v. 23). Therefore, we must not leave the God’s commands and laws but keep them in our hearts and obey them. Then, that Word of God will keep us from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife (v. 24). What should we do? We should not desire worldly beauty in our hearts. According to Isaiah 53:2, the Bible says that the Messiah “had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.” But it seems that we Christians, like the worldly people, are pursuing the beauty that appeals to the people in this world. Although Apostle Peter said “Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight,” we are not pursuing the inner beauty that is of great worth in God’s sight (1 Pet. 3:3-4). What is beauty in the sight of God? And we must seek and pursue the beauty of God in order not to seek the beauty of the prostitute in our hearts.

When I think of the beauty of God, I remember Psalm 27:4 – “One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.” As I live in the desert-like world, one thing I ask of the Lord is that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life so that I may gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and seek him in his temple. With this desperate hope, while living on this earth, not only that I seek the beauty of God, but I want to manifest His beauty. Now the question is what is God’s beauty? I want to humbly receive the Word Isaiah 35:1-2: “The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.” The life of seeking the beauty of God is the life that desires and pursues the glory of God. When we live for the glory of God in this desert-like world, we can manifest God’s beauty. I hope and pray that we humble ourselves and do the will of God and obey His Word until we die, so that we can live for His glory and manifest the beauty of God in this world.

## **A youth who lacks judgment**

### **[Proverbs 7:1-27]**

Do you know the Korean proverb ‘Dig your own grave’? It means that we put ourselves in a corner. When I look at myself, I experience that sometimes I speak a word that digs my own grave. What I learn from such experiences is that it isn’t what I speak that is important but I don’t speak. But the problem is that even after realizing this, I still put myself in the corner. Have you ever had this experience? Have you ever heard the old Chinese saying “jaseungjabak”? This is what I heard for the first time while preparing a sermon. It means ‘to put yourself into trouble, like binding yourself with the braided rope. In a word, the word “jaseungjabak” means he who ruins himself (Internet).

If we look at Proverbs 7:7, there is a young man who lacks judgement and who ruins himself. He is among the young men who doesn’t store up God’s commands within him (v. 1) and doesn’t keep His words (vv. 1, 2). As a result, he falls into the temptation of the adulteress (v. 5). Today, under the heading “A youth who lacks judgement,” I would like to meditate on how this foolish young man who lacks judgment falls into the temptation of the adulteress in three ways. Therefore, I pray that we all realize and know any temptations of Satan and fight them to live a victorious life.

### **First, Satan tempts the youth who lacks judgement to walk along in the direction of the adulteress’ house.**

Look at Proverbs 7:8 – “He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house.” God is commanding us in Proverbs 4:14-15, “Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way.” The wise man keeps this command of God in his heart and obeys it, so he avoids the path of the wicked and doesn’t walk in the way of the evil men. However, the foolish man does not listen to God’s command in his heart, but rather ignores it and goes on the path of the wicked. One of the young men who lacks judgement in Proverbs 7 was such a fool. When the fool was going down the street near the adulteress’ corner (7:8), he shouldn’t set his foot on that path and walk in that way. Rather he should turn away from that path and left (4:15). But the foolish young man didn’t turn away from the adulteress’ path. Rather he walked closer to the corner of her street and walked along in the direction of her house (7:8). When the sun sets and twilight, as the dark of night set in, the foolish youth walked along in the direction of the adulteress’ house (v. 9). Why did the young man walk in the direction of the adulteress’ house during the dark night, not broad



daylight? It was because he didn't want anyone to see him. In other words, the foolish young man went secretly to the adulteress in the deep night to hide his actions from others (Park). Why did he leave his house without sleeping at night, near the corner of the adulteress' street, and head toward her house? What was the reason? It was because the unwise young man didn't obey God's laws as the apple of his eye. Look at Proverbs 7:2 – "Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye." Here, the literal meaning of the Hebrew word "the apple of your eyes" means "the center of your eyes". By the way, the word "the dark of night" in verse 9 also literally means "the center of night", that is 'the middle of night' (Walvoord). What does it mean? In my opinion, the reason why the unwise boy who lacked judgment went secretly to the adulteress' house in the middle of a deep night was because he didn't look at the word of God with the middle of his eyes and didn't obey it. Rather, he may have been staring at the adulteress with his eyes, through the windows of his house, through the lattice (v. 6). If we don't obey the word of God like this, we will be tempted by Satan, walk toward the house of the adulteress, and eventually sin against God.

I don't know if this is the case these days, but long ago in the 80s, there were many prostitutes standing on the Sunset Street, just one block below the famous Hollywood Blvd. As Proverbs 7 says, the prostitutes were standing in the corners of the street and winked at the men who were driving and passing by. I don't remember well now, but I must have driven the Sunset Street with my friends when I was adolescent. When I think about it now, I can't deny why I drove the road with my friends at that time, that it was such a foolish act. Perhaps the reason why we drove the street at night was to see the prostitutes. At that time, I really was a foolish boy. Not only should I not have passed the Sunset Street by car at all, but I shouldn't go near the street late at night. I don't know if the prostitutes are still walking late at night on the Sunset Street. But more than that, I think the temptation of the adulteress over the Internet is now more serious. One day, when I watched TV channel 4, the police were having sting operation. They were trying to catch men who not only chatted with the minor girls under the age of 18 on the Internet but also came to their houses. TV channel 4 was broadcasting those scenes on TV when polices caught those men who came to the girls' house. In this era, when Satan tempts us, he stimulates the lust of our eyes through the Internet. And in the end, we are unable to overcome the lust of the flesh and sexual relations outside of marriage are taking place seriously. What should we do? We must live by keeping God's command inscribed on the plate of our hearts (v. 3). We must guard and obey God's teachings as the apple of our eyes (v. 2). This is what Dr. Yun-sun Park said: 'The pupils are precious, yet very tender, and must be carefully protected. That is why the eyebrows and eyelids are guarded to prevent even dust from invading there. Even if we are careless for a while in keeping the word of God, we will not be able to keep it well and it will be easy to deviate from it' (Park). I hope and pray that we will all overcome the temptation of Satan's harlots by not deviating from the word of God and by keeping the Word of God as the apple of our eyes.

**Second, the adulteress comes out and greets the youth who lacks judgement with hidden intentions.**

Look at Proverbs 7:10 – “Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.” When the foolish young man without wisdom fell into the Satan’s temptation and passed through the street in the twilight, in the evening, in the middle of night and in the darkness and went near to the adulteress’ corner and took the way to her house (vv. 8-9). She dressed as a harlot and greeted the foolish young man with cunning of heart (v. 10). The cunning adulteress hid her true intentions in meeting the foolish young man who lacked judgment. In fact, the literal meaning of the original Hebrew word ‘to be cunning’ here is ‘hidden’ (MacArthur). What was her hidden intention? Look at Proverbs 23:27-28: “For a harlot is a deep pit And an adulterous woman is a narrow well. Surely she lurks as a robber, And increases the faithless among men.” The hidden intention of the adulteress in greeting the foolish young man in dressing like the prostitute was to set a trap and render him faithless in marriage. In other words, the adulteress’ hidden intention is to force many married men to break what they had promised at marriage (Park). The problem is that many unwise men are approaching her too foolishly without knowing the hidden intentions of the cunning women. What should we do? As King Solomon says in Proverbs 7:1, we must keep and treasure the Heavenly Father’s command in our hearts. Here, the original Hebrew word for ‘to keep’ means ‘to hide’ or ‘to treasure up’. Isn’t it interesting that in verse 10, the cunning adulteress hides her true intention, and the Bible tells us to hide God’s command in our hearts in order to resist her temptation? In the end, the lesson King Solomon wants to give us is that we must hide the word of God in our hearts in order to resist the temptation when the cunning woman comes to us and tempts us with her true intentions.

### **Third, the adulteress seduces the youth who lacks judgement with her flattering lips.**

Look at Proverbs 7:21 – “With her many persuasions she entices him; With her flattering lips she seduces him.” Have you ever thought about how a woman seduces a man? I went to Google on the Internet and typed ‘How a woman seduces a man?’ And I watched the movie “Obsessed” and wrote down 4 ways the woman seduces the man. For reference, this film Obsessed is a thriller film that shows the obsession of a woman who seduces a married man (Internet). The first way is to ‘expose appropriately and strategically’. This method stimulates the sexual nature of men, which means that when men see the secret parts of women, they are not immediately forgotten by their heads. The second way is ‘Smile often with your eyes’. A woman’s smile evokes a lot of imaginations in a man. So when the woman looks at the man and smiles, the man becomes even deeply delusional, saying, ‘I think that woman is in love with me.’ The third way is ‘Show your tears’. It is said that the woman’s tears are like magic that attracts men. The fourth way is to ‘Look often’. If the woman looks at the man often, the man must be aware of that woman. In Proverbs 7:21, it is said that the adulteress seduces the foolish young man who lacks judgement with her flattering lips. Here, the word “seduction” comes from Latin and its literal meaning is “to lead astray”, which means ‘to lead in the wrong direction,’ ‘to deceive’ or ‘to degrade’. When the word is used negatively, it means that temptation and perversion are involved, causing a person to arouse sexual excitement, leading to a choice of behavior, but that behavior eventually leads to corruption (Internet). Indeed, in today’s text, I would like to consider three ways how the adulteress seduces and corrupts the young man who lacks judgement:

(1) The adulteress seduces the young foolish man by being seen.

Look at Proverbs 7:10 – “And behold, a woman comes to meet him, Dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart.” When the Bible says the adulteress ‘dressed as a harlot’, it means in these days that the adulteress is dressed like a prostitute. How does the prostitute dress? Doesn’t she dress temptingly? Looking at women wearing clothes in Korea these days, why is the skirt so short? Even some women wear clothes that are almost the same as panty clothes. It seems that prostitutes wear clothes seductively and the exposure is severe. But they are dressed enough to sexually stimulate the lust of men’s eyes and the lust of their flesh. I think it’s really stimulating to seduce foolish men. The Bible says that wearing such clothes, the adulteress is standing here and there on the streets or corners of squares waiting for men (v. 12).

(2) The adulteress seduces the young foolish man by touching.

Look at Proverbs 7:13 – “So she seizes him and kisses him ....” Can you imagine a heavily exposed prostitute rushing at the foolish young man, squeezing him tight with her arms and kissing him with her lips? At that time, the foolish young man would have already felt sexual excitement visually when he saw the adulteress’ clothes worn like a prostitute. But if he was held by here and even was kissed by her, then he would have had to feel sexual impulse at that time. This cunning adulteress even uses physical contact in seducing the foolish young man who lacks judgement. If the adulteress touches and even kisses the foolish young man, how can it not sexually arouse the young man?

(3) The adulteress seduces the young foolish man by being heard.

In other words, in seducing the foolish young man, the adulteress seduces "with persuasive words" and "with her smooth talk" (v. 21). I think that women are the same, but especially men seem to have weak sense of sight, of touch and of hearing. In other words, when a man is seduced by a woman, he may be tempted not only because he sees a woman's body, or he may be seduced through skinship, but he can also be tempted by listening to what the woman says. So, in today's text, the adulteress seduces the foolish young man, with the words that persuade him to move according to her hidden intention, that is, with very soft words that make the man to slip away and deviate from the walking path.

What does the Bible say that the adulteress says to the foolish young man who lacks judgement?

(1) The adulteress says to the young man who lacks judgement with a brazen face (v. 13), “I was due to offer peace offerings; Today I have paid my vows. Therefore I have come out to meet you, To seek your presence earnestly, and I have found you” (vv. 14-15).

This means that the adulteress says to the foolish young man 'God let me meet you' because she remains in the position of prostitute, and made a vow in front of God by coming to Him and offered an offering to Him and kept that vow. Does this make sense at all? Obviously, Deuteronomy 23:18 said, " You shall be careful to perform what goes out from your lips, just as you have voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God, what you have promised", how could the adulteress ignore this word and practicing religious rituals from time to time without obeying God's word in real life, and think that God was also helping her with her obscene jobs? (Park)

(2) The adulteress describes her bed in words to the foolish young man (Prov. 7:16), tempted him by saying, "Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with caresses" (v. 18).

Since her husband left the house with a bag of money and went a long journey and would come home at the full moon (vv.19-20), she said to the foolish young man with peace of mind, 'Let's sleep together.' What a tempting words of the adulteress? How convincing will this smooth seductive word of the adulteress that sounds especially to the foolish men who are not listening to God's voice? Now, many Christian men have been persuaded by the adulteress' flattering lips and have gone to bed and have sex with her and sin against God. In today's text, the young man who lacked judgment eventually fell into the adulteress' temptation and followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose (v. 22). What does the Bible say the result is? Look at verse 23: "till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life." What does it mean? The end of one without wisdom is destruction (v. 23). Just as a bird certainly loses its life when it enters the net, so the ending of the one without wisdom loses life as well.

What should we do? We must listen to God's word. We must pay attention to what God says (v. 24). We must keep His commands and guard His teachings as the apple of our eyes (v. 2). We must cherish the word of God in our hearts (v. 1). And we should be closer to wisdom and understanding than to the adulteress (vv. 4-5). We must obey and keep the commands of God with wisdom that fears Him. The reason is because if we follow the adulteress, there will be many of us who will be perished (v. 26). I hope and pray that all of us obey God's word with the wisdom of God, so that we will not let our hearts turn to the way of the adulteress or stay into her paths (v. 25).

## Understand prudence

### [Proverbs 8:1-11]

Personally, as I live in this world more and more I realize that I am so foolish and I feel more and more that I need the wisdom from God. In the light of the words of Proverbs, my foolishness is a lot. But I just want to share only three:

(1) My foolishness is not loving knowledge. In other words, my foolishness is hating knowledge.

Look at Proverbs 1:22 – “How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing And fools hate knowledge?” I can know that I hate knowledge rather than love it by looking at my foolishness. My foolishness is not standing firmly on the word of God, forsaking God’s instruction and teaching (v. 8), falling into Satan’s enticement (v. 10), and sinning against God by being swept away by sin.

(2) My foolishness is backsliding in faith due to my complacency.

Look at Proverbs 1:32 – “For the waywardness of the naive will kill them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them.” Restlessness or complacency means being satisfied with the current state. When my passion for growth such as progress in faith and gospel in my life of faith cools down and I am satisfied with my current state of faith, there is no choice but regression of my faith. And the regression of that faith is result of hating God's knowledge, instruction, and reproof, and the cause is because I turn my back on God's love and forsake God. The result is that I sin against God by disobeying His word. The kind of sin I commit against God is to make the world (people) friendly (Jos. 23:12) and live in harmony with the world amid the decline of faith like the Israelites in Joshua's day.

(3) My foolishness is impatience.

Look at Proverbs 14:29 – “A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly.” There are many times when God lets me see myself in a hurry. Those who are impatient like me quickly emit bloody anger (Park). Especially in my case, there are many times when I emit internal anger rapidly. Therefore, as I meditate on books of wisdom such as Proverbs, while my own foolishness is revealed, I feel little by little that I desperately need the wisdom from God. In the midst of such situation, God gives me

wisdom and discipline through Proverbs (1:2), and I enjoy the grace that makes me prudent (v. 4).

In the process of this, God is telling me in Proverbs 8:5 – “You who are simple, gain prudence; you who are foolish, gain understanding.” So, I would like to receive two lessons from God under the heading “Understand prudence” so that we can understand how we can be prudent. I hope and pray that we can humbly receive and obey God’s instructions so that we can live this world wisely with the wisdom that God gives us.

### **First, in order for us to be prudent, we must hear wisdom calling us.**

Look at Proverbs 8:1 – “Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice?” What does it mean here that wisdom and understanding raise the voice and call out? The meaning is a sighing about why we don't know God even though the whole universe is filled with the wisdom that God makes known to all of us (Park). That's why King Solomon says in Proverbs 8:2-3 that wisdom is calling out “On the heights along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; beside the gates leading into the city, at the entrances.” The similar word is found in Proverbs 1:20-21: “Wisdom calls aloud in the street, she raises her voice in the public squares; at the head of the noisy streets she cries out, in the gateways of the city she makes her speech.” Isn't it interesting? In Proverbs 7, the cunning adulteress seduces the foolish young man by standing in the streets, in the squares and lurking by every corner (7:12) and is loud (v. 11). In Proverbs 8:1-4, wisdom calls out on the heights along the way, where the paths meet, beside the gates leading into the city, at the entrances. After all, all of us are living by hearing two voices: one is the voice of Satan's foolish temptations and the other is the voice of God's wisdom. What are we listening to and living now? Wisdom is calling out on the heights along the way, where the paths meet and beside the gates leading into the city, at the entrances. But the problem is that people don't hear that wisdom's calling out, so they don't have spiritual wisdom to fear God and to know God. As a result, they are sinning against God while walking in their sinful ways. However, the problem is that not only unbelievers who don't believe in God aren't listening to the sound of wisdom, but we the believers are also turning away from the voice of wisdom. As a result, we Christians also lack spiritual wisdom to discern the right path that God shows us and aren't walking that path. Instead, we are now walking the wrong path in our folly. What is the reason? The reason is because we aren't listening to what wisdom calls out.

What should we do? We must hear the call of wisdom (vv. 1, 5). In order for us to be prudent, we must hear the voice of wisdom. Why should we hear the voice of wisdom? The reason is said in four ways in Proverbs 8:6-9:

#### **(1) The reason we should hear the voice of wisdom is because it tells us the noble things.**

Look at Proverbs 8:6 – “Listen, for I will speak noble things; ....” Here the Hebrew meaning of “noble things” is worthy thing, i.e. words that are valuable and proper and so true (Swanson). In the end, I think

this word means that the more we hear the voice of wisdom, the more we will establish the right values with the wisdom of God. In other words, the more we hear the voice of wisdom, the more we become wise and prudent. And with God's values, we can distinguish between what is of eternal and beneficial value and what is instantaneous and useless. In a word, when we hear the voice of wisdom, we have the right values. Therefore, a prudent Christian who hears the voice of wisdom chooses things of eternal and beneficial value and does what is worth in the sight of God.

(2) The reason why we should hear the voice of wisdom is because it reveals right things.

Look at Proverbs 8:6 – "... And the opening of my lips will reveal right things." Here, the meaning of the Hebrew word "right things" is "integrity" or "honesty/integrity/rectitude" (Koehler). Speaking of a line, it is straightness that doesn't bend or deviate from a linear direction (Swanson). In the end, this means that the more we hear the voice of wisdom, the more we become wise and prudent, so that we can distinguish between a crooked path and a straight path. In other words, the more we hear the voice of wisdom, the more we become wise and prudent, and we will walk the straight and the honest path, not left or right. In a word, when we hear the voice of wisdom, we are on the right path. Therefore, a prudent Christian who listens to the voice of wisdom doesn't choose the bent and the perverse path, but rather chooses to walk the right path.

(3) The reason why we should hear the voice of wisdom is because it utters truth.

Look at Proverbs 8:7 – "For my mouth will utter truth; And wickedness is an abomination to my lips." Here, the Hebrew word for "truth" is the word "amen" we often use. Its meaning is 'to be firm', 'endure', 'be faithful', 'be true', 'trust', 'believe' (Vine). So, when we say "Amen" while listening to the word of God during worship or while we pray and praise, it usually means "I believe." The more we hear the voice of wisdom, the more we become wise and prudent, and the more we can discern between truth and lies. And we detest wickedness in the fear of God (v. 7). In a word, when we hear the voice of wisdom, we get the right knowledge. Therefore, the prudent Christian who listens to the voice of wisdom puts away lies and chooses the truth. And if he speaks the truth with his lips, he will also live a true life.

(4) The reason why we should hear the voice of wisdom is because it speaks just.

Look at Proverbs 8:8 – "All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse." The word that comes out of God's mouth is just. As we have already meditated on in verse 6, the reason we need to hear the voice of wisdom is because wisdom speaks what is "right", verse 8 says that we need to hear the voice of wisdom because wisdom speaks what is "just". Both the words "right" and "just" have something in common. And the coming thing is that both words, if we speak as a line, it is a straight line

that isn't bent. So King Solomon says that "All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse" (v. 8). In a word, when we hear the voice of wisdom, we can do what is right. Therefore, the prudent Christian who hears the voice of wisdom walks away from the crooked and perverse paths, choosing only the path of just.

We must hear the voice of wisdom coming out of God's mouth. When we hear the voice of God that is the noble things, right things (v. 6), truth (v. 7) and righteousness (v. 8), we will gain knowledge and understanding (v. 9). Furthermore, as we hear and obey God's word of wisdom, we become more and more wise and understanding, knowing what is the noble things, right things, truth, and righteousness, we will be able to choose the noble path, the right path, the true path and the righteous path and walk on that path. In other words, when we hear the call of wisdom, we can do the right knowledge, the right values, the right path, and the right actions. I hope and pray that we all become such prudent Christians, listen to the voice of God's wisdom, and choose the path to live a life that is noble, right, true and righteous in God's sight.

**Second and last, in order for us to be prudent, we must listen to God's instruction and gain knowledge.**

Look at Proverbs 8:10 – "Take my instruction and not silver, And knowledge rather than choicest gold." If there are two choices ahead of you, one is silver and fine gold, and the other is God's instruction and knowledge, what would you choose? When I think of this question, it reminds me of the words that we have heard and known to teach our children how to catch fish rather than give them fish. In other words, we know that it's much better to teach the skills how to catch the fish than just give the fish. Nevertheless, looking at our real life, it seems that we are choosing the fish itself. We can know this when we see that we are pursuing gold and silver treasures, or riches, rather than God's knowledge and instruction. The key point of Proverbs 8:10-11 is that God's wisdom is much better than gold, silver, or pearls. The reason is because gold, silver and pearl treasures are fish, and God's wisdom is the way or skill to catch it. It means that if we become wise by obtaining God's instruction and knowledge, God's wisdom is better than wealth itself because God gives us the ability to earn wealth. When I read an article about the patent filing between Samsung and Apple on the Internet news a while ago, I think of what Mr. Chul-Soo Ahn said, 'There is no chance with hardware now.' As the times change, they are saying that we should focus on software rather than hardware. Here, hardware refers to all things that can be touched with the hand, such as the computer body, CPU, hard disk, mouse, monitor, etc., which are the computer or peripheral devices attached to the computer. And software is simply "program". For example, if we try to play a game on a computer, we cannot do it all with hardware. We must have a program that can play computer games. Someone made this comparison to humans like this: human body is hardware, human knowledge is software (Internet). I think the human body is also very important. But the body of a person without knowledge would be like hardware without software in a computer. Both are important. However, when we consider the body of a person without knowledge, we are concerned that



this age is trying to abandon the knowledge of knowing God and obtain wealth.

When I say “wealth”, I think of Deuteronomy 8:17-18: “Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' "But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.” Clearly, the Bible says that God gives us the power to acquire wealth. Isn't that the ability to acquire riches more important than the wealth itself? Therefore, in Proverbs 8:10-11, King Solomon urges us to obtain God's instruction and knowledge rather than silver or fine gold. In other words, the Bible urges us to use our strength to acquire God's wisdom to obtain riches rather than wealth. Look at Proverbs 8:18-21: “Riches and honor are with me, Enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold, And my yield better than choicest silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice, To endow those who love me with wealth, That I may fill their treasuries.” God's heart wants us to get rich in wealth in the end because we are prudent by the wisdom of God and walk on the path of righteousness and just. Therefore, we must be prudent by obtaining God's instruction and knowledge rather than wealth. We must know that prudence is better than wealth.

Not long ago, I read an editorial written by one of our presbytery pastors in a Christian newspaper. And in that editorial, I first heard the word "digital dementia". What "digital dementia" means is that science has developed these days, we have difficulty using our brains as we rely on machines. And as a result, we keep forgetting. For example, a lot of people are used to using a smart phone these days. So it seems that there aren't many things to use our heads especially because that phone does everything for us. As a result, we depend on the machine, so we don't use our heads that much anymore. So we have symptoms like dementia. I think it's an interesting observation. There is a side that I agree with. But when I think of “digital dementia”, I think of “spiritual dementia”. When we don't meditate on the word of God well and live busy day by day without listening to the voice of God's wisdom, then we have no choice but to live without remembering God's instruction and knowledge. As a result, there are times when we can't live a true and upright life as we walk on the crooked path, leaning left or right. And we are guilty of living unrighteously and practicing unrighteousness while pursuing the best material in our eyes rather than the best in God's eyes. What should we do? We must be prudent Christians. In order to do that, we must hear the voice of God's wisdom. And we must acquire God's instruction and knowledge that are worth more than wealth. I hope and pray that all of us become prudent people in God's sight.

## **A prudent man who hears the voice of wisdom**

We must hear the call of wisdom (Prov. 8:1).

This is because wisdom speaks “noble things” (v. 6).

In other words, because wisdom teaches us ‘right values’

we must hear the voice of wisdom.

When we have right values, we can discern

what is eternal and beneficial and what is instantaneous and useless.

A prudent man who hears the voice of wisdom chooses things that are eternal and beneficial with right values.

The reason is because wisdom reveals “right things” (v. 6).

In other words, because wisdom teaches us the ‘right way’ we must hear the voice of wisdom.

As we walk the right path, Satan is telling us to walk a crooked path.

But wisdom tells us to walk the straight path, or the right path.

The prudent man who hears the voice of wisdom

walks faithfully by choosing the right path without leaning to the left or right.

The reason is because wisdom speaks “truth” to us (v. 7).

In other words, because wisdom gives us ‘right discernment’

we must hear the voice of wisdom.

When we have the right discernment

we can discern what is true and what is false.

He who listens to the voice of wisdom has the right discernment

and chooses the truth and lives a life of truth.

The reason is because wisdom tells us “righteousness” (v. 8).

In other words, since wisdom teaches us to do the right thing

we must hear the voice of wisdom

As we do the right thing, the voice of Satan tells us to do the unfair unrighteous thing in this unfair world,

but wisdom tells us to do the right thing.

The prudent man who listens to the voice of wisdom

will do what is right, even in this unfair world.

# The power of wisdom

## [Proverbs 8:12-21]

What do you think our power is as Christians? I personally believe that our Christian power is God's power that manifests through our incompetence. Therefore, even though it is difficult and painful to feel our limit of power deeply through the adversities and difficulties of life I think it is necessary. The reason is because when we experience and realize our own limitation in terms of power or ability, we will have the opportunity to experience the infinite power of God. Aren't we living day by day with the power of God who gives us strength when we are weak?

If we look at Proverbs 8:12, the Bible says, "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence ...," and verse 14 says, "... I am understanding, power is mine." In other words, wisdom is understanding and power is wisdom's. So today, under the heading "Power of wisdom", I would like to think about and learn three lessons about the power of wisdom. Therefore, we want to experience the power of God's wisdom while feeling more keenly about our foolishness, which is the limit of our own power of wisdom.

### **First, the power of wisdom is to hate evil.**

Look at Proverbs 8:13 – "'The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverted mouth, I hate.'" Looking back at Proverbs 1:7, the Bible says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, Fools despise wisdom and instruction." If we think about Proverbs 1:17 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction" in connection with Proverbs 8:13, the wise man fears God and hates evil but the fool loves loves evil because he doesn't fear God. The fool loves pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth that God hates (v. 13). However, the wise man who fears God and hates evil, hates all these things because God hates them. This is the power of wisdom. In other words, the power of wisdom is to hate what God hates. In other words, the power of wisdom is to hate evil, pride and arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth that God hates.

Not long ago, in a conversation with a brother in Christ in the church, he told me Romans 3:10, "There is none righteous, not even one" and Romans 7:19, "For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want." At the same time, he said, "Wretched man that I am!" (v. 24), which the apostle Paul said, and I couldn't help but agree with the verses he said. I am sure there is no Christians who believe in Jesus didn't confess

like the apostle Paul did in Romans 7 in their spiritual battle against themselves. One of the reasons is because, as the apostle Paul said, “For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want” (v. 19), there are times when we see ourselves like this as well. Have you never seen yourself not doing the good you want and doing the evil you don’t want? If “yes”, how do you feel when you see yourself doing the evil that you don’t want to do? Are there times when you blame yourself in your incompetence and fall into sense of shame? The power of wisdom makes us to hate evil because we fear God. In other words, the power of wisdom makes us to hate what God hates. In Proverbs 8:13, the Bible clearly says that God hates pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth. It is that wisdom has the power to make us hate all of these. This is possible because wisdom dwells with prudence and we find knowledge and discretion (v. 12). What does it mean? Wisdom not only gives us the knowledge of judgment so that we can immediately discern religious and ethical good and bad, but also, wisdom makes us discreet and not committing religious ethical sins (Park). Wouldn't you like to receive this power of wisdom?

We could say that the power of wisdom makes us love what God loves. So what does God love? It is the good. And saying that God hates evil, pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth, we can say that the good God loves is humility, meekness, the good way, and honest (or upright) mouth. Therefore, the wise believers who possess the power of wisdom are humble and meek to do good and speak the truth. Are we really the wise Christians who possess this power of wisdom?

## **Second, the power of wisdom is to decree justice.**

Look at Proverbs 8:15-16: “By me kings reign, And rulers decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, All who judge rightly.” In order for the president and leaders of a country to rule and establish a country with justice, they must have the wisdom of God. In other words, in order for the government to govern a country well, the laws and order of the country must be set upright. In order to do that, I think the role of the judiciary (court) that judges according to the provisions of the law is important among the legislative, judicial, and administrative agencies of the country. But what would happen to the country if the judiciary didn’t establish justice in the right implementation of the law? Don’t we refer to such a country as ‘a lawless world’? In order for all nations to become a state of rule of law, the kingdom of God must be more governed by God's law, not to mention, just as the governmental power of that nation must be exercised according to the law. However, looking at the church these days, we cannot help but question whether the church of God is the kingdom of God governed by God. The reason is because the church doesn’t have the Lord as King, doesn’t resemble the Lord, and furthermore doesn’t reveal the glory of the Lord.

The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4:20, “For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.” But for some reason, it seems that the church these days are only talking and not showing their power. For

example, the church now speaks of the gospel of Jesus Christ, but the power of the gospel is not revealed to this world through the church. The law of God's kingdom is to love God and love neighbors, the twofold commandment of Jesus. But because the church doesn't obey the law of God and only speak about it, the church isn't showing the power of God's love in this world. Now the church, like the apostle Paul, doesn't match teaching and action (v. 17). In other words, the church now speaks about the word of God, but is not living according it by obeying it. Therefore, the church is now being influenced by evil from the world rather than having good influence to this world. We desperately need the power of God's wisdom now. Because God poured out wisdom on us, we the church not only hates evil because we fear God, but also establishes justice in the church, so that the church can be in order. To establish justice in the church with the wisdom that God gives means to discern between good and evil (1 Kgs. 3:9) to do good and to avoid evil in any way (1 Thess. 5:22). If we put those words in the context of today's text, we must abandon pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth that God hates, and do good things with the humility, meekness, the good way, and honest (upright) mouth that God loves (Eph 2:10). What is the reason? This is because our God is not a God of disorder but of peace (1 Cor. 14:33). What does it mean? When the family and the church that believe in the Lord are ruled by the wisdom of God, there is no disorder in the family and the church. Rather, there is peace from God in such family and the church. Is our family truly a family in which this power of wisdom is manifested?

### **Third and last, the power of wisdom is to acquire wealth.**

Look at Proverbs 8:21 – “To endow those who love me with wealth, That I may fill their treasuries.” From Proverbs 8:10 we learned that God's wisdom is far better than gold, silver, or pearls. In other words, when we hear the voice of God's wisdom and gain God's instruction and knowledge, we also gain the ability to earn wealth. That's why God's wisdom is more valuable than wealth itself. Look at Proverbs 8:18-19: “Riches and honor are with me, Enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold, And my yield better than choicest silver.” What does it mean? Now King Solomon says that those who have wisdom have wealth and glory. Wasn't King Solomon himself a person who enjoyed the riches and glories from God with his wisdom? As God says in Deuteronomy 8:17-18, God gives us the power to obtain wealth. Therefore, rather than striving to acquire riches, we must strive to acquire God's wisdom to acquire wealth.

Then what must we do in order to put on this power of wisdom? We must love wisdom. And we must earnestly seek wisdom. Look at Proverbs 8:17 – “I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me.” Now King Solomon is exhorting us to be “those who love me” (v. 21), that is, the one who loves wisdom. The reason is because when we love wisdom, we will be put on the love of wisdom. What does it mean to put on the love of wisdom? It means that wisdom gives us all these blessings when we love wisdom, just as God gave us riches that King Solomon didn't even ask for when he asked for wisdom that pleased God's heart. Therefore, King Solomon urges us to earnestly seek wisdom. Then we will find wisdom. How can we earnestly seek wisdom? First

of all, if we lack wisdom, we must ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault (Jam. 1:5). And we must listen diligently to the voice of wisdom (Prov. 8:1). We must listen and obey God's voice diligently. As we do so, we will receive the power of wisdom from God.

I personally ask God for certain power. That power is the power of the word of God and the power of His love. However, as I continued meditating on the books of wisdom in the Bible, I came to yearn for another power. That power is the "power of wisdom" meditated in today's text. Of course, the motive for seeking the power of wisdom is that as I meditated on the books of wisdom, I became more and more forced to seek wisdom from God amidst my stupidity and foolishness. Particularly one of the reasons I long for the power of wisdom is to hate evil. In other words, one of the reasons I ask God for the power of wisdom is that I hate the evil that God hates, and also love the good that God loves more and more. The reason why the power of wisdom is needed is to establish justice. Especially, while serving the Victory Presbyterian Church, the body of the Lord, my hope and pray is that the Lord to build justice with the power of wisdom even for order and peace in the church. And when I think of the church members, what I pray to God is to hope that God will give them power of wisdom to obtain wealth so that they may be able to offer some of their wealth for the word of the kingdom of God and the gospel ministry. For this kind of work to come true, I hope and pray that we all become eager to seek wisdom and love wisdom in order to be put on the power of wisdom.

## Hear the instruction of wisdom!

### [Proverbs 8:22-36]

We are busy with a lot of work while serving in the church (Lk. 10:40). Therefore, the brothers or sisters in Christ around me who has left me to do all the serving alone (v. 40) are considered unfavorable. So in dissatisfaction, we even go to the Lord and pray and complain: ‘Lord, do You not care that my brother or sister in Christ has left me to do all the serving alone? (v. 40) At that time, I wonder if the Lord is telling us: My name, my name, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary’ (vv. 41-42). Although the Lord wants us to sit at the Lord's feet and listen to His word like Mary (v. 39) and to obey His will, we have greedy heart in wanting to give a lot of glory to God by making many things busy according to our will. Although the Lord is saying, “only one thing is necessary” (v. 42), we are not satisfied with doing that one thing. After all, we aren’t obeying the will of the Lord, but serving the church according to our will. Although “May has chosen the good part” in the eyes of the Lord, we are busy with many things like Martha (vv. 41-42).

As we began meditating on Proverbs 8, we learned from verses 1 to 11 that in order for us to be prudent based on on the word of God, we must hear wisdom calling us and hear the instruction of wisdom and gain knowledge. I thought about four reasons why we should listen to the instruction of wisdom. The reason is because (1) It tells us the noble things (v. 6). In other words, the reason we should listen to the instruction of wisdom is because it gives us the right values. (2) It reveals right things (v. 6). In other words, the reason we should listen to the instruction of wisdom is because it guides us in the right way. (3) It utters truth (v. 7). In other words, the reason we should listen to the instruction of wisdom is because it allows us to acquire the right knowledge. (4) It speaks just (v. 8). In other words, the reason we should listen to the instruction of wisdom is because it makes us do right. Interestingly, in the words from verses 32 to 36 at the end of Proverbs 8, King Solomon repeatedly said, 'Listen to me (wisdom)' (vv. 32, 34) and 'Listen to instruction' (v. 33). In other words, he is telling us to ‘hear the instruction of wisdom.’ I would like to learn the lesson God gives us while meditating on how to listen to the instruction of wisdom in three ways:

### **First, we must wait humbly every day to hear the instruction of wisdom.**

Look at Proverbs 8:34 – “Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at my doorposts.” Personally, as a pastor, there are many times when I struggle when it comes to preparing and preaching sermons. Among the many concerns, I especially struggle about how to correctly interpret the text of the Bible and

how to properly proclaim it to the church members who listen to it. In the meantime, I sometimes think of this as well: 'I wonder how they really listen to my sermons?' When I think about this, I often think that believers need to be trained in how to listen to the sermons. So, in my memory, a long time ago, I learned how to listen to a sermon through Professor Jay Adams' book about how to listen to the sermons. And I thought it my church members based on his book. One of the reasons why we studied the book, which specifically sets out what we should prepare first, attitudes to take, and what hinders us from listening to the sermon, is to learn how to prepare our hearts before we listen to the sermons. In other words, the reason why we study the book is so that we who receive the seed of the word of God should learn how to make our hearts good soils so that the seed of the word of God may bear fruits. This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: 'The attitude of people who effectively listen to the word of God is to receive it with sincerity and trust' (Park). That sincere attitude is to listen to the word of God with a humble heart and earnest longing. In Proverbs 8:34, King Solomon says that such attitude is 'watching daily at His gates, waiting at His doorposts. This word seems to describe us waiting for the Lord, the King of kings, to listen humbly and earnestly to the voice of the Lord by the door of the royal palace where the Lord resides (Park). This is what Professor J. Adams said about one of the ways to listen to a sermon well: 'It's eager anticipation. It means that attitude preparation is necessary. The Bible says to receive the word with great eagerness (Acts 17:11). We need to have anticipation to hear the sermon well. When listening to the sermon in church, we must pay attention to only one thing. 'What is the word that God will give to me today?' We must have a childlikeness. We can hear it only when we have pure heart and open heart. Even when we search the Bible, we must search the Bible because of our desire to find the truth. If we take prejudice, we get nothing. Listening to catching a pod for flaws or not is the sick ears. In Hebrews 5:11, it says, "Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing." It means that we have dull ears to hear. Listening to the sermon isn't to find a fault, but to find the truth (Adams).

Why, then, must we humbly wait every day to hear the word of truth? The reason is because our Lord Jesus Christ is the word of truth. More specifically, since Jesus Christ is the wisdom that has been with God from the beginning, we must wait humbly every day to hear the word of the truth coming out of His mouth. If we look at Proverbs 8:22-26, we can see that King Solomon emphasizes that wisdom was with God in the beginning, even before the creation of the heavens and the earth: "The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old. From everlasting I was established, From the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, When there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills I was brought forth; While He had not yet made the earth and the fields, Nor the first dust of the world." Here, when we look at the words "Before", "From beginning", "When there were no depths", "While He had not yet made", King Solomon is referring to the fact that wisdom has been with God from the beginning and is similar to John 1:1-2: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." In other words, "wisdom" mentioned in Proverbs 8:22-26 refers to



Jesus Christ, who was with God in the beginning (Park). And because that Jesus Christ is the Word, we must listen to Him humbly every day. The reason is because “man does not live by bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord” (Deut. 8:3).

## **Second, we must listen and obey the the instruction of wisdom.**

Look at Proverbs 8:32 – “Now therefore, O sons, listen to me, For blessed are they who keep my ways.” We do not end only by listening humbly and earnestly to all the words of Jesus, who had been with God from the beginning. We must listen to all those words and obey them. That is the true blessed life of the Christians. However, just as we have problems listening to the word of the Lord, we experience in our lives that there are problems in keeping and doing what we heard. For example, when we listen to the word of the Lord, we need to diligently break up the field of our hearts every day into a field where our hearts are good. In order for His word to bear fruit, we must obey it. But Satan takes it from our hearts so that we cannot bear fruit (Lk. 8:12). Also, the reason we cannot keep His word is because our faith is not deeply rooted. So when we first hear the word of the Lord, we receive it with joy and believe for a while. But when we are tested, we betray the Lord (v. 13) and disobey His word. And because of the anxiety, wealth, and pleasure of this world (v. 14), we are not fully fruitful because we can't keep the word of the Lord properly. However, if we have “an honest and good heart”, we will live a fruitful life through patience by listening to and keeping the word of the Lord (v. 15). I think this honest and good heart is the heart that experiences the power of God's word that has made the work of creation. In other words, a wise person who listens to and obeys the word of the Lord has a wise heart to experience the power of the word of the Almighty who makes the work of the new creation. The power of the words of the Almighty, who makes this new creation work, can be seen in Proverbs 8:27-30: “When He established the heavens, I was there, When He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep, When He made firm the skies above, When the springs of the deep became fixed, When He set for the sea its boundary So that the water would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth; Then I was beside Him, as a master workman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him.” Here, when he sees the words "I was there" and "I was beside Him," King Solomon says that wisdom has been with God from the beginning and that even when God created the heavens and the earth, He remained with God and became the creator. This statement is described in John 1:3: “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” In other words, the “wisdom” mentioned in Proverbs 8:27-30 means that Jesus Christ is the Creator God who created the heavens and earth. In other words, the words that come out of the mouth of the Lord, the God who created the heavens and earth with the Word, have the power to accomplish the work of new creation. Therefore, when we hear the word of His power and are led by the power of the word, we have no choice but to obey it. The reason is because the word of life is the word of vitality and our light (Jn. 1:4), and the word of life that has become the light defeats all darkness in our hearts. Blessed are those who listen to and obey God's word. What is the blessing? It is the blessing of prosperity. Look at Joshua 1:8 – “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and

night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.” The wise hears and observes the instruction of wisdom, so they enjoy the blessing of prosperity from God.

### **Third and last, we must receive wisdom by listening to the instruction of wisdom.**

Look at Proverbs 8:33 – “Heed instruction and be wise, And do not neglect it.” We can gain wisdom when we listen to and obey the words that come out of the mouth of the Lord, who is the wisdom who makes the work of the new creation. And when we gain wisdom, we have joy. Look at Proverbs 8:30-31: “Then I was beside Him, as a master workman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him, Rejoicing in the world, His earth, And having my delight in the sons of men.” Here, King Solomon says that when God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning, Jesus, who is the wisdom, was with God and saw God created the heaven and the earth and rejoiced. Especially Jesus, who is the wisdom, was pleased when God created man (MacArthur). However, when a man disobeyed God's command and committed a sin, and because of that sin, the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, the Lord was sorry that He had made on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart (Gen. 6:5-6). Eventually, through one man Adam, sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men (Rom. 5:12). However, through obedience of Jesus Christ, the last Adam, to the point of death on the cross, we have received the gracious gift eternal life (v. 21). Those who listen to the words of Jesus who brought us to eternal life can gain wisdom. And the reason why we must hear the instruction of wisdom from Jesus and receive wisdom is to obtain life and to be favored by God. Look at Proverbs 8:35 – “For he who finds me finds life And obtains favor from the LORD.” However, those who lose Jesus, who is the true wisdom, hurt their own soul, and those who hate Jesus love death (v. 36).

I remember the words of Matthew 10:16 when Jesus sent out His twelve disciples: “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.” I think that we Christians must be truly wise in order to keep the purity of our faith while living in a world full of false teachers who are like wolves. And in order for us to become wise, we must hear the instruction of wisdom. Every day we must humbly wait before the Lord to hear His voice. And we must listen to the voice of the Lord and keep it. So we must get wisdom. Then, God will give us the right knowledge (truth) and the right values and make us walk the right path and live the right life. May we all have this grace of God.

## **Forsake your folly and proceed in the way of understanding!**

### **[Proverbs 9:1-18]**

I got a book gift from my friend this Monday. I wasn't interested in the book's author but personally, the title of the book drew my attention. The title of the book was 'The road I haven't been to is more beautiful.' Perhaps there are so many roads that I haven't been able to go, so I opened this book and started reading because I was curious about what the author said about that beautiful road. This is what the author said: 'We have many choices in our lives. Choosing is also about choosing one of several things, but also giving up on the other. That is why people with a lot of regret have lots of regrets about other things that have been abandoned because of their choice' (Internet). I think people who have lot of regrets about the road they haven't been able to go to are drawn to the title of this book and try to read it with curiosity. So I opened the book once and started reading it, and the title of the first chapter was 'The road I haven't been to is more beautiful.' In that first chapter, the author talked about her childhood and the Korean War. She was unable to walk the path she dreamed of because of the war and walked another path. When she looked at back her almost 80 years of life now, she concluded: 'The silk that I dreamed of may be worse than the silk that I actually have now. But as if the road I have not been able to go to is more beautiful than the way I have been to, I can't help but to see that the success that I missed in reality looks much shabby compared to the dream I missed' (Internet).

I personally looked back on my life for about 44 years, thinking about the path I have been on and the path the Lord gave me to walk. Of course, I know it's not easy to divide my life into just two paths. But I thought it would be nice to try it at least once while preparing for today's sermon. First of all, when I look back on the path I've been on, if I can say that path in one word, I can't help but confess that it was foolish path of wandering and sin. The reason why it was the path of wandering and sin is because I lived in the world apart from God, and I had left the Lord and tried to find the meaning of life, joy, and happiness in the world. Then, when I think about what I can say in a word that the Lord gave me to walk, I would like to say that it is the path of grace, the path of love, and the path of the purpose of existence of my life. The reason why the path of my life's purpose of existence is because when I was in my first year in college, through a college retreat at my church, the Lord made me realize the purpose of my life and led me to live a life that is guided by that purpose. And the reason why the way is the way of grace and the way of love is because everything is God's grace and God's great love that He made me to realize it and to enjoy it thus far. Meanwhile, about 6 years ago, God made me to start meditating on the book of Psalms, and continued to meditate on the book of Ecclesiastes and the book of Proverbs this year 2011. And I see that the Lord

is leading me to walk the path of wisdom. In particular, the Lord continues to teach me what the path of wisdom the Lord wants me to walk as He reveals my own foolishness more and more through the books of wisdom. In the midst of that, the Lord is giving me the word, “Forsake your folly and proceed in the way of understanding” through Proverbs chapter 9. Look at Proverbs 9:6 – “Forsake your folly and live, And proceed in the way of understanding.” Based on this word, under the heading “Forsake your folly and proceed in the way of understanding!,” I will like all of us to learn what folly we should forsake and how we can follow the path of understanding as we meditate on Proverbs 9:1-18.

First of all, what we want to think about is what is folly that we must forsake.

### **The folly we must forsake is mocking.**

Look at Proverbs 9:7-8: “Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you.” When we refer to someone as ‘he’s arrogant,’ we think that the meaning is ‘he pretends to be proud and despises others.’ By the way, in today’s text, “a mocker” refers to the “scorner” (Strong). This arrogant man is a scoffer of the instructions of truth (Park). And the trait of the arrogant who ridicule the instructions of truth is that he is proud and arrogant and likes to reject it with contempt. What does the arrogant despise and like to refuse? It is discipline and reproof or rebuke. In other words, the mocker likes to reject wisdom in contempt (Whitaker). That is why King Solomon says in Proverbs 9:8, “Do not rebuke a mocker.” What is the reason? The reason is because “he will hate you” (v. 8). In other words, if we rebuke the mocker, he will hate us so we shouldn’t rebuke the mocker. Another reason why we should not rebuke the mocker is because if we rebuke him, we will rather get dishonor and insults for ourselves (v. 7). Here the word ‘to get insults’ means that when we rebuke the mocker, we will get verbal abuse by the mocker (Swanson). This means, for example, that when we rebuke the mocker because we love him, he can pour out insults on us.

Personally, I sympathized with the words of King Solomon “Do not rebuke a mocker” (v. 7). And I thought about why the mocker would hate to be rebuked. What do you think is the reason? Dr. Park Yoon-sun says that there are two reasons why the proud person rebels without receiving advice. The reason he rebelled is, first, because he became obsessed with pride, not knowing the truth, and thinking that what he had done was right. And second, because he has pride, he considers a person who gives advice to him or rebukes him as the person who humiliates him (Park). Dr. Park said such pride is sin. The reason is because the Bible tells us to consider others better than ourselves (Phil. 2:3) (Park). Don’t we have this sinful pride in us? In this way the mocker believes himself that he is right in his sinful pride. So no matter how much we rebuke him in love, he will never listen to our rebuke. To such a person, the rebuke of the wise man can never benefit (v. 12). Rather, the mocker doesn’t hear the rebuke of wisdom but hears the voice of the woman of folly (v. 13). Look at Proverbs 9:13-17: “The woman of

folly is boisterous, She is naive and knows nothing. She sits at the doorway of her house, On a seat by the high places of the city, Calling to those who pass by, Who are making their paths straight: Whoever is naive, let him turn in here," And to him who lacks understanding she says, 'Stolen water is sweet; And bread eaten in secret is pleasant.'" The woman of folly calls to those who pass by, who are making their paths straight and says "Stolen water is sweet; And bread eaten in secret is pleasant" (v. 17). What does it mean here, "Stolen water is sweet; And bread eaten in secret is pleasant", the voice of the woman of folly? According to one commentator, "Stolen water" can refer to implicit sex, because Proverbs 5:15 says, "Drink water from your own cistern And fresh water from your own well" and it can refer to the sexual relationship between a husband and a wife in marriage and stolen water refers to sex outside of marriage. And the "bread eaten in secret" (9:17) is a clandestine activity (Walvoord) and that also has a negative meaning. In the end, the Bible says that the mocker falls into this foolish woman's deception (vv. 16-17) and will suffer alone (v. 12). What kind of suffer will the mocker go through? The mocker is simple (v. 16) and falls into the foolish woman's deception (vv. 13, 16-17). Not knowing that her dwelling place is a place to be killed and to be sent to the depths of the grave (v. 18), the mocker responds to her invitation and eventually will face death (ref.: 2:18; 5:5 7:27). Therefore, Proverbs 9:6 says, "Forsake your folly and live, And proceed in the way of understanding." We must obey this word and forsake our folly. And we must proceed in the way of understanding.

How can we truly follow the way of understanding? This question is what we would like to think about as the second and last in today's text. I think Proverbs 9:1-18 teaches us three things:

### **First, we must respond to the invitation of wisdom.**

Look at Proverbs 9:1-5: "Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars; She has prepared her food, she has mixed her wine; She has also set her table; She has sent out her maidens, she calls From the tops of the heights of the city: 'Whoever is naive, let him turn in here!' To him who lacks understanding she says, 'Come, eat of my food And drink of the wine I have mixed.'" In today's text, King Solomon says that two different voices are inviting us from the high places of the city: one is the invitation of the woman of folly (v. 14) and the other is the invitation of wisdom (v. 3). And the Bible says that he who lacks understanding (v. 16), in response to the invitation of the woman of folly called from the high places of the city, forsakes the right path he was walking on (vv. 14-15), choose the path of foolishness, and eventually die (v. 18). However, the wise man, in response to the invitation of wisdom from the heights of the city, forsakes his foolishness and chooses the path of understanding, and eventually lives (v. 6). The woman of folly says, "Stolen water is sweet; And bread eaten in secret is pleasant" (v. 17), and invites those who lack understanding, while wisdom says, "Come, eat of my food And drink of the wine I have mixed" (v. 5) and invite them. This invitation of wisdom reminds me of Isaiah 55:1-3: "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen,

listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.” What does it mean? Now God is inviting all people to participate in all His salvation through the prophet Isaiah. This refers to the gracious invitation of the Lord to participate in salvation through the gospel in the New Testament era (Park). In Proverbs 9, unlike “Stolen water” and “bread eaten in secret,” (v. 17) which the woman of folly refers to, wisdom says “my food And drink of wine” (v. 5). Here “my food And drink of wine” refers to the flesh to be torn and the precious blood of Jesus Christ, who is the true wisdom, to shed on the cross. The Bible says that if we drink the stolen water and eat the bread in secret in response to the invitation of the woman of folly, we will eventually die. But if we eat and drink the food and wine of wisdom in response to the invitation of wisdom, we will gain life (v. 6), that is, eternal life. Therefore, we must respond to the invitation of wisdom and walk the path of understanding.

### **Second, we are to love rebuke and instruction and teaching of wisdom.**

Look at Proverbs 9:8-9: “Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you. Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.” When we rebuke the mocker, he will hate us, and it will invite insult and incur abuse. But the Bible says that if we rebuke the wise, he will love us (vv. 7-8). Why does the wise love us for rebuking him? The reason is because through our rebuke, the wise will add to his learning and will be wiser (v. 9). In a word, because our rebuke will benefit the wise (v. 12), we must love rebuke, instruction, and teaching of wisdom. As I meditated on these words, I wrote a short writing under the heading ‘We must know how to be pointed out’: ‘Everyone knows how to point out. However, it is not easy to point it right. Even more difficult is pointing out wisely with the love of God. We must be able to point out humbly and correctly with the love of God. At the same time, what is really important is that we must be able to humbly receive the pointing out. Of course, when we are being pointed out, we can get stressed and it can hurt our hearts. Especially when we see the selfish side of a person rather than feeling the love of God through that person who pointed us, our hearts can feel pains and be troubled. Also, when we are pointed out in the midst of misunderstandings while our hearts aren’t properly understood, our instincts may have the urge to point out the misunderstanding of the person who pointed us out. Nevertheless, we must be able to humbly receive his pointing out. The reason is because maybe God is pointing us through him who pointed to us (whether that pointing out is correct or not). We need to know how to use people’s pointing out as an opportunity to grow before God.’ This is what the Bible Proverbs 12:15 says: “The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.” The mocker who believes in himself that he is right will not listen to us and will hate us when we rebuke him in love because he think that he is right no matter what. But when the Bible says that the wise hear counsel, he has humble listening ears. He doesn’t believe that he is right and doesn’t boast. Rather, he heeds correction and gains understanding (15:32, 21:11). So we must heed correction. We must love the rebuke of wisdom. Therefore, we must become wiser and walk on the path of understanding to the end.

### **Third and last, we must know and fear the holy God.**

Look at Proverbs 9:10 – “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” In order for us to forsake our folly and proceed in the way of understanding, we must get to know God. What kind of God is our God? He is the holy God. The more we get to know that holy God, the more we can't help but fear Him. The reason is because the more we get to know the holy God, the more we get to know how sinful, unclean, and profane we are. In Proverbs 9:10, King Solomon said that the fear of the Lord is “the beginning of wisdom”. Here, the word “the beginning” is different Hebrew word from “the beginning” in the theme verse Proverbs 1:7, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; ....” In Proverbs 1:7, the word “the beginning” means “beginning”, whereas in Proverbs 9:10, the word “the beginning” means “prerequisite” (Walvoord). That is, what King Solomon is saying in Proverbs 9:10 is that the fear of God is a prerequisite for wisdom. In the end, the prerequisite for wisdom is that we fear God because we come to know the holy God. In order for us to forsake our folly and proceed in the way of understanding, it is essential that we know the holy God and fear Him as the prerequisite for this wisdom. We hope that we become wise believers who fear God as we diligently know the holy God. Therefore, I hope and pray that all of us can walk along the way of understanding with the Lord.

When we look back on our lives and think about how we should live now and in the future, the Bible Proverbs 9:6 tells us to forsake our folly and proceed in the way of understanding. We must walk the way of faith by forsaking especially arrogance. And we must respond to the invitation of wisdom to walk on the way of understanding. And we must love rebuke and instruction and teaching of wisdom. And since we know the holy God, we must live according to God's will in the fear of God. Victory!

## The wise and foolish children

### [Proverbs 10:1-32]

A few days ago, I saw the news of the death of the son of Jung Yoon-hee, who was in the ranks of the most popular stars along with Yu Ji-in and Jang-hee in the 70s and 80s in South Korea. And yesterday's news revealed that the cause of death was acute pneumonia caused by drug use and alcohol consumption. I read this article with interest because it was the son of the popular star who was famous before. And when I saw that her 22-year-old son was a student at the University of Southern California (USC), a private university in Los Angeles, I thought this and that. Not long ago, I heard that there were students from South Korea who were the children of rich families and who came to US to study abroad and wander about alcohol and drugs rather than stick to their studies. It was bitter as it seemed to be confirmed. And I also thought about the feelings of Jung Yoon-hee who is now 57 years old and her husband. What is the heart of parents who lose their children?

If we look at Proverbs 10:1, the Bible says, “The proverbs of Solomon: A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother.” In other words, the wise son brings joy to his parents, but the foolish son is grief to his parents. Today, I would like to receive a lesson as we think about who are the wise children who bring joy to their parents and who are the foolish children who are grief to their parents under the heading “The wise and foolish children”.

**First, the wise children seek righteousness, while the foolish children seek ill-gotten gains.**

Look at Proverbs 10:2 – “Ill-gotten gains do not profit, But righteousness delivers from death.” Not long ago, after the whole family had dinner, we played a game called “Life” by our youngest child, Karis. One of the reasons I got to play the game is because I heard from my wife that it was a very materialistic game, and I wanted to know a little while playing with my children so that I can teach them a lesson about material. Actually, when I play that game, no matter how much it is, I think that I made the game materialistic as I watched the bills of thousands, tens of thousands, and even hundreds of thousands of dollars going back and forth on the game board. So I told my children, 'You shouldn't love riches more than God's, and then they answered 'I know'. The truth that we as Heavenly Father's children should know is that ill-gotten gains doesn't profit (v. 2). Here, “Ill-gotten gains” means wealth obtained through covetousness (cf. 1:19; 28:16) unjustly (cf. 16:8), but especially by theft and deceit (Walvoord). A good example is found in Proverbs 1:11, 13. The evil ones tempt us, who are God's children, to say,



“come with us, Let us lie in wait for blood” (v. 11) and “We will find all kinds of precious wealth, We will fill our houses with spoil” (v. 13). Of course, we won't actually kill any innocent person and take that person's wealth (of course, there are a lot of them in the world). But we're tempted to become slaves of greed and fill our bank accounts. The problem is that if greed permeates our hearts, we can say that we will make money and collect wealth for the right purpose, but the way to achieve that purpose is the wrong way out of the word of God. If we try to accumulate wealth by tricking the other person and even by stealing, the Bible says we are fools. Today's Bible says that foolish children who are a grief to our Heavenly Father are those who use unrighteous methods to obtain unrighteous wealth. We must keep in mind that such unrighteous wealth is useless (10:2). Furthermore, we must not forget that God will reject the craving of the wicked (v. 3). Another thing to keep in mind here is that, as the verse 16 says, “The income of the wicked, punishment.” What does it mean? It means that the wicked's income is rather punishment for him. Isn't this interesting? It would be nice if he had a lot of income, but the income of the wicked would rather punish him. God surely judges the wicked. Even through their income, God can judge them. But with their wealth, He can make them a snare. After all, the important thing here is not whether we have a lot of wealth or not, but whether we do righteousness or not. That is why the Bible says in Proverbs 10:2, “But righteousness delivers from death”. What does it mean? It means that unrighteous wealth is useless, but righteousness is beneficial. There is one thing we need to point out here. That's the word “righteousness”. When it comes to “righteousness,” we may think of “the principle that humans should obey”. But the word “righteousness” refers to “righteousness”. Here, there are interpreters that “righteousness” refers to love that sympathizes with others (Deut. 24:13). But Dr. Park Yoon-sun thought it was ‘a righteous life to keep the commandments of God’ (Park). I think there is a point in Dr. Park's interpretation. The reason for this is that “Ill-gotten gains” is wealth obtained through theft or fraud, which is an unfair method, and it is not the method taught in God's word. And I think that “unrighteousness” loves wealth, but “righteousness” loves God and therefore keeps His commandments.

But what does the Bible say is the benefit of this “righteousness” for us?

(1) God delivers the righteous from death.

Look at Proverbs 10:2 – “Ill-gotten gains do not profit, But righteousness delivers from death.” What does it mean here that “righteousness delivers from death”? It means that if a person obeys his righteousness, it will finally reap good fruit even though there are times when it is difficult to observe it (Park). When we live the right life to keep God's commandments, even though we may face difficulties and adversities, in the end God will work together to achieve good and bring forth beautiful fruit. God justified us who believe in death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We have been justified and delivered even from death through the righteousness of Jesus imputed to us, so that we can enjoy eternal life. The benefits of righteousness for us are eternal.

(2) God will not allow the righteous to hunger.

Look at Proverbs 10:3 – “The LORD will not allow the righteous to hunger, But He will reject the craving of the wicked.” The Bible clearly says that God doesn’t allow the righteous become hungry. Whether it is physically or spiritually that we are in need due to trouble, our God feeds us our daily bread who are justified by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Not only that, but God trains our faith to come out like pure gold even in the midst of that trouble and in need.

(3) God blesses the righteous.

Look at Proverbs 10:6-7: “Blessings are on the head of the righteous, But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot.” The blessing that God gives to the righteous from above is the blessing of prosperity. Although there are times when there are some difficulties and adversities along the path that the righteous walk, it means that at last God will make the path prosper (Park). And God is saying that the name of the righteous will be remembered as a person who is to be praise for future generations. Perhaps a good example of that is Joseph in Genesis. The Bible says that because God was with Joseph, God made him prosper, and eventually appointed him as the prime minister of Egypt to preserve the lives of Jacob and all his family members, and to multiply the people of Israel in Egypt. He made him to be remembered as an ancestor to be praised for future generation.

We must be wise children of Heavenly Father and please Him. We will never become foolish children of God and cause our Heavenly Father to grieve. As wise children of our Heavenly Father, we must pursue the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We must love Heavenly Father. Therefore, we must live a proper life of faith to keep the commandments of God. By no means should we be blind to this world and live a life of pursuit of useless and unrighteous wealth. We must never be foolish children who are grief to Heavenly Father.

**Second, the wise children are diligent, but the foolish children are lazy.**

Look at Proverbs 10:4 – “Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, But the hand of the diligent makes rich.” Let’s imagine. How would we the parents feel when we see our children sleeping late and waking up late, not doing anything and wasting each day? Wouldn’t we explode? Would we feel sad when we see our children lying in bed, eating, sleeping, and living lazy? In Proverbs 6:6-11, we have already thought about a lazy person who is worse than an ant under the heading “A person worse than an ant”. We have learned that the lazy person is a habitually lazy and inactive person who has no discipline and no plan, has moral failure, and is an unrighteous person before God, an unrighteous person, who is worse than the ant. So, when we see that the lazy person who is worse than the ant works lazy even if there is a supervisor, there is no voluntary work, no cooperation (6:7), and no

preparation for the future (v. 8). If our children are worse than the ant, how will our hearts be? If we look at Proverbs 10:4, the Bible says, "Poor is he who works with a negligent hand ...." What does it mean? It means that even though he works, he will become poor because he works lazily. The lazy person hates working with his hands (21:25). Rather, the lazy child is busybody (cf. 1 Tim. 5:11-13), which is a grief to his parents (Prov. 10:1). More serious than this is that the lazy children of God neglect God's work (Jere. 48:10). How much are these children of God grief to Heavenly Father? Jeremiah 48:10 says that such ones will be cursed. Also, the Bible says that the lazy person sleeps in harvest (Prov. 10:5). This seems to be God's rebuke to us, God's children, because we are sleeping spiritually and are neglecting to preach the gospel to many souls to harvest in this world. It is said that these children of God are children who act shamefully to Heavenly Father (v. 5). And if you look at Proverbs 10:26, the Bible says, "Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, So is the lazy one to those who send him." What does it mean? It means that the lazy person is disgusting to its owner (Park). In other words, when the owner sees the lazy person, he feels sickly or dislikes it. Think about it. Parents are also worried about their lazy children. How much will we feel when we see a lazy employee from the perspective of the owner? When we see the employee's laziness, how annoying the employee in the eyes of the owner? No wonder his owner wouldn't like such employee.

Ptah-Hotep, who was called the Egyptian sage in ancient times (about 4,500 years ago), said this about his correct attitude toward work: "The wise rise early to start to work, but fools rise early to worry about all there is to do"(Matthews). How about us? Do we wake up in the morning and start working diligently, or are we worried about our tasks all day long? King Solomon, the world's most wise, says in Proverbs 10:4 that in contrast to the lazy person, the diligent person will become rich (10:4). In other words, those who are diligent are those who work diligently and don't sleep, especially in the summer of harvest, but work diligently to harvest (v. 5). The Bible speaks of such a person as "a son who acts wisely" (v. 5). And the Bible says that such a wise son makes his parents glad, not the grief (v. 1).

**Third and last, the wise children receive commands, but foolish children speak without care.**

Look at Proverbs 10:8 – "The wise of heart will receive commands, But a babbling fool will be ruined." In Matthew 21:28-31, there is a parable that Jesus tells the chief priests and the scribes about a man who had two sons. When the father said to his first son, "Son, go work today in the vineyard," the first son answered, "I will not". But afterward he regretted it and went (vv. 28-29). The father went to his second son and said the same thing. And the second son answered, "I will, sir" but he didn't go (v. 30). Having said this parable, Jesus asked the chief priests and the scribes: "Which of the two did the will of his father?" (v. 31) They said, "The first" (v. 31). When he heard the answer, Jesus said to them: "Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe

him” (vv. 31-32). In this parable of Jesus, the second son who heard the father's command and said he would obey but disobeyed refers to the chief priests and the scribes. And the first son who repented and obeyed his father's command after saying “I will not” refers to the tax collectors and prostitutes whom the chief priests and the scribes despised. What matters here is whether we actually obeyed or disobeyed rather than listening to Heavenly Father's voice and answering “yes” or “no”. Whenever I think about this parable of Jesus, I sometimes wonder how good it would be to have a third son, beside the first and the second sons, who says “yes” to his father and obeys his command. But Jesus talked about only two sons. I think the reason is because the third son is of course the best in Heavenly Father's eyes, but such a son is the only begotten Son, Jesus. And we, as adopted sons of God in the Lord, at least, like the first son in the Jesus’ parable, respond to our Heavenly Father's command, “I will not” but afterward he regretted it and obeys His command. I think the important thing here is to repent and obey.

If we look at Proverbs 10:17, the Bible says that wise-minded children listen to the instruction of their parents. And that wise children obey the commands of his parents (v. 8). As I meditated on these words, I thought about what the parents' command toward wise children would be. In today's text, we looked up their command in four ways:

(1) The parents command their children to walk in integrity.

Look at Proverbs 10:9 – “He who walks in integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will be found out.” Which parents would like their children to walk in the perverted way, the way of sin? Isn't it the parents’ hearts that their children don’t walk in the way of sin, but in the right way? What is walking in the right way or in integrity? Isn't it referring to a righteous (clean) life? Those who live righteous (clean) life, first of all, are free of conscience. Therefore, their hearts are peaceful. And even after hardships, God's blessing is there, so they enjoy peace in their hearts (Park). I am sure all the parents in this world want their children to enjoy this blessing from God. But the problem is that the children disobey their parents and go astray. However, even so, the hearts of the parents will pray, expect, and wait, desperately wanting to see their children walk in integrity, the right way, the way of life (v. 17) again, even if their children are disciplined.

(2) The parents command their children to love and not hate.

Look at Proverbs 10:12 – “Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all transgressions.” Which parent would like to see their children quarrel, fight, and hate? On the contrary, don't parents' hearts want to see their children love each other? The love of neighbor that Heavenly Father commands us is love based on knowledge (v. 14). It's not just love that's unconditionally driven by emotions. What kind of knowledge? It is the knowledge of God. In other words, the more we get to know the God of love, the more He loves us to the point that He gave His only begotten Son on the cross and covered all our transgressions with His

blood, we will be able to love each other by covering each other's transgressions. However, the foolish children prefer to reveal the other person's transgressions rather than cover them. The reason is because the foolish children's hating heart is prejudiced against the other person, so they think that there are also faults even though they aren't (Park). These fools tend to hide their hatred toward the other in their heart. Proverbs 10:18 says about such a person: "He who conceals hatred has lying lips, And he who spreads slander is a fool."

(3) The parents command their children to restrain their lips.

Look at Proverbs 10:19 – "When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise." I have nothing to say when I think about this. The reason is because I often talk a lot to reveal my faults. So, I'm trying to control my lips, although I can't even get a gagged on my mouth. King Solomon says in Proverbs 10:20, "The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver." What is the reason? The reason is because the lips of the righteous feed (instruct) many people (v. 21). When I thought of this tongue of the righteous that is like choice silver, I thought of Ezra in the Old Testament. Ezra was the priest, the scribe who learned in the words of the commandments of the LORD and His statutes to Israel (Ezra 7:11). He was a scholar who had set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel (v. 10). He also had the tongue of disciples for which the prophet Isaiah prayed to God (Isa. 50:4). Shouldn't we, like Ezra, have the tongue of disciples to study and obey the word of God and teach others believers?

(4) The parents command their children delight in wisdom.

Look at Proverbs 10:23 – "A fool finds pleasure in evil conduct, but a man of understanding delights in wisdom." From the parent's point of view, what will the parents feel when they see that their beloved children are foolish and take pleasure in their evil conduct? Now, Heavenly Father is commanding us, His children, not to find pleasure in evil conduct, but delight in wisdom. God wants us to love the truth and make it our delight. And God commands us to live by obeying the word of God's truth because we fear Him. What should we do?

These wise children obey the commands of their parents. But the chattering fool comes to ruin (vv. 8, 10). What does it mean? This means that the person with foolish mouth chatters and suffers calamity because of that word (Park). Why does the fool suffer calamity by chattering? The reason is that the fool doesn't store up knowledge like the wise men (v. 14). In other words, the fool has no knowledge (v. 21). Therefore, the mouth of the fool speaks what is perverse (v. 32). As a result, the perverted tongue of the fool will be cut off (v. 31). Also, the fool dies for lack of knowledge (v. 21).

The wise children of God are joy to their Heavenly Father (v. 1). They seek seek God's righteousness (v. 2) by fearing God (v. 27). And they do the way of the Lord righteously (v. 29) diligently (v. 4). Also, the wise children of God obey Heavenly Father's commands (v. 8). Therefore, they will never be shaken (v. 30). However, the foolish children of God are a grief to Heavenly Father (v. 1). Because they don't fear God, they seek useless ill-gotten gains (v. 2). And they are lazy (v. 4). Also, they suffer calamity because they chatter (vv. 8, 10). Are we the wise children of Heavenly Father or the foolish children?

## Those who are God's delight

### [Proverbs 11:1-31]

Are you a child delight to your parents? If your parents died, were you a child who was delight to them when they were alive? Yesterday Tuesday afternoon, I went to my first daughter Yeri's school with her after dropping my youngest daughter Yeun to her after school. The reason was because Yeri had a spelling test at her school and it ended a bit late. 'Spelling Contest' is supposed to select representative students from 4th to 6th grades to memorize numerous English words and then take the test and there were 12 students this time. So I asked Yeun's after school teacher through phone to pick only Yeun up from her school and take her to the after school. And then I was about to go pick up Yeri from her school but she was walking down from her school because I think she ended her school little bit early today. So I stopped my car in front of Yeri and asked her how was the spelling test today. She said she won. So after complimenting her, I made a high five with her in congratulations (at the same time raising one hand and touching each other's palms). Haha. Then I asked her if she would like to talk to her mother on the phone. She said yes, so I called my wife and gave Yeri my phone. And when Yeri was talking to her mother, I was able to hear their conversation I made it on a speaker phone. I heard my wife saying to Yeri, "I am proud of you". Later, after I picked up my son Dillon and my youngest daughter Yeun, I told them Yeri won the first place in the spelling contest. And I was grateful that they were also happy.

Personally, I often feel grateful when I think of the three children God has given me and my wife as precious gifts of grace. One of the reasons is because I feel the grace through my children. There are many times when I feel that I am not a good example of my children and am unable to raise them properly. Nevertheless, I am just grateful for the way my children grow up well in the Lord and faithfully take their responsibilities. And sometimes, when I talked to my wife about our children, I'm grateful that them because they don't resemble me. Isn't there a time when you don't want your child to resemble you? Haha. I am really grateful and happy when I see that God is raising these children. And most of all, when I remember that Heavenly Father loves these three children more than me, I feel relieved and am thankful and I have joy in my heart.

We prayed to God after meditating on the word of God under the title of "The wise and foolish children," centering on the words of Proverbs 10 at the Wednesday prayer meeting in the last two weeks. First, we prayed for ourselves to be wise parents in God's eyes, and then we prayed to God for our children. Today, while meditating on the entire passage of Proverbs chapter 11, I would like to receive a lesson by thinking about those who are God's delight. Look at Proverbs 11:20 – "The perverse in heart are an abomination to the LORD, But the blameless in

their walk are His delight.” Today, based on this word, I would like to receive a lesson given by thinking about five things about those who are God’s delight under the title “Those who are God’s delight”. I hope and pray that we become those who God’s delight by receiving and obeying these five lessons.

### **First, those who are God’s delight are humble.**

Look at Proverbs 11:2 – “When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom.” When we read the Bible, we see so many ways that God is against the proud (1 Pet 5:5) and also rejects them (Jam. 4:6). What is “pride”? Jeremiah 48:29 says that “pride” is ‘haughtiness, arrogance and self-exaltation’. When we look at the Bible, we often see people who exalt themselves and are rejected by God. Among them, I cannot forget King Saul. Perhaps the reason is because I think I have fear that I will change like King Saul who considered himself little before he became king (1 Sam. 15:17), but after he became a king of Israel and won the war against Amalek (v. 20), he became proud of himself. In particular, when I see his deterioration that he makes excuse after he disobeyed God (vv. 9. 19), committed sins instead repented (vv. 20-21), and asked Samuel to honor him before the elders of his people and before Israel (v. 30) , I can't help but think that pride leads a person into the path of destruction. However, another aspect we clearly see in the Bible is that God surely gives grace to the humble (Prov. 3:34, Jam. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). When I think about “the humble,” I think of Moses, the great leader of Israel in the Old Testament. Especially, I remember the words written about Moses in Numbers 12:3 – “(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth)”. Although Moses was the most humble than anyone in the world in the Old Testament, he refers to Jesus in the New Testament. In Philippians 2:5-8, the Bible says that the humble Jesus didn’t regard equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And the Bible says that Jesus humbled Himself by becoming obedient to His Heavenly Father to the point of death on the cross. Shouldn’t we have this humble heart of Jesus?

In Proverbs 11:2, King Solomon says, “When pride comes, then comes dishonor,” which means ‘the proud will fail’ (Park). The inevitable reason is because the proud don’t listen to the command of the Lord by acting arrogantly (Neh. 9:16). Not only do they not listen, they also sin against God by disobeying His command. So they are bound to fail (v. 29). Although in our human eyes the proud people seem to succeed at first, we must not forget that in the end God will make them fail. At the same time, we must not forget that the humble has wisdom (Prov. 11:2). What does it mean? If God causes the proud to fail, doesn't it mean that God makes the humble successful? Then, how does God make the humble successful? Again, why do humble people succeed in the sight of God? The reason is because the humble have wisdom (v. 2). In other words, the humble have wisdom, which is the secret to success. The humble are the wise. So, how do the wise people act according to Proverbs 11? Here are four lessons to be learned:

#### (1) The wise know how to keep silent.



Look at Proverbs 11:12 – “He who despises his neighbor lacks sense, But a man of understanding keeps silent.” The wise are the ones who give the other person trust in relationships. The reason is because they are humble and their hearts are faithful (v. 13). And because they are faithful in their hearts, they don’t go around as a talebearer and reveal secrets (v. 13). Rather, they hide secrets well. Those who give trust aren’t foolish and don’t despise their neighbors in front of others. Rather, they are wise and are silent when they need to be silent.

(2) The wise have abundance of counselors.

Look at Proverbs 11:14 – “Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory.” The humble have wisdom, and they have their own counselors. Therefore, the humble make wise decisions in consultation with wise counselors (15:22; 20:18). Especially we see in the Bible King David appointing counselors to win the battles. That is why we can know from the Bible that his son, the wise King Solomon, also hired counselors (2 Sam. 8:15-18; 1 Kgs. 12:6) (Park). And that King Solomon said in Proverbs 24:6 – “For by wise guidance you will wage war, And in abundance of counselors there is victory.” If the wise King Solomon also hired counselors, how much more should we also have counselors? We must make the right decision while praying to God, having seniors of wise faith as counselors, discussing and seeking their advices. Then we will be able to triumph and have peace in our lives (v. 14).

(3) The wise hate to be a guarantor for others.

Look at Proverbs 11:15 – “He who is guarantor for a stranger will surely suffer for it, But he who hates being a guarantor is secure.” We have already been warned in Proverbs 6:1-5 against making a guarantee for our neighbors. In other words, King Solomon warns us not to make promise to pay off the debts for another person who defaults, knowing that we are in debt as well. In other words, the Bible warns us not to be a guarantor who is not prepared to actually take responsibility in the event of an accident, or a guarantor who has been deceived and becomes a guarantor, or a guarantor who has no economic power to fulfill the responsibilities. And King Solomon is talking about the guarantor again in Proverbs 11:15. The point of his words is that the wise hate to be the guarantor for others. And the wise who hate to be the guarantor is secure.

(4) The wise win souls.

Look at Proverbs 11:30 – “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who is wise wins souls.” This Bible verse was our church's 2006 theme verse. That year, our church theme was “Be a Soul Winner!” At that time, we learned 7 lessons from Pastor Spurgeon's book, “The Soul Winner,” about how to be the soul winner, focusing on the words of Proverbs 11:30. Today, I have merged those 7 lessons with the wise: (a)

The wise who win souls have holy character. (b) The wise who win souls have high level of spiritual life. (c) The wise who win souls are humble. (d) The wise who win souls have living faith. (e) The wise who win souls have real zeal. (f) The wise who win souls have great simplicity in heart. (g) The wise who win souls surrender themselves completely to God. In this way, those who are wise in the sight of God exert a good influence on people and lead them to walk the path of wisdom.

### **Second, those who are God's delight are the upright.**

Look at Proverbs 11:3 – “The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the crookedness of the treacherous will destroy them.” Here, “the integrity” of the upright means the righteousness pursued from his heart. In other words, the upright longs for righteousness and walks on the path of righteousness, and he leads to life (Park). In contrast, the Bible says that the treacherous will destroy himself because of his crookedness (v. 3). What, then, is the crookedness of the treacherous who destroys himself? Look at verse 1: “A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, But a just weight is His delight.” In other words, the crookedness of the treacherous is the false balance. In other words, the crookedness of the treacherous is a lie. In the end, the treacherous perishes himself because he seeks lies away from the truth of God. However, the upright person who longs for righteousness and walks on the path of righteousness throws away lies and lives according to the righteous word of God. Therefore, the upright person will be saved because of his righteousness (v. 6). And look at verse 11: “By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, But by the mouth of the wicked it is torn down.” What does it mean? It means that a city is elevated through the blessing of the upright, that is, prayer for blessing. More specifically, it means that the city is exalted by the people because of that upright person who is righteous. How is it possible? It is possible because the citizens living in the city praise and exalt the city because they see the blessings that the upright person receives from God (Walvoord).

Shouldn't we be the upright people? Since this city in which we live is blessed by God because of us, the upright Christians, shouldn't the city's citizens not only praise and exalt us, but also have the work of exalting this city? In that respect, I think it is worth noting that the sanctification movement currently being carried out in the Los Angeles city here and there. I don't know much about the sanctification movement, but it was started in 1972 by the Pastor Joon-Gon Kim, who was the president of the sanctification movement in Chuncheon. And its purpose is to preach the gospel: the whole church is preaching the whole gospel to the whole city. And the content of the sanctification movement is evangelization, sanctification, and welfare. In other words, it is the movement to create the just, holy, and blessed city by making everyone to hear the gospel (Internet). When I think about the purpose and content of this movement, I think it is a very precious purpose and content. So, what is our responsibility as Christians so that the purpose and content can actually be fulfilled in our city? Our responsibility is first to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. And we must first be just and holy. In order to make this city holy, we Christians must first live a holy life. Especially in light of today's text, we must be upright and honest first. We must first long for

righteousness and walk faithfully on the path of righteousness. The wise are upright, longing for righteousness, and faithfully walking the path of righteousness.

### **Third, those who are God's delight are the blameless.**

Look at Proverbs 11:5 – “The righteousness of the blameless will smooth his way, But the wicked will fall by his own wickedness.” Is there blameless among us? Here in verse 5, “the blameless” refers to the person who is blameless in his walk. Look at verse 20: “The perverse in heart are an abomination to the LORD, But the blameless in their walk are His delight.” In other words, the blameless is the person who is blameless in his conduct, and who is God's delight. Why does God delight in he who is blameless in his conduction? It is because he practices “righteousness” (v. 5). In other words, God is delight with the blameless because he hates the “false balance” that God hates and loves the “just weight” that God is pleased with (v. 1). God hates lies but is pleased with righteousness. Therefore, we must be pleased with righteousness so that we may be God's delight. Then, the Bible says that God will smooth our way (v. 5). What does it mean? It means that when we do righteousness that God is pleased with, God will make our path trouble-free and finally makes us prosper (Park). Of course, there will be many hardships and difficulties along the way. However, God will make us, the blameless who do righteousness, prosper through the course of suffering and adversity by refining us and finally delivering us from suffering and adversity. However, the wicked will fall by their own wickedness (v. 5). In other words, the wicked will be caught by their own greed (v. 6) and will perish (v. 10).

### **Fourth, those who are God's delight are those who are merciful who love to show grace.**

Look at Proverbs 11:16-17: “A gracious woman attains honor, And ruthless men attain riches. The merciful man does himself good, But the cruel man does himself harm.” Here, the word “gracious” means “kindhearted”. Therefore, it can be said that the virtuous people who are God's delight are those who love to show grace because they are merciful.

#### **(1) Those who are merciful who love to show grace show discretion.**

Look at Proverbs 11:22 – “Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.” In the Old Testament, women wore ornaments called nose rings to beautify themselves (MacArthur). However, King Solomon is saying that the beautiful woman who shows no discretion is like the gold ring in a pig's snout. Can you imagine the pig with the gold ring on its snout? If you put the gold nose ring on a pig's snout, does it look beautiful? Of course not! King Solomon is saying that the same is true of a woman who shows no discretion, that is, the woman who is morally unclean and unscrupulous (Park). This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘Although the face is beautiful, if the conduct is indulgent, the two are not

in harmony with each other. It is like a beautiful makeup of the dead body's face. It is actually ugly' (Park). However, in the eyes of God, a beautiful woman is a merciful woman who loves to show grace. And such woman isn't only morally clean, but her deeds are prudent, discerning, and the woman who does things well at her own discretion. She is merciful and loves to show grace carefully and in her discretion. This is the beauty of Christians. God is pleased with these Christians who aren't only morally pure, but who show grace with God's love, but carefully and discreetly.

(2) Those who are merciful who love to show grace gives freely.

Look at Proverbs 11:24 – “One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.” The merciful Christians who love to show grace that pleases God love to give freely and generously (Park). They like to refresh others (vv. 24-25). That is their joy. And the merciful Christians who love to show grace know that giving freely, generously and joyfully is the secret to refresh and enrich themselves. However, the fools don't know this secret, so they are too spared amidst anxiety and worry, and are stingy in giving relief. The Bible says that such people will come to poverty (v. 24). Not only that, the Bible says that the people will curse those who are stingy in giving relief (v. 26). Isn't that true? Who would praise and like someone who is stingy for giving to others? Of course, wouldn't he be insulted by people? The principle is simple. It's “generosity”. Just as Heavenly Father gives us good things generously, the Christians who are God's delight give generously to others, especially in giving relief to others. How can they give relief generously to others? It is because they earnestly seek good and find goodwill (v. 27), so that they can give abundantly to others. Also, those who are God's delight can give generously to others because they don't trust in their riches (v. 28). Such people are God's delight.

**Fifth and last, those who are God's delight are the righteous people.**

Look at Proverbs 11:8 – “The righteous man is rescued from trouble, and it comes on the wicked instead.” King Solomon isn't saying that there there is no trouble for the righteous man. Rather, he is saying that the righteous man has trouble, but he will be saved. In verse 21, King Solomon says that even the descendants of the righteous will be delivered. Even in such trouble, the desire of the righteous is only good (v. 23). What does it mean? It means that the righteous focus on the goodness of God “only” (v. 23), rather than focusing on a painful situation in the midst of trouble. What is the reason? The reason is because the righteous man believes that God is the good and He works together for good even in trouble. Therefore, since the righteous man looks to the good God only with faith even in the midst of trouble, he doesn't practice injustice but he is steadfast in righteousness firmly in the face of every adversity and crisis he encounters (v. 19). Then God will give the righteous man a true reward (v. 18). The true reward means that God will eventually let the righteous taste and know God's goodness (Ps. 34:8). Certainly God rewards. Look at Proverbs 11:31 – “If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth, How much more

the wicked and the sinner!” God surely rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked (sinners). The reward to the righteous is that God saves the righteous in trouble (vv. 8, 21), and makes the righteous prosper (v. 10). So, in the end, God makes the righteous flourish like the green leaf (v. 28). And God will make the righteous bear fruit, that is to win souls (v. 30).

As I meditated on this word today, I remembered Zephaniah 3:17 – “The LORD your God is in your midst, A victorious warrior He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.” When we think of this word, we cannot help but to thank God for His grace and love. Therefore, we must work hard to become God's children who are God's delight. In order to do that, I hope and pray that we will be raised by the Lord to be humble, upright, blameless (in deeds), love to show grace and mercy, and those who walk the path of righteousness.

## **Those who keep the soul = those who love their neighbors**

**“A kind man benefits himself ...” (Proverbs 11:17).**

The words that those who keep the soul, those who are merciful to others or those who love others, keep making me think. I think it is a wonderful truth of Christianity that we need to be merciful to others and love them in order to protect our own souls. And I understand little bit why the apostle Paul told the husbands to love their wives because it is loving themselves based on the truth that an unselfish life, a life of loving neighbors benefits our own souls. This word makes me to think that Jesus loves Himself because He loves the church. This word reminds me the essence of love, that is, God is love (1 Jn. 4:8, 16). Then, in contrast, it can be said that a life of selfishness, a life of loving only oneself, is hating and hurting one's soul. In the end, I think that we Christians are those whose souls are renewed to live a life of loving others. It means that they no longer live a selfish life, but have a responsibility to protect their soul in an unselfish life. As I love other souls in the grace given today, I want to keep my own soul.

## **Be a soul winner! (1)**

**“... and he who wins souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30b).**

The theme of Victory Presbyterian Church in New Year 2006 is “Be a Soul Winner!”. And the theme verse is Proverbs 11:30b - “... and he who wins souls is wise.” Then, what does the word ‘to win souls’ mean here? It means ‘to do good to people or to influence them in a wise way’ (MacArthur). In a word, the wise is a “life-giving influence” on others. Then, what does the life-giving influence refer to here? In the first half of Proverbs 11:30, the Bible says, “The fruit of the righteous is the tree of life.” Then we can say that the dead tree is the fruit of the unrighteous. That is, the life-giving influence is to do good to those lost trees that bear the fruit of the unrighteous is to bring the lost souls to the Lord so that they may believe in Jesus Christ and have eternal life. Therefore, the life of the wise who wins the souls is to help a believer to grow up and bear fruit as a tree of life. So, what qualities (or character) must we have in order to exert the “life-giving influence” on others? In Pastor Spurgeon's book “The Soul Winner,” he said seven things.

### **First, we must have holy character in order to win souls.**

This is exactly what Pastor Andy Stanley asked about the personality of his leaders (“The Next Generation Leader”): ‘Personal development should always start with an end in mind. How do you want to be remembered by others?’ How would you answer this question? What do you think is the end of personality development? If I ask a more specific question, what kind of person do you want to be memorable to everyone at your church? Don’t you want to hear the compliment that you really resemble Jesus?

However, the reason why Christians today don’t have good influence on the home, work, and neighbors, and the church is ungodly influenced by the world rather than holy influence on the world, is because the saints fail to live a holy life apart from the world. What is the end or goal of our character development? It is only to resemble Jesus. There is nothing else. With that goal of becoming like Jesus, we must pursue His holiness. How do we do that? The answer to John 17:14 and below can be summarized in two ways: (1) We must not belong to the world (v. 14). In order to do this, we must ask God to preserve us from falling into evil (v. 15). (2) We must be sanctified by the truth (vv. 17, 19). Pastor Spurgeon said: ‘God will not use tools (people) to compromise His own character.’ Even if we ask others to come to church and preach the gospel to them, if the inviter or the evangelist cannot resemble the holy character of Jesus and reveal His holiness in life, then we cannot win those souls (Spurgeon). We should not evangelize with only our lips, but with our lives as well. We must evangelize by becoming more like

Jesus' holy character.

### **Second, we must have high level of spiritual life in order to win souls.**

In the sermon of Pastor Han-eum Ok's Church Renewal Pastors' Council (Title: 'If we set the standard low, we will perish') (August 2, 2001), Pastor Ok said that a tremendous change in the leadership of today's Korean churches is qualitatively changed. He pointed out that this is a worsening change qualitatively. In other words, the trust in leadership has fallen. And he said, 'If it's an earthen bowl without worry, it's not the earthenware.' If we look at 2 Corinthians 4:7, God says that He put the treasure in earthen vessels. The earthen vessels are about to die because God put the treasure not in the golden vessels but the earthen vessels. Pastor Ok said that if a leader doesn't feel this, either he is a little weird, or he is so favored that he became an angel. What do you think? Do we really have any worries as the earthen vessel containing treasures? How high have we, bearing the precious name of Jesus Christ, set the standard of our spiritual life? For example, can a person who prepares with a local mountain as a standard to climb and a person who prepares to climb Everest have the same attitude of preparation? Of course it is different between the church officials who set their standard to other immature believers, saying everyone does it, and those who set their standard to imitate Jesus. Pastor Spurgeon said that some preachers are in the state of half-death. In other words, they live like an angel in the pulpit and an earthworm in their daily life. If we are an angel in church on Sunday but live differently at home or at work, then we are like half-death state of faith and cannot give life-giving influence to others. Here we can apply two things: (1) We must have high level of spiritual life. We must keep in mind that if we lower this level, then we will be ruined. We will not be soul-winners. But we will only be vessels that hurt man and hide the glory of God. (2) We will have to pursue a life of unity within and outside the church. If we continue to seem holy in the church and hide the glory of God in our homes, then we will not be sufficiently used as God's instrument to win souls because of our disagreeable character inside and outside the church.

### **Third, we must be humble in order to win souls.**

We must not forget this biblical principle: "... God ... but gives grace to the humble" (Jam. 4:6). Who is a humble person? He knows himself rightly by knowing God. Therefore, he not only does not think of himself more highly than he ought, but also he thinks of himself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given him (Rom. 12:3). Simply put, the humble person is a person who doesn't think presumptuously because he knows himself before God. However, too many times we tend to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. Therefore, there are too many times that we live a life of faith in an illusion. Sometimes I see an article saying that we are 2% insufficient. But I think that we are misunderstanding that we are 98% insufficient and not 2%. Why do we have times to live in this illusion? The reason is because of our pride. Pastor Spurgeon says there are two types of proud people: (1) The first group is those who are full of pride, who say, 'Praise me, please praise



me, I want it'. (2) The other class of proud people are those who don't even want to be praised. They are so arrogant that they don't care whether people praise them or not and they are satisfied with themselves. These people despise others rather than want them to praise them. After speaking of this class of proud people, Pastor Spurgeon spoke of false humility. And it was a stab to my conscience. When referring to that false humility, he called it "sinful love of ease." In other words, many people look low on themselves. And their idea is that they take their own abilities so small that they don't venture to try anything good. They say they don't have self-reliance, so they always choose a comfortable place for themselves. They are so humble that they don't do what they are responsible for (to be blamed). They call it humility, but Pastor Spurgeon called it "sinful love of ease". Pastor Spurgeon's challenge is that the soul winner must be free from this kind of pride. Rather, the soul winner must be truly humble. True humility makes us to think about ourselves rightly and it also makes us to think about the truth about ourselves.

#### **Fourth, we must have living faith in order to win souls.**

What is living faith? To answer this question, we should first consider the dead faith that James speaks of. In James 2:26, the apostle James said "faith without deeds is dead." Then we can see that living faith is faith with deeds (1:22). In the words of Luke 10:29 that I meditated on at the early Morning Prayer meeting on Tuesday, there was an expert in the law who tested Jesus (v. 25). Since he knew the law well, he knew about the love of God and the love of neighbor (v. 27). But when Jesus said "Do this", the expert in the law asked Jesus "And who is my neighbor?" (v. 29) As I meditated on this, I learned that faith without works and faith that deceives oneself cannot win souls. Pastor Spurgeon said that in order to be a soul winner, we must believe in God's call for us to win souls. He also said that while proclaiming the gospel, we must believe in the gospel and believe that the work of winning souls will take place through the gospel. We must keep in mind that those who walk by faith will be done according to faith.

#### **Fifth, we must have genuine zeal in order to win souls.**

We will have to work wholeheartedly to win souls. Look at 1Timothy 4:15, what Paul said to his spiritual son Timothy: "Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress." I want to apply the words of 1 Timothy 4:12 to "these matters": "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity." We need a genuine zeal to be an example for them to be soul winners. Also, we should reach out to them and preach the gospel eagerly.

#### **Sixth, we must have great simplicity in our hearts in order to win souls.**

Here, the great simplicity in our hearts means to set the purpose only to glorify God and to win souls. Otherwise, if there is one's own glory or other things that are not God's glory for the work of winning the souls, it means that we have lost the simplicity of our hearts, and we aren't winning souls worthy in the sight of God. But

Satan is trying to take simplicity out of our hearts. In 2 Corinthians 11:3, Paul says, “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.” Satan in some way deceives us and corrupts the simplicity of our hearts toward Christ. Therefore, above all, we must guard our hearts well. In particular, we should keep our simple hearts to Christ, focusing only on glorifying God and winning souls.

**Seventh and last, we must completely surrender ourselves to God in order to win souls.**

As a little boy offering all his 2 fishes and 5 loaves of bread to Jesus in the story of 2 fishes and 5 loaves of bread miracle, we must surrender ourselves completely to the Lord. Then we will be used by the Lord as soul winners.

In New Year 2006, we want to put our efforts into evangelizing one soul, under the church motto “Be a Soul Winner!” (Prov. 11:30). In order to do that, we meditated on the seven qualities that Pastor Spurgeon said above. As we begin this New Year, I want to pray for these seven qualities. In order not to forget, after proclaiming the Word, I wrote it down again. I’m going to put it on the wall and memorize it. And I want to keep on meditating, praying, and striving for these seven qualities. Therefore, I want to be raised by the Lord to be a soul winner for His glory.

## **Be a Soul Winner! (2)**

**“... and he who wins souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30b).**

While offering the 2006 New Year worship to God, I meditated on the four powers based on the words of the second half of Proverbs 11:30, the New Year theme verse of Victory Presbyterian Church. I proclaimed the word of God with the heaviness of my heart in my desperate desire to wake up from sleeping. The reason is because I wanted to wake up from my spiritual indifference and especially from my spiritual incompetence. I proclaimed the word of God while feeling my incompetence. So I proclaimed only these four powers with earnest longing desire. It was the New Year worship where I felt my incompetence even though I must be a good example of winning souls to my church members. In the midst of that, God's word was proclaimed with my heartfelt wish to experience these four powers by God's grace. In this New Year 2006, I pray that God will have compassion and fill me and all of you with these four powers.

### **The first power is the power of prayer.**

Looking at Acts 1:14-15, the Bible says about 120 persons were continually devoting themselves to prayer with one mind. They held on to the words of Jesus' promise, Acts 1:8, and prayed earnestly for the Holy Spirit to come upon them. They prayed with one mind, wholeheartedly or devotedly, and continuously. In the article in 'Evangelism through prayer' [America Gospel Newspaper, November 27, 2005], it says, 'Prayer is leadership'. If we look at the article, there is writing like this: 'A person who prays is greater than people who don't pray. Therefore, the person who prays becomes a channel of blessing to a organization or a nation. Pray to govern and manage the nation, home, society and workplace. ... Think of the arising of the desire to pray as a sign that God will bless you. Those who come to mind in prayer are a chance to evangelize' (Internet). At the same time, the author of the article said, 'The Christian internet site GodPeople.com surveyed 1043 netizens from Oct. 23 to Nov. 12 about 'the best evangelism method I've ever done' and 17% said they cited 'Evangelize every time I meet and pray if there is hardship' (Internet).

We must first experience the power of prayer as we believe in the power of prayer and surrender to the Lord. Therefore, as in the pattern shown in Acts 16, God opened Lydia's heart to receive the gospel through an encounter of Apostle Paul whom God guided and permitted while he was looking for the place to pray (vv. 13-14). As a result, not only Lydia believed in the Lord Jesus Christ but everyone in her household believed and was baptized (v. 15). So we earnestly pray for this kind of wonderful work of salvation to take place. Also, the apostle

Paul and his co-worker went to pray but were persecuted through an encounter with a demon-possessed woman servant (v. 16), they prayed inside the prison (v. 25). As a result, Paul and his co-workers experienced God's presence in prayer (v. 26), and the jailer accepted Jesus (v. 33) and his whole family believed in Him (v. 34). Just as this amazing work took place, we also pray for God's amazing work of opening the hearts of those who we try to reach out and preach the gospel so that the work of salvation will take place.

### **The second power is the power of the Holy Spirit.**

The power of the Holy Spirit refers to the “power” we receive because the Holy Spirit comes upon us as in Acts 1:8a – “but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you ....” Here the “power” [“power from on high” (Lk. 24:49)] isn't referring to the political power that the disciples were interested in, or the personal power of a godly life as spoken in the Old Testament. It refers to the ability for Jesus's disciples to go into all the world and to preach His gospel (Word Pictures in the NT & Nelson Study Bible). Professor Sang-seop Yoo said: ‘This power is the same as the Holy Spirit who came upon Jesus while He was praying after being baptized and who made Him to begin full-scale gospel ministry with power. And now Jesus told His disciples that the same Holy Spirit would work in and through them with power’ (Yoo). In short, “power” refers to the power to carry out the ministry of the gospel.

If we have already received this power, why aren't we preaching the gospel? I think the reason is because we aren't experiencing this power from above. In other words, it is because we aren't filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Because we do not give in to the power of the Holy Spirit, we aren't obeying God's commandment to preach the gospel. It is never because we have not received the “power” of Acts 1:8. In the Bible, we are those who have already received this “power” as witnesses of Jesus. So the apostle Paul prayed for the believers in Ephesus: “that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man” (Eph. 3:16). We must pray to the Lord for Him to strengthen us with power through His Spirit in our inner man so that we may live a life of boldly proclaiming (preaching) Jesus Christ. The surprising fact is that the Lord makes more overflowing when we ask for this: “Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us” (v. 20). Therefore, in prayer, we must receive not only the power of prayer, but also the full power of the Holy Spirit. Then we will be able to boldly preach the gospel to dying souls by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that we will be used as the Lord's tools to make the wonderful work of the Lord's salvation.

### **The third power is the power of the gospel.**

What is the power of the gospel? This is what the apostle Paul said in Romans 1:16 – “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, ....” The power of the gospel is “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.” I think about how Paul, the one who won

many souls to Christ, could have passion for evangelism. When I read an article on an Internet website, it says: 'Because he tasted the power of the gospel that saved him from sin, from the world and from the law.' Then, looking at the written text, it says, 'The first step in evangelism is to know the power of the gospel' (Internet). Indeed, if I myself have tasted the power of the gospel that saved me, I cannot endure it without preaching the gospel. One example is the woman at the well in John 4. This woman, who experienced the power of the gospel testified Jesus. As a result, many of the Samaritans from that city believed in Jesus (Jn. 4:39). Then the people of the city said to the woman, "'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world"' (v. 42).

The power of the gospel appeared in the early church when about 120 persons held on to the word of promise Acts 1:8, and continually devoted themselves to prayer (1:14), the Holy Spirit came upon them on the day of Pentecost (ch. 2). At that time, when the apostle Peter, who was filled with the Holy Spirit, arose and preached the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to the crowd, 3,000 people believed in Jesus and were baptized (2:41). Here we see a pattern: prayer → filled with the Holy Spirit → proclamation of the gospel → the work of saving 3,000 people. Therefore, we must pray and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And we must boldly proclaim the gospel. Then the work of salvation will take place.

### **The fourth and last power is the power of love.**

I think about what would happen if there isn't any God's love while the truth of the gospel is being proclaimed. As truth without love is incompetent, so if the truth of the gospel is not preached through love, which is the fruit of the Spirit, there will be no power. In 1 Corinthians 13:1, the Bible says, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." Even if we speak with the tongue of angels but don't have love, we are nothing but "a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal". What is the most fearful enemy for us today? It is "indifferent", Pastor Han-eum Ok, a former senior pastor of the Church of Love in Seoul, Korea, said in his book 'The Evangelist'. He said, 'Being caught up in relentless egoism, he has no interest other than himself, his family, or his loved ones. We can see that this generation is becoming more and more terrifying slaves of indifference' (Ok). Like the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37, there are countless souls dying spiritually like he who was robbed. But we are just seeing and passing by like a priest and a Levite (vv. 31, 32). The Lord said in Matthew 9:13 that He desires compassion and not sacrifice. But we lack interest for our neighbors, lack compassion for our neighbors, and lack love to make sacrifices (Ok) and come before God and worship ("sacrifice") Him. I wonder God would receive our praise and worship when we come before Him by ourselves, leaving other dying souls, unbelieving family members and children, parents, friends, etc.. Pastor Ok said that we should have some sort of pain when we worship God because we think we are sinning too much. In the midst of this, he said that God will be receive our worship and will be pleased with it when we shed tears in our unfortunate heart and cry out earnestly, 'Lord, save those souls no matter how' (Ok). We should never

justify our life of faith without actions by saying, 'Who is my neighbor?', like the lawyer in Luke 10:29. We must put our soul-loving hearts into action. Aren't there so many dying souls among our families, relatives, friends, co-workers and so on. We must not be like the priest and the Levite who just see them and just pass by. We must love them faithfully with the love of Christ.

My grandmother's favorite word was Psalms 23. In Psalms 23:1, the psalmist says, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." As I meditated on this word, God gave me this understanding. The understanding is that if I don't make the Lord my shepherd, and live as if a sheep is going my own way, I must feel completely lacking before returning to the Lord and relying on Him to serve Him as my shepherd. Like the prodigal son in Luke 15 left his father, went on his own way and lived a wild life, feeling utterly inadequate, so that he returned to his father, I would like to thoroughly feel the lack of myself when I serve the Lord's church, not having the Lord as my shepherd and relying on Him with doubt. Therefore, I want to rely more and more on the Lord. I want to long for His power to manifest. I want to taste the power of prayer. I sincerely wish you to experience the full power of the Holy Spirit, the power of the gospel, and the power of Christ's love in deep and wide range.

# The root of the righteous

## [Proverbs 12]

There was a Korean drama called ‘Tree with Deep Roots’ that aired on SBS Korea from October 5, 2011. This drama is based on Jung-myeong Lee’s novel "Tree with Deep Roots", and it deals with the serial murder of a bachelor's house in the Gyeongbokgung Palace for 7 days before the release of Hunminjeongeum during the Joseon Dynasty. It is said that this drama shows the greatness of the creation of Hangeul (Korean alphabet) and the grievances hidden behind it. After watching this drama, I read what someone wrote like this: ‘The excellence of Hangeul started from the motive of Sejong the Great, who tried for its production, and in the process, he imagined all the various situations he might have been worried about and showed it in the drama. Therefore, as one of the people who grew up under the culture of the Korean people who write Hangeul directly, it not only boosted the pride of having such a great king, but also the pride of handwriting such noble letters.’ And he said, ‘It's a drama I want to show as soon as the English subtitles are attached to the growing up of foreign generations who don't know how easy it is to learn Korean and the motive for creating it’ (Internet). It is the root of our faith in Jesus that we come to think through this drama that gives a glimpse into how the Korean language, Hangeul, was created and what difficulties and adversities were encountered. We, who have been forgiven through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and justified by His resurrection, will be asked what our root is as righteous people in the sight of God.

If we look at Proverbs 12:3, the Bible says “A man will not be established by wickedness, But the root of the righteous will not be moved.” Today, it is my hope and prayer that we will receive the lessons God gives us and obey as we meditate on Proverbs 12 under the heading “The root of the righteous”.

**First, the root of the righteous is immobile. In other words, the righteous stands firm.**

Look at Proverbs 12:3 – “A man will not be established by wickedness, But the root of the righteous will not be moved.” The Bible says that we humans cannot established firmly by wickedness (v. 3). In other words, if our root is wicked, we cannot stand firm and will be shaken. I remember the words of Psalms 1:4 – “The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.” The reason why the wicked are like chaff which the wind drives away is because the wicked hates correction like a beast (Prov. 12:1). Why does the wicked hate correction? The reason is because, as Proverbs 12:15 says, the wicked is a fool and he considers his way right in his own eyes. That is why the foolish wicked doesn’t listen to the counsel (advice) of the wise (v. 15). And while the

wicked devises evil (v. 2), he seeks deceit (v. 5). The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood (v. 6). To such wicked man, he has a “a disgraceful wife” as his wife and it is like decay in his bones (v. 4). What does it mean? It means that not only the wicked cannot stand firmly, but also his house as well. Eventually, this wicked man will be overthrown and will be no more (v. 7).

But the root of the righteous doesn't move. It cannot be uprooted (v. 3). How does the root of the righteous not move? How can the righteous stand firm? The secret is because the righteous loves discipline. In other words, the righteous can stand firm because he is deeply rooted in knowledge. Look at verse 1: “Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.” The reason the righteous loves discipline is because he loves knowledge. Therefore, he receives God's discipline without resignation. The reason is because the righteous wants to walk in the righteous way, the right way. Therefore, as verse 5 says “The plans of the righteous are just.” In other words, the plans of the righteous man who loves discipline and loves knowledge are just and honest. To such a person, God grants the grace (v. 2) to meet a wife of noble character (v. 4). Furthermore, God makes her to be her husband's crown (v. 4). In other words, God gives the wife of noble character to the righteous man and glorifies him through her. Therefore, in the end, God doesn't only make the righteous stand firm (v. 3), but also makes the righteous man's house stand firm (v. 7).

**Second, the righteous is fruitful through his root. In other words, the righteous bears fruit.**

Look at Proverbs 12:12 – “The wicked man desires the booty of evil men, But the root of the righteous yields fruit.” The Bible says that the wicked man desires the booty of evil men (v. 12). The reason is because he is chasing fantasies (v. 11). The covetousness in the heart of the wicked pursues fantasies and vain things of no value. That is why the wicked pillages others even by using all unrighteous methods. His mind is perverted (v. 8), not thinking of working with his own hands (v. 11), but only thinking of plundering others. One of the reasons is because the wicked is lazy (v. 24). That's why the lazy wicked man doesn't roast his prey (v. 27). Not only the wicked's mind is perverted (v. 8) but also his heart as well. Look at verse 20: “Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil ....” There can be no joy in the crooked heart of the wicked who pursues evil. Rather, there is cruelty in his heart (v. 10). So the wicked makes the plan of heart to pillage what remains even by bleeding at people (v. 6). In this way, the wicked man with his perverted mind and heart has the perverted mouth and sins on his lips (v. 13). There are transgressions on the lips of the wicked, and he speaks lies with his lips (v. 17). In other words, the wicked have “a lying tongue” that lasts only a moment (v. 19). So, while the wicked is in need of food, he pretends to be somebody in front of others (v. 9). And the wicked hurt the other person's heart with his reckless words that pierce like a sword (v. 18). However, the righteous is fruitful through his roots (v. 12). How does the righteous live a life that bears fruit?



(1) The righteous is diligent.

Look at Proverbs 12:27 – “The lazy man does not roast his game, but the diligent man prizes his possessions.” Like the wicked, the righteous doesn’t covet the unrighteous (v. 12). Also, the righteous isn’t lazy as the wicked who doesn’t roast his prey (v. 27). Rather, the righteous is diligent and cultivates his land, so he has plenty of bread (v. 11). And the righteous man has regard for the life of his animal (v. 10). Therefore, the diligent righteous man will rule over people (v. 24). However, the lazy wicked is put to forced labor (v. 24). In a word, the wealth of the righteous is diligent (v. 27).

(2) The righteous is wise.

Look at Proverbs 12:8 – “A man is praised according to his wisdom ....” The wise righteous doesn’t pretend to be somebody like the wicked (v. 9). Rather, he keeps his knowledge (v. 23; 10:14). He has temperance and humility. So he speaks of what he knows at the right time, so that he builds up the other rather than exalting himself (Ref. 14:1). And the wise righteous listens to advice, not thinking that his way is right like the fool (12:15). This is because the wise righteous hears advice and knows that the more he is instructed, the more he becomes wise (19:20). Also, the wise righteous man hears counsel because he knows that if there are many advisers, he will enjoy peace (victory) (11:14). Also, the wise righteous doesn’t immediately show anger and overlooks an insult (v. 16). The reason he can stand insult is because there is love in him. Love covers all transgressions (10:12). And because he promotes peace (12:20), he endures insult.

(3) The righteous is truthful.

Look at Proverbs 12:22 – “The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.” God is pleased with the righteous who act truthfully. Therefore, the righteous have truthful lips (v. 19) that are preserved forever, not lying lips (vs. 19, 22) that only exist for a moment. And he speaks the truth (v. 17). Also, the truthful lips of the righteous bring healing (v. 18). So the righteous cheers the other person up with kind words (v. 25). And the righteous is a guide to his neighbor (v. 26). Furthermore, the mouth of the upright even delivers other people (v. 6). Therefore, in verse 28, the Bible says: “In the way of righteousness is life, And in its pathway there is no death.”

In the book ‘Deep Roots Spirituality’, the author Pastor Joon-Min Kang introduces what Pastor Andrew Murray has said about ‘root disease’, one of the diseases that harm the orange trees in South Africa (Internet). According to Murray, the tree with this disease bears fruit as usual, so the public doesn’t even notice that the tree is sick. But an expert says that the tree listens to the prelude of slow death. Root aphids of the vine are also said to be a type of root disease. Fundamental treatment is said to be impossible unless the old roots are cut off and new roots

are grafted. After transplanting the roots of an American vine into the vine of origin, the stem, branches, and fruits are the same as before, but the roots are fresher and the vine becomes disease-resistant. What Murray trying to say here is that where the disease comes and needs treatment, there is the inside that is invisible. Just as the problem of the sick tree lies in the root disease, so the problem of people is that the root cause is the disease of the soul. So, Murray argues that in order for us to live a right spiritual life, we must be deeply rooted in Jesus. Are we really deeply rooted in Jesus? I hope and pray that we will be deeply rooted in Jesus, stand immobile, stand firm, and live a life that bears fruit through Jesus.

## “The light of the righteous”

### [Proverbs 13]

Do you have joy in your heart enough to make your face shine? In Proverbs 15:13, the Bible says: “A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, But when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.” If your heart is sad, then your spirits will be broken. Then of course, your face won’t shine. But if there is joy in your heart, your face will shine. If we look at Proverbs 13:9, the Bible says “The light of the righteous rejoices, But the lamp of the wicked goes out.” What does it mean? It means that because the righteous do good things (Mt. 5:16), their faces shine because their hearts are filled with joy. For example, the face of the Holy Spirit-filled deacon Stephen was like the face of an angel because his heart was happy even he was persecuted as a result of preaching the gospel by laying his life for others (Acts 6:15) (Park). So today, I would like to receive two lessons God gives us while thinking of the whole of Proverbs 13, under the heading “The light of the righteous” based on Proverbs 13:9.

The first thing I want to think about is the wicked lamp that goes out in three ways:

#### **First, the wicked's lamp that goes out is pride.**

Look at Proverbs 13:10 – “Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.” What is pride? Pride is the opposite concept of humility and is a state of mind that is not satisfied unless the proud self holds the sense of superiority in the heart and is always at the center (internet). But the core lesson of the Bible is that the fear of God is the greatest virtue, and pride is the greatest sin (Prov. 1:7, 6:16, 17; 1 Pet 5:5). Pride is often divided into pride of power, pride of knowledge, and pride of righteousness. Pride in the Bible arises when attention is focused on oneself without God. And it is the Bible's lesson that the proud man will be destroyed (Prov. 16:18). In Proverbs 13:10, the Bible says that pride only breeds quarrels. One of the reasons is because the proud wicked man doesn’t have the wisdom to listen to advice (v. 10). And because of lack of wisdom, the proud wicked man doesn’t enjoy listening to his father's instruction or rebuke (v. 1). And the reason why the wicked man doesn’t listen to the instruction or rebuke is because he despises the word (v. 13). In other words, because the wicked man has no respect or fear of God's commandments, he is disrespectful of instruction or rebuke. Also, the wicked man pretends to be rich (v. 7). In Proverbs 12:9, the Bible says that the wicked man pretends to be somebody and has no food. And in Proverbs 13:7, the Bible says that the proud wicked man pretends to be rich, but has nothing. Pretending to be somebody or pretending to be rich is trying to show people and it isn’t a true self, but a lie. We must live truthfully, giving thanks to God in the position or situation given to us, poor if we are poor, rich if we are

rich, low if we are low, high if we are high.

### **Second, the wicked's lamp that goes out is unfaithful.**

Look at Proverbs 13:2 – “From the fruit of his lips a man enjoys good things, but the unfaithful have a craving for violence.” To say that the wicked man’s heart is unfaithful here means that his heart is unfaithful and craves for violence. And because the wicked man who craves for violence in his heart does a brutal thing and he himself is subjected to brutal things (Park). However, the wicked man not only is unfaithful in his heart, his lips is also unfaithful. So, in the end, the wicked man indulges himself with shame and disgrace because of his unfaithful lips (v. 5). Furthermore, in verse 15, the Bible says “the way of the unfaithful is hard.” What does it mean? It means that the wicked man who habitually lies not only hardens his own heart like a stone, but also has a rough path. Then, in the end, the wicked man comes to ruin because he has spoken rashly (v. 3).

### **Third, the wicked's lamp that goes out is lazy.**

Look at Proverbs 13:4 – “The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.” A lazy wicked man wants wealth only with his heart and doesn’t actually work diligently. Rather, the lazy wicked man dishonestly seeks to obtain wealth (v. 11). In Proverbs 12, the Bible says that the wicked lazy man desires the plunder of evil men (12:12) and pillages the other person’s possessions even through all unrighteous methods. Although the Bible says, “Do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them” (Ps. 62:10), the wicked man trusts in extortion or takes pride in stolen goods. The reason is because the heart of the wicked man chases fantasies (Prov. 12:11). In other words, because the wicked man pursues vain things of no value, he accumulates his own wealth by plundering other people’s possessions even by using all unrighteous means. However, according to Proverbs 13:22, the Bible says that such a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous. Look at Job 27:16-17: “Though he heaps up silver like dust and clothes like piles of clay, what he lays up the righteous will wear, and the innocent will divide his silver.” Also, look at Ecclesiastes 2:26 – “For to a person who is good in His sight He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, while to the sinner He has given the task of gathering and collecting so that he may give to one who is good in God's sight This too is vanity and striving after wind.” In the end, not only does the wicked man craves but gets nothing because of his own laziness (Prov. 13:4), but also even if he obtains wealth through unrighteous methods, in the end God gives the wicked man’s wealth to the righteous.

Finally, what I want to think about is the shining the light of the righteous in three ways:

### **First, the righteous man shines the light in this world with his mouth.**

How does the righteous man shine the light in this world with is mouth?

(1) The righteous man shines the light in this world by hating what is false (v. 5) and loving the truth. In other words, the righteous man shines the light by speaking the truth.

God hates false lips (12:22). But God loves those who do truthfully, that is, those who are truthful. The true Christian knows that false lips only exist in the blink of an eye (12:19, 22). And he knows that true lips are preserved forever (v. 19). Therefore, the righteous speaks the truth. And by speaking the truth, he shines the light of the righteous in this false world.

(2) The righteous man enjoys good things by the fruit of his lips.

Look at Proverbs 13:2 – “From the fruit of his lips a man enjoys good things, but the unfaithful have a craving for violence.” What does it mean? It means that by receiving the wisdom of God and teaching others the word of life, he himself receives God's reward (Gal. 6:6). In other words, the wise righteous man benefits others with his wisdom, while at the same time receiving the blessing of God (Park). In Proverbs 12, the Bible says that the true lips of the righteous brings healing (Prov. 12:18). His kind word cheers others up (v. 25) and is a guide to them (v. 26). Furthermore, the righteous man even delivers man with his upright lips (v. 6). In the end, the wise righteous man teaches the word of God's life to others, giving them spiritual benefits, and saving their souls and receiving the blessings of God because he is the guide to their souls.

(3) The righteous guards his life by guarding his lips.

Look at Proverbs 13:3 – “He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin.” The righteous man guards his mouth. In other words, the righteous man is careful with words. He speaks the truth and teaches the word of life, benefiting others, delivering their souls, and doing things that will be blessed by God. And like the wicked man, he doesn't open his mouth widely and show his own transgression with his crooked lips (12:23). Proverbs 10:19 says, “When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise.” The wise righteous man controls his lips. This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘If a person isn't careful with words, it is easy to habitually say evil words. Then he first defiles and destroys his soul with his many evil words (Mt. 15:11). Therefore, above all, we must especially guard our mouths’ (Park).

**Second, the righteous man shines the light in this world with his life.**

(1) Here, the brightly shining life of the righteous refers to his diligence. In other words, the light of the righteous man that shines the world is diligence.

Look at Proverbs 13:4 – “The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.” The righteous are diligent and work hard with their hands. He cultivates the fields, so his field produces abundant food (v. 23). That is why he diligently collects (saves) the wealth he has gained in return for his work (v. 11). So, in some cases, the diligent righteous man receives the blessing of material things from God and becomes rich and escapes danger because of his wealth (v. 8) (Park). And he leaves an inheritance for his children’s children (v. 22). In other words, the good man (the righteous man) who truly fears God passes on his own property to his descendants. Of course, the premise here is that the descendants of the righteous are also righteous people. So Dr. Park Yun-seon said, ‘No matter how good a person may pass on property to his descendants, if his children are unrighteous, they will not enjoy the legacy and go bankrupt’ (Park). Of course, that doesn't mean that all the righteous work diligently to get rich. Rather, even though many righteous people work diligently, there may be more cases in the poor. In that case, if we look at verse 8, the Bible says, “The poor hears no rebuke.” In other words, the poor righteous will not be threatened by thieves. The important thing here is not whether the righteous man who believes in Jesus becomes rich or poor, but whether he is diligent or lazy. And the Bible says that the righteous shines brightly in this world through diligence.

(2) Because the righteous man acts blamelessly he lights up the world. In other words, the light of the righteous man that shines in this world is blamelessness.

Look at Proverbs 13:6 – “Righteousness guards the one whose way is blameless, But wickedness subverts the sinner.” The righteous hates falsehood (v. 5). And he abandons false conduct and pursues true conduct. The reason is because the upright fears God (14:2). Therefore, the righteous fear and respect God's commandments (13:13). And he obeys the upright word of God, and He is faithful in all He does (Ps. 33:4). Isaiah 26:7 says, “The way of the righteous is smooth; O Upright One, make the path of the righteous level.” What does it mean? The upright Lord not only protects the righteous man (Prov. 13:6) but also smooths the way of the righteous.

(3) The light of the righteous man that shines this world is wisdom.

The wise man acts out of knowledge (v. 16). Therefore, the wise righteous man doesn't forsake correction (v. 18). And the righteous man has wisdom to take advice (v. 10). Especially, the wise righteous man gains even more wisdom because they walk with the wise (v. 20). And because he has good wisdom, he produces favor (v. 15). How does he produce favor? Look at verse 14: “The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, To turn aside from the snares of death.” The wise righteous man shows grace by teaching others a lesson that is the fountain of life, and thus brings others out of the snares of death (v. 14). In particular, the righteous man who has good wisdom shows favor to his children by disciplining them

diligently because he loves them. Look at verse 24: “He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.” Therefore, good reward will come to the righteous man who has good wisdom (v. 21). In other words, God rewards the good wise righteous man who shows grace to others with good. Of course, when it comes to the goodness that God gives us here, we will often think about the reward that God will give us when we go to heaven. However, I think that the reward God gives to the righteous man isn’t necessarily only in Heaven. I think that God gives the righteous man the reward even on earth such as prosperity (v. 21) so that he can taste God's goodness (Ps. 34:8).

**Third and last, the righteous man shines the light in this world by his desire being fulfilled. In other words, the light of the righteous man who shines this world is desire fulfillment.**

Look at Proverbs 13:12 – “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.” In Proverbs 10:28, both the righteous and the wicked have hope. However, the Bible says, “The hope of the righteous is gladness, But the expectation of the wicked perishes.” In addition, Proverbs 11:7 says, “When a wicked man dies, his expectation will perish.” The reason is because the expectation of the wicked will perish because it is the hope of unrighteousness. However, the Bible says that the hope of the righteous will not be cut off (23:18). Rather, the Bible says that the righteous man has hope in his death (14:32). We, who are justified by believing in Jesus, have a future (23:18). And our future desire is only good (11:23). But the problem is that there are times when this future desire isn’t fulfilled. Then, as Proverbs 13:12 says, our hearts are sick. In other words, if the fulfillment of our future desire is slow, we can be heartbroken. However, if we pray in faith, expect and wait in the faithful covenant God, surely God will fulfill the hope that God has given us in His time, and will fulfill our desire. Today's text verse 12 says that it is a great comfort to us like the tree of life (Walvoord). Therefore, God makes the righteous man to shine the light in this world by fulfilling the desire of the righteous. Therefore, the righteous man will rejoice (v. 9).

The lamp of the proud, unfaithful, and lazy wicked will surely be extinguished. However, the light of the righteous man clearly shines brightly. We are the righteous people. We who believe in Jesus Christ by God's grace are the righteous. As righteous, we must shine the light of Jesus Christ in this dark world. We must shine the light on this dark world with our lips. True lips that hate lies and love the truth, good lips that benefit the other people’s souls by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to them and by teaching the word of God, and wise lips that preserve our souls by guarding our mouths. With our lips we should shine the light in this dark world. Also, we must shine the light in this dark world with our lives. We shouldn’t be lazy but we should be diligent. We should be upright and act wisely. In the end, God will make our heart's desire to come true and shine brightly in this dark world. What is our desire? What is our future hope? Isn’t it to go to heaven in a glorious spiritual body when Jesus' return and live there with Him forever? The Lord will fulfill this desire and will make us shine the light of Jesus Christ in this dark world.

## **A wise woman who builds her house**

### **[Proverbs 14:1-9]**

How should we build our own homes? Personally, when I think of Matthew 16:18, the word of the Lord's promise to our church, I have three prayer topics while holding onto the word that the Lord will establish the Lord's Church. Those three prayer topics I am praying for the Lord to raise among us workers with Christ-centered visions. In the midst of that, I am also praying that the Lord will raise up our families. And I am praying that the Lord will establish the kingdom of God by establishing Victory Presbyterian Church, the body of the Lord. That is why whenever we prayed together, we often put individuals, families, and churches together as our prayer topics. Among these three prayer topics, I can't help but think a little bit about how to pray for the second prayer topic, the Lord to build our homes. As a review, looking back at 1 Chronicles 17:16-27 under the title 'Lord, may You build our home!' preached on May 18, 2008, at that time we received three prayer topics: (1) 'Lord, let my family be ruled by the grace of God!' (v. 16), (2) 'Lord, let the word of God become authority in my family!' (v. 23), and (3) 'Lord, let my family experience God's presence through prayer!' (v. 25) Whether our homes are governed by God's grace, and whether God's word is the authority in our homes, and whether we experience God's presence through prayer, let's look back once more while receiving His word today and praying to God.

I would like to meditate a little on the fact that the Lord uses a wise woman in building our homes, centering on Proverbs 14:1-9. Look at Proverbs 14:1 – “The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.” Today, I would like to think about it by dividing it into two categories under the heading “A wise woman who builds her house”. While meditating on these two things, I pray that we all humbly join in the work of the Lord who builds our home and the church we serve by receiving and obeying the lessons God gives us.

The first thing I want to think about is a foolish woman who tears down the house with her own hands.

Look at Proverbs 14:1b – “... But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.” Who is the foolish woman who tears the house down with her own hands?

**First, the foolish woman who tears down the house with her own hands despises God.**



Look at Proverbs 14:2b – “... But he who is devious in his ways despises Him.” The foolish woman is the one who walks in rebellion. She who acts rebelliously is the one who does only what she likes (Park). And the foolish woman who only does her own good despises her God. In other words, she despises God. How does she despise God? Dr. Park Yun-seon said seven things (Park): (1) The foolish woman who despises God loves pleasure more than Him (2 Tim. 3:4), (2) The foolish woman who despises God doesn't repent and doesn't believe in God (Jude 1:10), (3) The foolish woman who despises God says that she despises Him and doesn't have God because God is patient with human sins and doesn't punish them quickly or every time (Rom. 2:4), (4) The foolish woman who despises God doesn't fear God's words recorded in the Bible (Prov. 13:13), (5) The foolish woman who despises God doesn't glorify God but glorifies herself. In other words, she commits rash action to take away the glory of God, (6) The foolish woman who despises God doesn't pray to God. This is contempt for God's promise to give to those who seek Him (Mt. 7:7-11), and (7) The foolish woman who despises God isn't devoted to worshiping God. The foolish woman who despises God in this way doesn't fear God, but rather despises Him. So she doesn't walk straight but she walks a crooked path. In other words, the foolish woman who despises God walks on a road with both sides (double-dealings) (KJV Bible Commentary). She is unfaithful and doesn't fear God. So she doesn't (and cannot) be upright, but rather does evil. Therefore, the foolish woman who despises her God tears her own house down with her own hands.

### **Second, the foolish woman who tears down the house with her own hands is proud.**

Look at Proverbs 14:3a – “The rod of pride is in the mouth of a fool ...” (WYC). The Bible says that the foolish woman who doesn't fear God is proud (v. 3). She is arrogant and considers others less than herself. Therefore, she laughs at others and look down on them with her heart. For example, in a family, if a wife is foolish and arrogant, she considers her husband less than herself. So she looks looks down on him. Thus she uses her mouth to say disrespectful words to her husband and hurts his heart. Still, the serious problem is that she doesn't realize that she has said something that hurt her husband. What is the feeling of the husband living with her who is proud and foolish? And what about their house? Will the house be built right or will it be teared down? If we look at the first half of Proverbs 11:2, the Bible says: “When pride comes, then comes disgrace ...” What does it mean? This means that the foolish and proud woman will be disgraced because of her mouth. What disgrace will she face? In the second half of Proverbs 10:13, the Bible says “... but a rod is for the back of him who lacks judgment.” In other words, the foolish and proud woman will be disgraced because of her mouth, but will be disciplined with a rod (26:3). Therefore, God will bring the proud woman low (29:23). God never makes the proud woman to build her home. Rather, this foolish and proud woman takes down her own house.

### **Third, the foolish woman who tears down the house with her own hands is haughty.**

Look at Proverbs 14:6a – “The mocker seeks wisdom and finds none ...” The foolish woman is haughty and refuses to listen to others. Therefore, she loses her ability to hear (MacDonald). What if a person loses the

ability to hear? No matter he has two ears, if he keeps refusing to listen to advice, instruction, or rebuke from other loved ones, not only he will be obsessed with the idea that he is right, but also he will become very selfish and will have no choice but to know only himself. He will have no choice but to lose all of his friends around him. Who would like to be friends with the selfish person who only knows himself? And even further, who will remain around him when he thinks he is the best and the words from his lips sound so arrogant? If a wife is foolish and arrogant in the house, she will refuse to listen to her husband. Then, in the midst of losing the ability to listen, she will turn into a proud, arrogant, selfish person who only knows herself. Can you imagine the bad influence of such woman on her husband and especially on her children? Such woman seeks wisdom and finds none (v. 6). Isn't it a little weird? How is it not strange in itself that the arrogant person who refuses to listen to others and thinks she is right seeks wisdom? The problem isn't that the haughty person asks for wisdom. Rather, the problem is that the person who asks wisdom is haughty and she doesn't fear God (1:7; 9:10) (Walvoord). How can a proud and arrogant person who doesn't fear God seek wisdom to obtain it? If we look at Proverbs 16:18b, the Bible says: "... a haughty spirit before a fall." The haughty and foolish woman without wisdom causes her husband and children to fall. She adversely affects her husband and her children, and she is forced to take her home down with her own hands.

**Fourth, the foolish woman who tears down the house with her own hands has no knowledge.**

Look at Proverbs 14:7 – “Stay away from a foolish man, for you will not find knowledge on his lips.” The foolish woman who tears down her house with her own hands despises God, is proud and haughty, and doesn't listen to God's words. In other words, she makes words and actions that ignore God (Ps. 14:1) (Park). And because she is conceited and understands nothing, she has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions (1 Tim. 6:4). If your wife is proud and knows nothing in your house, she will certainly love controversies and quarrels. The result is envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and there will be no days of peace in such a family. However, the problem is that the foolish woman, even though she has no knowledge, is proud and thinks she has knowledge. And what happens to the assumption if she is arrogant and does not listen to anyone's advice and counsel? The same is true with the spiritual family, the church. If there are people who are proud and arrogant and have little knowledge of God but like arguments and quarrels, then the church will be noisy. It won't be easy to teach such people. The reason is because they are proud and are not prepared to be taught. Therefore, the Bible urges us to stay away from such foolish people (Prov. 14:7). If we don't stay away from such foolish people, then if we do wrong, we may become fools who tears down our own house as we ignore God.

**Fifth, the foolish woman who tears down the house with her own hands deceives herself.**

Look at Proverbs 14:8b – “... but the folly of fools is deception.” The foolishness of the foolish woman is to ignore God. In other words, the foolishness of the foolish woman thinks there is no God (Ps. 53:1). Therefore, she is corrupt and commits abominable injustice because she doesn’t and can’t fear God (v. 1). She neither does nor can she do good (vv. 1, 3). Nevertheless, the foolish woman thinks that her own way is right (Prov. 12:15). This reminds me James 1:22 – “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” The Bible says that if you only listen to God's word and do not obey (execute), then you deceive yourself. But the foolish and arrogant woman thinks that there is no God, so she doesn’t listen to God at all. How can the foolish woman who ignores God in this way obey God's word? This is deceiving herself. How could the foolish woman, who deceives herself in this way, build her own her house?

### **Sixth, the foolish woman who tears down the house with her own hands mocks at sin.**

Look at Proverbs 14:9a – “Fools mock at sin ....” The foolish woman doesn't listen to God's word because she thinks there is no God. And she doesn't know the truth because she doesn't listen to God. What if she doesn't know the truth? She does evil. Still, she doesn’t regard her sin as sin because she has lost the ability to do so. Rather, the foolish woman who doesn't know the truth and has lost the ability to regard sin as sin finds pleasure in evil (10:23). Therefore, the foolish woman isn’t afraid to sin against God because her heart is hardened by sin. In other words, the foolish woman doesn’t take her sins seriously. She mocks at sin. Obviously, God takes sin seriously, but the foolish woman takes it lightly. This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘Those who are ignorant of the Bible don’t know sin as a sin, but rather enjoy it’ (Park). Therefore, she not only doesn’t repent of her sin, but she also cannot repent. The reason is because she doesn't regard her sins sin, so she doesn't even feel the need to repent. Therefore, she will continue to sin against God. Since she takes her sin lightly, she will lead a sinful life away from God's grace. And while she commits countless sins, she will live with her hardened heart that will not be pierced by her conscience. If such a woman is in her house, what would her house be?

### The last thing I want to think about is a wise woman who builds her house.

Look at Proverbs 14:1a – “The wise woman builds her house ....” Who is the wise woman who builds her house?

### **First, the wise woman who builds her house fears God and acts uprightly.**

Look at Proverbs 14:2a – “He who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD ....” The wise woman who builds her house fears God. The reason is because the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (1:7). And the wise woman who fears God acts uprightly. So how does she who fears God and walk uprightly live life of faith? Dr. Park said five things: (1) She fears God in order not to commit sins while doing ordinary things. (2) She lives reverently in secret, watches and prays. (3) She doesn’t commit sins in her heart. (4) She is afraid and careful that she would not leave the Lord in a time of peace. (5) In times of awkward time, the wise woman doesn’t rush to

avoid it but remains loyal. Like this, the wise woman who fears God and acts uprightly doesn't take sin lightly (v. 9). She takes her sins seriously because she fears God (v. 9). Therefore, when she sins against God, she realizes the sin and repents by confessing her sin to God. Therefore, because she fears her God, He extends His grace to her who act uprightly before God (v. 9). In other words, God accepts her willingly who repents her sins and returns to God (Walvoord). If this is not God's grace, what is? (8:35) In Proverbs 31:30, the Bible says about a woman who fears God: "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised." The wise woman who fears God is praised by God and people for acting uprightly. Through such a woman who fears God, God builds our homes and churches.

### **Second, the wise woman who builds her house has knowledge on her lips.**

Look at Proverbs 14:7 – "Stay away from a foolish man, for you will not find knowledge on his lips." The wise woman fears God and is humble before Him and people. And because she is humble, she listens to His voice well. Also she humbly listens to the counsel and admonition of the wise to gain her knowledge (v. 6). She even humbly listens to the rebuke of the righteous. Rather, she regards the rebuke of the wise as grace (Ps. 141:5). Therefore, she even welcomes the rebuke of the wise. The reason is because she knows that the rebuke of the wise one will benefit herself. How does she make the rebuke of the wise one good for herself? It is precisely that the wise woman causes the wise one's rebuke to add to her learning (Prov. 1:5, 9:9). Look at Proverbs 9:9 – "Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning." Such a humble and wise woman doesn't bring a rod to her back with her lips (14:3). Rather, she protects herself with her lips (v. 3). In other words, the wise woman keeps her lips for the benefit of others by speaking when she needs to and being silent when she needs to be silent. Therefore, she also benefits herself (Park). This is what Dr. Park said, 'The wise man doesn't reproach others because he loves others and covers over their multitude of sins (1 Pet. 4:8). Therefore, the others also protect the wise man with words' (Park). Furthermore, as a truthful witness (Prov. 14:5), the wise woman testifies God's word with her knowledgeable lips. Through such wise woman who has knowledge on her lips, God builds the home and the church.

### **Third, the wise woman who builds her house is diligent.**

Look at Proverbs 14:4 – "Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty, but from the strength of an ox comes an abundant harvest." Naturally, without oxen, the manger is clean. However, without oxen, there is no strength in cultivating rice fields. Therefore, without oxen, there is no big harvest in agriculture. Hence, the wise woman buys money and takes time to feed and wash her oxen. And she works diligently together to obtain a bountiful harvest. Reading the Bible, we can see that God is referring to oxen, especially among beasts, to teach people what they should strive for. For example, in Deuteronomy 25:4, the Bible says, "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." So Dr. Park said, 'An ox is a symbol of loyalty and effort' (Park). In other words, the wise woman is loyal and tries hard. She works diligently, so that she lacks nothing of value (Prov. 31:11). When we look at from Proverbs 31:13 and on, the wise woman "selects wool and flax and works with eager hands" (v. 13),

“gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls” (v. 15), “sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks” (v. 17), and sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night (v. 18). Therefore, her children arise and call her blessed and her husband also praises her (v. 28). Through such wise and diligent woman, God builds her home and her church.

#### **Fourth and last, the wise woman who builds her house understands her way.**

Look at Proverbs 14:8 – “The wisdom of the sensible is to understand his way, But the foolishness of fools is deceit.” The foolish woman doesn’t fear God and ignores Him. So she doesn’t seek the will of God and walk the path that God wants her to walk. Rather, she walks the path she wants to walk according to her desire and will. This is only revealing her own foolishness. The reason is because she live thinking that there is no God (Ps. 53:1). And in the end, it’s only deceiving herself. The reason is because living apart from God is to live a false life away from the truth. Such foolish woman who deceives herself in this way and reveals her own foolishness is bound to take her house down. But the wise woman builds her own house. She first knows her own way. She knows God’s will for her and she lives according to His will. In other words, the wise woman knows exactly what she is going to do that fits the will of God and does it (1 Cor. 7:17) (Park). One of the will of God is to build her house and also to build the church, which is God’s house. The wise woman knows this will of the Lord, and she is loyal to Him and strives diligently to fulfill the Lord’s will. And since she fears God, she humbly lives according to the will of her Lord. Through such wise woman, the Lord builds His house that is His church.

Who comes to your mind when you think of the wise woman who built her house in the Bible? I think of Ruth, a Moabite woman from the book of Ruth in the Bible. The Bible says that the Moabite woman, Ruth, is “a woman of excellence” (Ruth 3:11). In a way, in Ruth’s family, her father-in-law Elimelech died, her husband Mahlon died, her brother-in-law Kilion also died, and Orpah left the family. The only people left were Naomi, Ruth’s mother-in-law, and Ruth herself. And despite being a foreign woman, Ruth followed her mother-in-law Naomi to Bethlehem in the land of Judah, worked hard in the field of Boaz, and eventually married Boaz. And they got married and gave birth to David’s grandfather, Obed. So, in the end, Ruth and Boaz were named in the genealogy of Jesus. What a wonderful great grace this is? When I think of this grace, I really think that Ruth was the woman of excellence and a wise woman. And she was a woman who yearned for grace (2:10), an obedient woman (3:5-6), and a woman who showed love (3:10). The Lord established Boaz’s family through Ruth, and through that family eventually, Jesus, the Messiah, was born on this earth. And through Jesus, the Lord established the church. And the Lord wants to build up His church, the body of the Lord, through us. Therefore, we must be wise Christians. The wise Christians fear God and act uprightly. Also, the wise Christians have knowledge on their lips. The wise Christians are diligent. And the wise Christians know their way and faithfully do what they will do according to the will of the Lord. I hope and pray that we can become the wise Christians who build the house of the Lord.

## Bitterness and joy in our hearts

### [Proverbs 14:10-35]

Is your heart happy or bitter now? If your heart is bitter, why is your bitter? If your heart is happy, why is your heart happy? I remember the saying, ‘If you share sadness, it will be cut in half, and if you share joy, it will multiply.’ But are we really good at sharing the sadness or joy that each of us experiences with our loved ones around us? I think we share our joy with others, but for some reason we are not sharing our own sadness with them. I think one of the reasons is because we think that the other people don't fully understand our sad heart even though we share with them. And personally, I think this reason is reasonable. I think no one fully understands the sadness that each of us is going through. It is not only sadness but also joy. I don't think anyone can fully understand the sadness or joy in our hearts. Even if our wives or husbands, who are one body with us, don't fully understand, I think that the members of the church who have become one body in the Lord cannot fully understand the sadness or joy in our hearts. Nevertheless, in Romans 12:15, the Bible tells us, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." What is the reason? When I thought about the reason, Hebrews 4:15 came into my mind: "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." I think it is because God wants us, the members of His church, to sympathize with each other like Jesus, the High Priest. Therefore, the church needs to be established as a community that rejoices and mourns together.

In Proverbs 14:10, the Bible says: "The heart knows its own bitterness, And a stranger does not share its joy." Focusing on this verse, I would like to receive a lesson from God while thinking about two things under the heading "Bitterness and joy in our hearts."

The first thing I want to think about is 'Bitterness in our hearts' in 8 ways:

#### **First, there is bitterness in our hearts when our house is destroyed.**

Look at Proverbs 14:11a – "The house of the wicked will be destroyed ...." The term "house" here also means family members, according to one commentary. But it can also mean possessions (Walvoord). If this interpretation is correct, then the house of the wicked man, his family members and possessions, will be destroyed. Although living on this earth it seems to us, the Christians, that the wicked man is doing well, it is temporary (Ref.: Ps. 73). Therefore, we must not forget that the house of the wicked man may seem temporarily prosperous but will

eventually perish. What is the reason? It is because of the sins of the wicked. The holy and just God will destroy the wicked man's house for his sins.

I have applied this to us (the righteous Christians). And I think that our house will also be destroyed if we had unrepentant sins, and if we didn't receive forgiveness from God. The problem is our sins. If we don't repent our sins, our house is bound to suffer. One of the sufferings is that our life becomes difficult. Look at Proverbs 14:34b – "... But sin is a disgrace to any people." What does it mean? Here, the word "a disgrace" refers to lack or hardship. In other words, it means that if the people are guilty of a lot of sin, their life will be difficult (Park). Of course, this tells us that the people of a country suffer from sins. But I think this principle can be applied equally to our house. If our families are also guilty, our lives will inevitably suffer. Another suffering our families can suffer from sin is that we can be ashamed. Look at verse 35b – "... But his anger is toward him who acts shamefully." This word also refers to the country's officials who dishonor the country. When we apply this to our families, if there are many sins in our families, not only our lives will be difficult, but our family may be ashamed. For example, not only can children scorn their parents and shame their families because they commit a lot of sin as they go crooked, but the parents also can even curse their children and bring great shame to the family because they commit a lot of sin. When it comes to such a family, we say it is a broken family. If our house is becoming the broken family because of many sins, there must be bitterness in our hearts. What should we do? We must repent our sins as we trust in the blood of Jesus' on the cross by confessing our sins and the sins of our households to God. Then God will forgive our sins and the sins of our household and cover all our sins. As a result, God will bring joy to our hearts by turning away the bitterness in our hearts.

**Second, there is bitterness in our hearts when we walk on a way that seems right to us and not to God.**

Look at Proverbs 14:12 – "There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death." This word is repeated in Proverbs 16:25. King Solomon said, "There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death". When I apply this word to King Solomon, I think that the way he took right in his own eyes was that he "loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh" (1 Kgs. 11:1) and associated with them (v. 2). Obviously, God told the Israelites that if they associate with the Gentiles because they would surely turn the hearts of the Israelites away after their gods (v. 2). But King Solomon disobeyed His command and associated and love many foreign women because it seemed right to him (v. 2). What was the result? Look at 1 Kings 11:4 – "For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been." Eventually, King Solomon, who was so wise, also sinned against God by worshiping idols at old age. Although God appeared to him twice and had commanded him that "he should not go after other gods", he didn't observe what the Lord had commanded (vv. 9-10). I think since it seemed to him that it was right for him to do so, he didn't realize that he had chosen the way of

death.

In Proverbs 15:25, the Bible says that “The Lord will tear down the house of the proud.” God tore the kingdom of Israel in two in the days of Rehoboham, the son of the proud King Solomon, who had sinned by ignoring God's warning word and violating God's command. When I think about the fact that the Israel nation was divided into two, I remember what Jesus said in Mark 3:24-26: “If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but he is finished!” If our family disputes themselves, then our house cannot stand firm. If there is a conflict in our family, then the whole family members will suffer from heartache. Even King Solomon, who was said to have been the wisest in the world, ignored God's word and thought that he was right in his eyes, and realized that the way he chose was the way to death in the end, and said to us, “There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death” (Prov. 14:12), then how should we accept this word? At least, even if it seems right way in our eyes, we should check and check whether the way that seems right in our eyes is the right way in the eyes of God by looking at God's word again. In the midst of reflection and self-examination, when God's word makes us realize that the way that seems right in our eyes isn't the way that is right in the eyes of God, we must turn away from that way. In doing so, God will bring joy to our hearts by turning away the bitterness in our hearts.

### **Third, there is bitterness in our hearts when we seek the joy of this world.**

Look at Proverbs 14:13 – “Even in laughter the heart may be in pain, And the end of joy may be grief.” This word indicates that the joy of this world isn't pure and long. It means that after the joy of this world, that is, the joy of the flesh, comes with sadness (Park). Look at King Solomon. Didn't it seem right to him that he had many foreign women as wives or concubines, so he kept them next to him, and eventually did commit the sin of serving their idols when he was old? How much would he laugh and rejoice when he initially had so many foreign women as wives or concubines? But later, when I think about how grief and sadness King Solomon must have been because of them, I cannot but agree with the saying that the joys of this world's flesh must be followed by sadness. Even if I look back on my own past life, I can't help but agree with verse 13. In this world, I pursued the meaning of life, happiness, and joy, but in the end what this world gave me was sadness and tears. In particular, I remember feeling more painfully when my two friends with whom I had been hanging out were shot and killed, and that what this world can give me is sadness and tears.

If we look at Proverbs 14:16, the Bible says, “A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, But a fool is arrogant and careless.” The Bible tells us that fools don't have the wisdom to fear God, so they believe in themselves and commit sins in this world. Therefore, verse 17 says that he is quick to anger while living a prodigal life to pursue the pleasures of this world and to do many foolish things. Not only that, but the fool exalts his own



folly because he is quick-tempered (v. 29). In the end, he inherits foolishness (v. 18). Although such a foolish person laughs and rejoices outwardly, the only thing left in the end is anxiety and sorrow in his heart. Look at Proverbs 15:13 – “A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, But when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.” When I think of this word, I think that many Christians prefer a smiley face with sorrow in their heart rather than the joy of heart that brightens their face (14:13). So personally, when I see people who always laugh on the outside, I think again. The reason is because I think there may be light of worry behind their always smiling faces. When I see them whose smiling face is not shining, I sometimes think that they may be trying to cover up their sadness or anxiety in their heart. The important thing is that our faces will shine when we have the joy that God gives us in our hearts. However, if we pursue the happiness of this world, after that, we are bound to suffer in our hearts from sorrow and sadness.

#### **Fourth, there is bitterness in our hearts if our hearts are faithless.**

Look at Proverbs 14:14a – “The faithless will be fully repaid for their ways ....” Here, the word “The faithless” literally means “backslider in heart” (Walvoord). It would be nice if we keep on believing in Jesus and our faith continues to grow and we are being transformed. But there are times when we find that our faith growth seems to have stopped from a certain point and is backsliding. I think this is a sign that we are moving away from God. One of the bad things that often appears at that time is that we live apart from the truth and follow lies, and in reality we also live a false life. If our hearts are broken, we leave God and believe in lies, pursue lies, and lead the false life. In verse 25, the Bible says, “but a false witness is deceitful”. If our hearts are faithless, then our hearts devise wicked scheme (6:18). In other words, we devise scheme that will harm others in our hearts (Park). And we plot evil (14:22). If we are plotting evil and devising wicked schemes like this, then there is no joy in our hearts. Rather, there is bitterness in our faithless hearts. What is the reason? The reason is because God will judge us according to what we have done. In other words, the reason is because God will repay us for what we have done (v. 14). This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘After a person has committed a sin, it can be covered for some time without repenting. But the day comes when it shouts and catches the person (Jam. 5:4; Gen. 4:10). In other words, the sinner himself must resolve it by taking the initiative to catch his sin and repent. If he doesn’t do that and passes it over, the sin will catch him up and retaliate against him’ (Park). I think this is something I cannot but agree with. When we don’t repent our sins, I agree on the one hand that the sin will catch me up and retaliate against me and on the other I am afraid that will happen to me. The reason is because I believe that unrepentant sin certainly has consequences. For example, listen to what Jacob, who deceived and had been deceived in Genesis, came down to Egypt and said to Pharaoh king of Egypt: “... The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning” (Gen. 47:9). When I thought of Jacob’s confession, I remembered Genesis 37:34-35. When Jacob saw Joseph’s goats’ blood-stained, colored tunic, he tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his sons many days. When all his sons and all his daughters tried to comfort him, Jacob refused to be comforted. He

cried for Joseph and said, “Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son” (v. 35). What does this teach us? It is that our false actions will certainly have consequences when our hearts are faithless and we lie and deceive others when we have left God. The result is that not only will we be deceived, but we will also be forced to immerse ourselves in bitterness and sorrow. Therefore, in order for us not to be immersed in bitterness and sorrow in our hearts, we must continue to draw close to God faithfully so that our hearts aren’t faithless. Then we can prevent our fall. And as we draw close to God, we can realize our sins and enjoy the grace to repent. As a result, God will bring joy to our hearts by turning away the bitterness in our hearts.

### **Fifth, there is bitterness in our hearts when we believe in anything.**

Look at Proverbs 14:15a – “A simple man believes anything ....” Here, the term “a simple” refers to a person who is ‘innocent (because of lack of experience, knowledge, etc.)’, “naïve” or “gullible”. This kind of person is easily influenced by others (Walvoord). In Proverbs 14:8b, the Bible says, "But the folly of fools is deception." What does it mean? The foolishness of fools is that they not only deceive others but also themselves. Therefore, the fool is a person who believes in others and is deceived, and believes in all the words of others (14:15). An example is the naïve young man who lacks sense (7:7) who has fallen into the temptation of the adulteress (v. 5). The young man fell into the adulteress’s loud voice (v. 11) of persuasive words and her smooth talk of seduction (v. 21) and “followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose” (v. 22). What was the result? The result is that he falls down and even dies (vv. 26-27). If we are so naïve and easily believe in what others say and are deceived, then we will suffer in our hearts. We need wisdom. We must ask God for wisdom. Therefore, we must listen the words of others carefully with the wisdom that God gives us. We must listen to others with discernment. Then we will be able to prevent the heart from suffering.

### **Sixth, there is bitterness in our hearts when we are hated by our neighbors.**

Look at Proverbs 14:20 – “The poor is hated even by his neighbor, But those who love the rich are many.” Jesus commanded us to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt.22:39). Although we know that we must obey this commandment of Jesus, we have favoritism in loving our neighbor. How do we show favoritism? We take people by their appearance (Jam.2:1). So when “a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes” (v. 2), we show special attention to him and say to him “Here’s a good seat for you” (v. 3). But when “a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in” (v. 2), we say to him “You stand there or Sit on the floor by my feet” (v. 3). These actions are that we discriminate between the rich and the poor, judge with evil thoughts (v. 4), and insult the poor (v. 6). The Bible says that this is sinning. In other words, when we take man by appearance, we sin against God (v. 9).

Looking at Proverbs 14:21, the Bible says, “He who despises his neighbor sins ....” Here, the “neighbor” specifically refers to the “the poor” spoken in verse 20 or the “the needy” spoken in verse 21. In this sinful world, the poor and the needy are not only hated (v. 20), but also are despised by the society (v. 21). And even they are

oppressed by it (v. 31). As a result, it seems that the poor and the needy are envious of the rich even though the Bible says “but envy rots the bones” (v. 30). In the end, in the society we are jealous, hate, despise, and oppressing each other, and there is no other choice but to have pain and sorrow rather than peace. Although this is the society we live in, the church must be different. In the community, the church, the poor and the rich should not be differentiated (discriminated) and there should be no favoritism. If there are discrimination and favoritism even in the church, the poor and the needy brothers and sisters in Christ will be hated, so there will be bitterness in their hearts. To prevent this from happening, we must not discriminate people based on their appearance, whether inside the church or outside the church. And there shouldn't be any favoritism. Rather, we must obey the Jesus' commandment and love our neighbors as ourselves. Then the bitterness in our hearts will disappear and there will be joy in our hearts.

### **Seventh, there is bitterness in our hearts when we only talk and don't act.**

Look at Proverbs 14:23b – “... But mere talk leads only to poverty.” Here, “mere talk” refer to speaking only without execution (Job 11:2; Isa. 36:5) (Park). The Bible says that those who only speak with their lips and have no action will lead to poverty (Prov. 14:23). What kind of poverty does the people who only talk and has no action face? Dr. Park said two things: (1) They become poor in their physical life. The reason is because they are lazy people who go around and just merely talk without any action. And because the lazy people violate God's command to work hard (Gen. 3:19), they become in need by God's punishment. (2) The lazy people who talk only and don't have action will also be in need of spiritual life. Think about it. How can your spiritual life be enriched if you only talk about spiritual things and don't live according to the word of God? The problem seems to be that even though we know this, we are constantly walking on the path of poverty rather than pursuing abundance in our physical or spiritual life. In other words, it seems that there are many times when we just talk about what we know, that is we should not just talk with our lips, but move with action. It seems that we, weak humans, speak quickly but act slowly. So Proverbs 14:24 says, “But the folly of fools is foolishness.” What does it mean? It means that the fools who know their faults don't correct them and continues to act foolishly. As a result, the fools are bound to suffer in their hearts. We are not to be people who only talk and don't act. Rather, we need to develop a habit of speaking and acting immediately. There will be joy in our hearts when we live a life of acting up to what we say.

### **Eighth and last, there is bitterness in our hearts when we don't repent until the end.**

Look at Proverbs 14:32a – “When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down ....” The word “wicked” here refers to the wicked people who don't repent until the end. And the word “are brought down” means driven away, which means forcibly dragged (Park). In other words, the wicked who don't repent until the end are driven to tribulation. God, who is holy and just, judges the wicked who don't repent, and reveals His glory by letting them swallow them in tribulation. When we commit a sin and don't repent of that sin, we are bound to suffer tribulation

in the end. But the problem is that even though we are in tribulation for our unrepentant sin, we ask God for deliverance in the midst of that tribulation, but we don't feel the need to repent of our sin. And no matter how much we ask God for deliverance and when there is no answer to our prayers, we even blame on God because we are still in trouble. Eventually, through tribulation, we convict of our sins, and because we don't repent, we sin more and more against God. As a result, we experience more and more bitterness in our hearts.

When we are in trouble for our sins, we must look back before the holy God to see if we have sinned against God and have unrepentant sins. Then, when God the Holy Spirit reveals and convicts us of our sins, we must repent our sins by confessing to God all our sins by relying on the power of the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. Obviously, our God will forgive and accept us. In doing so, our hearts will be filled with peace and joy.

The last thing we want to think about is joy in our hearts. Here are 7 things to think about when there is joy in our hearts:

### **First, there is joy in our hearts when our tent will flourish.**

Look at Proverbs 14:11b – "... but the tent of the upright will flourish." The house of the wicked will be destroyed (v. 11a). And his family will not only suffer from the hardships of life, but will also be put to shame. But the tent of the upright will flourish (v. 11b). What does it mean? It means that the upright person, the person who sincerely confesses his sin and believes in the Lord and receives His righteousness, lives with hope in the kingdom of heaven (Park). Of course, this doesn't mean that we all have to sell houses and live in tents. Here, King Solomon said "The house of the wicked ..." and then "the tent of the upright" instead of 'the house of the upright'. The reason is because the upright doesn't have hope on this earth and doesn't live by thinking about things on this earth, but rather thinks of what is above, and has hope in heaven and pursues eternal things. That's what the Bible says that the tent of the upright will flourish.

We are people of faith moving toward a better home (Note: Heb. 11). This world is not our home. The house we will live forever is the house of heaven. Therefore, while living on this earth, we must have hope in heaven and pursue the things of the future. Then God will make our lives flourish. God will prosper and stabilize our homes and churches (Walvoord). I think our country is the same. When our country's president and rulers are upright and govern the country well with justice, then our country will be established as a nation of righteousness (v. 34). Then, there will be many people in the kingdom of righteousness (v. 28), and God will exalt the kingdom. The upright people who live in such a prosperous and stable country, church, or house will live day by day while enjoying the true joy that God gives.

### **Second, there is joy in our hearts when we live truthfully.**

Look at Proverbs 14:14b – “... But a good man will be satisfied with his.” If our hearts are faithless (v. 14), then we will leave God and believe in lies, pursue lies, and lead a false life. And we will deceive others by spitting lies. If our hearts are faithless, we will devise evil schemes in our hearts. In our hearts we will devise the evil scheme that will harm others. And we seek evil (v. 22). Then there is inevitably bitterness in our hearts. The reason is because God will judge us according to what we have done. But if we are “good men” (v. 14), that is, if we are Christians who live truthfully with the satisfaction of our souls with the saving grace of God, our hearts will be joyful. In particular, like the discerning one’ (v. 33), when we keep the God’s truth that we have realized in our hearts and live according to that truth (Park), there is bound to be joy in our hearts. The truthful believers, who become true witnesses and save human lives (v. 25), will live with the joy of salvation and the joy of God.

### **Third, there is joy in our hearts when we believe in only the Lord and do His will.**

Look at Proverbs 14:15b – “... but a prudent man gives thought to his steps.” Here, “a prudent man” is a person who truly believes in the Lord and does His will (Park). And “the prudent are crowned with knowledge” (v. 18b). Therefore, he refrains from his own actions in the knowledge of God. And he isn’t like a simple man who unconditionally believes in what others say and isn’t influenced by their words. Rather, he seeks and pursues only the Lord’s will while judging and discerning the words of others with the knowledge of God. The Bible Proverbs 14:8 says, “The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is deception.” What does it mean? It means that the fools, who don’t fear God but ignore Him, they don’t seek God’s will and walk the way that God desires. Rather, they walk the way they want to walk according to their own will (v. 8). But the prudent man knows his way. In other words, the prudent Christian knows God’s will and lives according His will. He knows what the Lord has called him to do and does it according to His will (1 Cor. 7:17).

In Proverbs 14:35, the Bible says that “A king delights in a wise servant”. In this way, when we walk wisely, we will receive the grace of the Lord, the King of Kings. How can we really act wisely in the sight of the Lord? It is doing what God is pleased with. Then, what does God please with? He is pleased when we live according to God's will. When we live by obeying God's word, God will rejoice, and when God is pleased, we too will be filled with joy.

### **Fourth, there is joy in our hearts when we fear God and shun evil.**

Look at Proverbs 14:16a – “A wise man fears the LORD and shuns evil, ...” The fool doesn’t have the wisdom to fear God. So he believes in himself and commits sins in this world and lives recklessly (v. 16). Since he doesn’t fear God, he lives a prodigal life pursuing the pleasures of this world. As a result, he suffers sorrow and pain in this world. However, the wise man turns away from evil because he fears God. And because he shuns evil, there is a sense of security in his life (v. 26). If we look at Proverbs 14:27, the Bible says that the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life. And the Bible says that when we fear God we may avoid the snares of death (v. 27). The Bible

says that when we live in the fear of God, there is hope even in death. In other words, we can have refuge even in death (v. 32). Therefore, we must become wise children of God. We must be God's wise children who fear God. And as wise children of God, we must shun evil and make Heavenly Father our refuge in the midst of persecution and tribulation (v. 26b). God will surely protect and keep us. Then we will be able to live with the joy that God gives us.

### **Fifth, there is joy in our hearts when we overcome evil with good.**

Look at Proverbs 14:19 – “Evil men will bow down in the presence of the good, and the wicked at the gates of the righteous.” The Bible clearly says that evil men and the wicked will bow down in the presence of the good and the righteous. That is, the good and the righteous will overcome the evil and the wicked. But for some reason, when we look at this evil world, it seems that the wicked and the evil people are overcoming the good and the righteous. In other words, from our human point of view, it seems that in this world, evil people are more powerful than good people, persecuting and harassing the good. So even the wicked killing the good are happening in this world. That is why many Christians probably don't believe the truth that the good and the righteous overcome the wicked and the evil people. However, in the Bible, there are many cases where the good people overcame the wicked. For example, Joseph's brothers surrendered before Joseph (Gen. 42:6), Egypt king Pharaoh and his people surrendered before Moses (Exod. 8:28, 9:27, 12:31-33), the wicked men who tried to kill Daniel were rather thrown in the lion's den (Dan. 7:27), Haman was killed on the gallows, that was made to kill Mordecai, in Esther (Esth. 7:9-10) and so on (Park).

When I meditated on these words, I remembered Romans 12:21 – “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” If we lose to evil while living our faith, there will be bitterness in our hearts. However, if God is with us and we overcome evil with goodness, there will be joy of victory in our hearts. Shouldn't we live to enjoy this joy in our life of faith? Looking at Proverbs 14:22, the Bible says that “those who plan what is good find love and faithfulness.” What does it mean? It means that we must do good work without interruption with a lot of preparation (Park). In that case, it means that God not only gives us mercy (love), but also faithfully fulfills the word of promise given to us. Therefore, we must promote good. We must work hard to do good things. We must live a life that overcomes evil with good. Then God will bring joy to our hearts.

### **Sixth, there is joy in our heart when we love our neighbors.**

Look at Proverbs 14:21 – “He who despises his neighbor sins, but blessed is he who is kind to the needy.” If we break the commandments of Jesus and don't love our neighbors, but rather despise them, then there will be pain in our hearts. The reason is because we are sinning against God. However, the more we obey the commandments of Jesus and love our neighbors as ourselves, the more joy will be in our hearts. Look at the lyrics verse 1 of the hymn “Jesus Comes With Pow'r to Gladden”: “Jesus comes with pow'r to gladden, When love shines

in, Ev'ry life that woe can sadden, When love shines in." Then how shall we love our neighbors? The Bible Proverbs 14:21b commands us to be kind to the needy. The Bible says that such a person is blessed. What is the reason? The reason is because being kind to the needy is honoring God (v. 31). That means that if we say we honor the Lord with our lips, but we don't show kindness to the needy, then we aren't actually honoring the Lord. We must be kind to the needy, not only with our lips, but also with our actions, and help them with love. In order to do so, one of the things we need is great understanding (v. 29). Also, we shouldn't be impatient. Then we will be patient and humbly loving our neighbors, but especially be kind to the needy. Therefore, we will have peace in our hearts in relationships with our neighbors (v. 30).

### **Seventh and last, there is joy in our hearts when we work hard.**

Look at Proverbs 14:23a – “All hard work brings a profit, ....” As we meditated on the Book of Proverbs, we have seen King Solomon talking about laziness and diligence over and over again. The point of those sayings is that we should not be lazy, but be diligent. Even in the first half of Proverbs 14:23, King Solomon says that all hard work is profitable. In other words, a person who only talks and does nothing at all end up in poverty (v. 23), while a diligent person who works hard and sweats will bring a profit. What is the profit for him? There are three things we can think of: (1) The Bible says that the diligent man will become rich. Look at Proverbs 10:4 – “Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.” The “diligent hands bring wealth” means that the diligent will work diligently, and don't sleep, especially in the summer of harvest, but work diligently to harvest (v. 5). (2) The Bible says that the diligent man will have a lot to eat. Look at Proverbs 12:11 – “He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.” If we work diligently and cultivate our land, of course, the profit is that we have plenty to eat. (3) The Bible says that the diligent man will rule over others. Look at Proverbs 12:24 – “Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor.” The lazy man has no choice but to be managed, but the diligent man will rule over others. So it can be said that this is also the profit of being diligence. When we consider these profits, if we are diligent and work hard, there is joy in our hearts.

I often go up to God's house and sing the hymn “Out of My Bondage, Sorrow and Night”: “Out of my bondage, sorrow and night, Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come. Into Thy freedom, gladness and light, Jesus, I come to Thee. ....” When I sing that hymn of repentance and forgiveness to God, there are times when I feel that there is a lot of pain in this world, and there are many times when we are disappointed and discouraged. There are many causes, but in the light of today's text, even though it isn't the right path in the eyes of God, I walk that path in my proud because I think that it is the right path. Also, when I seek the joy of this world as I walk that wrong path and when I am only talking and not doing anything, I am disappointed and discouraged because of myself. Especially, I am disappointed and discouraged of myself because I see myself unable to repent even though I know I need to repent. So, while singing that hymn ”Out of My Bondage, Sorrow and Night”, there are times when I want to put my proud heart down on the cross and follow the God's blessed word: “Out of unrest and arrogant pride, Jesus, I

come, Jesus, I come. Into Thy blessed will to abide. Jesus, I come to Thee.” At those times, I often experience God's comforting my sad heart and giving me strength. I want to believe in the Lord and live according to His will with the power that God gives. I want to live my life truthfully and a life of shunning evil because I fear God. I want to overcome evil with good. I want to love my neighbors and working hard in the Lord's work according to the commandments of Jesus. As I do so, I believe that the Lord will revitalize the church and family.



## The tongue of the wise

### [Proverbs 15:1-7]

Have you ever heard the phrase ‘You have to use your three inches tongue well’? It means that the tongue is that the words that come out of a short tongue are so important that life goes back and forth. The tongue is as short as that, but the result of the words coming from that tongue is enormous. Look at James 3:5 – “So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!” The words that come out of our tongues become great scars, frustrations, disappointments, and curses for some, hope, courage, and life for some. And in other cases, inadvertent words can kill others. If so, how important is a word from us Christians who believe in Jesus? So Proverbs 18:21 of the Bible tells us this: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.”

This is what the Bible Proverbs 15:2 says, “The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, But the mouth of fools spouts folly.” Based on this word, I would like to receive the lesson God wants to give us while thinking about two things under the heading “The tongue of the wise.”

The first thing I want to think about is the mouth of the fool. I would like to think of three things:

#### **First, the tongue of the fool speaks a harsh word.**

Look at Proverbs 15:1b – “... but a harsh word stirs up anger.” In the Bible, there are examples of the harsh word in anger. One of them is what King Saul said to his own son Jonathan in anger. Look at 1 Samuel 20:30-31: “Then Saul's anger burned against Jonathan and he said to him, ‘You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Therefore now, send and bring him to me, for he must surely die.’” How could he harshly say “You son of a perverse, rebellious woman!” to his own son? How hurtful is this for his son Jonathan? This saying of King Saul, even mention Jonathan's mother in anger was the most intense expression of extreme hatred and anger, especially in the ancient Middle East (Internet). In the end, King Saul spoke the harsh words to his own son Jonathan.

This is what the Bible Proverbs 15:18 says: “A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger calms a dispute.” What does it mean? It means that a man of rage (Walvoord) who gets very angry easily causes contention. How does he cause contention? He does so in anger in which he cannot restrain his mouth and speaks

carelessly and violently and hurts the other. Yet, the fool who is easy to get angry thinks that he is right while he is actually wrong and quarrels by making noise (Park). What are some lessons we should learn here? That is, when we are angry, we must shut our mouths. In other words, when we are angry, we need to refrain from speaking. The reason is because the words that come out our mouths can be harsh if we fail to manage our anger. And if we are unable to control our anger and open our mouths to speak harsh words, the person who listens to those harsh words can be hurt. So we should be slow to speak when we are angry (Jam. 1:19).

### **Second, the tongue of the fool spouts folly.**

Look at Proverbs 15:2b – “... But the mouth of fools spouts folly.” Here, the literal meaning of the original Hebrew word for ‘to sprout’ is “bubbles forth” (Walvoord). This same word appears in the second half of verse 28: “... but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.” Here the word ‘gush’ means ‘(liquid) soaring, (liquid suddenly) pouring out, (praising, feelings without much sincerity) pouring out’ (Naver Dictionary). What does it mean? It means that the folly pours out of the mouth of the fool, like a bubble, as if water springs from a spring. In a word, it means that the fool talks a lot without thinking (Park). In the end, since the fool doesn’t have the truth to understand in his heart, he pours out such random words without thinking instead of thinking and speaking the word of God. And because the fool speaks a lot without thinking, he makes known what is in his heart (14:33). Not only that, he proclaims his own folly. Here, what is in the heart of the fool? It is his own folly. As the fool shows his folly, his mouth feeds on folly (15:14). What does it mean? The fool enjoys the folly in himself with his foolish mouth. How foolish is this? That's why the Bible Proverbs 17:27-28 says, “He who restrains his words has knowledge, And he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; When he closes his lips, he is considered prudent.” Isn't it interesting that even the fool is considered wise if he remain silent. We need to spare words. And we must have knowledge. We must have the knowledge of God and the knowledge of His truth. Therefore, we need to think and speak based on the truth. We don't have to proclaim and express our own folly by simply pouring out words without thinking.

### **Third, the tongue of the fool crushes the other person’s spirit.**

Look at Proverbs 15:4b – “... but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.” Here, the term ‘deceitfulness’ is not only not true, but also refers to harassing the listener (Park). What does it mean? This means that the fool man has the deceitful tongue, and he afflicts others with it, especially their hearts (Refs: 15:13; 17:22, 18:14). Especially, the fool man hurts the other person's heart because he carelessly speaks harsh words in his anger. However, the problem is that the fool not only doesn’t know how much he hurts the other person's heart with the words he pours out of his mouth in anger. He only thinks of himself at the moment of anger, and has no interest in the other person's hurt.

Last week, two of my kids were upset. When I was around, one kid called another kid “jerk”. At that time,

when I heard that, I was angry and said a word of bitterness to that child who said “jerk” to her sister. Then the child went to his room and cried sadly. I think the reason why I was upset was because someone called me “jerk” when I was in 9th grade. At that time, it seems that her word broke my heart when I heard that. That’s why I reacted sensitively to what my child said. In a way, it seems that many people use the inappropriate words in their conversations these days that even we don’t care using them. Among those words, there is ‘you stupid. And it seems that the word stupid is used by many people. Furthermore, these days, young people are using the bad word such as ‘f-word’ in conversation without hesitation. These words don’t seem to offend the other person, so everyone seems to use it comfortably. Can we use these words so comfortably like that? In Matthew 5:22, Jesus says “But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.” The word “raga” here means “blockhead” (Kittel) in English. This was an insult at the time. That is why Jesus tells us that if we tell our brothers that we are idiots and fools in our anger, we will be put into the fire of hell. When we think of these words, we think we shouldn't say these things to the other person. Especially if we call the other person this way, and if it hurts the other person's heart, we should stop using those words anymore.

Then I would like to think about four things about the tongue of the wise:

### **First, the tongue of the wise turns away wrath.**

Look at Proverbs 15:1a – “A gentle answer turns away wrath ...” The wise will not be angry with the other when the other is angry. Rather, the wise man is slow to get angry even when the other person is angry (v. 18). Meanwhile, he knows what to do with his angry opponent. It's about taking the other person's anger off with a gentle answer. In other words, the wise man uses gentle words to relieve his opponent's anger. A good example is given in 1 Samuel 25:24-31. A good example is what Abigail, the wise wife of a man named Nabal who repays good with evil (v. 21), who is worthless (v. 25) and foolish (v. 25), said to David. Because of Nabal, David decided to harm Nabal's house (v. 17) with about 200 men each with a sword (v. 13) and was going to Nabal's house. Then Abigail, the wise wife of the foolish Nabal, heard of his servant (vv. 14-17), “lost no time” and “took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys” (v. 18). She made her servants to go ahead of her (v. 19), and met David and his men when he followed her servants (v. 20). When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground and said, “My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name--his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent. ... Please forgive your servant's offense, for the LORD will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the LORD's battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live” (vv. 24-25, 28). After hearing all the words of the wise Abigail, David tells her: ““Praise be to the

LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. Otherwise, as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak."

If we look at Proverbs 25:15, the Bible says "By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded, And a soft tongue breaks the bone." The wise man is patient and treats the angry man. He convinces the other person with his gentle tongue, so that the anger of the angry person can be turned away. The Bible says that in Proverbs 16:14, the tongue of the wise makes the king's fury that is like messengers of death, rest. What a wise tongue is this? Shouldn't our tongue be like this? May we have this wise tongue so that we can turn away other person's wrath with our gentle words.

### **Second, the tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable.**

Look at Proverbs 15:2a – "The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable ...." What does it mean? The tongue of the wise means speaking the word of God well (Park). In other words, the tongue of the wise speaks the word of God well and spread knowledge (v. 7). The reason is because the eyes of the wise read the word of God, his ears seek knowledge (18:15), and his life meditates on the word of God day and night (Ps. 1:2). In other words, since the wise man meditates on the word of God day and night, he has knowledge of God's word so that he can convey that knowledge to others well. What a contrast with the tongue of the fool? Since the tongue of the fool isn't knowledgeable, he not only pours out his own folly (v. 2) but also proclaims about it (12:23), whereas the tongue of the wise spreads knowledge well.

In Proverbs 24:5, the Bible says, "A wise man is strong, And a man of knowledge increases power." If we apply this to the first half of Proverbs 15:2, I think we can say that the tongue of the wise who spreads knowledge well increases power and is strong. In the end, in order to cultivate the strength and power of our tongue rather than the strength and power of the flesh, we must meditate on the word of God day and night, and grow steadily in the knowledge of God and the knowledge of the truth. Therefore, we must use our tongue well with the wisdom God gives us. We must use it to proclaim the word of God.

### **Third, the tongue of the wise heals wounds.**

Look at Proverbs 15:4a – "The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life ...." The lips of the fool speak harsh words and hurt the other person's heart. But the tongue of the wise heals the wound. Don't you want to have this healing tongue? How does the tongue of the wise heal wounds? It heals the wounds by speaking the word of God well (v. 2). The tongue of the wise speaks well with gentle words (v. 1) to heal the other's broken heart. Dr. Yoon-sun Park speaks of this healing tongue, saying that it is truthful and peaceful word that comforts, saves, and

gives hope to the listeners. Such words are referred to as “full of grace, seasoned with salt” (Col. 4:6) (Park). The Bible says that the tongue of the wise is the “tree of life” because it comforts, gives life and hope to those who hear it (Prov. 15:4). In other words, the tongue of the wise is the tree of life to heal dying souls by preaching Jesus Christ, who is life.

#### **Fourth and last, the tongue of the wise speaks a timely word.**

Look at Proverbs 15:23 – “A man finds joy in giving an apt reply-- and how good is a timely word!” As I personally meditate on this word, I think of how beautiful the right word is at the right time. And in fact, I often experience the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit, letting me speak the right word at the right time. For example, when I talk to others through internet chat, there are times when I get a glimpse of what is working in the other person's heart because God the Holy Spirit makes me to share the Bible verses by reminding me those verses. When that happens, sometimes I am surprised by myself. The reason is because the words that the Holy Spirit reminded me were appropriate words for others at that time. So personally, when I think of Proverbs 15:23, I believe that God will bring us joy by letting us speak the word of God through us in His time. This is what Proverbs 24:11-12 says: “Like apples of gold in settings of silver Is a word spoken in right circumstances. Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold Is a wise reprove to a listening ear.” What does it mean? In case of proper advice, it means that it produces good fruit (Park). Here, the original Hebrew word for “right circumstances” means “wheel”. In other words, it refers to the turn by adjusting the circumstances at that time. This teaches that the adviser should take a number of things into account and control it when speaking to the other person (Park): “Those who give advice should speak when they have love and peace. They should not speak in a humiliating manner. They should not speak hasty. Don't speak without courtesy. The Bible says that when the other person accepts such advice, it becomes a great treat (meaning of “apples of gold” and “setting of silver”) to the person giving them (Park). Are we taking the advice of those around us who love love us with great treat?

When we say the right words at the right time, and sometimes the indwelling Spirit wants to give advice or even rebuke, we must do it without sparing advice or rebuke with the word of God. When we do so, we should not do it to the proud, but with the wise. The reason is because we fear that if we reprove the arrogant, he will hate us.

This is what the Bible James 3:2 says: “For we all stumble in many ways If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.” As we should strive to become whole Christians without stumble in what we say, we meditated on the tongue of the fool and the tongue of the wise, based on Proverbs 15:1-7. And we have been taught that the tongue of the wise can turn away wrath, makes knowledge acceptable, heal the other's wounds, and speak the timely words. Is our tongue indeed the tongue of the wise or the tongue of the fool?

## What God hates, what God loves

### [Proverbs 15:8-33]

We Christians need to be clear with black and white. We need to know clearly how to distinguish good and evil. In particular, as we continue to meditate on the book of Proverbs, the Book of Wisdom, we must learn to clearly distinguish between what God loves and what God hates. And we must hate what God hates, and we must also love what God loves. This is what Proverbs 15:9 says: “The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But He loves one who pursues righteousness.” Today, I would like to receive the grace and instruction given by meditating on what God hates and what God loves under the title of “What God hates, what God loves.”

First, we want to think about three things that God hates:

#### **First, God hates the sacrifices of the wicked.**

Look at Proverbs 15:8a – “The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked ....” What is the sacrifice of the wicked that God hates? It is a sacrifice who is outwardly offering a sacrifice to God, but is evil in his heart. The sacrifice of the wicked can be found particularly in the Old Testament. For example, the Jews honored God with their lips and their hearts were far from God (Isa. 29:13, Mt. 15:8, Mk 7:6). Regarding such sacrifices, Isaiah 1:11-14 says: “‘What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?’ Says the LORD. ‘I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them.’” Why did God hate the countless offerings and sacrifices of the Jews, and couldn’t endure their meetings on the New Year's Day, the Sabbath, and the assembly? Why did God hate such offerings and gatherings and say, “I am weary of bearing them”? The reason is because the Israelites did evil as well while thoroughly performing all these religious ceremonies (v. 13). In other words, they respected God with their lips and offered sacrifices to God with their actions, but their hearts were pursuing evil, and their lives were doing evil. Look at verse 15-17: “So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen Your hands are covered with blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless,

Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow.” When I came to the New Testament and thought of the sacrifices God hates, I remembered Romans 12:1-2: “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” If we are living in the same way as this generation and don’t know God’s good, pleased, and perfect will, and live according to our will, then such worship isn’t appropriate in God’s sight even though we come to the church every Sunday and worship God. Rather, it can be said that such worship is a worship that God hates. If we live in harmony with the world and are changing rather than being transformed by renewing our hearts and worshipping God according to our will, will God really love or hate such worship?

I remember the Korean gospel song ‘Like the sun in the day and the moon in the night’. If we look at verse 2 of the lyrics of the song, it says: ‘... But I like receiving more than giving. My lips look like You, but my heart is still ugly. So I am counting only the love I will receive. Lord, help me.’ Isn’t this our confession? Our lips seem to resemble the Lord, aren’t our hearts still ugly? Will God love or hate our worship with such an ugly heart? Looking at the second half of Proverbs 15:14, the Bible says “...But the mouth of fools feeds on folly.” Isn’t our mouth foolish? Aren’t we enjoying the fact that our hearts are far from God and our lips are like the Lord? A way to know that our hearts are far from God or not is by checking whether we are worshipping God while obeying His commandments or not. For example, look at Proverbs 15:18 – “A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger calms a dispute.” If we come to the church on Sunday and want to worship God, but when we come to a family member or a church member and think that there is something that might be resentful to our brothers due to quarrels, Matthew 5:24 says, “leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.” However, if we know that we should do that, but we don’t obey God’s word and don’t reconcile with our brother, we cannot help but question whether God will love that worship.

The Bible Proverbs 15:8 says that God hates the sacrifice of the wicked. Even though we aren’t the wicked, if our lips say that we love God like the wicked, but our hearts are far from Him and we continue to live a life that aren’t obeying His commandments, then our worship will never be the worship that God loves. If we live a life of disobedience to God’s word and come before Him to worship without any repentance, such a service will not be a worship that God is pleased with and loves. I remember what the prophet Samuel said to Saul, Israel’s first king: “Samuel said, ‘Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams’” (1 Sam.15:22).

## **Second, God hates the way of the wicked.**

Look at Proverbs 15:9a – “The LORD detests the way of the wicked ....” The wicked man who walks the way of the wicked that God hates is he who forsakes the way of God (v. 10). I don’t know if his lips obey God’s way.

But his actions forsake God's word and live a life of disobedience. One of the reasons he does so is because he is eager for profits (v. 27). In other words, the reason why the wicked who walks the way of the wicked forsakes the God's way and disobeys His word is because of his covetousness in his heart. And because he doesn't fear God, he wants to enrich himself even though he disobeys the word of God in his greed (v. 16). And he actually gets rich. But the problem is that he lives a life of hating each other even though he eats "a fatten ox" (v. 17). If we look at the second half of Proverbs 15:6, the Bible says, "But trouble is in the income of the wicked." At that time, even though the wise rebukes him, he does not like to receive it (v. 12). Rather, he hates the rebuke of the wise (v. 19). He even rejects his father's discipline (v. 5). This is to reveal one's ignorance and foolishness (v. 21). And this is despising himself (v. 32). Proverbs 13:18 says that poverty and shame come to those who neglect discipline. Furthermore, in Proverbs 15:25, the Bible says that God will tear down the house of the proud wicked. Therefore, the wicked will suffer (v. 15). His heart will be sad and his spirit will be broken (v. 13). Furthermore, it is said that the wicked will face severe discipline, even death (v. 10). Because the wicked enjoy ignorance and foolishness, rather than walking the right way (v. 21), they walk the way of the wicked that God hates. The way of the wicked isn't the way of following God's word, but the way of following his own greed and desire. In walking that way, the wicked love bribes (v. 27). The way seems like a way that can be greatly enriched. But it is the way with a lot of trouble (v. 16), hatred (v. 17), anger and strife (v. 18). We should not walk this way. The reason is because it is the way that God hates.

### **Third and last, God hates evil plans.**

Look at Proverbs 15:26a – "Evil plans are an abomination to the LORD ...." God hates not only the sacrifices of the wicked and the ways of the wicked (vv. 8-9), but also He hates the evil plans of the wicked (v. 26) or wicked schemes (6:18). Although the wicked may think that no one knows the evil plans or schemes he has planned, the Bible clearly says that the all-wise God knows. In Psalms 139:1-2, it is said that God is not only looking at us and knowing when we sit and rise, but also clearly knows all our thoughts. And Proverbs 15:11 also says, "Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD, How much more the hearts of men!" Nevertheless, the fool and wicked man intends to do evil (24:8). The reason is because he is proud (15:25) and doesn't fear God (vv. 16, 33).

If we look at Proverbs 1:10, the Bible says, "My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent." The reason is because the wicked entices us to get all sorts of valuable things and fill his house with plunder (v. 13). In other words, the reason the wicked conspires evil is because he covets other people's possessions and try to make them his own. In the end, as Proverbs 15:27 says, the reason why the wicked devises evil is because he is eager for profit in his greed. Therefore, the wicked also exchanges bribes and use corrupted methods. The problem is that the wicked man tries to act in a corrupted way by using evil schemes without even hard working. In the end, because the wicked does a lot of tricks, he is bound to become lazy (v. 19). He has no choice but to be lazy because he wants to



be rich by only trying evil tricks without thinking of laboring while working in sweat. However, in Proverbs 15:19, the Bible says, “The way of the lazy is as a hedge of thorns”. In other words, even in the life of the wicked man living lazily with evil plans, he is surrounded by difficulties such as thorns from east to west.

In Job 5:12, the Bible clearly states that “He frustrates the plotting of the shrewd, So that their hands cannot attain success.” Even though it seems to us that the wicked man seems to succeed because his wicked scheme increases his possessions and becomes rich, the Bible clearly says that God doesn’t allow the wicked man to succeed. Therefore, we don’t have to be envious of the wicked’s success (prosperity) (Ref.: Ps. 73). We will never fall for the wicked. Rather, we must hate the sacrifices of the wicked, the ways of the wicked, and the evil plans that God hates.

What, then, should we love? Finally, I want to think about three things about what God loves:

### **First, God loves the prayer of the upright.**

Look at Proverbs 15:8 – “The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked, but the prayer of the upright pleases him.” God isn’t pleased with the countless sacrifices (worships) we offer as we disobey God’s word. Rather, God is pleased with the sacrifices (worships) we offer while obeying His word. And God is pleased with our prayers to God as we obey His word. This prayer we offer to God while obeying His word is referred to as “the prayer of the upright” in Proverbs 15:8. Who is the upright one? Is he who doesn’t sin at all? I think the upright man obeys Psalms 51:17 – “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.” In other words, the upright man is a person who offers sacrifices that God asks for. In other words, the upright in God’s sight is he who comes to God with the broken and contrite heart, confesses and repents his sins. The Bible Proverbs 15:19 says that God listens to that kind of prayers of the upright

Like the Israelites, we should not honor God only with our lips, and our hearts far from Him. What we will keep away from in our hearts is the wicked man (v. 29), the sacrifice of the wicked (v. 8), the way of the wicked (v. 9), and evil plans (v. 26). We must draw close to His word and obey it by honoring Him with our hearts. As we obey His word, we must pray to God. God is pleased with this prayer of the upright.

### **Second, God loves he who pursues righteousness.**

Look at Proverbs 15:9 – “The LORD detests the way of the wicked but he loves those who pursue righteousness.” The wicked man who walks the way of the wicked that God hates forsakes God’s way (v. 10). But the righteous man whom God loves obeys His word. Because the righteous man fears God (vv. 16, 33), he humbly obeys His word (v. 33). Therefore, he loves his neighbor according to God’s word. He loves each other (v. 17), is slow to anger (v. 18) and diligent (v. 19). God keeps the righteous man’s boundaries intact (v. 25) and makes him walk the right way (vv. 8, 21). God makes the righteous man to walk the path of life that leads upward (v. 24). The

righteous man has ears to listen to a life-giving rebuke (v. 31). So he likes to be corrected and disciplined (vv. 10, 12, 32). The reason is because the mind of the discerning righteous seeks knowledge (v. 14). Therefore, the discerning righteous man not only opens his eyes and has joy in his heart (v. 30), but he also brings joy to his parents (v. 20). And because of his joyful heart (vv. 13, 15) his face shines (v. 13) and has continual feast (v. 15).

We are forgiven and justified through Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Therefore, we must walk the way of righteousness as righteous people. As those who follow righteousness, we fear God. So we must live by obeying the word of God. We have joy in our hearts because we humbly obey God's commandments. God loves those who follow such righteousness

### **Third and last, God loves he who speaks pleasant words.**

Look at Proverbs 15:26 – “Evil plans are an abomination to the LORD, But pleasant words are pure.” The righteous man who offers upright prayers obeys the word of God and speaks pleasant words in loving his neighbors. What are “pleasant words” here? Look at Proverbs 16:24 – “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.” The pleasant words are happy and kind words (Park). They are words that please the neighbor. He who says pleasant words that please his neighbors delivers the good news that gives health to the bones of his neighbors (15:30). Also, he who speaks pleasant words thinks deeply about how he will answer (v. 28). He doesn't carelessly pour out the folly and evil in anger. Rather, he turns away his neighbor's anger with the gentle answer (v. 1). And he speaks the timely words to his neighbor that pleases his neighbor (v. 23). Therefore, he who speaks pleasant words has good (loving) relationship with his neighbors. Therefore, the man who speaks pleasant words discusses with others and gets advice in plan (v. 22). He is able to cooperate with others because he doesn't covet other people's profit and hates bribes (v. 27). Also, the man who speaks pleasant words has a lot of counsel in plan (v. 22). Therefore, plan is successful (v. 22). The reason is because God accepts the pleasant words like pure offerings (Park). In other words, the righteous man who obeys God's word and speaks pleasant words while offering upright prayers to God will make his plan successful because God accepts his life as a pure offering. Look at Proverbs 16:1 – “To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the reply of the tongue.” We simply commit our plans to the Lord by faith. Then, God will succeed our plans (v. 3).

We learned 3 things that God hates and 3 things that God loves based on the words of Proverbs 15:8-33. What God hates is the sacrifices of the wicked, the way of the wicked and evil plans. What God loves is that He loves the prayer of the upright who pursues righteousness and who speak pleasant words. I hope and pray that we can be able to love what God loves and to hate what God hates.

## **“Commit to the Lord whatever you do”**

### **[Proverbs 16:1-3]**

How are you planning your own management and the rest of your life? Elder Soo-woong Park, who came to our church few years ago and led the family seminar, set up his own management and plans for the rest of his life in his book ‘Soo-woong Park's Self-Management’ (Soo-woong Park): First of all, if we look at the ‘2002 Self-Management Chart’, the theme of self-management is ‘First, seek God's kingdom and God's righteousness’ (Mt. 6:35). And the “goal” of self-management is ‘Let's grow healthy and balanced in character, life, and ministry in the image of Jesus Christ and produce the fruits of the filling of the Holy Spirit in the Lord God (1 Thess. 5:23-24, Gal. 4:19, Josh 14: 6-15).’ In his management, he divided into two categories: ‘life area’ and ‘ministry’. In terms of life, ‘spiritual life’, ‘intellectual life’, ‘emotional life’, ‘healthy life’ and ‘family life’, ‘occupation’, ‘church life’ and ‘finance’. Looking at the field of ministry, he is serving “JAMA”, “KOSTA”, “CCC(Campus Crusade of Christ)”, ‘family ministry’, “Christ's ambassador”. In particular, looking at his spiritual life in the realm of his life, he walks with God every moment with the Word, personifying the QT (the Word meditation), communion with God through personalization, and attends the early morning prayer meeting to God with his knees (Knee-mail), and aiming to go out and fill his thoughts with the word of God according to Psalm 119:9-11. In ‘Healthy Life,’ he set the goal of ‘Let's keep a modest diet so that I don't get fat, let's exercise golf once a week, and live in scale with a regular lifestyle.’ He set the goal to change his full-time doctor job to part-time, to yield to his hospital colleagues and to become an example as a Christian, to witness the gospel as a doctor who praises God, and to become a peacemaker so that the workplace becomes the kingdom of God.’ Another look at his ‘future resume’ he made plans from 1998 (his 54 years old) to 2023 (79 years old). I guess he is almost 70 years old now. His plans from the age of 60 (2004) include ‘retiring from the hospital’, ‘to completely pay off the bank loan for the purchase of a house’, ‘youngest son... beginning with marriage to make 2 boys and 1 daughter self-reliant’, ‘expanding the scope of ministry to the world.’ Looking at the 2006-2010 (ages 62-66), he said ‘join the young people ministry,’ ‘be faithful to the new vision from God’. Isn't this amazing and challenging that he wants to be faithful to the Lord's new vision at the early 60's? In his 2011-2020 (age 67-76) plan, it says, ‘I will cultivate and cooperate with juniors as a mentor’ and ‘I will focus on resembling the image of the Lord in a whole person.’ And his future plans are ‘to publish the fourth book that ends my life’, ‘to give glory to God by completing the vision as written in my future resume’ and ‘preparing to enter heaven’. What a great future plan? If we are challenged, how about writing our own “Self-Management Chart” and “Future Resume”?

If we look at Proverbs 16:3, the Bible says “Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will

succeed.” Focusing on this word, I want to receive a lesson from God as we meditate on today's text in three ways under the heading, “Commit to the Lord whatever you do.”

### **First, we must make the plan of the heart.**

Look at Proverbs 16:1 – “To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the reply of the tongue.” The first thing we need to think about here is the word “the plans”. The word is plural, meaning “plans” or “considerations”, which are plans, considerations, ie, an orderly, purposed, arrangement of ideas with regard to future actions (Swanson). What do you think? Do we have in our minds now plans, considerations, arrangement of ideas about future action, that is plans for the future? I think that verse 1 can have some misunderstanding points. When we read this word, “To man belong the plans of the heart, ...” we can think ‘Oh, we don’t need to make plans for our future since in the end only God’s sovereign will come true.’ Is this really what the Bible is talking about in verse 1? No. What we need to make clear here is that, in the tension between God's sovereignty and our responsibility, we must humbly and faithfully take our responsibility. For example, a brother in Christ told me a long time ago: ‘If there are people already chosen and predestined by God in His sovereignty, there is no need to evangelize.’ What do you think of this? This word is spoken without knowing the tension between God's sovereignty and our responsibility, evangelism (preaching the gospel). Jesus' command is to preach the gospel. Our responsibility is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not up to us who are the people whom God has chosen and who are not. Having such thought is very dangerous. I think such thought is the thought that challenges God's sovereignty.

In Proverbs 16:1, the Bible is by no means saying that we don't need to have plan of the heart because from the Lord comes the reply of our tongues. Rather, the Bible urges us to make plans of the heart. The reason is because it is our responsibility. But we have to remember Proverbs 19:21 – “Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.” When we have many plans in our hearts, we should only pursue the will of God. We must make plans for the future of our lives with desperate desire that only God's will be accomplished. For example, like Elder Park, the theme of self-management should be ‘Let's first seek God's kingdom and God's righteousness’. And there are times when we don't know what God's will is. But every time, like Jesus, we must make plans in our hearts by praying, ‘Not my will but God’s will be done’. I hope and pray that only God's will will be accomplished through the plans of our hearts.

### **Second, we must check whether the motives of our hearts are right in the sing of the Lord.**

Look at Proverbs 16:2 – “All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the LORD weighs the motives.” Because we humans cannot see the other person's heart, we have no choice but to judge only by looking

at the other person's appearance. A good example of this in the Bible is given in 1 Samuel 16:7 – “But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” As we already know, because God rejected Saul from being king of Israel, he pre-selected one of Jesse's sons (v. 1). When Samuel saw Eliab, the son of Jesse, he thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before Him (v. 6). At that time, God said verse 7. Even Samuel judged Eliab based on his appearance. Therefore, when we judge only by looking at a person's appearance, there are many chances of being wrong. The reason is because we are able to behave right outwardly, even though our heart’s motives are impure. The Bible Proverbs 16:2 says, “All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight ....” Here the word “clean” means ‘flawless’ (Swanson). In other words, our human instinct is to think that we are right so that our actions are flawless in our eyes. So even if the other person sees and points out our faults (defects), we not only deny it, but we even defend ourselves that we are never at fault to the point that we are offended and upset. Although there are countless times when God points out our faults through His holy words, we are unaware of our own faults, thinking that we have not done anything wrong. For example, we take Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament: “A son honors his father, and a servant his master Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?” says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests who despise My name. But you say, ‘How have we despised Your name?’ ‘You are presenting defiled food upon My altar But you say, ‘How have we defiled You?’ In that you say, ‘The table of the LORD is to be despised’” (Mal. 1:6-7). Although God clearly said to the priests of Israel, “O priests who despise My name” (v. 6), they said, “How have we despised Your name” (v. 6). Also, God said that they offered defiled food to God's altar, and the Israeli priests said, “How have we defiled You?” (v. 7) The Israeli priests firmly believed that they didn’t despise God’s name and didn’t defile the Lord in their own eyes. When I think about why the Israeli priests have come to this point, I think the cause is written in the first half of Malachi 1:2 – “I have loved you,’ says the LORD But you say, ‘How have You loved us?’” In other words, they weren’t aware (experienced) of God's love, so they thought that there was nothing wrong with them.

It is very dangerous to think that our actions are right or clean in our own eyes. The danger is that we are guilty of God, but we don’t regard it as sin. That is why we continue to commit sins before God that we don’t consider to be sins. Rather, we must ask ourselves the question, “How am I in God’s eyes?”, not in our own eyes. The reason is because God sees our hearts (1 Sam. 16:7). The reason is because God weighs the motives (Prov. 16:2). So we must remember that God weighs our motives. God knows everything. He know whether we are pursuing His will and His glory, or whether we are pursuing His will and His glory outwardly, only in people's eyes with impure motives in our hearts. Therefore, we must also listen to Proverbs 21:2 – “Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts.”

**Third and last, we must commit our works to the Lord.**

Look at Proverbs 16:3 – “Commit your works to the LORD And your plans will be established.” Here, the original Hebrew word for “commit” means “roll”. In other words, it means to entrust our works to God with sincere heart and earnest desire, as if rolling a stone (Swanson). But the problem is, we often worry again after praying to God and after we leaving all the works to God. It's like rolling the stone and looking for it again. Think about it. The fact that we have rolled the stone is that it has already been left from our hands. And if we have left all of our works to God in prayer, it is like taking our hands off the stone. However, if we are worried and anxious about the prayer topic that we have left to God, it has not been completely entrusted to Him. The word ‘roll out’ is also found in Psalms 22:8 and 37:5 – “Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him” (22:8), “Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it” (37:5). The psalmist uses the words ‘to commit’ with the word ‘to trust.’ That means that we commit our ways to God, to rely on Him and to trust in Him.

We must commit our ways to God. We must entrust our ways to Him and trust in Him. What is the reason? The reason is stated in Proverbs 16:9 – “The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.” The reason we must commit our ways to God is because it is God who directs our steps. Also, the reason is stated in Proverbs 19:21 – “Many plans are in a man's heart, But the counsel of the LORD will stand.” Even if we have many plans in our hearts, only God's will will be fully established. So even if we make plans of our heart, which is our responsibility, we must completely commit them to God. Like Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, we must commit all of our plans to God with prayerful heart saying, “... yet not as I will, but as You will” (Mt. 26:39). Then God will fulfill the plans of our hearts (Ps. 37:5).

We must a plan for the rest of our lives. And when we make the plan, we must do so with a heart of pursuing God's will. We must lay down our will and plan our lives with the heart attitude to pursue God's will. The reason is because God is weighting the motives of our hearts. And we must commit all the plans of our hearts to God. The reason is because only God's will will stand. May only God's will come true through our lives.

## The plans of the heart

**“To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the reply of the tongue. All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD. Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed” (Proverbs 16:1-3).**

Dr. Dong-Seok Choi of “Mind Program” defined management as follows: ‘Management is to set the vision/purpose/direction first, then adjust the conditions to achieve it, and specifically trigger actions that meet those conditions’ (Internet). And he says, ‘The most important whole of this definition is the state of mind of a manager.’ In other words, he says that management is starting from a desirable state of mind, that is, mental structure, and helping to generate desirable behavior patterns by arranging conditions to increase efficiency (Internet). It’s an interesting perspective. In particular, I agree with the words that the desirable behavior pattern emerges from the desirable state of mind for managers. What is the desired state of mind for the Christian managers?

In Proverbs 16:1, King Solomon is talking about “the plans of the heart”. He says that the plans of the heart belong to man. What does it mean? It means that the man has many plans in his hearts (19:21). However, we must keep in mind that no matter how many plans we have in our hearts, “the counsel of the Lord will stand” (v. 21). In other words, no matter how many plans we make in our hearts, only God's sovereign will stands completely. So King Solomon says in Proverbs 16:9 – “In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.” Therefore, we must manage our hearts by believing in this truth. In other words, we Christian managers must trust in God with all our hearts (3:5). We should never lean on our understanding (v. 5). We must acknowledge God in everything (v. 6). We Christian managers must acknowledge that our sovereign God uses even the wicked who gives us hard time by opposing us to carry out His sovereign will (v. 4). Therefore, we must entrust all of our plans to God (v. 3). Then God will accomplish what we plan (v. 3). In a word, we who manage hearts must have believing heart or faith in God. In other words, first of all, the desirable state of mind for us is trustfulness. Second, we must tell God the plans of our hearts in prayer (16:1). We must lay down our plans before God and pray for God's sovereign will to be done. Humility is the desirable state of mind for us who pray for God's will to be done. In other words, we Christian managers who manage hearts must have humble heart. And we should act humbly with humble heart. The reason is because God hates those who are proud (16:5). Therefore, we, the humble Christian managers, not only pray to God, but also consult with many many counselors (15:22). In other words, the

humble Christian managers not only prays to Jesus Christ, our true Counselor, but also consults with seniors of faith and seeks guidance from them. And the humble Christian managers listen humbly to their advices and rebukes. Third, the desirable state of mind for the Christian managers is wisdom. In other words, we who manage hearts must have a wise heart. And the wise-hearted Christian managers look at themselves with “God's perspective” rather than their own (v. 2) or others (v. 25). In other words, the wise Christian managers know that God weights the motives (v. 2). Although they see their ways are clean in their own sight (v. 2), the wise Christian managers have no choice but to rely on the fact that their sins in God's eyes have been made atonement for God's mercy and truth (v. 6). Therefore, the wise Christian managers keep away from evil in the fear of God (v. 6). In other words, we Christian managers go from wisdom, the desirable state of mind, to the wise behavior, the desirable pattern of behavior. As a result, we please God by acting wisely (v. 7).

We Christian managers who plan of the heart must have a heart that trusts Sovereign God, a humble heart, and a wise heart. This is the right state of mind for the Christian managers. In this right state of mind, the right pattern of behavior must appear in the life of the Christian managers. The right behavioral pattern is, in a word, the pattern of the life of Jesus Christ, the true wise Man who completely trusted in Heavenly Father and obeyed the Father's will humbly and died on the cross. In other words, we Christian managers must live a life that embodies the heart of Jesus Christ and imitates the pattern of His life. I hope and pray that all of us who do the right minded plans and right actions.



## God who made everything for His purpose

### [Proverbs 16:4-9]

If we look at Ecclesiastes 3:1, the Bible says, “There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven.” What does it mean? It means that there is a time when every purpose will be achieved. Because God works in our individual lives, in the end, God's purpose and God's will will be fulfilled (Wiersbe). King Solomon talks about several times from Ecclesiastes 3:2-8, and I have divided all those times into five. One of them is that there is a time to give birth and a time to die. Look at Ecclesiastes 3:2 – “A time to give birth and a time to die; A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted.” There are times when we are born, but there are times when we certainly die. In this way, when we speak of the tree of birth and death, there is a time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted. What is important here is God's sovereignty. In other words, under God's sovereignty, people are born, and under God's sovereignty, people also die. Not only man's life but also the life of trees is in God's sovereignty. The important thing is that only the will of the Lord must be done through life and death. In other words, only the glory of the Lord must be revealed through our life and death. Then our lives and deaths will be beautiful. God is the God who makes everything beautiful through our life and death by fulfilling His sovereign will.

If we look at Proverbs 16:4, the Bible says, “The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil.” Focusing on this verse, I would like to find the answer in the Bible by asking three questions under the heading “God who made everything for His purpose”:

#### **First, why doesn't God judge the proud wicked, but leave them alone?**

Look at Proverbs 16:4 – “The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil.” Now, the Bible says that God made all things purposeful, and it says, “Even the wicked for the day of evil.” If so, then is the Bible saying that God the Creator also made evil? Certainly not. How can we say that the good God made evil? In the Bible Psalms 5:4, it says “For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You.” In other words, God is a God who hates evil (Park). And the Bible says that evil cannot dwell with the holy Lord. Therefore, it is very wrong to say that God also made evil. Then the question we cannot but ask is the “Origin of Evil”. When we say that God made everything but not evil, then we will be forced to ask the question who made evil? Obviously, the Bible Genesis 1:31 says that when God created the heavens and earth and all things, all creation was very good in the sight. But in Genesis 3:1, while all creatures are good in the sight of

God, suddenly an evil creature “the serpent” appears. As a result, the serpent seduces Adam and Eve and causes them to sin. How is the power of sin appearing in the good world created by God, and even accelerated, such as the tragedy of Cain murdering his own younger brother Abel? In other words, the question is, where did the demon appearing as the serpent come from?, What is it? and What is the source of this evil? In other words, the question is ‘Since God is the source of good, how did evil originate?’ (Internet) I think this answer is beyond our knowledge. We know from the Bible that an angel in the spiritual world is proud and coveted God's position. As a result the angel was exiled to become Satan who is against God (2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 1:6). That means we don't know what the source of evil is. But what we can clearly see is that evil doesn't come from God. Then, the question we cannot but ask here is the question, ‘Why didn't God remove the evil from the spiritual world?’ In other words, it is a question why God didn't judge Satan, the angel who fell from the spiritual world, but allowed the serpent in the Garden of Eden to tempt Adam and Eve after the creation of the heavens and the earth. Indeed, it is a question that cannot be understood by our knowledge. Obviously, when God hates evil and the wicked, there may be a question about why He doesn't judge the evil and the wicked. In particular, if we look at Proverbs 16:5, the Bible says, “Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD.” Why doesn't God judge and leave them alone despite hating the proud wicked? Clearly, it is written in the Bible that “The LORD has made everything for its own purpose” (v. 4). What is the purpose of God? This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘God doesn't make evil. He hates evil (Ps. 5:4). It is the wicked person's own responsibility for the wicked to become evil. However, it is certain that He has neglected the inclination of someone's evil. Here too is His holy will, to reveal the virtue of long-awaiting the repentance of the wicked, and the light of justice in which He finally punishes the wicked (Rom. 2:4-5, 9:17).’ What do you think of this statement?

I remember Ezekiel 33:11 – “‘Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?’” The purpose of God not to judge the proud wicked, but to leave them alone is because He wants them all to repent and return to God. However, the secondary purpose is that if the arrogant wicked don't repent, God will judge them not only to reveal His justice, but also to save His people by judging the wicked. A good example is Pharaoh, the proud king of Egypt during the time of Moses. Look at Exodus 14:4 – “Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.” And they did so.” God used the wicked and proud King Pharaoh to show the glory of God in front of the Red Sea. And that glory of God is God's judgment upon Pharaoh and his soldiers and God's salvation for His people, the Israelites. In other words, God not only showed His justice by destroying the proud King Pharaoh and his army in front of the Red Sea, but also delivered the Israelites from Pharaoh's hand, so that God's covenant love for the Israelites, great grace, and truthfulness revealed. This is the reason why God doesn't judge the proud wicked, but leaves them alone.

God hates the proud (Prov. 16:5). And the proud wicked will not go unpunished (v. 5). What does it mean?

It means that God is a just God who punishes the proud and those who unite with the proud (Park). The just God does not judge the proud and wicked, but leaves them alone, because He is “a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity” (Jonah 4:2). It is because He wants all the proud and wicked to repent and return to the Lord. What is the reason? The reason is because God wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). Therefore, as God says in Proverbs 16:6, “By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for.” In other words, God had compassion on people with His lovingkindness character so that He could benefit from the system of atonement (truth) with the blood of sacrifice (the blood of the redeemer) (Park). As a result, in the midst of judging the proud wicked for sins, God forgave all our sins with the ransom death and shed blood of the only Son Jesus for the redemption of those whom God chose. How, then, should we, who receive this saving grace, live? Proverbs 16:6-7 teach us two things:

(1) We must keep away from evil because we fear God.

Look at Proverbs 16:6b – “... And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil.” We were sinners who deserve to die forever and deserve the judgment of God. But God loved us and forgave all our sins with the blood of the death of His Son on the cross and the ransom of our only Son, Jesus Christ. As those who have received this grace of God, we must fear God. And when we live in the fear of God, we have no choice but to keep away from evil. The Bible Proverbs 8:13 says “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverted mouth, I hate.” We must hate pride, arrogance, evil conduct, and perverse mouth. We must hate evil. We must hate what God hates.

(2) We must live a life that pleases God.

Look at Proverbs 16:7 – “When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.” How can we please God? When we live according to God's good, perfect and pleasing will (Rom. 12:2), we can please God. In other words, when we live by obeying God's commandments, we can please God. In particular, in the words of Proverbs 16:5-6, the commandments of God that we must obey are 'be humble' (v. 5), 'love others' (v. 6), and 'remain in the truth' (v. 6) and 'keep away from evil' (v. 6). When we obey these commandments of God, God will make even our enemies to be at peace with us (v. 7).

**Second, why does God allow a low income for the righteous and a large income for the unrighteous?**

Look at Proverbs 16:8 – “Better is a little with righteousness Than great income with injustice.” This second question also makes us puzzle. It may be hard to understand why God allows the righteous person who believes in Jesus to have a small income, but rather, the unrighteous person who doesn't believe in Jesus and does

evil has a lot of income. When I personally ask this question, the word I think about is Psalms 73. The reason is because the psalmist Asaph saw the prosperity of the wicked and was envious of the the arrogant (v. 3), and his feet came close to stumbling and his steps almost slipped (v. 2). Here, the prosperity of the wicked means that the wicked aren't only proud and violent (v. 6) because they have no suffering or calamity like others (v. 5), and especially they have more income than their heart could wish (v. 7). When we see the wicked people who are always at peace and rich in wealth (v. 12), not only Asaph the psalmist, but also we may be jealous enough to stumble. Why don't the righteous who believe in Jesus have a lot of income? Of course, we know that not all of the Christians are like this. Some Christians have high incomes. But, in general, many Christians don't have a lot of income. What is the reason? Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: 'If a person is to possess righteousness, he isn't materially abundant. The reason is because he fears God (Prov. 15:16) and doesn't use his income and accumulate much income to help others. He doesn't want to live luxuriously. But he enjoys satisfaction and happiness in such a life. The reason is because God is with him' (Park). What do you think of this statement? Now King Solomon contrasts not only "little" income and "great income" in Proverbs 16:8, but also contrasts "righteousness" and "injustice". What he cares about here is not whether the income is small or great, but whether there is "righteousness" or "injustice". How this is opposed to our instincts? What we usually value is high and low income. We are more sensitive and interested in it. However, the lesson the Bible teaches us is that we should value whether we have "righteousness" or "injustice" more importantly than whether we have great or little income. That is why King Solomon is saying that even if we have a small income, it is better to have righteousness than to have a lot of income with injustice.

We don't have to envy the prosperity of the wicked. We don't have to envy the unrighteous for a lot of income. What is the reason? The reason is because "the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous" (Prov. 13:22). What does it mean? It means that the wealth that sinners accumulate will eventually be given to the righteous. Isn't God's work interesting? Isn't it interesting that God lets the unrighteous who loves riches more than God to gather things with greed, and eventually gives all of his wealth to the righteous? This is what Ecclesiastes 6:2 says: "a man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor so that his soul lacks nothing of all that he desires; yet God has not empowered him to eat from them, for a foreigner enjoys them. This is vanity and a severe affliction." King Solomon saw evil in this world (6:1), and he said that the evil is heavy upon man (8:6). The evil that is heavy for man is that he has received all the riches and wealth and honor from God so that his soul lacks nothing of all that he desires, but he has not been able to enjoy all of them. Rather, God lets a foreigner to enjoy them. Who is God really making to enjoy all that riches, wealth, and honor? Look at Ecclesiastes 2:26 – "For to a person who is good in His sight He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, while to the sinner He has given the task of gathering and collecting so that he may give to one who is good in God's sight ...." The Bible says that after God causes sinners to labor and accumulate wealth, in the end, God gives the sinner's wealth to those who are pleased with him and lets him enjoy them. We are forgiven of all our sins by the ransom death of Jesus Christ on

the cross. And because of the resurrection of Jesus, we are justified (Rom. 4:25). How should we, who are justified by the merit of Jesus' cross, live?

(1) We should not be envious of the great income of the wicked.

The Bible Proverbs 15:6 says "... trouble is in the income of the wicked." One of the troubles is that there is turmoil in great wealth (v. 16). In addition, the great income of the wicked can always cause suffering in his conscience (1 Tim. 6:10), and his heart is always dark and inevitably suffers (Mt. 6:23-24) (Park). The great income of the wicked makes themselves to say, "Who is the LORD?" (Prov. 30:9). Therefore, we don't have to envy the high income of the wicked.

(2) We should hate injustice and love righteousness.

And we must walk the path of righteousness. It is better to walk the path of the righteous, obeying the commandments of God with a small income, than to walk the path of the wicked with a large income. We must hate what is false (13:5) and rejoice in the truth. Our lips must be truthful. The Bible says that "Truthful lips endure forever" (12:19). In addition, our tongues should bring healing (12:18). We should speak a kind word that cheers other up (v. 25). Also, we should use our tongues wisely in order to rescue our neighbors (v. 6), and lead them in the right path (v. 26). Also, we must be diligent (13:4). And we must act righteously (v. 6). Also, we must obey God's commandments as we fear and respect them (v. 13). We must act wisely. We must show favor to others (v. 15).

### **Third and last, why is God leading us sovereignly and asking us to make plans?**

Look at Proverbs 16:9 – "The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps." Last week, based on Proverbs 16:1–3, we thought about three things under the heading "Commit to the Lord whatever you do": (1) We must make the plan of the heart. (2) We must check whether the motives of our hearts are right in the sing of the Lord. (3) We must commit our works to the Lord. King Solomon's "The plans of the heart" in Proverbs 16:1 speaks of many plans in our hearts (19:21). However, we must keep in mind that no matter how many plans we have in our hearts, "but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails" (v. 21). In other words, no matter how many plans we make in our hearts, only God's sovereign will stands completely. So King Solomon says in Proverbs 16:9 – "The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps." By believing in this word of God that only God's sovereign will stands completely, we must have the plans of the heart, which is our human responsibility. When I think of God's sovereignty and our human responsibility, I think of Ezekiel 36:37 – "Thus says the Lord GOD, "This also I will let the house of Israel ask Me to do for them: ...." The meaning of this word is that even if God gives us promises and fulfills those promises in His sovereignty, we must ask God for those promises to come true. That doesn't mean that we just need to be still because God sovereignly carries out the words of His promises. Our

responsibility is to hold onto the word of God and ask God in faith for Him to fulfill it. In other words, we must bear our human responsibilities.

How, then, should we bear our responsibilities, the plans of the heart? There are three things we can think of:

(1) We must make plans of our hearts by faith.

When we make plans of our hearts, we must trust in God with all our hearts (3:5). We should never lean on our own understanding (v. 5). We must acknowledge God in everything (v. 6). We must acknowledge that the sovereign God even uses the wicked who are against us and oppose us to carry out His sovereign will (v. 4). Therefore, we must commit our works to God (16:3). Then God will accomplish our plans (v. 3). In a word, we who have the plans of our hearts must have believing heart or faith in God. In other words, first of all, the desirable state of heart for the Christian managers is trustfulness.

(2) We must tell God the plans of our hearts through prayer (v. 1).

We must lay down our plans before God and pray for God's sovereign will to be fulfilled. The desirable state of our hearts in praying for God's will to be done in this way is humility. In other words, we must have a humble heart. And we must act humbly with humble heart. The reason is because God hates those who are proud of their hearts (16:5). Therefore, we should not only pray to God, but also "consult" with many "many counselors" (15:22). In other words, the humble Christians not only pray to Jesus Christ, our true counselor, but also consult with seniors of faith and seek guidance from them. And the humble Christians humbly listen to their advice and rebuke.

(3) The desirable state of our hearts is wisdom.

We Christians who have the plans of the heart must have a wise heart. And the wise-hearted Christians look at themselves with "God's perspective" rather than their own point of view (v. 2) or others' point of view (v. 25). That is, the wise Christians know that God weighs the motives (v. 2). Even though their ways are clean in their own sight (v. 2), the wise Christians know that they must rely on the fact that in the sight of God their sins have been atonement by God's lovingkindness and truth (v. 6). Therefore, the wise Christians keep away from evil by the fear of God (v. 6). In other words, they go from wisdom, the desirable state of heart, to wise behavior, the desirable pattern of behavior. As a result, the wise Christians will be able to please God by acting wisely (v. 7).

God made everything to suit His purpose. The purpose of God not to judge the proud wicked and to leave them alone is because He wants them all to repent and return to God. However, if the proud wicked people don't

repent, God will judge them, not only showing God's justice, but also leaving them to save God's people by judging them. In addition, the purpose of God's granting a small income to the righteous and a great income to the unrighteous is that God allows the righteous to live the life of the righteous with the small income, and in the end, to give the large amount of income from the unrighteous to the righteous. And the purpose of God leading us sovereignly and instructing us to make plans is to fulfill our responsibilities by faith. God will fulfill His sovereign will completely through the plans of our hearts that we make humbly and wisely as we fully trust in God. Therefore, we are praising God "My Jesus, as Thou Wilt":

1. My Jesus, as Thou wilt! O may Thy will be mine; Into Thy hand of love I would my all resign.  
Through sorrow, or thro' joy, Conduct me as Thine own; And help me still to say, My Lord,  
Thy will be done.
2. My Jesus, as Thou wilt! Though seen through many a tear, Let not my star of hope  
Grow dim or disappear. Since Thou on earth hast wept, And sorrowed oft alone,  
If I must weep with Thee, My Lord, Thy will be done.
3. My Jesus, as Thou wilt! All shall be well for me; Each changing future scene  
I gladly trust with Thee. Straight to my home above I travel calmly on;  
And sing, in life or death, My Lord, Thy will be done. Amen.

## A good king who pleases God

### [Proverbs 16:10-15]

On Monday, May 14th, 2012, when I looked at the Korean Hankook Ilbo Internet Newspaper, there was an article under the heading ‘Obama is the first gay president’ (Internet). As I read it, it was the article written mainly about controversy that President Barack Obama recently declared support for same-sex marriage by Newsweek in the US. In the end, President Obama became the first incumbent president to support same-sex marriage, and there are interpretations of why he supported same-sex marriage ahead of the presidential election. One of the interpretations suggests that President Obama's remarks include ‘President Obama's political gambling aiming for re-election’ and ‘Remarks at risk of headwind’ and so on. It is said that he has had a chance to catch the attention of the progressive supporters who had been disappointed with Obama's administration of the state so far. Some voices said that Obama, who was confronted by economic problems, turned his attention to the hot issue of homosexuality (Internet). What do you think when you see this eventually happening in our day? I remembered Deuteronomy 17:18-20: “Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel.” If our US President was learning to fear God by reading the Bible or the rest of his life, I wonder if the President made this kind of statement in public support for same-sex marriage. I am regretful that if he were a God-fearing president, he would not have been proud and left God's command and would not turn aside to the right or the left. I think that a leader of a country should try to please God who weights his motives rather than try to please people (1 Thess. 2:4).

In Proverbs 16:10-15, King Solomon talks about “the king”. He's talking about the good king. So, under the title of “A good king who pleases God,” I would like to learn the lessons God gives us by thinking about what the king or the president, the leader of a country, should do in three ways.

### **First, the good king who pleases God makes right decisions with God's wisdom.**

Look at Proverbs 16:10 – “A divine decision is in the lips of the king; His mouth should not err in judgment.” The Bible says that decisions from divine wisdom are on the lips of the king. Then, how can the good king who pleases God have divine wisdom? The answer can be found in Deuteronomy 17:18-20. In other words,



the reason that divine wisdom is on the lips of the king is because the king has read God's word all his life. That means that God gave wisdom to the king through His word. Of course, in the case of King Solomon, he asked God for wisdom when God appeared in a dream at night and asked what he wanted after he offered thousand burnt offerings to Him. But when we look at Psalms 1 or Psalms 119, I think King Solomon also became wiser because he meditated on the book of God's law day and night.

My personal opinion is that when we talk about divine wisdom, it's better to take his father, King David, than King Solomon as an example. The reason is that in 2 Samuel 14:20, the Bible says that King David's wisdom is "like the wisdom of the angel of God, to know all that is in the earth." David is saying that he had the same wisdom as that of God's messenger. In other words, he had the same wisdom as that of an angel. Is this wisdom not divine wisdom? David, who had this divine wisdom, knew (v. 19) that Joab the son of Zeruiah (v. 1) brought a wise woman from Tekoa (v. 2) and put the words in her mouth (v. 3). Therefore, the wise woman of Tekoa, who was caught by King David, said to King David, "But my lord is wise, like the wisdom of the angel of God, to know all that is in the earth" (v. 20). But more importantly, David, who had angelic and divine wisdom, was able to discern good and evil like the angel of God (v. 17). Therefore, no one could turn to the right or to the left from anything that David had spoken (v. 19).

Looking back at the second half of Proverbs 16:10, King Solomon says that the mouth of the king who has divine wisdom should not betray justice. What does it mean? This means that the wise king with divine wisdom, discerns between good and evil, and doesn't make mistakes because he makes a right (just) judgment. Who is saying this verse 10 now? Isn't it King Solomon? Then what does King Solomon's judgment come to mind? Doesn't the story of "two women who were harlots came to the king" Solomon (1 Kgs. 3:16) and debated whose one living son belongs (v. 22), and the wise King Solomon said, "Get me a sword" (v. 24), "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other" (v. 25), and thus discerned the true mother of the child come to your mind? This is what the Bible says: "When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice" (v. 28). The Bible records that all the Israelites saw King Solomon's judgment and saw that "the wisdom of God" was in him.

Shouldn't our president have this wisdom of God? If he had this wisdom, would he have supported same-sex marriage? This time I saw an article on CNN's Internet News, and read that President Obama's thoughts evolved and made this decision. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how the president who claims to be a Christian has evolved and officially made a remark that is contrary to God's Word. I can't find the word of God on his lips. I cannot find divine wisdom in him. In the end, it is inevitable to make a right judgment from the blurred discernment because he doesn't fear God. He cannot be wise if he leaves the word of God. Therefore, we must not only pray for the Korean President, our home country, but also for the President of the United States where we live. We must pray that God will give them divine wisdom, the wisdom that God gave to Kings David and Solomon. We must

pray to God that they may become presidents who meditate the word of God day and night as they put the Bible next to them, and become leaders who can make the right decisions because they fear God with the wisdom that God gives them. Therefore, I hope and pray that the President of our country to become the President who pleases God.

## **Second, the good king who pleases God detests wrongdoing.**

Look at Proverbs 16:12 – “Kings detest wrongdoing, for a throne is established through righteousness.” The wise king hates evil because he fears God (8:13). Therefore, he is wary of his own doing evil. He listens to and obeys God's word without departing from it. How different is this from the previous Korean presidents in Korea? At the end of the presidential term, aren't there presidents who are called to the prosecutor's office due to corruption and even go into jail? Why does this happen over and over again? I find the answer in Deuteronomy 17:18-20. In other words, it is because they don't keep God's word in their entire lives and don't read His word. Therefore, he didn't learn to fear God. As a result, they are proud and turn away from God's commandments and commit sins against God. What sin do they commit? Like the words of Deuteronomy 17:16-17, we commit the sin of multiplying this or that and storing them, especially a lot of money and wealth. However, the wise king who fears God obeys the God's good, perfect and pleasing will (Rom. 12:2). That will of God is to rule the kingdom with righteousness (Prov. 16:12). Look at Proverbs 16:11 – “A just balance and scales belong to the LORD; All the weights of the bag are His concern.” Here, “balance”, “scales”, and “weights” all refer to “measures”. It refers to the scale that accurately measures (Park). In other words, this scale is a “just” scale. In other words, it refers to ‘unchanging or constant scales’. King Solomon says in Proverbs 20:10 and 23: “Differing weights and differing measures, Both of them are abominable to the LORD. ... Differing weights are an abomination to the LORD, And a false scale is not good.” The wise king who fears God hates the differing and false scales that God hates. Therefore, his throne stands firm by righteousness. To say that the king's throne stands firm by justice means that the wise king who fears God rules the kingdom rightly.

The Bible Proverbs 16:13 says that the king who governs a country well with righteousness and justice makes the country stand firm. When I think about what and how the king should do, I look for three principles in the book of Proverb:

### **(1) The king who rules the country rightly and well with righteousness preserves himself with loyalty and truth.**

Look at Proverbs 20:28 – “Loyalty and truth preserve the king, And he upholds his throne by righteousness.” Whenever the presidential election approaches, all the presidential candidates travel all over the country and ask people to vote for them. In the meantime, they make many promises to citizens that if they are elected, they will become president and do these and that for them. Do they really keep the promises they made before becoming president as president? Have you ever seen a just president with that kind of integrity?

Especially when you watch the Korean presidential election on TV, there is times when the presidential candidates travel all over the country to meet the citizens and make promises, especially to the common people. There are times when I wonder if they really love the common people and have compassion on them. This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘If the king has only the kindness (compassion) and there is no truth (the truthfulness that is righteousness that keeps the promise), the people become promiscuous. Therefore, the King is absolutely necessary for maintaining the regime, both loyalty and truth (Park). I think this makes sense. However, when I think about what kind of president can rule the country well with loyalty and truth, I think that only the wise king who fears God will rule the country well with loyalty and truth.

(2) The king who rules the country rightly and well with righteousness take away the wicked.

Look at Proverbs 25:5 – “Take away the wicked before the king, And his throne will be established in righteousness.” The meaning of this word is that the king who rules the country rightly and well with righteousness will get rid of the evil wicked men. Just imagine. No matter how well the king rules the kingdom well with kindness (compassion) and truth (righteousness), and thus preserves himself, what will happen to his country if his servants who work close together with him are evil wicked men? If the king doesn’t take away those wicked servants, he himself will receive the consequences of their sins. Therefore, trusting those wicked servants is a foolishly chosen suicidal act as a king (Park).

(3) The king who rules the country rightly and well with righteousness judges the poor with truth.

Look at Proverbs 29:14 – “If a king judges the poor with truth, His throne will be established forever.” The meaning of this word is that when the king is humbled and merciful with the difficulties of the poor, he immediately grasps their circumstances and judges their case well, and his throne will be forever strong (Park). In other words, the king who rules the country well with righteousness listens to the voices of the poor and understands their circumstances and judges them truthfully. How would good citizens react if the president of our country is governing the country properly and well with righteousness? I looked for the answer in Romans 13:1-5. The answer is that good citizens are subjected to the governing authorities (v. 1). The reason is because they know that those governing authorities are established by God (v. 1). If the president of our country is governing us well with righteousness, then good citizens will not go against the authorities of the government. The reason is because they know it is against God's command (v. 2). And good citizens will do what is good (v. 3). But the citizens who do evil will not only yield to the powers above them, but they will also be against them. If we are, the apostle Paul says in Romans 13:4 – “... But if you do what is evil, be afraid ...” What is the reason? The reason is because a God's minister will bring wrath on the one who practices evil (v. 4). That is, since God who hates doing evil will repay those who do evil with wrath, the citizens who do evil should be afraid.

### **Third and last, the good king who pleases God is well advised by loyalists (Park).**

Look at Proverbs 16:13 – “Righteous lips are the delight of kings, And he who speaks right is loved.” I think it is precious and important that the wise king who fears God rules the kingdom well with kindness and truth, especially just the case of the poor well, understanding their circumstances with kindness and truth. In the midst of this, the wise king who fears God hates those who do evil so that he takes away the wicked servants. The reason he does so is because they will hurt him. And since what is harmful to the king will harm the country, the king must decisively root out the wicked men. As I meditated on this word, I remembered King Solomon. The reason is because when Solomon became king, he was commanded by his father David to remove the wicked men around him. For example, when Solomon became king, he killed Adonijah, the son of Haggit, who had conspired to become king (1 Kgs. 2:25), expelled Abiathar’s priesthood, a priest who was the leading force in the royal crown Adonijah's rebellion conspiracy (2:26-27), killed Shimei, who cursed his father David (vv. 39-46), and killed Joab who killed the two commanders of the armies of Israel, Abner and Amasa (v. 5) and later followed Adonijah (v. 25). Of these, the killing of General Joab was significant. The reason is because General Joab was a military commander who commanded the armies of Israel, even to Solomon's monarchy, when David fled from King Saul before becoming king. There would have been no generals who have fought so many wars in Israel's history. He was a great general at the time of the most war in Israel's history (Internet). Why was such a man killed by King Solomon? The reason is because he caused great confusion in Israel by having the murder of Abner and of Amasa, and the Adonia rebellion in the historical transitional period where public sentiment and political stability were desperately required due to excessive attachment to power (Park).

In this way, the wise king who fears God puts loyalists next to him and receives advice from them, even while removing the evildoers. What is the reason? The reason is because the lips of the righteous are ‘righteous lips,’ and they speak what is right (Prov. 16:13). What precious lips of the righteous? Their righteous words are of great help to the wise king. However, the cunning servants obscure the king's judgment because they abhor the king with false lips, and further lead to false judgments in governing the country. If the king is foolish, he will refuse to listen to his loyal servants’ reproof. And on the contrary, he will hate the loyal servants. But if the king is a wise king, he will the loyal servants, even their direct rebuke. Rather, he will welcome their advice and rebuke. It is a great blessing to have loyalists to such wise king. The reason is because the wise king knows that the reason they advise the king is because they love the country and the king. Therefore, they advise the king even at the risk of life. Also, the loyalists are wise, so that they appease the king’s fury. Look at Proverbs 16:14 – “The fury of a king is like messengers of death, But a wise man will appease it.” What does it mean? It means that when the king tries to engage in fierce politics in the midst of his fury, the wise loyalists appease the king's fury so that he can do good politics (Park). At that time, the king who heard the advice of the loyalists turns back from fierce politics (v. 14) and becomes a good politics, so that the people of that country benefit publicly [(v. 15a) “In the light of a king’s face is life”]. The benefits are like the late rain that falls on Palestine for the maturation of grains (Park). When we think of

these words, we are reminded that we must not only pray for the president of our country, but also pray for the surrounding leaders who help the president. When we pray for the President, we must pray to God that he will be wise and become a president who can humbly hear the advice of his faithful aids. And when we pray for his aides, we should pray that they are wise aides who can assist the President well.

It is said that the 18th presidential election in Korea, where we were born, will be held on Wednesday, December 19th. And the presidential election here in the United States, where we live, is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, November 6th this year. In particular, in the 2012 US presidential election, 33 out of 100 federal senators and 435 members of the federal congress will be elected (internet). What should we do? We should pray for elections, US and Korea, which people will elect their presidents and other leaders. Let's pray that God will give our presidents divine wisdom so that they can make good judgments and good decisions. Let's pray for our new presidents who fear God and hate evil. Also, let's pray that they may listen to the advice of loyalists humbly and become a president who governs the country well.

## **“The highway of the upright”**

### **[Proverbs 16:16-24]**

What is your favorite gospel song? I really like the gospel song ‘The blessed man’. So I frequently listen to the song and sing along with it while driving. The first part of the lyrics of verse 1 of the song reads: ‘You are God’s blessed man whose strength is in You, in whose heart are the highways to Zion! ... .’ Here, “the highway to Zion” refers to the main road leading to Zion City (Jerusalem Temple). And the content of this lyrics is based on Psalms 84:5 – “How blessed is the man whose strength is in You, In whose heart are the highways to Zion!” The saying that the psalmist had “the highway of Zion” means that he longed for going to the temple in Jerusalem, praying to God in the temple, and desperately wanting to meet God and have fellowship with Him (vv. 1-4). The psalmist’s soul yearned so much for God’s courts, even to the point of fainting (v. 2). However, as he lamented his sadness because of his far distance, the psalmist expressed his wish to go to the temple of the Lord. According to Dr. Yoon-sun Park, the Israelites living abroad at that time had pains and difficulties such as ‘Tear Valley’ in their plans and efforts to visit the temple in Jerusalem. However, it is said that if they persevere and pass through it, they will end up in ‘a place of many springs,’ that is, the comfort and joy of the soul. And it is said that there was a spiritual experience of seeing God while receiving the gift of heaven, such as the ‘early rain (Park). Is there the highway of Zion in our hearts? Do we have an earnest desire for the true city of Zion, the New Jerusalem Temple in Heaven?

If we look at Proverbs 16:17, King Solomon says: “The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who watches his way preserves his life.” Based on this word, I want to think about two things regarding the highway of the upright man under the heading “The highway of the upright.”

### **First, the highway of the upright is to depart from evil.**

Look at Proverbs 16:17a – “The highway of the upright is to depart from evil ....” This truth that the highway of the upright departs from evil reminds us of Proverbs 16:12, which we already meditated on last week’s prayer meeting. In other words, the good king who pleases God hates evil. Furthermore, today’s text Proverbs 16:17 first half reminds us of Proverbs 16:6 saying, “And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil.” The key point that all these Bible verses is the first half of Proverbs 8:13. “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; ....” After all, the lesson that the Bible teaches us in Proverbs 16:17 is that the upright man departs from evil, because he fears God and hate evil. This also means that the upright man has the wisdom of God like the good king who pleases God that we meditated on last week. Based on Proverbs 16:16, it also means that the upright man, who has

the highway, is a person who knows that getting wisdom is better than getting gold and silver. Since he knows the value of wisdom, and because he gains it, he fears God and departs from evil. What, then, is the wickedness that the upright man who has the highway leaves? It's "pride". Look at Proverbs 16:18-19: "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling. It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly Than to divide the spoil with the proud." The upright man gains wisdom and fears God, so he departs from evil, especially pride. The reason is because he knows that pride goes before destruction (v. 18). Not only does he depart from the pride, he isn't with the proud. The reason is because the upright man knows the words of Proverbs 16:5 – "Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Assuredly, he will not be unpunished." Another evil that the upright man with the highway departs is "laziness". Look at Proverbs 15:19 – "The way of the lazy is as a hedge of thorns, But the path of the upright is a highway." What does it mean? Since the wicked man is lazy, he doesn't work hard in sweating but acts craftily. As a result, in the life of the wicked man, he is surrounded by difficulties such as thorns from east to west and south to north. But the way of the upright man is like a highway. The reason why the upright man who faithfully fulfills his responsibilities is as smooth as it is well laid out because he not only fears God and follows His will, but also he doesn't procrastinate and works diligently (Internet).

We are those who have the highway of Zion. We are those who walk on this pilgrimage path, longing for and hoping for a new heaven, a new earth, and a New Jerusalem. And as we walk this pilgrimage path, we must hate all evil and depart from them because we fear God. As the apostle Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:22, we must avoid every kind of evil. And we must move forward toward the New Jerusalem, our city of Zion in the distance. I remember the gospel song called "Pilgrim's Song": 'My Zion city in the distance Oh holy place Father's house/ I stayed up all night to go to my longing house/ Even if this body hurts on the sea/ Today here and tomorrow there, I will preach the Gospel of the Lord/ When I approach my distant path and rest in the garden / The Lord will know all my troubles/ Even though this body may be weary in the empty fields or in the desert/ Oh my Lord Jesus will love me and protect me.'

### **Second and last, the highway of the upright watches his way.**

Look at Proverbs 16:17 – "The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who watches his way preserves his life." The upright man who departs from evil, that is, the true believer doesn't fall for the temptation of sin, but bravely departs from the temptation of the sin (Park). How can a truthful saint resist the temptations of sin and depart from it? The reason is because he gives attention to the word of God. Look at verse 20a: "He who gives attention to the word will find good ...." In other words, the upright believer who fears God meditates on the word of God day and night. Therefore, he has the wisdom that God gives him (vv. 21-23). And with the wisdom of God, he discerns everything rightly and listens to His word, and obeys it. And the reason that the true believer can obey God's word is because he has humility (v. 19). In other words, the upright Christian who fears God is with humble people and humbles his heart. And he pays attention to the word of God and obeys Him and keeps His way

faithfully. He can do that because he trusts in the Lord (v. 20). Therefore, the upright Christian respects the authority of God's word and follows it carefully (Park). Therefore, when the temptation of sin comes, he discerns by the word of God and departs from evil.

When I meditated on these words, I remembered the words of Psalm 119:9-11: "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You." Like the psalmist who pays attention to the word of God and keeps it in his heart so that he may not sin against God, King Solomon, in Proverbs 16:20, is also encouraging us to bravely resist the temptation of sin and depart from it by giving attention to the word of God. In order for us to pay attention to the word of God, above all else, we need God's wisdom and humility. The reason is because only with the wisdom and humility of God can we listen to His word and obey Him. The fool and the proud never heed or listen to God's word. Rather, such a person sins against God by disobeying His word.

The wise, humble and truthful Christian who fears God walks the path of the Lord by obeying His word and keeps it well. He never leans left or right in walking the path of the Lord. Not only that, but he keeps his mouth well (v. 23) and glorifies God with it. He glorifies God with his mouth by instructing his mouth and promoting instruction (v. 23). Look at verse 23: "A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction." That is, the upright Christian is wise in heart and keeps his lips. And through his lips he "promote instruction" (vv. 21, 23). How can he promote instruction? He does so by speaking "Pleasant words". Look at verse 24: "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." What does it mean? "Pleasant words," that is, God's word, is like "a honeycomb". So it is sweet to our hearts and a medicine to our bones. So the prophet Jeremiah also confessed in Jeremiah 15:16 – "When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, ...." In this way, the word of God becomes joy and delight to our souls. Therefore, we must eat the word of God, which is joy and delight to our hearts, and obey His word and walk faithfully in His way. Then we can say that we are truly upright (truthful) Christians.

We are the people who walk one way. We are Jesus' disciples walking the way of Jesus. We are the pilgrims who walk the way of the cross Jesus walked. As we are heavenly people who are walking up to the higher place, we must be upright and truthful. And as the upright Christians, we must depart from evil, especially pride and laziness. We must keep relying entirely on God, paying attention to His word, departing from evil and guarding our own way. We must humbly obey God's word with wisdom to fear God and faithfully walk the way of the Lord. Not only that, we must guard our mouths well and use our mouths to speak pleasant words that promote instruction. I hope and pray that all of us may walk the highway of the upright.



## The things that urges us

### [Proverbs 16:25-30]

Psychologist Abraham Maslow made three assumptions about human nature and developed Motivation Theory. The first assumption is that humans have unsatisfied needs. The second assumption is that human behavior is aimed at satisfying unsatisfied needs. The third assumption is that human needs consist of five levels, from basic needs (physiological needs, safety needs) to higher needs (the need for belonging and affection, the need for respect, the need for self-actualization). Humans have unsatisfied needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a kind of motivational theory, as follows: (1) Physiological need: The need to avoid hunger and sustain life, from the most basic need for food, clothing, and shelter to sexual needs. (2) Need for safety: A need that appears after a physiological need is satisfied, a desire to protect oneself from dangers, threats, and deprivation, and to avoid anxiety. (3) Affection/Affiliation Needs: The desire to make friendship with family, friends, and relatives, and to feel a sense of belonging by belonging to a desired group. (4) Need for respect: This is the basic human need to get along with people. (5) Self-realization desire: This is a desire that focuses on maximizing one's potential for continuous self-development. Unlike other needs, it tends to increase as the needs are satisfied, so it is sometimes referred to as the "growth desire". These include cognitive and aesthetic needs to know and understand (Internet). When I think of Maslow's human needs, I have divided them into two needs for us, Christians. Those two needs are physical and spiritual needs. Here, the physical need can be close to the physiological need, which is the first need of the scalpel. For example, our basic physical need is the appetite to eat when we are hungry. Another need we have is a spiritual need. If we can briefly divide this spiritual need into two, we can say that it is the desire to do righteousness and the desire to sin (Internet).

If we look at Proverbs 16:26, the Bible is referring to our human needs: "A worker's appetite works for him, For his hunger urges him on." What does it mean? What urges us is hunger. We humans eat in exchange for labor (Ps. 128:2). That is God's law (Gen. 3:19). Therefore, the Bible says that those who don't work are those who are leading an undisciplined life (2 Thess. 3:11). And if we look at 2 Thessalonians 3:10, the Bible says, "if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either." Evil thoughts will fill our hearts as long as we eat and play (Gen. 6:5). As a result, we have a lot of danger of committing sins against God. There is a saying that 'The devil builds a nest in the heart of the lazy one'. Therefore, we the people must work diligently on earth (Park). The workers must work diligently. The Bible regards laziness as a sin and encourages diligence (10:4-5; 12:24; 14:23, 28:19). The Bible says that the worker who works diligently for himself ("A worker's appetite"). Here, to work diligently for himself means to work for his own dietary life. And the Bible says that the reason why he works hard for his own

dietary life is because his hunger urges him. In this way, our instinct is to look for food to satisfy our appetite when we are hungry. But if we don't have food, we try to make money to buy food. Mostly, we work hard to earn money to buy food. And some people even beg for money to buy food.

Sometimes while driving, I see people standing in front of traffic lights holding flat cards and begging for money. And the text on that flat card says "I am hungry". Even as Proverbs 6:30 says, a man tries to fill his hungry stomach by stealing. In this way, hunger urges us to work hard. When I thought of appetite, which is our basic physical desire, I came to think of Deuteronomy 8:3 – "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD." Why did God make the Israelites hungry in the wilderness? Why is God making us, who are living in this wilderness-like world, hungry? The purpose is to enable us to have everlasting life through faith in Jesus, who is "the bread of God" (Jn. 6:33) and "the bread of life" (v. 35). And God makes us hungry to let us know that we live by every word that comes out of His mouth. Therefore, Jesus, the bread of life, who came down from heaven, said in the first half of John 6:27: "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, ...." Those who heard that asked Jesus, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" (v. 28). Jesus' answer was this: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent" (v. 29).

We must live by faith in God. Although the hunger of the flesh urges us to work, our spiritual hunger must be satisfied by being fed only with the word from God's mouth. Thus we must not live by what we see but by faith alone (2 Cor. 5:7). We must live a life of seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness (Mt. 6:33), rather than being worried about life, as to what we will eat or what we will drink or what we will wear (Mt.6:25, 31). In this way, even though we must live a life of faith that satisfies our spiritual desire to seek God's righteousness, the desire to sin, another desire within us, makes us to commit sin against God. I thought of the desire to commit sin in two ways, focusing on Proverbs 16:25-30:

### **First, the desire to sin within us is self-deception**

Look at Proverbs 16:25 – "There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death." Obviously, to the people around us (especially seniors of faith), why do we think (believe) that we are walking the right path when we aren't walking the right path right now? The reason is because we are deceiving ourselves. In other words, because of self-deception, we may be mistaken that we are walking the right path even though we aren't walking the right path right now. There are 3 types of people who are prone to self-deception like this (Park): (1) The first class of people are disobedient people. Those who disobey the word of God think that their actions are right because they are spiritually darkened by sin. (2) (2) The second class of people are legalists like the Pharisees. Those show their own glory and boast by relying on self-righteousness and self-merit. It is because they practice

religious rituals, thoroughly believing that their actions are right in their own eyes. (3) The third class of people are hypocrites. These are people who say and do different things. Even though they speak correctly, they think they are right even though they cannot do things right. If we look at James 1:22, the Bible says, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” The Bible says that if we only listen to God’s word and have no action, we are deceiving ourselves. In other words, if we say we have faith and there is no deed, our faith is dead faith and we are deceiving ourselves. If we are deceiving ourselves in this way, our spiritual discernment and judgment are already blurred and we have no choice but to lose our ability to properly evaluate our own lives. If we try to live a life of faith without this ability, we will have to pay the price by walking the path we choose in our self-deception. Maybe the price is “the way of death”.

Therefore, we have to think once more about the Korean proverb, ‘Before cross the bridge, make sure it’s okay.’ What does it mean? It means no matter how well we know, we must be careful and make no mistakes (Internet). Considering this proverb in connection with Proverbs 16:25, we must check it again and make sure that we don’t make any mistakes even though we may seem to be on the right path now. In particular, even if we are so confident that we believe that the path we have chosen is really right, we should look back on ourselves once more and reflect on ourselves whether we have chosen that path, whether we are now disobeying the word of God, or whether we are acting like legalists, or whether we are living differently in words and actions. Although the road that we are walking seems correct to us because our judgment is blurred, we must rethink it at least once, and must consider whether the road we are walking on is right in God’s eyes.

## **Second, the desire to sin within us is evil.**

Here we can think of “evil” in three ways:

### **(1) The evil desire within us to sin is worthlessness.**

Look at Proverbs 16:27 – “A scoundrel plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire.” Here, “a scoundrel” literally means “a man of belial” (6:12). When we say that a person is “a scoundrel”, it refers to a worthless and wicked person (Walvoord). What this worthless man does is to conceive evil. He sins against God by digging a pit into our lives, as if a hunter digs a puddle to catch prey, causing us to fall into that trap. In particular, Proverbs 16:27 says that this worthless man tries to overwhelm us with his scorching fire like speech. Satan keeps making us to sin with our lips. Satan is making us sin against God and our neighbor by causing us to speak useless and evil words. We must not sin with our lips like Job (Job 2:10). In no distressing circumstances, we should not sin by blaming God like Job (1:22).

### **(2) The evil desire within us to sin is perversity.**

Look at Proverbs 16:28, 30 – “A perverse man spreads strife, And a slanderer separates intimate friends. ... He who winks his eyes does so to devise perverse things; He who compresses his lips brings evil to pass.” Here, the term “A perverse man” is “a liar” (Park). Such a person has rebellion in his heart and always devises evil, causing contention (6:14). The Bible says that such a perverse man devises perverse things (v. 30). And the Bible says that he not only closes his eyes but closes his lips to come up with an evil plan. The reason he closes his eyes is to devise an evil plan. And the reason he closes his lips is to carry out the evil plan with determination or strength (Park). Such perverse man not only lies but he also spreads strife among brothers (6:19). And he is a slanderer who separates intimate friends (16:28). In the end, it means that the perverted man separated between brothers and close friends because he lies and gossips. Satan keeps breaking the relationship between brothers and sisters in Christ. Satan hates us when we love our neighbors. So he makes us to break relationship with our neighbors, make us to quarrel, and end up distancing each other and make us to hate each other. We must fight this temptation of Satan. In order to do that, we must not have perversity in our hearts. We must not make evil plans or devise evil. Rather, we must have truthful heart and obey the Lord’s command to make a good plan to love our neighbors.

### (3) The evil desire within us to sin is violence.

Look at Proverbs 16:29 – “A man of violence entices his neighbor And leads him in a way that is not good.” Here, “A man of violence” is a wicked person who harms others. He leads other people by tempting them to “a path that is not good”, the road of destruction (Park). As we meditated on the Book of Proverbs, we saw this violent man. For example, in Proverbs 7, we thought of “an adulteress” and “a harlot” who flatters with her words (vv. 5, 10). With her many persuasion she entices (v. 21) “the naïve” (v. 7) until it costs him his life (v. 23). In order to make us lose our lives like this, Satan continues to tempt us who believe in Jesus. Satan is diligently deceiving us in an attempt to harm our souls to give up our faith and to betray the Lord. What should we do? We must overcome this spiritual battle with the word of God. Look at the psalmist. In Psalm 119:11 he says: “Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.” Like the psalmist, we must keep the word of the Lord in our hearts in order not to sin against the Lord. Therefore, we must overcome Satan's temptations with His word. May we all become victorious with the word of God!

Today we have considered the physical and spiritual needs within us. Thinking of hunger, which is the physical desire that urges us, we must spiritualize that desire and diligently eat the word of God for our spiritual appetite. Therefore, our faith will continue to grow, so that we will be drawn to the word of God and be able to overcome the self-deception and evil that urges us to sin against God. May this blessing be upon us all.

## The people who deserve respect

### [Proverbs 16:31-33]

When I looked at an Internet article, I read the article and photos from the Korea 'Sisa Journal' that selected 'Most Admired Persons' in a total of 30 fields in collaboration with Media Research (Internet). Politician Park Geun-hye in politics, former Chairman Chung Ju-young of Hyundai Group in business, Ahn Cheol-soo, chairman of the Board of Directors of Ahn Cheol-soo Institute in IT, and Warren Buffett, chairman of Berkshire Headerway in finance. But what I was interested in was the most respected person in Protestantism. The first place was Pastor Cho Yong-gi, an retired pastor of the Full Gospel Church, the second place was Pastor Han-eum Ok of the Church of Love, the third place was Pastor Sam-hwan Kim, a senior pastor of Myung-sung Church, the fourth place was Pastor Han Kyung-jik of Young-rak Church, and the fifth place was Pastor Ha Yong-jo of All Nation Church. As I read the results of this survey, I have 2 thoughts. For one thing, when I look at the names of the most respected people in Protestantism, all of them are pastors of large churches. I thought that the pastors of the small churches and medium-sized churches are little-known or not well known at all so they couldn't be in that list. So I thought that this survey was just a survey. Another thought is that the retired pastor of Full Gospel Church, who was surveyed as being one of the most respected pastors in Korea, is now the most criticized pastor when I see the news continuing to appear on the Internet Christian news. When I look at it, I get skepticism about what it means to be respected by people.

In the meantime, when I searched the Bible, I thought about the two people who were respected by the people of Judah and I thought about why they were respected. The two were Esther's cousin Mordecai in Esther 10:3 and the prophet Samuel in 1 Samuel 9:6. First, let's consider for a moment a man named Mordecai, who was greatly respected among the Jews. Look at Esther 10:3 – "Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Xerxes, preeminent among the Jews, and held in high esteem by his many fellow Jews, because he worked for the good of his people and spoke up for the welfare of all the Jews." The Bible says that Mordecai was greatly respected among the Jews. Why was he so respected? The Bible says that he was not only greatly respected by the Jews, but also loved by his many kinsmen. The reason is because he sought the good of the people of Judah. The reason for this is because he spoke for the welfare of his whole nation. In short, Mordecai was greatly respected among the people of Judah because he loved them. Because of his love, he sought the good of his people and spoke for their welfare. Let's consider for a moment another man, the prophet Samuel, a man of God who was respected by the Jews. Look at 1 Samuel 9:6 – "But the servant replied, "Look, in this town there is a man of God; he is highly respected, and

everything he says comes true. Let's go there now. Perhaps he will tell us what way to take.” The Bible says that the prophet Samuel is "a man of God" and also “highly respected” man. In other words, he was the man of God who was respected. Why was he respected? We can find some answers to this question in 1 Samuel 12:2-4: “Now you have a king as your leader. As for me, I am old and gray, and my sons are here with you. I have been your leader from my youth until this day. Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the LORD and his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes? If I have done any of these, I will make it right. You have not cheated or oppressed us,’ they replied. ‘You have not taken anything from anyone's hand.’” Also look at verse 23a: “As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you ....” He was a man of prayer. Isn't it interesting that the respected man is the man of God and the man of prayer?

If we look at Proverbs 16:31-33, we can see people who deserve respect. As I divide these people into three categories, I want to receive the lessons that God give us and obey them.

**First, the people who deserve respect are old men who have walked the way of righteousness all their life.**

Look at Proverbs 16:31 – “A gray head is a crown of glory; It is found in the way of righteousness.” Personally, I don't like dyeing my hair very much. I don't know whether I will dye my hair partially when I get older and have more white hair only one part of my head and other parts are black. But even if my hair is totally white, I don't think I will dye my hair. The reason is because of the words of Proverbs 20:29 – “The glory of young men is their strength, gray hair the splendor of the old.” It is said that the beautiful thing of the old is gray, so I don't want to dye my hair even if it turns gray. Of course, I know that King Solomon's term “gray hair”, the beauty of the old man, is not just about the gray hair. Nevertheless, for some reason, I think it is nice to see the gray hair of the elderly as they are. If I say this, I don't know if some of the seniors will say, ‘James, why don't you grow old too.’ I think that when we get older, the elderly mainly hate the fact that they get old, but rather prefer youth. That's why they may want to be with young people. However, there is no denying the fact that all of us are aging. All of our youth is passing away. But what's important here is how we're getting old. In Proverbs 16:31, King Solomon says, “A gray hair is a crown of glory; It is found in the way of righteousness” and we should learn a valuable lesson on how we should grow old here. That precious lesson is that we must grow old by living a righteous life. If we become old as we live the righteous life, our gray hair is said to be “the crown of glory”. The term “the crown of glory” here means that a person's longevity deserves respect. Do you understand? Among the elderly people who have become gray hair, who is the one we say, ‘He is a respectful elderly man’? Isn't he the one who believes in Jesus and follows the Lord with consistent faith and obey His word and imitates Jesus? Personally, I have white-haired old people whom I don't respect them despite their age. I don't respect them because I see them still sinful instead of little Jesus in their lives. However, despite their many years of age, when I see the elderly who serve the

Lord faithfully and humbly to fulfill the mission that the Lord has given them to the end, I naturally respect them. Especially when I see their character being sanctified, I can't help but respect them.

In Proverbs 16:31, King Solomon says that old people who faithfully and humbly walk the righteous path until their hair gets gray deserve respect. Those elderly people are blessed with longevity because they have wisdom and fear God, hate evil, love righteousness, obey God's word, and live holy lives (10:27). They rejoice with the word of God (1 Cor. 13:6), and their mind and body are at peace (Prov. 3:2). Therefore, they can become healthy in their physical life and live longer (Park). The reward God gives to these elderly people is “the crown of glory”. He grows old and gray-haired, and he gets more respect from more people. Shouldn't we be such a respected, gray-haired old man?

### **Second, the people who deserve respect are old men who are slow to anger.**

Look at Proverbs 16:32 – “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.” When I look at an Internet website, there are two typical feelings that bother modern people. Those two feelings are called depression and anger (Internet). If depression is an inner expression of unhappiness, anger is an external expression of unhappiness, and depression destroys oneself, anger destroys others. When it comes to “depression,” we take it a bit seriously and recognize the risk of depression, while when it comes to anger, we don't seem to take it very seriously. The reason is because our Korean culture is tolerant of anger. So, it seems that there are many people in Korea who think that there is no big problem even if they sometimes get angry ‘if we don't hold grudges’. But for someone like me who holds grudges, even getting angry sometimes can be a big problem. But here in America, where we live, anger seems to be seen as an important emotional problem. Americans take anger as a serious problem, so they put a lot of effort into solving it. One of those efforts is ‘the anger management’ program. Looking at the anger management program technique, the first among them is to define and know what anger is. Are you taking “anger” as a serious problem? What is “anger”? In Chinese the word “anger” is composed with two words that means ‘something that is solidified or clustered in the heart rises at once’ plus anger that rises in the heart. So, the definition of “anger” according to the Chinese is ‘when one's desires, demands, or meanings are blocked or rejected, the things in the heart and thoughts rises’ (Internet). I think it's an interesting definition. I think it's a true that feeling of anger that rises when one's desires, demands, or meanings are blocked or rejected. Who would like to be denied their desires, demands, or meanings? At that time, the things that were in the heart exploded at once, and this feeling of anger, which screams in the middle of anger, throws objects, even assaults, and even kills people, is truly a serious problem.

It is said that there are five stages of anger (Internet): (1) The first is the stage of mild ‘irritation’. This is the stage of ‘unpleasantness’ that doesn't cause any harm to yourself or others. (2) The second is the stage of ‘indignation’. This is the stage in which you are not able to forgive the other person for what you have suffered and

try to retaliate. But in most cases you can overcome it well without revealing it. (3) The third is the stage of 'wrath'. When a person reaches this stage of fury, there is a strong desire to retaliate. When in this stage, there are often people who cannot eat or sleep unless they repay what they have received. It is the stage where you can be relaxed when you release your anger. (4) The fourth is the stage of 'fury'. When a person becomes angry, he cannot control his emotions and eventually explodes. (5) The fifth is the stage of 'rage'. The stage of this madness is literally going crazy. It's the most dangerous anger, a stage with very destructive and fatal consequences. When you think about these five steps, to what level of anger have you ever angered? Probably all of us were irritated. We have probably had resentment, rage, and maybe even rage. This is what Proverbs 14:17 says: "A quick-tempered man does foolish things, ...." And this is what James 1:19-20 says: "My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires." The Bible clearly says that if we are angry, then we cannot bring about the righteous life that God desires. The Bible tells us that it is foolish to be quick to anger. And this is what the Bible Proverbs 25:28 says: "Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control." If we don't control our hearts, it will be as if a city is torn down and there is no wall. And it will be easy to fall into the temptation of Satan and sin against God and people. What should we do? How should we go about solving this problem of anger?

In order for us to solve the problem of anger, we must know how to control our hearts (Prov. 16:32). In other words, when anger occurs in our hearts, we must be able to control the feelings of that anger. What we absolutely need for this is one of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, that is "self-control" (Gal. 5:23). We can overcome this problem of anger when the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us, produces abundantly the fruit of self-control. So what is our responsibility that we must faithfully bear to bear this fruit? The responsibility is that we must pray to God while meditating on His word day and night. Then, the Holy Spirit will control our hearts with the Holy word of God, and will work and lead us to be led by His word, which is the fact, rather than by feelings of anger. God the Holy Spirit will help us control our anger. The Bible says that those who keep themselves under control are wise (Prov. 29:11). The Bible says that the wise patient man who controls his temper is better than the warrior who conquers the city (16:32).

### **Third and last, the people who deserve respect humbly accept God's will.**

Look at Proverbs 16:33 – "The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD." One of the ways to find God's will (guidance) in the old Bible times was to draw lots. A good example is Jonah 1:7 in the Old Testament: "Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah." When the ship on which the disobedient prophet Jonah was riding was almost broken due to the great wind from God, the Gentile sailors prayed to their idol gods, but there was no answer. So they casted lots to find out who was responsible for this calamity (Jonah 1:1-7). The act of casting



lots had two meanings in those ancient times: First, to discover whose fault is it (1 Sam. 14:41-42), and second, to find out divine guidance (Esth. 3:7; Prov. 16:33). Here, the reason why the Gentile sailors casted lots was the first meaning: to find out who's fault is it. Another good example is in the New Testament Acts 1:26. After Judas Iscariot died, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, it was necessary to choose one of the men who had been with the rest of eleven disciples the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection” (Acts 1:21-22). So they proposed two men: Joseph and Matthias (v. 23). At that time, the eleven disciples prayed to God, “Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs” (vv. 24-25). And then lots were cast, and the lot fell to Matthias (v. 26). So Matthias was added to the eleven apostles (v. 26). In the days when people knew God's will (directing) by casting lots like this, even if people casted lots, God made the true decision (Park). And the people humbly accepted God's decision as God's will. However, after the completion of the Bible, in the church age, the system of casting lots doesn't reveal the will of God anymore. In our time, only the words of the Bible become the light that guides us (Ps. 119:105) (Park). In other words, in this day and age, only God's complete Bible words tell us the will of God (MacDonald).

When a man of God knows the will of God, he lays down his will and obeys the will of God. The supreme example is Jesus, who asked Heavenly Father in the Garden of Gethsemane, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Mt. 26:39). Shouldn't we, like Jesus, put down our own will and obey the will of the Lord? When I think about “the will of the Lord”, the hymn “My Jesus, as Thou Wilt” comes to my mind. In the commentary of this hymn, it is bound to think that Benjamin Schmolck (1672-1737), a Lutheran pastor who wrote and composed the lyrics, was truly a man who lived the life of a small Jesus, a true disciple. Due to the anti-reformist forces of Roman Catholicism, all Lutheran churches were absorbed by Catholicism, and there was no bell tower in the city that had to be erected outside the castle. He was in the middle of attending a Lutheran church where he couldn't even hold a funeral. Three co-workers had to minister to a vast area of 36 villages. B. Schmolck collapsed from overwork, fell ill from a stroke, and even after recovery, his right hand was paralyzed and unusable, and had to suffer from cataracts. Despite these difficulties, he focused on shepherding. One day, he and his wife went to an atrium together. And when they returned home, they were shocked by the loss of a completely destroyed house and even their sons on fire. The couple knelt in prayer with the bodies of their two burned sons in front of them. This famous hymn was born from the content of the cry of prayer, “My Jesus, as Thou wilt” The desire to escape death and the desire to escape from pain are human instincts. Jesus also expressed one of these instinctive agony of human beings on the verge of death. “Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will” (Mk. 14:36), he set a practical example of obeying God's will, even death. B. Schmolck is a man who lived the life of a little Jesus, a disciple. The decision of faith to obey thoroughly even when humans face difficulties that are difficult to overcome is reflected in this hymn, “My Jesus, as Thou wilt”

(Internet). Together, at this time, let's praise God, "My Jesus, as Thou wilt": (1) My Jesus, as Thou wilt! O may Thy will be mine; Into Thy hand of love I would my all resign. Through sorrow, or thro' joy, Conduct me as Thine own; And help me still to say, My Lord, Thy will be done. (2) My Jesus, as Thou wilt! Though seen through many a tear, Let not my star of hope Grow dim or disappear. Since Thou on earth hast wept, And sorrowed oft alone, If I must weep with Thee, My Lord, Thy will be done. (3) My Jesus, as Thou wilt! All shall be well for me; Each changing future scene I gladly trust with Thee. Straight to my home above I travel calmly on; And sing, in life or death, My Lord, Thy will be done. Amen.

I think this age in which we are living is an age where the object of respect is lacking. I think it's a time when we can't find person to respect at home, school, work, or even church. Even at home or at church, what is the reason for disrespecting parents or pastors? In light of today's text, I think the reason is because we don't faithfully walk the path that the Lord took, because we are quick to anger, and because we don't live according to the Lord's will. What must we do? What must we do to be respectable people?

## A peaceful family

### [Proverbs 17:1, 9-10, 13-14]

What do you think is the final goal of employees' lives? As a result of a survey of 239 employees, 88.7% of respondents answered that they have the final goal of their lives. Nine out of ten workers say they have the final goal in life, and the number one is a peaceful family. 28.3% said that they want to achieve the peaceful family as their final goal of their lives. 27.4% of the respondents said that they want to be the best in their field, 16.0% said that they want to be entrepreneurs, 9.4% said that they want to trouble around the world, 8.5% said they want to prepare their own house, 4.2% said that they want to change jobs and etc.. In order to achieve the goal, 60.4% said that they are working hard, 45.8% said that they are collecting a lot of money, 34.4% said that they are doing activities to expand their network, 31.1% said that they are studying hard every day, 26.4% said that they are doing financial technology. The reason for setting the final goal of life is that 72.2% said that they want 'to live a happy life, 8.5% said that they want to earn wealth and honor, 7.1% said that they want to not be ashamed by others, 6.6% said that they want to contribute to society, and 2.4% said that they want to do their filial duties to their parents (Internet).

In Proverbs 17:1, the Bible says, “Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife.” What does it mean? It means that it’s better to be peaceful in the family even if we live poorly than to live abundantly with strife in the family. It is said that the old family of Israel shared the leftover food from what they offered sacrifice to God (Lev. 7:16; 19:6; 1 Sam. 9:24). And after offering sacrifice to God, the family members supposed to enjoy meal together. But if there was strife among them, then it is the family with serious dissatisfaction (Park). Can you imagine that after we gave tithe and thanksgiving offering to God during Sunday worship the family members are disputing with the leftover money? The word of Proverbs 17:1 teaches us that peace of the family doesn’t depend on abundance or poverty. And my personal thought is that the cause of strife is not only depended on abundance. Based on Proverbs 17:1, I would like to think about what kind of family is the peaceful family and how we can avoid strife in our family.

**First, a peaceful family covers each other's offense. We must not repeat each other's offense in order to avoid strife in our family.**

Look at Proverbs 17:9 – “He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.” Once, I posted this question on my personal facebook: ‘Why is it hard to share our prayer

topics with one another in the church community?’ One of the brothers in Christ commented as follow: ‘We can share the prayer topic of our heart when there is trust among us. If not, then we can get hurt greatly. That’s why it is possible only with those who have the spirit of keeping the secret completely.’ What do you think of these words? As someone said, the church became the place where we cannot share our prayer requests. The reason is because there are people who "repeat the matters" in the church (v. 9). In other words, there are those who repeat the prayer requests of another person. If we repeat another person’s prayer request, then our relationship with that person will be distanced. Look at Proverbs 16:28 – “A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.” What does it mean? A liar stirs up dissension and separates close friends. When we look at marital relations at home, why do we have strife? Isn’t it because Satan, a liar, separates our marital relationship? How does Satan separate our marital relationship? Satan does so especially by making us to look at each other's offenses more that each other’s strengths and to repeat them not only to each other but to others as well. Although love keeps no record of wrongs (1 Cor. 13:5), Satan keeps on making us to keep record of each other’s wrongs in our thoughts, and make us to tell each other about the wrongs. Thus, Satan brings strife and discord in our marital relationship. I cannot help but agree with what King Solomon said in Proverbs 18:8 – “The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts.”

What should we do? We must meditate on the love of God that has covered our transgressions. In Ephesians 2:1, the Bible says, “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.” God made us alive together with Christ even when we were dead in our transgression, and saved us (v. 5). Therefore, the Psalmist said in Psalm 32:1 – “How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!” We who have received God’s great blessing and love in Christ Jesus must love our neighbors. How should we love our neighbors? We can love our neighbors by covering over their wrongs (Prov. 10:12). We must put effort to cover over our closest neighbor that is our family members’ wrongs. Therefore, we must keep the unity of the Holy Spirit in our family (Eph. 4:3).

**Second, a peaceful family receives rebuke from each other. We must humbly receive each other's rebuke in order to avoid strife in our family.**

Look at Proverbs 17:10 – “A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding Than a hundred blows into a fool.” What would you do if your children were offended and fighting each other because they broke the commandments of God and continued to talk about each other's faults? Would you just keep on watching them arguing and fighting? I am sure you won’t. I am sure no parents like to see their children fighting. We want our children to love each other and to be at peace. But if they fight, then we have to rebuke them in love. But what if our children are fools so they don’t listen to our rebuke? What should we do then? I think we have no choice but to discipline them. But if any of our children hear our rebuke and repent of their own wrongs and have peace with their brother or sister, then how wise are they? The Bible says it is better to rebuke our wise children because our rebuke will go deeper into them more than the hundred blows into the foolish children (v. 10). Isn’t this word

interesting? Of course we must not interpret this word literally. Can you imagine hitting our foolish children hundred times? What would happen to our children then? Nevertheless, a fool is mocker (9:7) that he won't repent and turn away from his/her wrongdoings. But if we rebuke our wise children, our rebuke will be deeply engraved in their hearts even though there will be no mark of discipline on their body. There is a good example in the Bible about the wise man. The good example is David. How did David respond when Prophet Nathan rebuked him for his sins of adultery and intentionally killing Bathsheba's husband Uriah? Look at 2 Samuel 12:13a – "I have sinned against the LORD ...." As soon as David heard the Prophet Nathan's rebuke, he immediately confessed and repented of his sins. In the case of Apostle Peter, when a rooster crowed and when the Lord turned and looked at Peter, he remembered the word of the Lord, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times" (Lk. 22:60-61). And he went out and wept bitterly (v. 62). What a wise man who wept bitterly and repent as he remembered what the Lord said? Like David and Peter, those who are wise don't need a hundred lashes. They just need a word of rebuke from the Lord. Then they will confess and repent of their sins. Don't you think our family members need this kind of wisdom?

Those who are wise, that is, the ones who have understanding, will repent of their sins and walk on the right path. We cannot but help ourselves sinning against God and against each other in our family. But if we have God's given wisdom, we will be able to not only know our sins but also the Spirit will help us to confess and repent our sins to God and to each other. Especially, we will be able to receive each other's rebuke humbly and repent and return to God and to each other. When we do so, our family will be in peace.

**Third, a peaceful family doesn't pay back evil for good. We must pay back good for good in order to avoid strife in our family.**

Look at Proverbs 17:13 – "If a man pays back evil for good, evil will never leave his house." The family, in which evil never leaves, rebels against God's will, disobeys God's words and does unrighteous things. And because they do unrighteous things, they meet disaster in their family. That biblical example is David. King David paid back evil for good. In other words, he purposely killed Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, who was loyal to him and his kingdom, so that he repaid evil for good. As a result, his son Amnon raped Tamar like his father David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. And as David killed Uriah, Absalom, the brother of Tamar, killed Amnon. These family calamities came because David disobeyed God's will and His commands. It was the result of his unrighteous acts.

So many families now are facing family disasters. It seems like there is never ending discord in the families. What are the problems in the contemporary family that are filled with wounds, pains and suffering? One of the problems is the sin of our family. Many families are suffering now because they are sinning against God's will, disobeying God's Word, and doing evil rather than good. The family that cannot taste the goodness of God,

that doesn't feel the grace and love of God, and is not humble before God, but rather is arrogant eventually rebels against God's will, disobeys His commands and does unrighteous. What must we do? We should listen to the words of 1 Peter 3:9 – “Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.” What do you think of the word of God, that you should repay evil with blessing? We should bless our family members even when we hurt each with our lips in the midst of strife in the family.

When I was working out before with mp3 on my years, I heard 1 Peter 2:23 Jesus didn't retaliate when people hurled their insults at Him but he suffered. As I heard this word and meditated on it, I thought to myself that I shouldn't say the same thing to other people when they say the things that displeased me. We should not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21). We must suffer from doing good rather than doing evil. This is the will of God for us (1 Pet. 3:17). Although our souls forlorn when people repay us evil for good (Ps. 35:12), we must not grow weary of doing good (2 Thess. 3:13). We must turn from evil and do good. We must seek peace and pursue our family peace (Ps. 34:14).

**Fourth, a peace family drops the matter before a dispute breaks out. We must drop the matter before the dispute breaks out in order to avoid strife in our family.**

Look at Proverbs 17:14 – “Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.” Why do we usually start a quarrel in the family? Is it because of big things or just a little thing? There are few Chinese words that I found in the Internet. Let me translate into English: (1) “百年偕老” (Growing old together): As a couple, a husband and a wife grow old together in harmony. (2) “偕老同穴” (Growing old together and are buried in the same grave): Since the couple lives in peace, they grow old together when they are alive and they bury in the same grave when they die. (3) “蝸角之爭” (Fighting over small things): Literal meaning is that fighting on the horns of a snail. It means that small countries are fight each other. The couple is fight over very small thing. The reason why couples and children fight each other is starting from a very minor matter. That's why Proverbs 17:14a says “Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam ...” What does this mean?

Have you ever been to Hoover Dam, near Las Vegas? If you have heard that there is water leaking in the dam, will you still walk on the dam and look around? Think about it. If there is a very small hole in such a large dam, and water is coming out in small quantities, will you still stand over the Hoover Dam and continue to look the dam and its surround? Even if it is very small hole with small amount of water leading, I am sure that if people working at the dam find out, then they will certainly tell the tourists to flee and not come near at all. Why is that? Isn't it because it is very dangerous? When I think about this, I think there is a perfect Chinese word for it. It is “水滴穿石”. It means that if water drops continually, then it will eventually punch a hole in a stone (Internet). Even if it is a very small hole in a big dam, if you leave it alone, the dam will collapse, and it will have a great

damage. That's why King Solomon said in Proverbs 17:14b "so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out." But it seems like we aren't obeying this word of God. We aren't dropping the matter before the dispute breaks out. As a result, small argument gets bigger fight. What's the problem? Look at James 4:1 – "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?" The problem is our desires that battle within us. And if we don't control these desires but just keep on fighting and quarreling, then we will be those who love a quarrel (Prov. 17:19). And if we love the quarrel, then we will love sin (v. 19). After all, the reason we fight and quarrel in our home is because of our desires that battle within us. And there is covetousness in us that desires to fight and quarrel (Jam. 4:2). For example, when the couple is fighting, they start fighting when their desire is not satisfied by their spouse, that is, when they don't get what they want. When we put down what we want (covetousness), we can prevent the fight. But how difficult is it to actually put it down?

There is book titled 'Put down' by formal missionary to Mongolia Pastor Yong-gyu Lee. I think after he published that book he wrote another book titled 'Put down more'. Although he could have pursued worldly success with his Ph.D. degree at Harvard University, he went to remote area as a missionary and served the Lord. But that wasn't why he wrote his book 'Put down'. What he emphasized in his book was death of self in Christ as Galatians 2:20 teaches (Internet). And this is what he said in his book 'Put down': 'There is a very small child in us. That child is a crying child who wants to be recognized. When this child's desire is not satisfied, he makes our inner self very difficult. We live in our emotions without knowing that there is a child in us. However, this child can only be restored and rested through the love and recognition of God. Satan constantly makes us obsessed with what we don't have. As long as we are obsessed with what we don't have, we cannot enjoy what we have received with joy. As we seek the recognition of the world, we are held in this world. That is how much we miss our freedom from heaven. God said, 'I see the perfumed jar in you.' The very next word drove me into surprise and pierced my heart deeply. 'But the jar wants not to be broken yet even though it was given in front of Jesus' feet.' Because of that word, I saw my unbroken self. Although I went all the way in front of the Jesus' feet, I realized my pride that didn't want to be broken. I saw in me that I wanted to be respected. I thought because of that I was hurt by someone else's words. A deep sob came out of me. I made a pledge to God in sadness. 'God, I see parts in me that are still unbroken. I want to break my perfumed jar'. Although I was offered in front of Jesus' feet, I cannot sent forth a sweet fragrance if it's not broken. When the perfumed jar is broken and all the perfume in it flows out, we can commemorate the cross of Jesus' (Internet).

There is a story among old traditions fairy tales of Korea. 'It was not long before she was married. But one day she was crying in the kitchen without making rice. Her husband who saw her crying asked her why she was crying. She said because she had burnt the rice. The husband, who heard this, said to her, 'It is my fault that I brought little water today because I was busy and that's why you burned the rice because of little water.' And he comforted her. When she heard this, she was more tearful because her heart was touched by what he said. His father-in-law, who was passing by in front of the kitchen, saw this scene and asked her why she was crying. When

he heard what she said, he said that it was because he was too old and weak that he couldn't cut the firewood small enough. So the fire was too strong and that's why the rice got burned. And he comforted his son and daughter-in-law. When her mother-in-law who heard all these came and told her daughter-in-law that it was her fault because she is too old that she couldn't smell the rice cooking and forgot to tell her daughter-in-law the time to put down the rice. So she tried to comfort her daughter-in-law as well. The old people told this story and said it was "家和萬事成" (Chinese word). It means 'when one's home is happy, all goes well.' If we look at this story, we can see that no one blamed her who burned the rice, but everybody tried to comfort her as they reflect on their mistakes and blame on themselves. In this way, peace comes. And all is well in peace. Moreover, the Holy Spirit is dwelling in us. This Holy Spirit unifies our hearts. Therefore, when all our family members are obedient to the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we will be able to live in understanding, forgiveness, comfort and encouragement and live heavenly life in our family (Internet).



## How should we raise our children?

### [Proverbs 17:2, 6-7, 17, 21, 25]

How should we raise our children? I read an article from Christian Today under the heading 'The principle is more important than the method of child raising'. The content of the article was from the book 'The Family Principles that Decide My Child's Future' (Internet). In this book, the author says that the parents must learn how to raise their children so that they may become experts and that the important thing is they must learn the principles of raising children well and apply them before they learn the child raising methods or skills. Also the author says that the parents should also set the principles of child discipline and training with consistent attitude and discipline and put them into practice. It seems that there are eight principles, one of which suggests two ways to pass on a healthy faith to their children. And two ways are education through an example and fun family time. When we set up these principles in raising our children, we can nurture our children emotionally and spiritually healthy.

In Proverbs 17:2, this is what King Solomon says: "A servant who acts wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully, And will share in the inheritance among brothers." Based on this Word, I want to think about three things that teach us how we should raise our children.

### **First, in raising our children, we must raise them as wise children of God.**

Look at Proverbs 17:2: "A servant who acts wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully, And will share in the inheritance among brothers." As I continue to meditate on the Book of Proverbs, I gradually realize how important "wisdom" that the Bible talks about. In other words, God teaches me more about the value of wisdom through the words of Proverbs. Therefore, I pray to God for more wisdom. Moreover, I pray and think about how to nurture my wife and my three children with God's wisdom. So as I meditate on the Word of Proverbs, I think about James 1:5 more than before, and I hold onto that word of God and pray: "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him." In Proverbs 17:2, King Solomon says that the wise servant will rule over the son who acts shamefully and will share in the inheritance among brothers. Here, King Solomon contrasts the son of the master who acts shamefully with the wise servant. One has the status of "son" and the other has the status of "servant". Nevertheless, King Solomon says that the person with the status of "servant" will share in the inheritance of his master like the person with the status of "son". How is this possible? How can the person with slave status be able to share his master's inheritance like his master's son? That is because that the servant had the wisdom. When I think of this wise servant, I

remember Proverbs 16:20. The reason is because this verse explains "wisdom": "He who gives attention to the word will find good, And blessed is he who trusts in the LORD." What does this mean? It means that to be wise is to pay attention to the word of God. This is what the Bible Proverbs 19:20 says: "Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days." We can be wise when we pay attention to the word of God and receive the counsel and accept discipline of God. And the Bible says that a wise man will find good (16:20). And that good is that the wise servant will also share in the inheritance like his master's son (17:2). But the foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him (v. 25). And in Proverbs 17:21, the Bible says "He who sires a fool does so to his sorrow, And the father of a fool has no joy." Here the word "a fool" appears twice. The first "a fool" means "dull," "thickhead" and the second "a fool" means "one who lack spiritual perception and sensitivity" (Walvoord). In other words, a foolish child is not only dull and thickhead, but s/he is also lacks spiritual perception and sensitivity. So s/he acts shamefully because s/he cannot discern God's will but lives on his own accord. Therefore, s/he is sorrow and pain to her/his parents.

If we have this kind of foolish child who is sorrow and pain to us, will there be any joy in our lives? That's why we must nurture and raise our children well as God's wise children. In order to do that, I think we, the parents, first have to deal with at least these three things faithfully. And then hopefully we can apply the same principles to our children as well:

(1) We must pay attention to the word of God (16:20).

In other words, we must focus on the Word of God. And we must obey the voice of God as we meditate on the Word day and night. We must receive the commands of God which is the wise of heart (10:8). We must receive instruction and teaching through the Word of God. Then we will be wiser (9:9).

(2) We must walk with wise people.

Look at Proverbs 13:20 – "He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm." We must not associate with fools. The Bible Proverbs 14:7 says that we must leave the presence of a fool. Why is that? The reason is because we will not find knowledge on the lips of the fool (v. 7). If we make friends without leaving the fool we will suffer the pain. Rather, we must walk with the wise. Why is that? The reason is because we get wisdom when we walk with the wise (13:20).

(3) We must seek wisdom from God.

Look at James 1:5 – "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." When we realize that we lack wisdom through meditation of the Word of God, we must seek wisdom from God even more.

**Second, in raising our children, we must instruct our children to live righteously by God's grace.**

Look at Proverbs 17:6 – “Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.” Here, if we interpret the phrase “Children’s children are a crown to the aged” narrowly, it means that the grandchildren are the grandparents’ joy and dignity (Walvoord). However, if we interpret this statement somewhat broadly, it means that the descendants are a crown to their ancestors. And this suggests that the heritage of faith continues to be handed down from the ancestors to their descendants as the crown. Therefore, the ancestor's faith and godly influence manifest in love and respect for one another in the home, which also affects their offspring (MacArthur). In short, it means that when a child lives rightly by God's grace, that child becomes a glory to his/her father (Park Yun-sun). Furthermore, it means that when the children and the descendants live rightly by God’s grace, their ancestors will be honored. If we walk in the right way by God’s grace and become gray hair old men and women (16:31) and if we see our children and their children also walk the same right way by God’s grace, won’t that be our joy and glory? Of course, I know that raising children always doesn’t go as we think and expect. I know that no matter how hard and how well we teach and nurture the Word of God to our children by showing them the godly example of faith, the results may be that our children may disobey God and us. But if we think of this as the opposite, isn’t it totally God’s grace that our children live rightly even though we have not been able to nurture our children with the word of God and to show godly example of faith to them? So Dr. Park Yun-sun said: ‘We should keep in mind that even though the parents can teach their children well, the reason their children are obedient to God is only by God's grace.’ If our children follow our example and walk the right path by God’s grace, how much joy and glory is to us? If there are such parents who have been walking in the right path by God's grace, then they are pride to us (17:6). In other words, we, the children, should be proud of such parents. Isn’t it interesting do see that three generations appears in Proverbs 17:6 and the grandchildren are their grandparent's joy and glory ("crown") and the father is the pride of his children? The relationship of grandfather, father and grandson of family that can be joy and glory and proudness to each other like this is beautiful and very valuable. Don’t you want to build this kind of family in which all three generations love God and live righteously by God's grace, and therefore can be joy and glory and proud to each other? In order to do that, we, the parents, should teach our children well. We must nurture them with the Lord's discipline and instruction (Eph. 6:4).

**Third, in raising our children, we must teach them the love of friends and the love of their brothers and sisters.**

Look at Proverbs 17:17 – “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” When we pray for our children I think one of the prayer topics is ‘God, let our children to meet godly good friends.’ In particular, we who have children in school cannot help but pray that God may lead our children to meet not only good teachers

but especially good school friends. When I pray for my church college students, I pray that God to allow them to meet not only good professors but also good roommates and good friends. The reason is because I want them to meet good friends of faith who can influence them so that their faith may grow. In Proverbs 17: 17, King Solomon says “A friend loves at all times.” What does it mean? It means that when we encounter crisis rather than when we are comfortable, our friend’s love toward us shines more and more. A good bible example is David and Jonathan. In the midst of the crisis that King Saul was trying to kill David, Jonathan loved David as himself. Look at Proverbs 18:24 – “A man of too many friends comes to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

What a precious friend s/he is who sticks closer than a brother? What a blessing this is if our children have this kind of friends? Then shouldn’t we teach our children first to be that kind of friends to others by teaching them the love of Jesus Christ? In order to do so, we must love our children with the love of Christ. By doing so, we must nurture our children who can give Christ’s love to their friends since they receive from us. In addition to this friendly love, we must teach our children brotherly love. If we look at Proverbs 17:17b, the Bible says “a brother is born for adversity.” What does it mean? This means that the brothers voluntarily help each other in times of trouble’ (Park). It teaches us that we should raise our children in a way that they can share the brotherly love and able to help each other voluntarily when their brothers and/or sisters are in difficulties. It is precious brotherly love when our children help each other when everything goes fine. But this is especially true when they are going through very difficult time in their lives. How can we teach this love to our children? I think we can do so by helping and loving each other as a husband and a wife when we are going through difficult times in our lives. And we must pray to God that our children can understand God's love more deeply, widely, and highly (Eph. 3:18).

We are taught three lessons about how to raise our children in the context of Proverbs 17:2: (1) We must raise them as wise children of God, (2) We must instruct our children to live righteously by God's grace, and (3) We must teach them the love of friends and the love of their brothers and sisters. I hope and pray that we may teach and nurture our children well by obeying these words and with these three biblical principles so that we may glorify God.

## God who tests the heart

### [Proverbs 17:3-5, 7-8, 20, 23]

Yesterday Tuesday morning prayer meeting, I meditated on the word of God centering on Isaiah 41:10 – “Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” As I meditate on this word of God, I thought about praying to God for faith that we trust in God who is with us and truly helps us even in a fearful situation rather than asking Him for us not be confronted with that fearful situation. This is because firstly, we must realize how much our faith is lacking even in the face of the fearful situation. Secondly, through that fearful situation, we must be trained and grow in faith to trust in God more and more. Do you want your faith to be trained, even through the fearful situation, adversity and crisis you face?

If we look at Proverbs 17:3, the Bible says, “The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart.” How does God test our hearts? As we think about the words of Proverbs 17 in three ways, we would like to learn the lessons God gives us:

#### **First, God tests our hearts even through a liar.**

Look at Proverbs 17:4 – “A wicked man listens to evil lips; a liar pays attention to a malicious tongue.” Here, “A wicked man” and “a liar” have something in common that they both listen so easily to the wicked and the evil words. Here, the wicked words refer to gossips, evil plans, or evil conversation that make up lies or slander, while the evil words refer to words that are evil and liars trying to spoil and destroy others (Walvoord). Those who do these evils or who lied will sin against God by saying the wicked and the evil words with their lips. One example is David's son Amnon who committed a sin after following his friend Jonadab's words (Park). When Amnon was frustrated to the point of illness on account of Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom and a virgin, Jonadab, son of David's brother Shimea and a very shrewd man, said to Amnon (2 Sam. 13:1-3): “‘Go to bed and pretend to be ill,’ Jonadab said. ‘When your father comes to see you, say to him, ‘I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand’” (v. 5). When Amnon heard this and was lying down on purpose, his father King David came to him. And Amnon said to him, “I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand” (v. 6). King David accepted Amnon's request, and eventually Tamar came to Amnon's house, tried to make some special bread for him, and was finally raped by him (v. 14). Another example is that the Jews listened to false

prophets (Isa. 30:9-11; Jer. 38:1-6) (Park). With all the false prophets seeking the peace of the Israelites, the prophet Jeremiah correctly prophesied that Israel would fall into the hands of the Babylonian army (Jer. 38:3). Why didn't the Jews listen to this word of true prophet Jeremiah, but listen to the false prophets? The reason is because the Jews were "rebellious people, deceitful children, children unwilling to listen to the Lord's instruction" (Isa. 30:9). That is why they told the true prophets, "'Give us no more visions of what is right! Tell us pleasant things, prophesy illusions'" (v. 10).

Jesus said in Matthew 24:24 about the signs at the end of the world: "'For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.'" Now these false Christs and false prophets are pouring out countless lies (Prov. 14:5). Since they are false witnesses, they are trying to deceive the Christians who have been chosen by God by pouring out lies. Why are they pouring out lies? Look at Proverbs 17:20 – "A man of perverse heart does not prosper; he whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble." The reason is because they have perverse hearts. In other words, it is because their hearts are deceitful. In other words, since the hearts of false witnesses are false, lies must come out of their lips. Satan, the liar and father of lies (Jn. 8:44) is now trying to deceive the Christians as well as trying to ruin and destroy our souls by causing false witnesses to pour out lies. Satan is already causing the liars to sin against God by deceived church leaders. Look at Proverbs 17:7 – "Excellent speech is not fitting for a fool, Much less are lying lips to a prince." This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: 'Here, "a prince" refers to a leader (Prov. 8:16). As a leader, he has the trust and respect of many people. Therefore, truth is the most important qualification for him. Nevertheless, if he is corrupted and lied, it goes against the expectations of many. As a result, many people also stumble' (Park). How many believers are being stumbled by many church leaders now? How many of the church leaders lie and hide the truth? Aren't we preaching a false life, false faith, or false gospel? Why does God allow those who lied under His sovereignty to deceive us? The reason is because, as in Proverbs 17:3, God is testing our hearts. In other words, God is removing all lies, impurities in our hearts even through the liars. Just as a crucible for silver and a furnace for gold separates the impurities of silver or gold, just as the impurities of our hearts toward God break up the lies through tribulation and suffering even through the liars. He is breaking apart and removing the lie that is not the truth of our faith. Therefore, God frees us with the truth (Jn. 8:32) and purifies our souls by obeying the truth so that we can love our brothers without lies (1 Pet. 1:22). Furthermore, God has established us as true witnesses of Jesus Christ with sincere heart and sincere love to save human life (Prov. 14:25).

## **Second, God tests our hearts through calamity.**

Look at Proverbs 17:5 – "He who mocks the poor taunts his Maker; He who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished." Looking at Proverbs 14:21 and 31, the Bible says, "... blessed is he who is kind to the needy" (v. 21), and "whoever is kind to the needy honors God" (v. 31). However, it is said that those who violate this Scripture and mock the poor are despising the Lord who made the poor. Also, it is said that those who are pleased with human

disasters cannot escape punishment. Rather, Proverbs 24:17 in the Bible says, “Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice.” Isn't this love of neighbors and love of enemies? When I meditated on these words, I thought that God is testing our hearts through poverty in our lives. And I tried to meditate on the words of Proverbs 17:5 by connecting that poverty and disaster. The reason I did that is because I meditated on the unfortunate man who lost all his wealth because of disaster in the words of Ecclesiastes 5:13-16 during the early Morning Prayer meeting of the last week. In other words, no matter how rich we are, just like the man named Job in the book of Job, when we encounter disaster, we can quickly become poor and needy. And it means that we become destitute through such disasters and that God uses them to test our hearts. How does God really test our hearts through need? Look at Deuteronomy 8:3 – “He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.” The Bible tells us that the purpose of God to let us be hungry is to let us know that we live by every word that comes out of God's mouth. Why is God making us needy? God, who tests our hearts, wants us to realize in our hearts that we live only by the word of God through our need. And living only by the word of God means that we love our neighbors because we love God. God wants us to love the poor and even our enemies. In order to give us such love for our neighbors, God is trying to test our hearts even through disaster.

### **Third and last, God tests our hearts through a bribe.**

Look at Proverbs 17:8 – “A bribe is a charm in the sight of its owner; Wherever he turns, he prospers.” What is “a bribe”? A biblical website defines bribery like this: ‘It is unclean money given to gain private advantage’ (Internet). The Mosaic Law said not to accept bribes (Exod. 23:8). Since God doesn't accept bribes (Deut. 10:17, 2 Chron. 19:7), His people were also not allowed to accept bribes. King Solomon, the writer of Ecclesiastes, said that bribes ruin people's understanding (Eccl. 7:7). In particular, the judges were severely warned (2 Chron. 19:7). It is because bribery has consequently bent justice (1 Sam. 8:3; Prov. 17:23) (Internet). That's why Proverbs 15:27 of the Bible says, “A greedy man brings trouble to his family, but he who hates bribes will live.” When I personally think of “bribes,” I think about Korean politicians who are frequently bribed and are investigated by prosecutors. There are so many politicians who went to jail for bribes. And when I see politicians being investigated by the prosecution for bribes, I wonder why these things happened so frequently. This is because, like the words of Proverbs 15:27, they are greedy for profit. Since a person who has received a bribe says that the bribe seems to be like a jewel and satisfies his covetousness, he will try to achieve the work he was asked to do, but the result is that he will lead him to the wrong way (Job 36:18) (Park).

How does God test our hearts with these bribes? God is teaching justice to our hearts through bribes. And God wants us to do justice in this unfair world with a just heart. And one more thing, God makes us realize that bribery doesn't make us prosper, but God's presence makes us prosper. And the reason why God tries our hearts

through bribes is because He wants to give our hearts joy. Look at Proverbs 17:22 – “A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.” The person who takes the bribe, even though at first the bribe looks like a jewel, the bribe and covetousness will bring him to heart trouble. In the end, he becomes anxious because of the bribe he received and kills his soul because of the worries of his life (Mt. 13:22) (Park). However, those who resist the temptation of greed and are satisfied with the Lord alone and have the joy of their hearts. Also, the Christian who regards God's presence as a jewel has joy in their hearts. And there is joy in the heart of a Christian who lives righteously in the presence of God. In order to give us this joy, God is testing our hearts through bribes.

When I think that we Christians are being tested or being trained, I think of Job 23:10 – “But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.” How much plague did a man named Job face and suffer great pain? But he believed that after God tested him, he would come out like pure gold. Today we learned about God who tests our hearts based on Proverbs 17:3. God tests our hearts through liars in order to remove all lies, impurities in our hearts, and make us to love the Lord with truthful heart. And God allows us to live in this world only with the word that comes out of God's mouth through disaster. Also, he tests our hearts with bribes so that we can realize that only God is with us is the secret of prosperity. Therefore, we have learned that God allows us to live righteously in this unfair world. I hope and pray, in the name of Jesus, that this learning will actually bless us all to be tested in our hearts by putting it into practice when we encounter lies, calamities and bribes on our journey of faith.



## **A rebellious man who seeks only evil**

### **[Proverbs 17:11-13]**

Have you ever heard the word “Oppositional Defiant Disorder” (ODD)? According to the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, children with this disability have a persistent, uncooperative and hostile attitude towards authoritative figures. Symptoms of this hostile defiant disorder are said to be: (1) Frequent tantrums or temper tantrums, (2) Excessive verbal quarrels or self-assertion with adults, (3) Actively resisting or refusing to comply with the demands or rules of adults, (4) Deliberately encouraging others to be irritable and angry, (5) Blaming others for their mistakes or wrongdoings, (6) Being irritable and easily irritated by others, (7) Being often angry and resentful, (8) When angry, they say spoiled and disgusting words, (9) Revenging (internet).

If we look at Proverbs 17:11, the Bible says, “A rebellious man seeks only evil”. Focusing on this verse today, I would like to receive a lesson from God under the title “A rebellious man who seeks only evil”. What is “rebellion”? Rebellion is act or state of disobedience, opposition, or resistance to one in authority (Swanson). Who do you think of when you think of people who disobeyed, opposed, or resisted such an authority? I remember the Israelites. Look at Deuteronomy 31:27 – “For I know your rebellion and your stubbornness; behold, while I am still alive with you today, you have been rebellious against the LORD; how much more, then, after my death?” This word was commanded to the Levites who carried the ark of God's covenant after Moses had finished writing all the words of the law (vv. 1-2) to all Israel at the age of 120 (v. 24). This was what Moses said, knowing that after he died, the Israelites would more rebel against God. How did Moses know this? Look at Deuteronomy 31:16 – “The LORD said to Moses, “Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers; and this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going, and will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them.” When God said to Moses that Moses' death was imminent, Moses knew that when the Israelites entered the Promised Land, Canaan, they obscenely liked the foreign gods of the land. And God told him that they would forsake God and break the covenant that God made with them. Just imagine. In life, how much did Moses witness the Israelites’ rebellion as he led the Israelites in the wilderness for 40 years? That is why Moses said, “I know that your rebellion and your stubbornness” (v. 27). The rebellious and stiff-necked Israelites are people who repeatedly rebelled against God, and we can say that they are wicked people who seek only evil, which is said in Proverbs 17:11. The Bible Proverbs 17:11-13 teaches us three things about the rebellious man who seeks only evil (Swanson):

**First, the rebellious man who seeks only evil will surely encounter disaster.**

Look at Proverbs 17:11 – “A rebellious man seeks only evil, So a cruel messenger will be sent against him.” The Bible tells us that a cruel messenger will be sent to a rebellious man who seeks only evil. In other words, God will bring disaster by sending God's messenger to the rebellious man who seeks only evil. Why does God send messengers to bring disaster? The reason is because He is just God, and the rebellious man who seeks only evil keeps on rebelling against God and His word. He who repeatedly rebels against God and His word but seeks for rebellion refuses to be reproved by God, and in the end, he will be judged by just God (Walvoord). Why does he who seeks only evil refuse to be reproved by God? The reason is because he is fool. Proverbs 17:20 says that he will fall into trouble because he has “a crooked mind”, and his tongue is deceitful.

Our God is a just God. There is the reward of the righteous, but disaster for the sinner (13:21). Therefore, it is natural for God to bring disaster on those who seek only evil. That disaster is God's just judgment. If we rebelled against God and are subject to God's judgment (retribution), we should no longer harden our hearts (28:14). Rather, we must confess and repent our sins. And we must no longer rebel against God, but rather obey His word. And we must escape to the Lord, who is our refuge when we face disaster (Jere. 17:17). And we must rely on the Lord (2 Sam. 22:19).

**Second, the rebellious man who seeks only evil is a dangerous person who only harms others.**

Look at Proverbs 17:12 – “Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly.” What will happen to us when we meet a bear robbed of her cubs? Look at Hosea 13:8 – “Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and rip them open. Like a lion I will devour them; a wild animal will tear them apart.” What a terrifying word of God? How terrifying is this saying that God will attack the Israelites and rip them open like a bear robbed of her cubs? However, the Bible tells us not to meet a fool who does foolish things, even if we meet the bear robbed of her cubs. The fool is more dangerous than the bear robbed of her cubs. Why is that? Why is the fool more dangerous than the bear robbed of her cubs? It is because the fools are less rational in anger than wild bears (MacArthur).

Can you imagine the fool irrationally showing anger right now? (Prov. 12:16) The fool not only irrationally expresses anger right away, but also kills the other person after holding anger in his heart with perverse thoughts for a long time. An example is Absalom the son of David in 2 Samuel 13. He continued his anger for two years to kill Amnon, who raped his sister. In this way, if a person holds anger for a long time, he will surely commit a sin (Park). That is why Proverbs 27:3 of the Bible says, “A stone is heavy and the sand weighty, But the provocation of a fool is heavier than both of them.” What does it mean? It means that the person with anger makes the other person unpleasant and unbearable for a long time. This is especially the anger of the fool (Park). Therefore, we must not meet the fool who is angry. We should not even get close to that fool. The reason is because the fool is pleased with his wrongdoing (10:23). And the fool who takes pleasure in his evildoing is one

who strives for rebellion against the word of God. Such a person only harms others. So we should not only be close to him, nor should we meet him.

### **Third and last, the rebellious man who seeks only evil will face disaster as a family.**

Look at Proverbs 17:13 – “If a man pays back evil for good, evil will never leave his house.” According to Dr. Yoon-sun Park, repaying good with evil is characteristic of rebels. Those who act like this are those who can't even do anything like an ox or donkey (Isa. 1:3), and who actually lift their heels toward their owners (Ps. 41:9; Jn. 13:18) (Park). Therefore, the Bible says, “evil will never leave his house.” In other words, God is bringing disaster into the rebel's family. I think the representative example is the family of David. Because David disobeyed God's word and sinned against God, God prophesied, “... he sword shall never depart from your house ...” (2 Sam. 12:10). According to this prophecy, the disaster came into David's family. In addition to the incest of David's son Amnon (13:1-19), there was Absalom's bloody revenge (vv. 20-29).

How would you react to this catastrophe in your home? Can you imagine? Of course, our first momentary reactions will vary from surprise and shock, pain and sadness, fear, and so on. However, we need to use this kind of family disaster as an opportunity to confess and repent the sins of our homes. We must confess and repent of the sin of rebellion against God and disobeying His word. In the midst of that, we must make commitment to obey God's word before Him. In that commitment, there must be an obedience to repay for evil with blessing. Look at 1 Peter 3:9 – “Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.” Of course, not all family catastrophes are due to our sins. Then we should make it an opportunity for our homes to be trained in persevering and enduring in faith.

In Psalms 78:40-41, the Bible says about the Israelites at the time of the Exodus: “How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness And grieved Him in the desert! Again and again they tempted God, And pained the Holy One of Israel.” I think this is exactly what the Israelites look like and also what we Christians look like as well. In other words, like the Israelites, we constantly rebel against God, grieve Him, and put Him to the test again and again. We should no longer rebel against God. We should no longer be the ones who strive to rebel against Him. We should no longer be those who do harm to others. If we rebel against God and live a life that hurts others, disaster will surely come upon us. Rather, like Jesus, we must be the ones who are willing to obey God humbly. Therefore, I hope and pray that we may be able to fulfill God's will and please Him.

## **What God detests, What is not good in God's sight**

### **[Proverbs 17:15, 26]**

You may have already heard from the news last week. The news that the jury verdict in the first trial of the patent infringement case between Samsung Electronics and Apple in the US ended with Apple's complete victory. As a result, the jury in this case reported that Samsung had infringed the Apple company's patents and decided to pay compensation of \$1,049,354,000 (Internet). However, due to this ruling, it is said that the market capitalization of Samsung Electronics 13.9935 billion dollar evaporated in one day on Monday (Internet). For some reason, I was constantly interested in this trial. So I was watching the internet news. But after seeing such a ruling, I honestly wondered how this case will unfold in the future. I am curious about how a Korean-American judge will judge the jury's verdict. If the judge gives Apple's hand, I wonder how it will be judged in an appeal from Samsung in the future. In the meantime, the unchanging thought is that the judge must rule the trial rightly. When I saw that the Korean court ended with Samsung's victory, and the US court ended with Apple's victory, I don't understand how the judgment of the judiciary in Korea and the US can be so different in ruling the same case. When I read an Internet article, it is said that one of the reasons why the judgments of Korea and the United States were different is in the public sentiment. In the case of Korea, it seems that some people see it as a factor that the public sentiment was strong enough to protect Samsung, a representative company in Korea, to the point of saying, 'If Samsung fails, Korea will fall' (Internet). In the case of the United States as well, seeing that he wrote in an Internet article under the headline 'Not Samsung and Affair, but US Patriotism', it is an analysis that 'the conclusion is the result of the limitations of US protectionism and the jury system, which can be easily swept away by emotions' (Internet).

In this way, the world's judiciary system is bound to have limitations. The reason is because we are human beings with limitations. As a result, an unfair ruling in the trials of this world is bound to come out. Therefore, in this world, wrongdoing can continue to be rationalized. However, in the kingdom of God, there can be no such injustice and unjust conduct. The reason is because our God is the just God and the perfect Judge. In Proverbs 17:15, 26, this God is speaking about what He detests and what is not good in His sight. As we meditate on these two things, we want to receive the lessons God gives us and obey them.

### **First, what does God detest?**

Look at Proverbs 17:15 – “Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent-- the LORD detests them both.” When it comes to things that God detests, we need to remember the words already meditated in Proverbs 15:8-33. In other words, we learned three things that God detests: ‘the sacrifice of the wicked’ (v. 8), ‘the way of the wicked’ (v. 9), and “evil plans’ (v. 26). Here, ‘the sacrifice of the wicked’ refers to the sacrifice that a person offers to God outwardly, but is evil in his heart. A good example is the sacrifices offered to God in the Old Testament times when the Israelites honored God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him. ‘The way of the wicked’ refers to a life of disobeying God’s word by action even though the person may say with his lips that he obeys God. One of the reasons is because there is greed in his heart (v. 27). And the ‘evil plans’ that God detests is wicked plans (6:18), which means that the person's material is unjustly exploited because he is greedy for profit. In Proverbs 17:15, King Solomon says that God detests two kinds of people. Those two kinds of people are those who justify the wicked and those who condemn the righteous. This means that God detests the unjust judge's judgment.

I think the best example in the Bible is Jesus' trial. The ruling that released Barabbas, who had committed murder and a robber, and sentenced Jesus to death, who was innocent, is the unfair judgment that God detests. Think about it. How can they release the murderer and the robber Barabbas and condemn the innocent Jesus who had no sin and sentenced him to death by crucifying Him? How could they have such unfair ruling? We can't like this ruling. And we can't even like those who make such unfair judgments. How much more would just God dislike that judge who makes judgments unfairly? Proverbs 17:15 says that such a person is detested by God. So the question is, ‘Why does that person judge unfairly?’ Why does an unfair judge make an unfair decision? One of the reasons is said in Proverbs 17:23 – “A wicked man receives a bribe from the bosom To pervert the ways of justice.” The unfair judge takes a bribe and perverts the way of justice to make an unfair decision. Look at Isaiah 5:23 – “Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!” The Prophet Isaiah also says that the reason for taking away the right of the ones who are in the right is because of bribery.

The world we live in is an unfair world. In the Old Testament times and now, how many people have been wrecking judgment because bribes have obscured their judgment. They take away the rights of the righteous. And they say you are innocent to the wicked. Therefore, the unfair things such as the wicked don't go to jail even though he sins, and the righteous are falsely accused and go to jail, are happening in our country's court of justice. It is truly an unfair world. How should we live in this unfair world? American educator Charles J. Sykes says the first in his ten tips “Some rules kids won't learn in school” (Internet): “Life is not fair, get used to it”. Life is not fair like this. Life is unfair in everything from childhood home environment to appearance, health, talent, luck and bad luck. But what makes the world the most unfair is human complaints. Rather than the willingness or effort to change the world, the attitude of simply complaining and desperate causes greater inequality. If we want to make the world a little fair, first accept the fact that the world is unfair. And we have to put more effort into making that unfair world fair. And in order for us to put a lot of effort into it, we must first find the principle of what the Bible says. First of all, if we look at Proverbs 24:23, the Bible says: “... To show partiality in judgment is not good.” First of all, we

must keep in mind that the Christian judges must not forget that it is not right to show partiality in judgment. That means that he shouldn't show partiality in judgement by saying the wicked, "You are right" (or "you are innocent"). The Bible says that "People will curse him, nations will abhor him" (v. 24). Rather, the Bible tells us not to say that the wicked are innocent, but to convict the wicked (v. 25). In other words, the Christian judges must make a right judgment. Then they will be delight and a good blessing will come upon them (v. 25).

### **Second and last, what is not good in God's sight?**

Look at Proverbs 17:26 – "It is not good to punish an innocent man, or to flog officials for their integrity." What is not good in the sight of God that King Solomon is talking about here is, in a word, injustice. And King Solomon says that those who are receiving injustice are the righteous and the innocent man. In modern society, it seems that what we often hear through the news is unfair labor practices. One of the types of unfair labor practices is disadvantage treatment. In this case, for example, layoff is a representative case of disadvantage treatment. In addition, there are leave of absence, suspension of work, reduction of salary, etc., and there are also acts of transferring to a position where no benefit is received, or being placed on the waiting list (Internet). Is unfair act restricted only to labor? I think there is a lot of harm especially to faithful Christians who want to live honestly and sincerely in this era where unjust practices are being used throughout society. The Bible says that this is not good in God's sight. One interesting thing is that the phrase "It is not good" appears in Proverbs 3 more times in addition to Proverbs 17:26. Among them, Proverbs 18:5, "To show partiality to the wicked is not good, Nor to thrust aside the righteous in judgment" is a little similar to the words of Proverbs 17:26 (The other two verses are 19:2 and 25:27). In summarizing these two verses, it can be said that what is not good in the sight of God is to punish the righteous and make them resentful, and also to show partiality to the wicked.

Then, what is good in God's sight? It means that the judge condemns the wicked and justifies the righteous in trial. Deuteronomy 25:1-3: "If there is a dispute between men and they go to court, and the judges decide their case, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, then it shall be if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall then make him lie down and be beaten in his presence with the number of stripes according to his guilt. He may beat him forty times but no more, so that he does not beat him with many more stripes than these and your brother is not degraded in your eyes." This speaks about the judge takes care of a dispute and punishes the wicked who deserves to be beaten. However, even in this regard, the judge made him hit according to the severity of the sin, but not more than 40 times. The reason was to respect human rights (Park). The apostle Paul in the New Testament was beaten by the Jews 39 lashes five times (2 Cor. 11:24). The reason is because he was beaten for the gospel and church of Jesus Christ. This was wrongful acts of the Jews against Paul. This is by no means good in God's sight. We must not do things that are not good in God's sight that is wrongful acts. According to an Internet article, what we Christians are stealing is a violation of the eighth of the Ten Commandments. And we should not try to have what we should not have, which is the basic Christian ethic (Mk. 10:19; Rom. 13:9). Nevertheless, it is

said that as stealing someone else's, it is an act of unfair exploitation (Internet). As a new person in Christ, Christians must abandon this wrongful act. We should not take unfair advantage in political, economic and social activities. The new person must not be a donor or receiver of unfair money. Only then will our society be brighter and cleaner.

We must detest what God detests too. God detests those who say that the wicked are righteous or that the righteous are wicked. God detests that unjust judges make unjust judgments. Therefore, we too should detest unfair judges who make judgments unfairly. In short, we must detest the injustices that God detests too. And we must avoid injustice, which is not good in God's sight. Rather, we must seek justice. Therefore, as the people of God's kingdom, we must give glory to God because we pursue impartiality and justice.

## The Christians who have knowledge

### [Proverbs 17:27-28]

What qualities and characteristics do we need to be a true leader? In response to this question, LG Economic Research Institute mentions 15 common qualities of 50 successful leaders who lead the business in their book “Lessons from the leadership experts, Top” by Tomas J. Neff and James M. Citrin, leadership experts. Only three of these fifteen qualities are related to intellectual or technical abilities, and most of them are attitudes or wills based on soft level of Emotional Intelligence. Here, “Emotional Intelligence” refers to 'the ability to objectively judge one's limits and possibilities, to control one's feelings well, to truly understand the person from the other's point of view, and to maintain a good relationship with others.' Then, why is Emotional Intelligence becoming increasingly the basic qualities for future leaders, especially in the field of corporate management? First of all, as the speed of changing business environment, the values of employees are changing so fast and diverse. Therefore, the leaders must be able to understand and accept the various values and perspectives of their members, and form close relationships with them. In other words, the leaders should be able to demonstrate emotional leadership based on rich emotional intelligence. Only then can they meet the needs of their employees and make them feel satisfied. This enables the employees to be passionate about their work and generate high results. Furthermore, at the organizational level, human ties based on understanding and consideration between the leaders and the subordinates lays the foundation for a workplace or a strong organizational culture that allows them to work well. Daniel Goleman, a psychologist, has published research showing that the difference between successful and unsuccessful leaders depends more on emotional intelligence (EI) than on technical abilities or IQ. When about 80% of emotional intelligence and 20% of intellectual ability are properly harmonized, the leaders can be effective (Internet).

But I think little bit different from what the psychologist Daniel Goleman said. If effective leadership requires 80% emotional intelligence and 20% intellectual ability, I think that 20% intellectual ability should lead to 80% emotional intelligence. In a word, intelligence is more important than emotion in effective leadership. The reason is because emotion that isn't based on knowledge is dangerous (cf. Rom. 10:2). In other words, I think that emotions should be led by intelligence. And my thought is based on Proverbs 19:2 – “It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way.”

Based on Proverbs 17:27-28, I want to think about “The Christians who have knowledge” in two ways:

**First, the Christians who have knowledge use words with restraint.**



Look at Proverbs 17:27a – “A man of knowledge uses words with restraint ....” King Solomon who wrote this says that those who have knowledge use words with restraint. Here the phrase “words with restraint” means “restrain mouth” (Brown). What is the reason? Why do the Christians who have knowledge restrain their mouths? The reason for this can be found in Proverbs 10:19 – “When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.” The reason why the Christians who have knowledge, that is the wise Christians, restrain their mouth is because when the words are many sin is not absent. In other words, if we talk too much, we cannot be without sin. But the problem is that a pastor like me or a Bible teacher must open our mouths to speak and talk. What should we do? I look for the answer in James 3:1-2: “Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.” Although in case of pastors and teachers who teach the Bible should say many words, we must become perfect men who don’t stumble in any ways. That is, we must be perfect, just as our Father God in heaven is perfect (Mk. 5:48). In order for us to pursue this Heavenly Father's perfection, we must listen to what Apostle Paul says in Romans 2:21 – “you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? ...” We who teach the Bible must first diligently teach ourselves before teaching others. Then, what should those who learn the Bible from their pastor or their church Bible teachers do? I found the answer in James 1:19 – “My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” That is, those who learn the Bible should be slow to speak and quick to listen. In other words, they need to be quick to listen to the message of Christ (Rom. 10:17). Then their faith will grow.

Nowadays, as I look back on myself and pray to God, I have few struggles. One of those struggles is about listen quickly and speaking slowly. I think I have been struggling with this issue from the third year of college. While I was serving in the Christian club in college, I think I hurt so many people’ hearts by the words that came out of my mouth. Thus my heart was in distressed. So whenever I came back to my school apartment, I asked God for forgiveness and fell asleep. But since I couldn’t uses words with restraint and spoke out in a hurry, I unintentionally hurt many people’s hearts. Such person like me, the Scripture Proverbs 29:20 says, “Do you see a man who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for him.” So nowadays, I try to think once more before I say something, unlike the years when I was in college, but I am still struggling with it. But I don't want to give. And I want to try harder to be more careful in what I say and speak few words. And I should try not to speak the words of a gossip (26:22). In particular, I shouldn’t say the prayer topics of others who have shared only with me, even to my close friends without their permission. Also, no matter how complimentary it is, I want to be honest but not exaggerate too much. And I want to restrain my mouth from criticizing others. My thought is to be self-reflecting in a balanced way, being generous to those who criticize me but not to myself. And if I share one more thing, I have to be silent when I need to. Look at Proverbs 17:28. I personally think of this passage when I see myself smiling, but I feel a bit pathetic: “Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue.”

## **Second, the Christians who have knowledge is calm.**

Look at Proverbs 17:27b – “and a man of understanding is even-tempered.” Here, the word “even-temper” means that the person’s character is calm (Park). There is an English phrase “Be cool!” This means “Be calm!” This phrase is often used to mean ‘Why don’t you calm yourself’ when the other person is excited. The literal meaning of “even-tempered” in Proverbs 17:27 is 'cool of spirit' (Walvoord). This means that the man of understanding is calm in his soul no matter what situation he is in. In other words, the man of understanding had calm character and he can control his emotion and deal with a situation calmly even in the situation where he can surely get angry. Thus, in Proverbs 14:29, the Bible says, "A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly." What does it mean? A person who is slow to be angry has great understanding, but a person who is quick to get angry is displaying his own folly. Are we the people who have great understanding or easily get angry?

The Scripture Proverbs 17:12 tells us that “Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly.” In other words, the fool is more dangerous than the bear robbed of her cubs. Why is the fool more dangerous than the bear? The reason is because when the fool is angrier than the bear, s/he is irrational. Then if we meet this fool who is irrational, would we be able to react calmly? This is possible to the Christians who have knowledge. The reason is because they can control their temper. Look at Proverbs 16:32 - “Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.” If we are filled with the Holy Spirit and our hearts are controlled by the word of God, we can be slow to anger because the Holy Spirit rules over our hearts. So we can keep calm in any situation.

This is the post-modern age we live in. One of the characteristics of this postmodern era is relativism. In other words, people don’t acknowledge the objective and absolute truth (value or norms). Another characteristic of postmodernism is "emotionalism." In other words, this age in which we live emphasizes emotion more than reason. People seek emotional and sensuous things in all areas, and they speak and act as they flow under the control of their feelings. This also reveals as it is in our walk of faith. Rather than building faith on the foundations of the Bible and the biblical sound doctrine, we consider experience, mystery, or feeling more important and emotional aspects are prioritized in worship, praise, and prayer (Internet). But as we learned in Proverbs 17:27-28, we should be knowledgeable Christians rather than emotional Christians. We must restrain our words. We must also be calm. We should be slow to speak, and when we speak we should be careful in speaking. Never should we be swept up by our feelings and open our mouths. We must also be calm. Our character needs to be cold. In other words, we must be able to control our emotions calmly and respond calmly even in situations where we may be angry. Therefore, we must honor the Lord Jesus Christ through our lives.

## **He who defies all sound judgment**

### **[Proverbs 18:1-3]**

A Jewish proverb says 'He who does not have wisdom has nothing' (Internet). It seems that we tend to think that Jews are a smart people. However, I think they aren't naturally smart, but the result of being taught to use their head from an early age. To use their head here doesn't teach them knowledge, but they were taught how to gain knowledge. That is, the Jews were raised as wise. That is why Jews are said to have acted with wisdom on everything (Internet). So, when we talk about Jewish education, the concept that cannot be left out is the Talmud. The Talmud is said to be the culmination of their wisdom. And it is said that until the coming of age ceremony, they steadily study and accumulate knowledge and then continue the process of sharing it with others for a lifetime and accumulate wisdom (Internet).

If we look at Proverbs 18:1, the Bible says, "An unfriendly man pursues selfish ends; he defies all sound judgment." What does it mean? Now King Solomon is speaking of a fool who despises all kinds of true wisdom (complete wisdom, true knowledge). I want to receive the lessons God wants to give us by meditating on three things under the heading "He who defies all sound judgment," based on Proverbs 18:1-3.

### **First, he who defies all sound judgment pursues selfish ends.**

Look at Proverbs 18:1 – "An unfriendly man pursues selfish ends; he defies all sound judgment." He who defies all sound judgement separates himself from the crowd. That is, he is isolated from his friends. What is the reason? The reason is because he who defiles all sound judgement is selfish. To what extent he is selfish, he acts harshly for himself, even for his friends, and his friends fall away from him. For example, we have already meditated on Proverbs 16:28 – "A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends." In other words, he who defies all sound judgment is a selfish person and can separate his close friends for his own sake. How is this possible? He can separate his close friends by repeatedly speaking his friend's offense (17:9).

We must keep in mind that he who defies all sound judgement is not without wisdom at all. He has no true wisdom. But he has false wisdom. What is this false wisdom? It is the earthly, natural, and demonic wisdom that James 3:14-15 speaks of. Those who have this kind of wisdom have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in their hearts (v. 14). Therefore, he who defies all sound judgement lies against the truth (v. 14). As a result, there is not only jealousy and selfish ambition within the community, but disorder and every evil thing (v. 16). However, he

who loves all kinds of true wisdom, that is, he who has wisdom from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy (v. 17). That is, a Christians with true wisdom are peacemakers in the community (v. 18). And the peacemaker is never a selfish person who follows only his own desire. Rather, the Christian with true wisdom has many friends because he loves and serves his neighbor as an unselfish person. We must become Christians with this true wisdom.

### **Second, he who defies all sound judgement delights in airing his own opinions.**

Look at Proverbs 18:2 – “A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions.” He who defies all sound judgement is he who follows his desire and only delights in talking about his own opinions. In other words, he delights in airing his own opinions. What does “air” mean? Doesn't it mean “air” or “empty”? In other words, the fool who defies all sound judgement enjoys pouring out his opinions in the air. He is a selfish person who knows only himself because he has a closed mind. But at the same time he is an open mouth and only airing his own opinions (Walvoord). Such a person doesn't seek knowledge. Rather, this kind of person likes to speak to people who differ only in their own thoughts or opinions. Even Dr. Yoon-sun Park said like this: ‘A fool insists on his wish and throws away the truth in order to accomplish it’ (Park). Therefore, he who defies all sound judgment is foolish and thus gushes his own folly through his mouth (15:2). As a result, the lips of the fool bring him strife, and his mouth invites a beating (18:6).

The Christian who loves all sound judgment doesn't selfishly delight in airing his own opinions. He doesn't do that, as if pouring his views into the air. There is a scripture that comes to mind when I think about the word “the air”. That's 1 Corinthians 9:26 – “Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air.” When I meditate on this word of the apostle Paul in connection with Proverbs 18:2, I came to think like this: ‘The Christian with all sound judgment has an open heart and loves his neighbors selflessly. So he opens his mouth and speaks with purpose and moderation.’ And I think the purpose is to love neighbors and the church is to make peace to keep the unity of the community. In order to accomplish this purpose, the Christian with all sound judgement makes his words gracious (Eccl.10:12). Not only that, but his words are always like seasoning with salt with grace. So he knows how he should respond to each person (Col. 4:6). Also, the lips of the Christian with all sound judgement is right (Prov. 23:16) and speak the truth (8:7). Also, his mouth spreads knowledge (15:7). His tongue makes knowledge acceptable (v. 2). His lips feeds many people (10:21). And the lips of the Christian with all sound judgment bring forth what is acceptable (10:32). The Christian with all sound judgment speaks with purpose and moderation to keep the love of neighbor and the unity of the church. Not only that, he likes to listen to other people's opinions, while the fool who defies all sound judgement delights in airing his own opinions. Is there anybody whom you like to just open your heart and feel comfortable to talk this or that that is in your heart? Usually, it seems that such a person is not only the person who comforts our hearts to open our hearts and speaks, but also loves us warmly with the love of God. In my opinion, there should be a lot of these people in the church.

Then the church will be reconciled and the fragrance of Christ's love will be manifested.

**Third and last, he who defies all sound judgement receives contempt disgrace.**

Look at Proverbs 18:3 – “When wickedness comes, so does contempt, and with shame comes disgrace.” He who defies all sound judgement is he who contempts all kinds of sound judgment. And it is said that he who defies all sound judgment is being contempted. What is the reason? The reason is because he is proud. And because he is proud, he defies all sound judgment. And he is despised because he despises all sound judgment. Especially, he is proud so he despises all counsel of God (Prov. 1:25). Not only that, he doesn't want God's reproof (v. 25). And he despises his neighbor (11:12). Such a man ignores and even despises his neighbor. Therefore, the fool who defies all sound judgement will be shame. And as Proverbs 18:3 says, he who defies all sound judgement will receive disgrace as well as shame. What does it mean? It means that he who defies all sound judgement and follows his desire, and who prefers to show only his will, is reproached and dishonored. But the Christian who loves all sound judgment exalts wisdom, and that wisdom will exalt him (4:8). And because he has wisdom, it will honor him (v. 8). And the Christian who has all sound judgement will be praised for that wisdom (12:8).

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction” (1:7). He who defies all sound judgement follows his selfish desire (18:1). And he delights in airing his own opinions (v. 2). As a result, he who defies all sound judgment faces contempt and reproach (v. 3). But he who fears the Lord, who loves all sound judgment, is never selfish man who follows only his own desire. Rather, as a selfless person, he loves and serves his neighbor. Also, he who loves all sound judgement speaks with a purpose and moderation in order to keep the love of neighbor and the unity of the church. Not only that, he likes to listen to other people's opinions, while the fool who defies all sound judgement delights to airing his own opinions. And the Christian who loves all sound judgement exalts wisdom, and that wisdom will exalt him (4:8). And because he has wisdom, it will honor him (v. 8). And the Christian who has all sound judgment will be praised for that wisdom (12:8). I hope and pray in the name of Jesus that we all become lovers of all sound judgment.

## The mouth of the wise and the mouth of the fool

### [Proverbs 18:4, 6-8]

If we look at the Jewish Talmud, there is a story like this: ‘The animals from all over the world gathered and were exchanging the story about eating food excitingly. First, a lion living in the jungles of Africa said with dignity. ‘We, lions, kill our prey first and then eat it.’ Then the wolf bundled his eyes and said. ‘We, wolves, tear our prey gently and then eat it.’ Animals each said a word about how to eat prey. At this time, a tiger living in India asked a snake in a hoarse voice. ‘Hey Snake, you swallow the whole prey, but why is that?’ Then the snake, which was wrapping around, said to the animals. ‘But I think I’m still better than a human who reproaches others because I never hurt others with my tongue’ (Internet). What do you think of this Talmud story? Aren't we criticizing others with our tongues? Aren't we hurting others with our lips?

If we look at Proverbs 18:4 and 6-8, the Bible speaks about the mouth of the wise and the mouth of the fool. As we meditate on these two types of mouths based on Proverbs 18:4, 6-8, I want to receive the lessons God wants us to give us and obey them.

#### First, let's think about the mouth of the wise.

Look at Proverbs 18:4 – “Words from wise people are like water bubbling up from a deep well—the well of wisdom” (Easy-to-Read Version) [“The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; The fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.” (NASB)]. King Solomon says that the words of the wise man's mouth are like deep waters. What does it mean? It means that the words that come out of the wise man's mouth are fundamental (basic) (Park). In other words, the words that come out of the mouth of the wise man are knowledge (15:7), and that knowledge is truth (8:7). And King Solomon says that the words of the wise man's mouth are the fountain of wisdom that is a bubbling brook (18:4), which means that the words of the truth of life are abundant (Park). From the mouth of the wise Christian, the word of truth, which gives abundant life, should flow like a well. In other words, the gospel of Jesus Christ, who gives eternal life, must flow from the wise Christian man’s mouth. Not only must the knowledge of Jesus Christ be preached, but also the good news of Jesus Christ, who died on the cross and resurrected in three days, to give eternal life must be proclaimed through his mouth. We must become this wise Christians. That is why the gospel of Jesus Christ must be proclaimed through our mouths. I hope and pray that the words of the truth of Jesus Christ, who becomes life, will flow out of our mouths like the bubbling brook, so that we can share God's rich blessings with many people.

Then, let's think about three things what Proverbs 18:6-8 says about the mouth of the fool:

### **First, the mouth of the fool brings strife.**

Look at Proverbs 18:6a – “A fool's lips bring strife ....” In Proverbs 15:18, the Bible says, “A hot-tempered man stirs up strife”. In other words, a man of rage causes contention. He is unable to restrain his mouth in anger. So he speaks a harsh word (v. 1), the word that hurt the other, causing strife. Interestingly, the fool who is easy to get angry thinks that he is right even though he is wrong and fights with a chatter. This is what the fool is. In other words, the fool fights by making noise, thinking that he is right even though he is wrong. And he easily gets angry and hurts others because he speaks harshly to the other people. I often see this while playing soccer. Even though a man committed a foul, I see him screaming that the other person committed the foul and pouring out harsh words. Especially when I played soccer last week, a man screamed in anger saying that our teammates were fouled, even though the other team was wrong. Among those words, I heard racist words against the other. Even after hearing those words, I saw the other person just refused to respond. When I think about it, I think of Proverbs 17:14 – “The beginning of strife is like letting out water, So abandon the quarrel before it breaks out.”

The fool loves strife (17:19), but the wise loves peace. We must be the wise Christians. By meditating on Proverbs 18:1-3 at the Wednesday prayer meeting last week, we learned that we must become Christians who love all sound judgment and live a life of peace as those with wisdom from above (Jam. 3: 18). And we, as peacemakers, should not seek our own desire, but also should not reveal our own mind (Prov. 18:1-2). Rather, the gospel of peace should flow out of our mouths. And we must live a life of reconciliation with God and people, and reconciliation with those who are enemies. Hopefully, I hope and pray that we all become peacemakers, and not be people who bring strife.

### **Second, the mouth of the fool ruins himself.**

Look at Proverbs 18:6b-7: “... And his mouth calls for blows. A fool's mouth is his ruin, And his lips are the snare of his soul.” King Solomon already said in Proverbs 12:13, “An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips”. Then, King Solomon says in Proverbs 18:7 that the lips of the fool are the snare of his soul. What does it mean? Here “the snare” means ‘the trap’. In other words, the fool makes the trap for himself through his lips. When I think about the phrase ‘making the trap for himself,’ I think of this: ‘Digging his own grave’. In the end, the selfish and arrogant fool who only likes to reveal his own mind by following his selfish desire is digging himself into the trap. Not only that, but in the second half of Proverbs 18:6, the Bible says that the mouth of the fool calls for blows. A similar word are found in Proverbs 19:29 – “Judgments are prepared for scoffers, And blows for the back of fools.” Furthermore, the Bible says that fools are ruined by their lips (v. 7) (cf. 10:14, 13:3).

The life-giving word of God's truth (gospel) flows out of the mouth of the wise, but lies and evil that ruins

themselves flows out of the mouth of the fool. Our lips should be the lips of the wise, not the lips of the fool.

### **Third and last, the mouth of the fool hurts others.**

Look at Proverbs 18:8 – “The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts.” Looking at the second half of Proverbs 15:4, the Bible says “... but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.” Here, the word ‘deceitfulness’ is not only not true, but also refers to harassing the listener (Park). In other words, the fool who has a deceitful tongue afflicts others with it, especially hurts their hearts with his deceitful tongue. In particular, the fool hurts the other person's heart because he carelessly speaks harsh words in anger. Not only that, but the foolish rumors of lies that aren't based on facts, so he urges people and cause commotion in the church.

When I received an e-mail from a pastor last week, I remembered Satan's strategy for meditating on the word based on Acts 21:27-36, which I meditated a long time ago. The Satan's strategy is four things: commotion, impulse, rumor, and violence. In particular, in the pastor's e-mail, I saw that the church he serves is experiencing great difficulties, and the cause is, in my view, the work of Satan, and rumors of lies that are not based on facts, which urges people to cause commotion. In that e-mail, I thought about how painful and difficult it would be when I thought about the feelings of that pastor in the church. We must be careful with our mouths. We must make sure not to speak lies that are not based on facts. And we must try not to speak critical and provocative words with our mouths. Of course, in order to do that, we need to control our emotions as well. No matter how angry we may be, we must calm our feelings and deal with the situation calmly. That's why we must speak and act with the right situational grasp and right judgment. In particular, we must be sensitive and careful that if we say this to the other person that he may get hurt or not. At last week's prayer meeting, as we learned that Christians who love all kinds of true wisdom know how to please others (Prov. 10:32), we should try hard to say things that please others. King Solomon says in Proverbs 18:8 that the fool is a gossip who likes to talk about other people (Ref.: 26:22). And the gossip's words are like choice morsels, so not only do they like to talk about the secret faults of others, but they also like to listen those secret faults. As if eating delicious food, the foolish gossip loves to talk and listen to the secret faults of others. As a result, the foolish gossip hurts the other people.

The mouth of the fool hurts others, but the mouth of the wise is the tongue that heals (15:4). In other words, the fool's lips speak of someone else's secret transgressions, and thus hurt the other person's heart. But the tongue of a wise person heals the other person's wound. How does the tongue of the wise heal the other person's wound? It heals the other's wounds by speaking the word of God well (v. 2). I hope and pray that we can speak the word of God (the gospel of Jesus Christ) well like the tongue of the wise which speak soft words so that we can heal the other person's broken heart.

The Bible says that he who doesn't stumble in what he says is perfect man (Jam. 3:2). We must be perfect people of God. In order for us to be perfect people, we must become wise Christians. Never should we ruin



ourselves, like the fool, by causing strife and hurting others with our mouths. Rather, we need to be wise people and the fundamental, basic truth should come out of our mouths. I hope and pray that the words of abundant life truth will flow out of our mouths. In the name of Jesus, I pray that the gospel of Jesus Christ, who gives eternal life, flows out of our mouths.

## **Casting the lots and judgment**

### **[Proverbs 18:5, 17-19]**

Do you know what is the largest denomination in Korean Christianity? This is the Korean Presbyterian Church of Korea. But now, the 97th General Assembly of the Korean Presbyterian Church has overturned the stigma of ‘Service General Assembly’, ‘Reporter No Access General Assembly’, ‘Tear Gas Gun General Assembly’, ‘Singing Bar General Assembly’ and ‘Snapping General Assembly’ (Internet). ‘Service General Assembly’ refers to a General Assembly secretary who hired 150 service workers during the General Assembly, saying that the mobilization of the service men was inevitable because of threats such as hiring a murder contractor and breaking the Achilles tendon.’ In addition, those service men closed all the other entrances to the meeting place of the General Assembly and opened only one front door. And then they checked all pastors and elders who entered the door, but didn’t allow the representatives to enter without a pass with a photo, name, and the name of the presbytery. At the same time, the men from the service company banned reporters who came to cover the General Assembly meeting. That’s why the General Assembly was called ‘Reporter No Access General Assembly.’ Furthermore, the General Assembly secretary who called the service men stood in front of the microphone during the General Assembly meeting and took out the gas gun he was holding for his own personal safety. That’s why the Assembly was called ‘Tear Gas Gun General Assembly’. In addition, the reason why the General Assembly was called ‘Singing Bar General Assembly’ is because the newly elected General Assembly president went to a singing bar with other two pastors and enjoyed the entertainment with a female assistant. And to cover up this fact, another pastor, called a denomination officer, even threatened the female assistant. Nevertheless, the newly elected General Assembly president, who was leading the General Assembly, suddenly declared a breakdown on the last day of the meeting and left the meeting place, and then all the microphones and lights were turned off. That’s why they used the stigma of ‘Snapping General Assembly’. So now, an emergency countermeasure committee has been formed for the normalization of the General Assembly, and it is said that 140 presbyteries gathered and resolved five agendas: (1) Convocation of an emergency general meeting, (2) Non-confidence of the General Assembly president, (3) Dismissal of the General Assembly secretary, (4) Suspension of the activities of the committees until the General Assembly meeting is normalized, and (5) Postpone of the presbytery’s membership fee and the payment of each church baptized member donation. After receiving a prayer request for the Korean church, I especially prayed for this General Assembly meeting and received news about that meeting held for five days through a Christian Internet website with interest. However, while receiving such bad news, I was a little shocked and heartbroken. But I saw little hope that even after the sudden breakdown of the General Assembly, 842 representatives remained until the

end, gathering their hearts together, and finally, seeing that a large number of the presidents of the presbyteries, about 140, formed the emergency response committee. I hope that this crisis will be a precious opportunity that God gives to the the Korean Presbyterian Church of Korea, and will be an opportunity for true repentance, restoration, and reform. I don't know how everything will go on in the future. But when I look at the news through internet, I want to think about two things as I related the news with Proverbs 18:5, 17-19. Those two things, first of all, is about the electoral system that elects general assembly officers, which is casting the lots method. And the other thing is “trial”. Now, at the General Assembly, one of the pastors has proposed to revise the casting the lots election system. And the proposal is to propose an amendment that compromises the casting the lots system and the direct election system. The reason the pastor made a compromised proposal was that the casting the lots election system was more focused on preventing voting for money rather than the system needed to select the best people (Internet). And the other thing, “Trial”, in my personal opinion, I think there will be a lot of probability of going to lawsuits and trials between the President of the General Assembly, the general secretary and the Emergency Response Committee in the future. The reason I think this is because I have already seen an article that the court decision will take care the case of the president General Assembly’s singing bar (Internet).

If we look at Proverbs 18:5, 17, the Bible talks about judgment. And in verse 18, the Bible talks about casting the lots. That is why, under the title of “Casting the lots and and judgment”, I want to receive lessons from God as we meditate on Proverbs 18:5, 17-19 and pray to God, and obey Him.

### **First, I want to think about ‘Judgment’.**

In Proverbs 18:5, the word “judgment” comes out, and in verse 17, the word “case” comes out, and the “case” in the Bible means “judgment” (Internet). There are verses in the Bible where these two words come together, for example the first half of Ezekiel 44:24 – “In a dispute they shall take their stand to judge ...”. Here the word “dispute” refers to the “case”. The “case” refers to a lawsuit in these days. It is also a matter of having a plaintiff and a defendant quarreling that they are right. But when they can't reach a conclusion, they go to trial and get a judgment (Internet). Then, how is it to judge according to God's ordinances? There are many ways to think about it, but I would like to consider some of the rules the Bible says (Internet): (1) 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 says not to lawsuits among the saints. (2) Matthew 5:25-26, 40 says to reconcile before a litigation. (3) But when reconciliation is not made, there is judgement in Exodus 18:13 (for example, the Israelites came out to be judged by Moses). Of course, the Bible isn't talking about world trials here. (4) In Deuteronomy 1:16 and 25:1, the judge says that when the dispute arises between people and asks for a trial, the judge must hear a case (19:15-19) and make a fair decision between the two sides. In other words, the judge must justify the righteous and condemn the wicked. Here, in order for the judge to judge fairly, we must apply the words of Proverbs 18:17 – “The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him.” What does it mean? It means that the judge must listen to both sides in a case. In these days, we could say it is cross-examination. At this time, the judge says in

Exodus 23:3 not to show favoritism to a poor man in his lawsuit. In other words, the judge should not show favoritism and side with the poor because he is a poor man. In addition, if we look at Proverbs 18:5, the Bible says, “It is not good to be partial to the wicked or to deprive the innocent of justice.” What does it mean? It means that the judge shouldn't deprive the righteous unfairly by showing partiality to the wicked. The reason is because it isn't good in the sight of God. Proverbs 17:15, which we have already meditated on, says, “He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.” The judge, who is obliged to do justice, must not do anything that God is hated by God.

Did you know that a pastor could be tried and faced with dismissal (removal)? Now, in Korea, there is a continuous voice that a famous pastor of a large church should be dismissed because of the pastor's sexual harassment. So who can judge the pastor? The presbytery can do it. Article 19 of Chapter 4 of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in Korea says: ‘A case involving a pastor falls under the direct control of the presbytery, and cases involving general church members are under the direct control of the session. If they don't obey, or if they don't treat them carelessly, the superiors have the right to take them directly’ (Internet). According to this regulation, the presbytery governs the case of pastoral relations, and the session governs all other cases of baptized member relations such as elders, deacons, and other church members. Here are some words to keep in mind before the session of the local church judges the members of the local church. That word is Matthew 18:15-17: “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.” In other words, before the trial, the session must lovingly exhort the members of the local church to repent. In the course of the recommendation, (1) the plaintiff makes a one-on-one deal with the defendant and makes a recommendation. (2) If the accused doesn't listen, take one or two people and have them confirm each word with the mouth of two or three witnesses. (3) If he doesn't listen to them, they speak to the church. And if he doesn't listen to the church, (4) the church should treat him like an unbeliever. The purpose of doing this is not to retaliate for hating the accused, but to somehow make the accused convict of sin, repent, and return to God.

### **Second and last, I want to think about ‘Casting the lots’.**

Look at Proverbs 18:18 – “Casting the lot settles disputes and keeps strong opponents apart.” According to the procedure of the Bible's trial, when quarrels arose and there are disputes, lots were sometimes drawn to solve the problem. What we have to think about here is why the lot was implemented. There are two main reasons for this: ‘One was to ask God's will in doing something, and the other was to decide things that were ambiguous to decide’ (Internet). Therefore, the form of casting the lots has the meaning of entrusting everything to the will of God (Internet). In other words, the act that only those who try to do something according to God's will is to draw lots

(Park). These words show that the quarrels are both strong men, not trying to solve their quarrels by their own strength or by taking them to the courts of the world, but still trying to solve their problems by casting lots to solve them according to God's will. In other words, since both sides of the quarrel are trying to end the quarrel from the center by the result of throwing lots, their spiritual attitude is proper before God (Park). However, the problem is when the dispute is so intense that they cannot find a solution to the problem. In other words, when both sides of the quarrel don't try to end the quarrel (at least on one side), they not only try not to draw a lot, but go further and don't try to solve the problem according to God's will. So there are lots of cases where people go to the courts of the world. That is why Proverbs 18:19 says, "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, And contentions are like the bars of a citadel." What does it mean? How difficult was it to win a strong castle during war at that time? I saw in a Korean drama that capturing a strong castle was very difficult. This means that it is difficult to reconcile with family members or close friends who have been hurt by us. King Solomon said, "And contentions are like the bars of a citadel," which means that such quarrels are very difficult to get rid of (Walvoord).

As I meditated on these words, I remembered the Korean news about the quarrels between the chairman of the Samsung Company and his brothers. Although they are close brothers, there is no sign of reconciliation in the conflict. When I saw that on the news, I can't help but agree with the words that it is more difficult to be reconciled with a brother who is angry than to win the strong city. I think we should seriously consider how to avoid quarrels and bring peace when we see that the couples, family members, and siblings become enemies. The reason is because it is God's will for us to reconcile to each other, and Jesus came to this earth to reconcile us to God and to each other. Therefore, we, as disciples of Jesus, must be faithful in the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18). How can we be faithful to the ministry of reconciliation? Pastor Eric Foley of the Peacemaker Ministry said that in the midst of conflict, strife and division within the church, there are the Peacemaker, the Peace-breaker, and the Peacemaker. And he pointed out that there are exceptionally many people who disguised peace especially among Koreans. He said, 'In Korean culture, the sentiment that revealing the conflict will damage face and authority has been there for a long time, and the problem begins here. He warned that this is only a reduction in conversations with each other and an increased gap, but not a solution. He said that we must respect the person's personality and culture, admit our faults, repent, and achieve true peacemaking through forgiveness and reconciliation. He emphasized the importance of peacemaking based on the principles of the Bible. Pastor Polly suggested that biblical peacemaking is 'a ministry that prays, loves, fulfills, and reconciles us in front of the cross, as Jesus Christ forgiven us sinners with His blood on the cross before covering up any controversy in the conflict' (Internet ). We must be faithful in the ministry of reconciliation. Whether in the church, at home, or at work, we must resolve the conflicts that come from relationships in the Lord. It can be said that the worthy life of the gospel that we must live is a life of reconciliation. Not only must we promote reconciliation between God and people by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, but also we must do the work of reconciling and resolving conflicts and disputes between neighbors. Casting the lots was a way of reconciling ministry at that time. And there are still some people who still use it. But

we must faithfully carry out the ministry of reconciliation with the gospel of the cross of Jesus Christ.

These days, the joint denomination of the Presbyterian Church of Jesus in Korea draws lots when selecting the general assembly officers. However, the denomination is in conflict now due to scandalous things. So, from my perspective, I think there is a possibility of going to court in the world. If we fail to resolve the conflict by finding a solution to each other in the Lord, we may end up relying on the judgment of the world, which is a more disgraceful thing. Then it will be more and more embarrassing. This is by no means God's will. Not only the Korean Joint Denomination, but also the immigrant church in the United States, where we live, going to the courts of the world due to conflict doesn't serve as light and salt in the world. Even if we have a trial, we must settle it in the church, the presbytery, or within us. But we must solve it in Jesus Christ with His gospel. We must be faithful to the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, we must be an example to this world by keeping the unity of the church in the Lord.

## Laziness and pride

### [Proverbs 18:9, 12]

What do you think are the obstacles to success? In his book, ‘Seven Obstacles to Success’, Pastor Byeong-sam Kim listed seven obstacles hidden in success that we Christians must overcome (Internet). Two of them are “Pride” and “Neglect”. The author says that pride means to think self-centered, saying that God comes in through the door of humility, but Satan comes through the door of pride. And the author says that laziness is a sin because communication with God is cut off, complaints increase, and it leads to disconnection of relationships with all people. How should we overcome this pride and laziness?

In Proverbs 18:9, 12, King Solomon speaks of one who is slack in his work and a proud heart. Focusing on these two verses, I would like to receive a lesson from God as we meditate on laziness and pride under the title of “Laziness and pride.”

#### **First, let’s think about ‘Laziness’.**

Look at Proverbs 18:9 – “He who is lazy in his work is a brother to him who destroys” (NLV). King Solomon has already spoken several times about the lazy in Proverbs 10, 12, 13, etc. The point is that the lazy person becomes poor (10:4). The reason for this is because the lazy person doesn’t work diligently. Because he works with a negligent hand (10:4), he is bound to become poor. Although he works with the negligent hand, he diligently puts his brain to work, especially the evil and lazy slave. How do we know this? As we have already meditated on in Proverbs 15:19, the wicked do a lot of trick. Therefore, he is lazy and doesn’t think of laboring and sweating. As a result, it is said that the life of the evil and lazy slave is surrounded by difficulties such as thorns from east to west and north to south. A good example is the parable of Jesus’ talents (Mt. 25:14-30). When a man went to another country, he called his servants and entrusted them with his possessions (v. 14). He gave each of them, according to their talent, gave one person five talents, another person two talents, and another person one talent (v. 15). After a long time, the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them (v. 19). He who received five or two talents left five talents and two talents each (vv. 20, 22). And the one who received one talent came and said, “Master ... I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you” (vv. 24-25). Then the master replied, “You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my

money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest” (vv. 26-27). The other two took the talent the master gave them immediately went and traded with them, leaving five and two talents each. But the one who received the one talent didn’t immediately obey. Rather, he said, “I knew you,” and hid his one talent in the ground. This wicked and lazy servant is shirk his duty. So, in Proverbs 13:4, the Bible says, “The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing ....” That means even though he wants in his heart, he can’t get what he wants because he has lazy hands. Therefore, the lazy man not only doesn’t roast his prey (12:27), but also buries his hand in the dish because he will not even bring it back to his mouth (19:24, 26:15). Isn't it funny that even if he wants to eat meat, he should hunt and catch an animal but he only wants with in his heart and doesn’t actually hunt it? Also, who is hungry and struggles to put his hand in the bowl and raise it back to his mouth? Then like a baby, should someone feed him with a spoon? I think this is the culmination of laziness that his heart wants it, but he doesn’t even struggle to put his hand in the bowl and raise it back to his mouth. Regarding this lazy man, Proverbs 19:15 says that he is “an idle man,” that is, a person who is idle and playing. In short, the lazy man hates working with his hand (21:25). Yet the lazy man rather makes a problem. How does he make the problem? Look at 1 Timothy 5:13 – “Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to.” Rather, the lazy young widow goes about from house to house, becomes idlers, gossips and busybodies, saying what she ought not to do. These people were in the Thessalonica church. They were idle. They were not busy, they were busybodies (2 Thess. 3:11). These were people who like to intervene in other people's affairs, and they caused commotion by interfering with others in the church. And they were not practicing brotherly love because they were extorting taxes from some brothers in the church for the needs of their day to day life.

Those who neglect their work in this way are brothers to one who destroys” (Prov. 18:9). What does it mean? To say that the lazy man and the one who is slack are brothers means that the lazy man is a great waster (Spence-Jones). That means that the lazy man is like a prodigal man. So in Proverbs 23:21, the Bible says, “For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe one with rags.” And if we look at Proverbs 12:11, the Bible clearly says, “but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.” But what is the problem? The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes: “The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes Than seven men who can give a discreet answer” (26:16). When I think of these words, I think laziness and pride have something to do with it. In other words, the lazy man is proud.

We Christians should not be lazy. Rather, we must be diligent. Although we have already been taught many times as we meditate on the book of Proverbs, the wise Christians who fear God are diligent (Prov. 12:27, 15:19). As we must become wise Christians, not only we should diligently teach ourselves (Rom. 2:21), but also should diligently teach others the word of God, and work diligently (Prov. 16:26). Like ants, we must work diligently and cooperate with each other voluntarily even without any supervisor (6:7). And, like ants, we must prepare in advance for the future diligently (v. 8). Just as ants prepare for winter in the summer during harvest time,



we must diligently prepare things to prepare in advance while thinking about the future. In particular, we must prepare diligently for our death, as well as to meet the Lord. Let us diligently prepare for the Lord's Second Coming.

### **Second and last, let's think about 'pride'.**

Look at Proverbs 18:12 – “Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor.” What is pride? Pride is the opposite concept of humility (11:23, 13:10, 15:33, 16:18, 19; Matt 5:3; Luke 14:11) and is a state of mind with sense of superiority that is unsatisfied if one isn't always at the center (of attention). But the core lesson of the Bible is that the fear of God is the greatest virtue, and pride is the greatest sin (Prov. 1:7, 6:16, 17; 1 Pet 5:5). Pride is often divided into pride of power, pride of knowledge, and pride of righteousness. Pride in the Bible arises when attention is focused on oneself without God. We must be on the lookout for people's attention to us. We must be especially wary of people's praise. In Proverbs 27:21, the Bible says, “The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold, And each is tested by the praise accorded him.” We must glorify God when we are praised by people. In other words, we must direct people's attention to the Lord. Otherwise, we may become proud by people's praise, attention, and concern. We must always fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2). Our eyes should always be fixed on the Lord. And we must be humble like Jesus. While being humble, we must have an attitude to always obey the will of the Lord.

We must be upright Christians who fear God. As we have already meditated on in Proverbs 8:13, the fear of God is to hate evil. God hates pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth. Also, as we meditated in Proverbs 16:18, the upright man who fears God leaves evil, especially pride. This is because he knows that pride goes before destruction (16:18). Not only does he leave his pride, he isn't with the proud. The reason for this is because not only quarrels arise in pride (13:10), but also he knows that God hates the proud. Also, he knows that even if he joins hands with the proud, he will not go unpunished (16:5). Rather, the upright man who fears God humbles his heart as he is with the lowly in spirit (16:19). This is because he knows that the humble man has wisdom (11:2). Also, because he knows that God will surely show favor to the humble (3:34), he humbles his heart by being with the lowly in spirit. Another evil that the upright man leaves is “laziness” (15:19). The upright man who fears God faithfully fulfills his responsibilities. Therefore, the path of the upright man is as smooth as a well-prepared road. The reason is because he not only fears God and follows His will, but he also doesn't procrastinate and works diligently and sweats. Like the upright man who fears God, we must be humble and diligently strive to do the will of the Lord.

The Lord wants us to be good and faithful servants. And the good and faithful servants are diligent. We must never be lazy but diligent. And the good and faithful servants of the Lord are humble. May we humbly obey the Lord's commands and be the Lord's good and faithful servants who are diligent in His work.

## **A rich man and the righteous man**

### **[Proverbs 18:10-11]**

This Monday, I read a news article under the headline ‘The Korean men in their 40s are not safe zones for prostatic hypertrophy’ (Internet). The main point of this article is that the average prostate size of Korean men was found to be 23.5% larger on average compared to five years ago. In the case of men in their 40s, the average prostate size was 16.7g 5 years ago, which was in the safe zone from prostatic hyperplasia. But in 2011, the average prostate increased to 20.9g at the level at which the diagnosis of enlarged prostate is possible. According to one study, a typical Western diet, low intake of fruits and vegetables and high intake of animal fat, has been reported to increase the risk of an enlarged prostate (Internet). The reason I became interested in this article is not because I am now in my mid forties, but I think I was compelled to pay attention because I said, ‘It is not a safe zone for prostatic hyperplasia, even for men in their 40s in Korea.’ And actually, like this article says, I’m not in my safe zone right now. Therefore, the content of this article applies to me. How about you? Is your health in a safe zone? Are your children and grandchildren in their safe zone? How about your spiritual life? Are you spiritually in a safety zone or in a danger zone?

In Psalms 12:5, the Bible says, “Because of the devastation of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, Now I will arise,” says the LORD; “I will set him in the safety for which he longs.” It cannot be but a word of God's promise that is truly comforting. What a great strength and comfort is that God is now rising and saying that He will protect us and set us in the safety which we want. Our true safety is Jesus Christ. Although we are living in this wicked world, which is the danger zone, our safe zone is Jesus Christ. We must always run to Him and take refuge in Him. Only the Lord will keep us safe.

If we look at Proverbs 18:10-11, the Bible says, “The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe. A rich man's wealth is his strong city, And like a high wall in his own imagination.” Focusing on this passage, I would like to receive a lesson from God by thinking about the two classes of people under the title of “A rich man and the righteous man”.

### **The first class of people is rich who depend on their own wealth**

Look at Proverbs 18:11 – “A rich man's wealth is his strong city, And like a high wall in his own imagination.” King Solomon says that the wealth of a rich man is his strong city. That means that the rich man sees

his wealth as his strong city. In other words, the rich man depends on his wealth. And he regards his wealth as a high wall, which means that the rich man believes that wealth is the strongest way to protect himself (Internet). King Solomon already said in the first half of Proverbs 10:15, “The rich man's wealth is his fortress.” Then he went to the next verse, the second half of verse 16, and said, “The income of the wicked, punishment.” In other words, the wicked's income is rather (punishment) for him. The reason is because God will reject the craving of the wicked (v. 3). Why does God resist the craving of the wicked? The reason is because the income of the wicked doesn't profit and it is ill-gotten wealth (v. 2). What is the ill-gotten wealth? It is the wealth obtained from covetousness (cf. 1:19; 28:16) unfairly (cf. 16:8), especially through theft and deception or deceit (Walvoord). King Solomon says that the rich man who lives by relying on this ill-gotten wealth is using his wealth as the strongest way to protect him.

What do you think of the rich who depend on ill-gotten wealth? Pastor Dong-ho Kim's book ‘The Clean Rich Man’ says as follow: ‘Money is a gift, not a blessing. If you believe in Jesus, everyone will receive blessing, but not everyone will receive this gift. And the gift is given to you so that you can use for the Lord.’ ‘True wealth is not in possessions, but in sharing.’ ‘Be a rich person whom God can trust and entrust’ (Internet). Even if you become rich, shouldn't you be rich man or woman whom God can trust and entrust? Proverbs 11:28 says: “He who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like the green leaf.” The Bible clearly says that those who rely on their wealth rather than God will fall. However, it is said that the righteous who are attached to the Lord who is the vine will flourish like the green leaf. In other words, the righteous man who lives by relying on only God will produce abundant fruit. We should never be reliant on wealth. Rather, we must rely on God.

### **The second and last class of people is the righteous who depend on God.**

Look at Proverbs 18:10 – “The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe.” King Solomon contrasts with the rich man who depends on his wealth and the righteous man who depend on God in Proverbs 18:10, 11. In particular, he uses the words “a strong tower” in verse 10 and “their fortified city” in verse 11, and says that the rich man regards his wealth as his fortified city whereas the righteous man regards the name of the Lord as his strong tower. To say that the righteous man regards the name of the Lord as his strong tower means that it is the best way to rely on God to protect himself. In contrast, the rich man makes his life the best way to rely on his wealth to protect himself, so he lives on wealth. In this way, King Solomon's purpose in contrasting the righteous man who relies on God and the rich man who relies on his wealth is to give a lesson that the Israelites, we, and the only righteous man, must live by faith in God (Hab 2:4). ; Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:38; Gal. 3:11). King Solomon teaches us that this is the wisdom of the righteous and the life of fearing God. And he is advising us to never become rich fools who depend on wealth.

This is what King Solomon says in Proverbs 29:25 – “The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in

the LORD will be exalted.” What does it mean? It means that if we don’t fear God but fear people, it is not safe. Rather, it means that we should not fear people but fear God and rely on Him. Then we will be safe. Look at Exodus 15:1-3: “Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and said, "I will sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted; The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; This is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will extol Him. The LORD is a warrior; The LORD is His name.” When they escaped from Egypt and met the Red Sea in the wilderness, the Israelites were terrified when they saw Pharaoh king of Egypt and his army coming from behind (14:10). So in fear they blamed Moses (vv. 11-12). But Moses was not afraid of Pharaoh and his army. Rather, he looked to God and cried out to Him (v. 16). What was the result? Pharaoh and his army were annihilated in the Red Sea, and Moses and the Israelites were saved. Therefore, Moses and the Israelites sang songs to God, and the song began in Exodus 15:1-3: “... I will sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted; The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea. The LORD is my strength ...”

Those who don’t fear man but fear God, and trust in Him look to God even in the most disturbing and fearful situations. And they cry out to God. They are able to go forward in obedience by faith because they are enjoying safety in the Lord. Then they experience the saving power of God upon which they fully rely. They enjoy the grace of God’s answering their prayers. Therefore, they praise God. This is what Psalms 27:5 says: “For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle; In the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock.” Our God is the God who guards and hides us and places us on a high rock. Our God is the God who protects us and makes us safe. Therefore, we who are righteous who believe in Jesus must rely solely on God and run into the bosom of God even in distress, hardship, or emergency (Prov. 18:10). We must run to God, who is our strong tower, and enjoy the security He gives us.

As the years go by, we Christians who recognize our weaknesses must rely on God more and more. We who have received Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord through God's grace and have been saved, and who have been called righteous by God, must run to God, who is our strong tower. It is only the Lord who gives us real security. The wealth of the rich man can never give us real security. Therefore, we must run to the cross of Jesus. We must run forward to Jesus Christ who was crucified, and lay down all our burdens. And we must rely on Him alone. When we rely on Him alone, He will protect us. The Lord, the strong tower, will put us on the high rock.

## **The spirit of man and a man's gift**

### **[Proverbs 18:14, 16]**

Last Sunday we learned that one of the blessings given to those who fear God is the blessing of the family, based on the words of Psalm 128. Here, the family blessing refers to the wife (spouse) and children. In other words, God blesses those who fear God with their wives and children. In Psalms 128:3, the Bible says, "... Your children like olive plants Around your table." Children are God's blessing and peace to the parents' hearts. How grateful it is for us to have a good family life with joy when we sit around the table with our little ones at home. However, if our children, the blessings and gifts God gave us, are living in sin by breaking God's commandments and not fearing God, how much will this worry the parents' hearts? Especially if our children are children who dishonor us, the parents (Prov. 29:15), it will be a great concern for us and will hurt our hearts.

In Proverbs 18:14, 16, King Solomon speaks of "The spirit of a man" (v. 14) and "A man's gift" (v. 16). Focusing on these two verses, I would like to meditate on the word of God under the title of "The spirit of man and a man's gift". I hope and pray that we can enjoy the blessings God gives us by listening to and obeying the voice that God wants us to hear while meditating His word.

### **First, I want to think about "The spirit of man".**

Look at Proverbs 18:14 – "The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, But as for a broken spirit who can bear it?" At the early Morning Prayer meeting on Tuesday last week, I thought about a woman who had suffered from bleeding for 12 years, focusing on Mark 5:25-34. We also thought about the fact that she suffered "a great deal" and "had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse" (v. 26). Can't you imagine? If we had a rare disease, wouldn't we spend a lot of money on treatment (if there was a treatment fee, of course) as we met a lot of doctors to try to cure it? But what would happen to our spirits if our sickness became worse without any efficacy? Won't we be discouraged and desperate? In Proverbs 12:25, 15:13 and 17:22, King Solomon says: "Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, But a good word makes it glad" (12:25), "A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, But when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken" (15:13), "A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones" (17:22). d

The anxiety of the heart not only makes us annoy, but it hurts our spirits. Why there anxiety in our hearts? One of the reasons is because of disease. If we are suffering from illness for twelve years, not one or two days, like the woman who had suffered from bleeding, not only our hearts will become anxious, but our hearts will be

discouraged. In particular, if we have met many doctors with a lot of money to cure our disease like her, but not only has no benefit, but rather our disease is getting worse and we are in a lot of suffering, then our hearts will be broken and will be discouraged for sure. At that time, what is more terrifying than our disease is the loss of hope in our hearts. King Solomon says in Proverbs 18:14, “The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, But as for a broken spirit who can bear it?” What does it mean? Here, the word “a broken spirit” refers to being disheartened and helpless in front of tribulation, disease, or other difficulties (Park). If our spirits are healthy, we can fight our sickness and overcome it. But if our spirits are hurting and discouraged (sick), then we cannot fight our sickness and overcome it. One example is the general emotional response after cancer diagnosis when we have cancer. It is said that the emotional response of cancer-diagnosed patients can be divided into three major stages (Internet): (1) The initial reaction stage is when people experience infidelity, mistrust, and despair within a week of being diagnosed with cancer. And it is said that some patients may make false judgments about tests or treatment methods due to severe anxiety. (2) The second stage is a period of emotional turmoil. Patients at this time are said to have difficulty maintaining their daily life as they repeatedly come up with thoughts about cancer or death and suffer from depression, anxiety, insomnia, difficulty concentrating, and loss of appetite for one to two weeks. (3) The third is the adaptation stage, which is called the stage where each patient accepts the diagnosis and treatment process and finds his or her own coping method and returns to daily life. It is said that 50-70% of cancer patients experience adaptation disorders such as insomnia, anxiety, and depression due to difficulties related to cancer. In addition, 10-20% of cancer patients are accompanied by depression that needs treatment. And at this time, they suffer from various physical symptoms such as decreased mood, decreased motivation, and insomnia, as well as inability to eat or have many sore spots. In addition, fear of death, anxiety about recurrence and metastasis of cancer, fear of uncertainty in the future, worries about the changes and pains to come, and anxiety about whether it is a big disease even with small physical changes are experienced. Rarely, it is said that family members have a delusion about whether they want the patient to die or whether the treatment staff is deliberately doing the wrong treatment (Internet).

We must not be discouraged even if we encounter any tribulations and difficulties, whether it is a disease called cancer. Rather, we must keep our hearts at ease and joy by trusting God. Proverbs 15:13 says “A joyful heart makes a cheerful face ...” and Proverbs 17:22 says “A joyful heart is good medicine ....” Even if we have a disease, if we have the joy of our hearts, we will try to fight it. With this will, we must fight the sickness. Pastor John Piper wrote a book called “Don't waste your cancer” before cancer surgery. This is what he said: If we don't believe that our cancer is designed by God for us, we will waste it. ... In 2 Corinthians 1:9, God's design is clear: “indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead.” God designed it to deepen our love for Christ. When we die, we don't win cancer. Cancer wins when we don't value Christ. Cancer is designed to obliterate the desire for sin. ... Don't just think about fighting cancer. Think of fighting (my sins) with cancer. Cancer is a great opportunity to testify Christ (Lk. 21:12-13) (Piper). Let's hold

onto the words of Exodus 15:26 and pray to God: “And He said, “If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer.” God who heals us will heal us if we listen to and obey His word. Even He doesn’t heal us, I hope and pray that we can give thanks and praise and worship God as we experience God’s great and deep love through our disease.

### **Second and last, I want to think about “A man’s gift”.**

Look at Proverbs 18:16 – “A man's gift makes room for him And brings him before great men.” Here, “A man's gift” doesn’t refer to bribery. Looking at Proverbs 17:8, 23, the Bible says, “A bribe is a charm in the sight of its owner; Wherever he turns, he prospers” (v. 8) and “A wicked man receives a bribe from the bosom To pervert the ways of justice” (v. 23). What do they mean? Since God doesn’t accept bribes (Deut. 10:17, 2 Chron. 19:7), God’s people also must not accept bribes. The Bible says “a bribe corrupts the heart” (Eccle. 7:7). In particular, the judges were severely warned (2 Chron. 19:7) because bribes pervert the way of justice (1 Sam. 8:3; Prov. 17:23). That’s why Proverbs 15:27 says, “He who profits illicitly troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live.” In Proverbs 18:16, the “gift” that King Solomon refers to is not a “bribe,” but a gift we give to others. For example, look at Genesis 32:20-21: “and you shall say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob also is behind us.'" For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me. Then afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me. So the present passed on before him, while he himself spent that night in the camp.” In the process of returning home after about 20 years, Jacob heard the news that his brother Esau was coming to him with 400 people (v. 6). Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. And he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two companies (v. 7). Then he prayed to God (vv. 9-12) and prepared gift for Esau from his possessions (v. 13). What was the reason? Look at Genesis 32:20 – “... For he said, ‘I will appease him with the present that goes before me. Then afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me.’” Jacob tried to relieve his brother's feelings by giving the gifts to Esau. Then Jacob thought that if he faced Esau, Esau would accept him. When I thought of this Jacob's story, I thought of Proverbs 21:14 – “A gift in secret subdues anger, And a bribe in the bosom, strong wrath.” King Solomon says that the secret gift subdues anger. In the end, Jacob was trying to relieve his brother Esau’s 20 years of anger by giving gifts Esau. No matter how angry you are, can you still be angry with a person who gives you gifts?

King Solomon says in Proverbs 18:16, “A man's gift makes room for him And brings him before great men.” In other words, the gift leads us to great men. An example is found in Genesis 43:11. In that verse, Jacob told his ten sons to take some of the best products of the land of Canaan in their bags, and carry down to to the Prime Minister of Egypt, “a little balm and a little honey, aromatic gum and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds.” Also, in 1 Samuel 25:27, a wise woman named Abigail, Nabal's wife, meets David, who was angry and was about to retaliate against Nabal, and offered him a gift. In this way, the gift brings us before great men. Do you know who

the best gift is? The best gift is Jesus, the only begotten Son of God and the Passover Lamb, who was offered on the cross. Through Jesus, we can be brought to the throne of grace of glorious God (Heb. 4:16). In other words, we are saved through faith, which is God's gift, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, who is the best gift (Eph. 2:8). Not only that, according to the gift of God's grace given to us, we became God's workers who preach the gospel of Jesus Christ (3:7).

In Isaiah 38:16, there is an account that Hezekiah king of Judah wrote when he became ill and was healed: "O Lord, by these things men live, And in all these is the life of my spirit; O restore me to health and let me live!" Since God loved Hezekiah (v. 17) and God answered Hezekiah's prayer. Not only God heal his sickness, but He also casted all his sins behind His back (v. 17). In a word, God saved Hezekiah (v. 20). God loves us and gave His only Son Jesus on the cross in order to save our spirits and our lives. And He gave us faith as gift of grace to accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord. God has given us the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ. What should we do with this wonderful gift? We must preach the gospel of Jesus Christ that saves the human spirits. The reason is because the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16). I hope and pray that this best gift, eternal life, is given to us so that the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ that saves the life of the human spirits will be revealed through our preaching the gospel.



## Mouth, ear, heart

### [Proverbs 18:15, 20-21]

What do you think about Jesus' saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man" (Mk. 7:20)? Jesus said, "Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him" (v. 18), but "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man" (v. 20). The reason is because what come out of the heart of men is "evil thoughts" (v. 21) and "All these evil things" (v. 23). That is why Proverbs 4:23 says, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life." Are you watching over your heart well? How can you tell how you are watching over your heart? One of the ways is to look back at how we are using our own mouths and ears. In other words, by evaluating what we are quick to speak with our mouths and what we hear quickly through our ears, we can see the current state of our hearts.

In Proverbs 18:15, 20-21, King Solomon is talking about a person's heart, ears, and mouth. I would like to receive a lesson from God by thinking about "mouth," "ear," and "heart," centering on Proverbs 18:15, 20-21.

#### **First, let's think about "mouth".**

Look at Proverbs 18:20-21: "With the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach will be satisfied; He will be satisfied with the product of his lips. Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit." We have already learned many lessons as we meditate on the tongue and mouth until Proverbs chapter 17. I have summarized these lessons in three ways.: (1) God loves a true tongue (12:19) that speaks the truth (8:7-8), but he hates a false tongue (6:17). We must avoid a deceitful mouth and devious speech (4:24, 6:12). (2) The mouth of the wise gives good knowledge, but the mouth of the fool pours out folly (15:2). In other words, even though the mouth of the wise (the righteous) is the fountain of life (10:11) that delivers (11:9), the mouth of the fool invites ruin (10:14; 18:7). The reason is because the mouth of the wise produces wisdom (10:31), but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence (10:6, 11), speaks what is perverse (10:32), and gushes evil (15:28). (3) We must restrain our lips. The reason is because when there are many words, transgression is unavoidable (10:19). In other words, we need to know how to keep silent (11:12; 17:28). We must never cause contention like the lips of the fool (18:6). In Proverbs 18:20-21, King Solomon is talking about the fruit of the mouth. What is the fruit of the mouth? If we are the wise or the righteous, the truth will come out of our mouths, and we will be satisfied by the fruit of it. But if we are fool and if crooked words or lies come out of our mouths, we will be perished by the fruits of those lies. So King Solomon said, "The tongue has the power of life and death" (v. 21). In other words, the tongue has a great

influence. If we use our tongue wisely and well, we can save people and we can live. But if we use our tongue foolishly, we can kill others, and we can even die.

We must use our tongue wisely. In order to do that, we have to think carefully about the “power of the tongue” (v. 21). In other words, we must wisely control the power of our tongue. We must never tease our tongue to show off our strength. In a word, the power of the tongue must be restrained. From that point of view, as King Solomon said in Proverbs 10:19, we must restrain our lips. In other words, we shouldn't talk a lot (10:19). In particular, we shouldn't talk a lot in the church. As we shouldn't talk a lot, we especially shouldn't like to talk about others (18:8). Otherwise, we can crush the spirit of our brothers and sisters in Christ by our many words and stumbles in what we say, whether we intend or not (15:4). In particular, we must not speak reckless words that pierce like a sword (12:18). In other words, when we talk about others, we shouldn't say any words full of hidden meaning. Otherwise, we will eat the fruit of the tongue (18:21). In other words, if we don't use our tongue wisely, we will be ruined. Let us all speak the words of reconciliation. We are God's peacemakers. Therefore, in our mouths, we should speak words that are reconciling to each other. This is what is fitting for us to say (10:32). Look at 1 Corinthians 5:19 – “namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” Because we speak the word of reconciling, we must be at peace with all men if it is possible (Rom. 12:18). As King Solomon said in Proverbs 17:1, “Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife.”

## **Second, let's think about “ear”.**

Look at Proverbs 18:15b – “... And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.” Looking back on the book of Proverbs we have already meditated on, King Solomon said that the wise keep knowledge (10:14) and are saved through his knowledge (11:9). And King Solomon said that the tongue of the wise commends knowledge (15:2). The wise loves knowledge that much. Therefore, the ears of the wise seek knowledge. That's why Proverbs 23:12 tells us this: “Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.” But the time we are facing now is “the time will come,” as the Apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:3-4. What time has come? “For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths” (vv. 3-4). Now, many people don't believe that the Bible is God's word and that God's word is the absolute truth. As Paul prophesied, people's ears have already turned away from the truth. They hate to hear the truth of God, so they turn their backs and close their ears so that they will not listen (Zec 7:11). What is the reason? The reason is because their ears aren't circumcised. That is why they cannot hear (Jere. 6:10). They don't like to listen because the word of the Lord is offensive to them (v. 10).

Hear what King Solomon says in Proverbs 17:4 – “A wicked man listens to evil lips; a liar pays attention to

a malicious tongue.” What does it mean? Those who do evil or who lie are listening to perverse words or evil words. What is the reason? The reason is because those who do evil or who lie are perverse and evil. That is why they are listening to perverse words or evil words. But we are Christians who believe in Jesus. We are neither evildoers nor liars. Rather, we are those who do good and speak the truth. Therefore, we must listen to good knowledge and truth. Like Mary in Luke 10, we must sit at the Lord's feet and listen to His words (Lk. 10:39). Therefore, we must press on to know the Lord (Hos 6:3). And we must grow in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:10). I hope and pray that we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13).

### **Third and last, let's think about “heart”.**

Look at Proverbs 18:15a – “The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge ....” What kind of heart is the heart of the discerning man who gains knowledge? When I thought of this question, I remembered the Jesus' parable of the sowing. In particular, I remembered “good soil” that Jesus spoke of in the parable. Look at Luke 8:15 – “But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.” The good soil Jesus spoke of is the good heart that listens to God's word, keeps it, and bears fruit by perseverance. I think this heart is the heart of the discerning, that the heart of the wise. The heart that listens to the word of God and keeps it and bears fruit by perseverance is the heart of the discerning and the heart of the wise. Such heart of the wise man acquires knowledge (Prov. 18:15). King Solomon has already said something similar to this in Proverbs 15:14 – “The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.” What does it mean? It means that the heart of the discerning, that is, the heart of the wise, longs for knowledge. So, his ears quickly hear the knowledge of God. As a result, the wise listens and adds to his learning (1:5). He acquires knowledge (18:15). Then the knowledge of God will be pleasant to his soul (2:10).

We must pay attention and listen to the word of the Lord, and put the knowledge of God in our hearts (22:17). We must hear and obey His word. Because we fear God [“the beginning of knowledge” (1:7)], we must obey God's commandments. That is our wisdom and knowledge (Deut. 4:6). Then our hearts can guide our mouths (Prov. 16:23).

What comes out of a man is what makes him unclean (Mk. 7:20). In order for what comes out of our hearts to be something good instead of evil, then our hearts must long for the knowledge of God. And we must fill our hearts with the knowledge of God. In order to do that, our ears must pay attention and listen to God's voice. Our ears must be quick to listen to the word of God. Therefore, the word of God must come out of our mouth. And we must speak the knowledge of God with our mouths. May God control our hearts, ears, and mouths.

## A wife and a friend

### [Proverbs 18:22, 24]

Do you think meeting is the most important thing in your life? If you look at the article titled ‘The most important thing in life is meeting’, this is what it says: ‘To live means to meet. It’s meeting with parents, meeting with teachers, meeting with friends, meeting with good books, and meeting with many people. Human happiness and unhappiness are determined through meeting’ (Internet). What do you think of about this? My personal opinion is that the most important meeting in our life is meeting with Jesus. Also, meeting parents and teachers is important. But I think meeting with spouses is very important. The reason is because I think that the most important meeting after Jesus is the meeting with spouse. After that, meeting parents and children is important. In the meantime, I think another important meeting is a friend. The reason is because I think meeting good friends shapes our lives.

In Proverbs 18:22, 24, King Solomon talks about “a wife” and “a friend”. As I think about “a wife and “a friend” based on these two verses, I want to receive the lessons God gives us and obey them.

#### **First, let’s think about “a wife”.**

Look at Proverbs 18:22 – “He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.” How do you, husband, view your wife? When you think of your wife, do you think, ‘I am blessed by God’? Surely you aren’t thinking, ‘I am cursed by God’? Haha. When I think of “wife”, I think of Proverbs 5:18-19: “May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer-- may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.” The lesson we had already received here was that we should bless our wives. How do we do that?

#### (1) We should rejoice in our wives.

Look at Proverbs 5:18 again: “May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.” How should we husbands rejoice in our wives? We should always be satisfied with our wives. Look at Proverbs 5:19 again: “A loving doe, a graceful deer-- may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.” To always be satisfied with the wife means that we should be captivated by her love. In particular, we should be captivated by her virtues rather than her beauty. This is the meaning of the parable of the word “A loving doe, a graceful deer” (v. 19, Park). Then we will only enjoy the love of our wife, our “cistern” and our “running water” (v. 15), and will never forsake her and go to the

harlot's house. In other words, when we attain satisfying refreshment, sexually and affectionately, satisfied by our wives, we will never miss the harlot's bosom and envy her love (v. 20). King Solomon says in Proverbs 5:16-17: "Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers." But how many husbands are now flooding their springs out of their homes and sharing them with others? How many men abandon their wives and go to another woman? Now, many husbands aren't always satisfied with their wives and don't rejoice in them. So they don't admire their love (v. 19), but rather conspire with a harlot and embrace her breast (v. 20). In this way, when the men abandon their wives and become interested in other women, they are bound to taste the consequences of their sinful choice (vv. 7-14). Those consequences are lost strength (v. 9), lost time (v. 9), lost wealth (v. 10), loss health (v. 11), and pain in conscience (vv. 12-14). Therefore, we must know the consequences of this adultery and not be intrigued by harlots. Rather, we should always rejoice in our wives by being always satisfied with them.

(2) We must regard our wives as blessing God has given us (18:22).

Of course, King Solomon is not referring to any wife. The "wife" he refers to here is "an excellent wife" (12:4), "prudent wife" (19:14), or "A wife of noble character" (31:10). Look at Proverbs 31:10 – "A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies." Such noble woman, a wise wife, is from the Lord (19:14). And he who has such wise wife is blessed and favored by God (18:22). In other words, the husband who has such wife as a spouse is the blessed man. The reason is because such wise wife is a blessing (a very valuable person) to him. But why don't many husbands view their wives as blessing God has given them? What is the reason? One of the reasons is because she isn't a wise woman, but "a disgraceful wife". Look at Proverbs 12:4 – "A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones." What does it mean? Who is "a disgraceful wife"? It refers to a woman who quarrels well with her husband (Park). Regarding this quarrelsome woman, King Solomon says: "Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife" (21:9), "Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife" (21:19; 25:24). Maybe some of men want to make such excuse: 'God didn't give me a wise woman, but a quarrelsome and angry woman as my wife. How can I regard such a wife as a blessed person?' Sounds like a good excuse, isn't it? If I hear such a statement, I would like to tell him: 'God didn't give you a woman who was quarreling and angry. But because you chose such a woman, take responsibility and raise her to be a noble woman.' Too many times, it seems that a man chooses to marry a woman who looks pretty and attractive to him, but later quarrels and angers and rejects the wise and noble woman whom God gives him. If he has made such a choice, he must take responsibility and dedicate himself to raise his wife as wise and noble wife. Too many men are saying and doing things that are so irresponsible to their chosen and married wives. They aren't afraid to speak the cursing words to their wives, and are making their wives to feel that the wives are cursed by their

actions. In short, many wives now live without being loved by their husbands. What a miserable woman's life that is. We should see our wives as the blessings God has given us. Our wives are blessing God has given to us. We should rejoice at our wives, and always be happy with them.

### **Second and last, let' think about "a friend".**

Look at Proverbs 18:24 – "A man of too many friends comes to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." Have you ever felt proud and even bragged about having a lot of friends in your life? I did. When I was in my third year of high school, I was hanging out with a lot of friend. And I once boasted about 40 friends gathered at a cafe in a Koreatown to others. As much as that, I can remember that I even proudly boasted about having many friends. I'm not sure why I hang out with so many friends back then. It was just nice to have a lot of friend. But now, of those many friends, only about four are very close friends. In the end, I have only about one tenth of friends left. Haha. In Proverbs 18:24, the wise king Solomon says two things:

#### (1) King Solomon says that a man of too many friends comes to ruin.

Why is it comes to ruin to the man who has too many friends? I found the reason in Proverbs 14:20 and Proverbs 19:4 – "The poor are shunned even by their neighbors, but the rich have many friends" (14:20), "Wealth brings many friends, but a poor man's friend deserts him." The Bible says that the rich have many friends. However, in Proverbs 18:24, it is said that those who have many friends comes to ruin. What is the reason? The reason is because many of them are friends who have come to see their wealth (Park). Have you ever seen a person come to you and want to be friend with you before of your money? If "Yes", then that person will leave you if you have no money. The reason is because he wants to see you money and be friends. I've experienced this a bit. When I was in high school, I was hanging out with lots of friends. And when I was on drugs, I experienced our friendship were being separated. In other words, some of my drug addicts have experienced clinging to a friend with a lot of money and being separated with those who have no money like me. In the end, King Solomon is saying that it would come to ruin if we have many friends who came just for our wealth. Isn't it interesting? How rich was King Solomon? Couldn't there be any of the thousands who approached him who saw his wealth and tried to be his friends? I think King Solomon thought of his experiences and said, "A man of too many friends comes to ruin" (v. 24).

#### (2) King Solomon says that "there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (v. 24).

What does it mean? In short, it means that there are friends who are closer than a brother. Do you have a friend who is closer than your brother? Look at Proverbs 27:10 – "Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you-- better a neighbor

nearby than a brother far away.” The Bible urges us to enter the home of our friend or a friend of our father, who is closer than our brother far away when disaster strikes us. What is the reason? The reason is because the close neighbor (friend) is better than the brother far away. But what kind of friend is closer than the brother far away?

**(a) A friend who makes my face shines.**

Look at Proverbs 27:17 – “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” What does it mean? This is a metaphor for believers helping each other (Park). A friend who is closer than siblings is the friend who helps each other. Therefore, as he promotes his friend's progress, he sees that friend shine.

**(b) A friend who gives earnest counsel.**

Look at Proverbs 27:9 – “Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.” Here, the earnest counsel of a friend means “the counsel of the soul,” which refers to exhorting a friend earnestly with love (Park). That earnest counsel also includes painful rebuke for the friend. Look at Proverbs 27:6 – “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.” The friend closer than the brother far away is a friend who loves our souls and therefore not only gives heart-pleasing and loyal counsel, but also wounds our hearts with rebuke in love.

**(c) A friend who lays down his life for me.**

Look at John 15:13 – “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.” Jesus regarded us as friends and gave His life on the cross for our salvation. Where is a love greater than this? This is the love of the friend more intimate than the brother far away. The friend who lays down his life for us, this friend's love is more intimate than the brother's love.

He who has a wife is the one who is blessed and who is favored by God. God blesses us with our spouse in our lives. Not only that, but God gives us the blessing of friends as well. God also allows us to meet friends who are closer than our siblings. I hope and pray that you may have such blessings from God.

## Wealth and trials of the poor

**[Proverbs 18:23; 19:1, 4, 7, 17]**

Is the poor a blessing or a curse? When I thought of this question, this saying came to my mind: ‘Is it a sin to be poor?’ No one can say that poor is a sin. However, while living in this world, I think somehow poor people are treated as sinners. That means even though poverty is not a sin, in this world where the gap between rich and poor is getting worse, the poor are living under the fingering, contempt, and ridicule of the world as if they are sinners.

As I meditate on the words of Proverbs 18:23 and 19:1, 4, 7, 17, I thought that it was ‘the wealth of the poor’. In other words, even though the poor can be poor economically, there are actually poor people who are rich in God's eyes. Nevertheless, they have no choice but to face trials while living in this world (19:4, 7). Today's passage Proverbs 19:17 teaches us how to treat the poor. So, I would like to receive the lessons God gives us by meditating on three things, focusing on Proverbs 18:23; 19:1, 4, 7, 17. The three are: (1) The wealth of the poor, (2) The trials of the poor, and (3) How we should treat the poor.

### **First, what is the wealth of the poor?**

Today's passage teaches two things:

#### (1) The poor's wealth is earnestness.

Look at Proverbs 18:23 – “A poor man pleads for mercy, but a rich man answers harshly.” I personally think that people in Tijuana Mexico have better receptibility to accept the gospel than Hispanics in the United States when I see our church Hispanic Ministry members strive to evangelize the Hispanic community around our church and when I heard from our Hispanic Ministry pastor who goes down to Tijuana, Mexico with his wife and proclaim the gospel to the people over there. According to statistics, I heard that about 10 Hispanic people heard the gospel from our Hispanic Ministry pastor Victor Gomez and accepted Jesus as Savior through the last missionary work in Tijuana Mexico. Despite this, not so many souls are accepting Jesus in the Hispanic community around our church. When I think about why this is the case, I think one of the reasons is that Hispanic people living in Tijuana Mexico have stronger desire to hear the gospel in poverty than Hispanic people living here in the United States. In other words, I think it is



because people living in Tijuana Mexico are poorer in spirit than those living here in America (Mt. 5:3). When I think about it, I think that being poor is a blessing.

Looking at the first half of Proverbs 18:23, King Solomon says, “A poor man pleads for mercy ....” What does it mean? Dr. Yoon-sun Park says, ‘When a person is poor, he becomes humble and desperate in seeking what he needs’ (Park). As we know, when the Israelites lived in the wilderness, God warned them through Moses. What was that warning? He warned them that their hearts should not become proud and they should not forget their God when they entered into Canaan, a land where bread would not be scarce and they would lack nothing (Deut. 8:9, 14). Why did God warn the Israelites this way? The reason is because God knew that their hearts would be proud when they entered the land of Canaan, they ate and were satisfied, when they built fine houses and settled down, when their herds and flocks grew large and their silver and gold increased and all they had is multiplied (vv. 12-13). Shouldn't we also hear this message of God's warning? Listening to the news last week, I heard the news that the US economy is reviving, and signs are visible everywhere. When I heard that news, everyone will think it's good news. However, after I meditated on Proverbs 18:23, I thought that the news might not be the good news. The reason is because I thought that if the US economy revives, then we may not seek God desperately. Of course, this is just my personal opinion. But at least I think that we Christians still lack the desire to seek God. Therefore, I think that the news that the economy is improving again may be a danger, not a blessing.

What do we Christians need now? Is it economically enriched by economic growth? Or is it our eagerness to seek God? I think that three things are noticeably lacking in our living in the postmodern era. The three are commitment, earnestness or desperateness, and sense of urgency. When considering why commitment, earnestness, and urgency are lacking, I looked for the cause in selfishness, comfortism, and laziness. As the world moves toward the end more and more, we love ourselves as 2 Timothy 3:2 says. That is why we love ourselves more than the Lord and the church that is the body of the Lord. That is why we are increasingly not serving the church. One of the things I felt in Korea this time is that everyone is having a hard time in living. More and more believers are not committed to the church. I think not only commitment but also earnestness as well. We who love ourselves seek our comfort instead of seeking to suffer for the Lord. Although hedonism is dangerous, I think comfortism is also very dangerous. The reason is because not only we don't earnestly seek God, but also it makes us impossible to do so. How about the urgency? Do we really have a sense of urgency? For some reason, it seems that we aren't only lacking sense of duty, but also lack of urgency. I think that's because we love ourselves and seek comfort and thus become lazy. Therefore, I think we are not properly fulfilling the mission entrusted to us as stewards of the Lord. Even so, it seems that we aren't living a life of faith with sense of urgency in the thought that we should account for when we stand in front of the Lord.

We must ask God with earnest words like the poor in Proverbs 18:23. In other words, we must become poor in spirit and pray to God earnestly in seeking Him. This is what Proverbs 8:17 says: “I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me.” Also, in Luke 22:44, the Bible says “And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.” I hope and pray that we, like Jesus, will be able to pray more earnestly to God.

(2) The poor’s wealth is integrity.

Look at Proverbs 19:1 – “Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity Than he who is perverse in speech and is a fool.” One of the Christian virtues that I personally value in my own Christian life is truthfulness. One of the reasons is because, I don't remember well whether I was a college student or a seminary student , when I went to a senior citizen’s apartment with my grandmother to see my grandmother's friend, she said a word to me. I remember that at that time, as my grandmother helped her friend and took her into the apartment, she pointed to me, and told her friend, ‘This is my grandson who will be a pastor’. When my grandmother’s friend heard that from my grandmother, she said ‘Be truthful’. That word keeps echoing in my heart until today. Don't you also want a truthful pastor? May we all become truthful Christians.

Today's text Proverbs 19:1 is similar to Proverbs 28:6 – “Better is the poor who walks in his integrity Than he who is crooked though he be rich.” In these two verses, ‘the poor who walks in his integrity’ refers to the poor who acts truthfully. Here, the truthful person refers to the person whose inside and outside is consistent (Park). Now King Solomon contrasts this truthful man with the fool in Proverbs 19:1. In other words, he is contrasting truth and falsehood rather than contrasting wealth and poverty. What does it mean? It means that it is better to be truthful man who is poor than the false man who is rich. In Proverbs 28:6, “he who is crooked though he be rich” refers to a person who is rich but crooked in his words and distorts his words without telling the truth (Park). About such a person the Bible Proverbs 2:15 says, “Whose paths are crooked, And who are devious in their ways.” After all, he who is wealthy and acts crookedly has a crooked heart. And from such crooked heart only crooked words and crooked actions can come out. The Bible says that such person is fool. And the fool isn’t truthful, but rather a liar.

Rather than striving to become rich, we must strive to become truthful Christians. We must abandon lies and hypocrisy and dedicate ourselves to living a life of unity on the inside and the outside. In order to do that, we must listen to and obey God's voice. In other words, we must live a life of faith in which the word of God is being personified in our lives. Therefore, we must be truthful Christians.

**Second, what are the trials of the poor?**

Look at Proverbs 19:4, 7 – “Wealth adds many friends, But a poor man is separated from his friend. ...

All the brothers of a poor man hate him; How much more do his friends abandon him! He pursues them with words, but they are gone.” Looking at these verses, we can see what the trials of the poor are. They are nothing other than being hated by his brothers, and being abandoned by his friends. And in Proverbs 14:20, the Bible says that the poor is hated by his neighbors. It means that the poor is isolated and that he is bound to be lonely. Not only that, the poor is also abused and oppressed by evil rulers (28:3, 15; Ref.: 22:16). Why does God allow the poor to go through these trials? Why did God make some people rich and some poor? Look at Proverbs 22:2 and 29:13 – “The rich and the poor have a common bond, The LORD is the maker of them all. ... The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: The LORD gives light to the eyes of both.” What do they mean? It means that God made “the oppressor” that is both the unrighteous rich and the poor and caused them to have this in common. That is, God doesn’t differentiate between the rich and the poor, but gives light to their eyes. When the Bible says ‘give light to the eyes’, it means giving the power to sustain life. In Matthew 5:44-45, the Lord said something similar. At that time, the Lord said to His disciples, “He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good” (Internet). We can’t figure out why God made someone rich and some poor. But it is clear that the rich and the poor are all within His will.

James 1:3 states that the trials of poor brothers and sisters among Christians produce patience. And the apostle James says in James 1:12 – “Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” I hope and pray that even in poverty we endure any kind of trials with the words of God’s mouth (Deut. 8:3) and thus earning the crown of life that the Lord promised.

### **Third and last, how should we treat the poor?**

Look at Proverbs 19:17 – “One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, And He will repay him for his good deed.” What does it mean? The Bible tells us to be gracious to the poor. And the Bible tells us that being gracious to the poor is lending to the Lord so the Lord will repay us for what we gave to the poor (Park). Looking at the second half of Proverbs 14:31, the Bible says, “... But he who is gracious to the needy honors Him.” Therefore, we should be gracious to the poor. And we should be concern for the rights of the poor (29:7). We should give to the poor (29:7). We should give some of our food to the poor (22:9). We must not shut out eyes to the poor (28:27). However, the unrighteous rich man is proud and treats the poor roughly when the poor man utters supplications (18:23). This is the same as the attitude of a proud rich man who didn’t open his eyes to the request of the beggar Lazarus in Luke 16:19-21(Park). Furthermore, the unrighteous rich man even oppresses the poor to make more for himself (Prov. 22:16). However, the Bible Proverbs 14:31 says “He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker”.

This land of America we live in is a rich land. At the same time, this land seems to be becoming more and more spiritually poor. The reason for this is that, just as the Israelites at the time of the Exodus lived in the land of

Canaan, where milk and honey flowed, and thus became proud in the richness of the land, we are also becoming proud in the richness of this land. In this time, we need to humbly receive the lessons God gives through today's text. We must long for the wealth of the poor. We must long for earnestness and integrity. We must live a life of pursuing the wealth of the poor. At the same time, we must be prepared to face the trials of the poor as well. We must also be prepared to be isolated and lonely, hated by our brothers and sisters and neighbors. In the midst of that, we must be gracious to the poor and be generous to the poor. Therefore, I hope and pray that all of us can glorify God.

## **“The foolishness of man”**

### **[Proverbs 19:2-3, 5]**

Have you ever met a fool? In Proverbs 17:12, the Bible tells us “Let a man meet a bear robbed of her cubs, Rather than a fool in his folly.” Who is the fool? When I look at an Internet website, it says: ‘An ignorant and foolish person makes people more difficult than a ferocious female bear. If he is ignorant and stubborn without knowing himself, the intellectuals are in trouble. Also, since he has selfish tendency to know only himself, he isn’t considerate of others. So the fool is more cruel and destructive, and is like dynamite. He doesn’t know what to do when, and what he thought he would do. And once he insists that no one can stop him (Internet).

If we look at Proverbs 19:3, the Bible says, “The foolishness of man ruins his way, And his heart rages against the LORD.” Focusing on this verse, I would like to receive a lesson from God, thinking about the three sins of the fool under the heading “The foolishness of man”.

### **The first sin of the fool is to hurry his footsteps with zeal that is without knowledge.**

Look at Proverbs 19:2 – “It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way.” A translation of the original Hebrew word for this verse is as follows: ‘Also it is not good a soul without knowledge, and he who hurries his footsteps sins’ (Park). Here, the conjunction ‘Also\’" implies that the verse 2 is related to verse 1. In other words, the fool is not only perverse in speech (v. 1), but also has “zeal without knowledge” (v. 2). Here, the phrase “zeal without knowledge” means that there is no knowledge of the soul. And the phrase “to be hasty and miss the way” means that he who acts impatiently and rashly commits sin (Park). A representative example is the apostle Paul in the New Testament. That is, before meeting the resurrected Jesus, Paul (Saul) was zealous for God in the absence of knowledge of Christ (Acts 22:3) [“because I acted in ignorance and unbelief” (1 Tim. 1:13)]. That was why he persecuted the disciples of Jesus who followed His way [“as to zeal, a persecutor of the church” (Phil. 3:6)]. We can another example in Romans 10:2 – “For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.” Here, “they” refer to the Israelites (v. 1). When the apostle Paul thinks of his people, the Israelites, he says that the Israelites are zealous for God in ignorance of not knowing that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah). In other words, the Israelites didn’t want to be saved by believing in Jesus Christ (vv. 9-10, 13), but rather to be saved by keeping the law (v. 5). They didn’t know the righteousness of God and tried to establish their own righteousness (v. 2). How foolish they were.

It is dangerous for us to be zealous for the church without growing up in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The reason is because zeal that isn't based on the knowledge of Jesus Christ is only to establish our own righteousness. What does it mean to establish our own righteousness? That means we become proud. And when we become proud, we are bound to sin against God because we speak and act impatiently and rashly. One example is Saul, the first king of Israel in 1 Samuel 13. As he was proud, hasty and rash, he didn't ask God for grace, and didn't wait for Samuel, and offered a burnt offering to God in the thought that the Philistines would come down to Gilgal against him and Israel (v. 12). Charles Bridges, an evangelical preacher and theologian of the Anglican Church, pointed out the five misfortunes of souls without spiritual knowledge (Park): (1) A soul without spiritual knowledge doesn't know the true guidelines of life. He doesn't live for God, but for himself. (2) A soul without spiritual knowledge doesn't know how to deal with sin. In other words, he doesn't know the truth of Christ's atonement, faith, and repentance and etc.. (3) A soul without spiritual knowledge doesn't know how to get help when he faces trouble. In other words, he doesn't know about the fact that the trouble can be the love of God, makes man humble, and he will go through the process of sanctification and so on. (4) A soul without spiritual knowledge doesn't know what the power of accountability is. He only knows his own strength. However, human strength is not really strength, but weakness. He doesn't know that he becomes strong in the Lord. (5) A soul without spiritual knowledge doesn't know the true hope. For him, everything is only uncertain. He is completely unaware of the faithfulness of God's promise.

### **The second sin of the fool is to blame God after he has done wrong.**

Look at Proverbs 19:3 – “The foolishness of man ruins his way, And his heart rages against the LORD.” The original Hebrew word for this word is translated as follows: ‘The man's foolishness overthrows (overturns) his way, and his heart resents against the Lord’ (Park). Our sinful nature is to blame God for the painful consequences of our choice instead of being responsible for our wrong choice. This sinful instinct was passed on to us from Adam, the first human being in Genesis 3. That is, when Adam and Eve broke God's command and ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God called Adam (v. 9). At that time, Adam, who was hiding in fear (v. 10), said to God: “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.” Although Adam sinned, he said “The woman whom You gave to be with me ...”. This is blaming God for giving a wife to him. To blame God in this way is a terrifying sin of quarreling with the Almighty God (Isa. 45:9) (Park).

If we think about ‘blame’, we remember the Israelites at the time of the Exodus. Not only they grumbled at Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” (Exod. 15:24), they also grumbled against God (Num. 14:27). At that time, God said to them, “How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me” (v. 27). The Israelites who were blaming God in this way didn't listen to God's voice (Ps. 106:25). That is, they disobeyed God's word. As a result, God was angry with them (Num. 11:1) and disciplined them (ch. 21). The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:10 – “Nor

grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.” Why do we grumble? Why do we blame not only people, but even God? I looked for the answer in Jude 1:16 – “These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.” The reason we grumble is because we have discontent within us. And the reason we are dissatisfied is because we are distrusting God. As a result, we not only sin against God, but even disobey His commandments. We must obey God's commandments. In order to do that, we must trust God. And we must be content with God alone. Then we can obey God's commandments so that we can walk the right path the Lord wants. And when we walk the right path, we will not sin against God.

### **The third and last sin of the fool is to lie.**

Look at Proverbs 19:5 – “A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who tells lies will not escape.” The original Hebrew word for this word is translated as follows: ‘The witness of lies will be punished, and the one who breathes lies will not be saved’ (Park). Here, ‘The witness of lies’ or ‘the one who breathes lies’ is a lie that shows no sign of repentance, but a brazenfaced. Such a person has missed the opportunity to repent for a long time (Rom. 2:4) and isn’t conscience-stricken for lying (Park). Therefore, the Bible says that he will not be saved, but rather will not escape punishment (vv. 5, 9). Furthermore, the Bible Proverbs 19:9 says “... he who tells lies will perish.” The Bible Proverbs 14:25 says “... but a false witness is deceitful.” Psalms 5:6 says that God abhors those who deceive people without even the pang of conscience. And in Proverbs 13:5, it says “A righteous man hates falsehood ....” Therefore, we should not lie to each other. Lying is an act of the old self. We must take off our old self (Col. 3:9).

We should not tell lies. Rather, we must be truthful witnesses (Prov. 14:25). We must be faithful witnesses and not lie (v. 5). Rather, we must save lives (14:25) by speaking the truth (12:17). We must keep in mind the words of Proverbs 12:19 – “Truthful lips will be established forever, But a lying tongue is only for a moment.”

Today we thought about the three sins of the fool. The sins of the fool are (1) to hurry his footsteps with zeal that is without knowledge, (2) to blame God after he has done wrong, and (3) to lie. I hope and pray that we all act carefully with knowledge and zeal with the wisdom of God, never blame God, and speak the truth as truthful witnesses of the Lord.

## The person we desire

### [Proverbs 19:6, 22]

Who do you like? Who do you want to be friends with? When I look at an internet website, there is an article titled 'What is a Real Friend'. I was reading it, there is a part of the article that comes to my mind that I want to share with you: 'A friend is a face you miss when you wander in longing, and a person who just wants to be there while you are alive. The one who can wipe those tears away when you're crying and the one who will respond to your bright smile, the one who things of you wherever you are. The friend is the beings of love who doesn't expect to receive and who is willing to give all of his. That is why he is a person who prays to share your pain and sorrow. He is the person who can only give you warm feeling when you are frustrated, someone who cares your heart when you want to walk alone. The friend is someone who wants to call you when you're lonely and someone who wants to tell you a short story. The friend is a person who can love all of you, and who will only wish you happiness even in the event of an unexpected breakup' (Internet). Do you have a friend like this? Don't you think it would be nice to have such a friend if you don't have one? What does the Bible says about whom we should desire?

In Proverbs 19:22, King Solomon says: "What a man desires is unfailing love ; better to be poor than a liar." I would like to receive the lessons God gives us by thinking about two things under the heading "The person we desire" based on Proverbs 19:6, 22.

#### **First, the person we desire is a generous man.**

Look at Proverbs 19:6 – "Many will seek the favor of a generous man, And every man is a friend to him who gives gifts." It may not be easy to find someone who treats you generously when everyone is struggling because the economy is not so good these days. It can be difficult to find someone who treats you more generously, especially because many people are so absorbed in materialism that they don't want to do anything that hurts their financial situation in any way. However, in the midst of such situation, how would you feel when you meet someone who treats you generously even though he suffers a little loss? One of my personal restaurants is El Pollo Loco. There is one near our church, and another one near my house. So I usually go to these two places to order and eat my favorite Tostada salad. Once I went to the El Pollo Loco restaurant near my neighborhood and ordered a Tostada salad. And when I opened the lid, there was too little lettuce. So I asked someone who works there to give me more lettuce. Then one more time, I went to the same restaurant near our church and ordered the same food. And the worker looked at my face and checked my name. And she made the food and gave it to me and I was



grateful for how much she gave me the food. I am sure you like a generous person too.

In Proverbs 19:6, the generous man that King Solomon is talking about is a person who is generous and likes to give to others. In particular, he knows the plight of others and wants to help. So he helps those living in difficult lives and serves them with his loving hand. The generous man is the one who gives gifts (v. 6). Therefore, the generous man not only gives food to the poor (22:9), but also shows grace all day long (Ps. 37:26). Such generous man who likes relief enriches others (Prov. 11:25). What would you do with such generous man who gives you relief, gives you gifts, and shows you grace all day long? According to Proverbs 19:6, the Bible says that many people seek the favor of the generous man. And the Bible says that many people want to be friends with that generous man (v. 6). Do you have such a generous friend?

I remember the word of Proverbs 18:16 – “A man's gift makes room for him And brings him before great men.” As I meditated again on this word that the man's gift brings us before great men, I thought again of Jesus, who is the God's gift to us. As a result of this fact that God has given the best gift of Jesus to sinners like us and to those who have been enemies with God, are we not being led before the graceful throne of God? Therefore, we must approach before the throne of grace boldly in order to receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Heb. 4:16). And we must live a life of showing grace to others through the grace of God. And we should be generous to them. Then we will be blessed (Prov. 22:9), and not only us, but also our descendants as well (Ps. 37:26). And God will enrich and enrich us (Prov. 11:25).

### **Second and last, the person we desire is a kind man.**

Look at Proverbs 19:22 – “What is desirable in a man is his kindness, And it is better to be a poor man than a liar.” What do you desire from people? Isn't it “kindness” (v. 22)? This verse is translated into original Hebrew as follows: ‘A man's desire is his kindness, and the poor man is better than a liar’ (Park). The meaning of this word is that ‘If a man has a desire in his heart to do good (kindness), then the poor who has such a desire are better than the rich who do good without that desire in his heart (Park). Here, King Solomon says that rather than being poor and rich, it is more important whether or not we have desire to do kindness in our hearts. What is the reason? The reason is because God is looking at our hearts (1 Sam. 16:7). And since God who sees our hearts wants us to be truthful (Ps. 51:6), it is very important whether we have desire to exercise kindness in our hearts or not.

In fact, do you think the rich man who lied is better, or the truthful poor man better? In particular, if the rich man outwardly relieves many people, but he has no kindness in his heart, but if the poor man relieves few neighbors with kindness, who do you think is better in your eyes? One of the things I am grateful to God is that the members of the Mexican Church that the Lord has established, the members of our church mission team who serve that church are serving the Mexican people with pure hearts. According to Pastor Gomez, who serves our Hispanic Ministry, many churches in Mexico are not serving people with a pure heart. For example, the most churches are

asking for money or materials from people who come to church. However, our Mexican church provides free meals and offers to people who come to the church, so people are keep on coming. I believe that this is a very precious ministry that a member of our church and his wife collect and bring can foods to the church every day so that our Mexico mission team can take them to Mexico church and give to people who come to the church. One of our Mexican church sisters in Christ is sharing the can foods with her neighbors and evangelizing. How precious is this ministry? We must do good to our neighbors. Our hearts must have a heart (desire) to do mercy on them. With this heart, we must spread the gospel of Jesus Christ while showing love to our neighbors. What is the reason? The reason for this is because first of all, God gave us grace and is still giving us His grace. King Solomon knew of this grace. So he said in 1 Kings 3:6 – “Then Solomon said, ‘You have shown great lovingkindness to Your servant David my father, according as he walked before You in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart toward You; and You have reserved for him this great lovingkindness, that You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.’” Therefore, King Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings to God on the altar of Gibeon (v. 4), and God appeared in a Solomon's dream and said, “Ask what you wish me to give you” (v. 5).

Those who know God's great grace in this way cannot but show grace to their neighbors. Those who experience the great kindness of God cannot but show the kindness of God to them. A man of God who knows that the Lord's lovingkindness is better than his life (Ps. 63:3) cannot but shows that kindness to his neighbors. It is this kindness of God that we must desire now. We must desire for God's kindness more and more. Therefore, we must be loving and kind Christians.

The real friend we should desire is Jesus. What is the reason? The reason is because Jesus desires us (Song of Sol. 7:10). To what extent does Jesus desire us is that He loves and desires us until He dies on the cross in bearing all our sins on our behalf. Jesus is pleased to show us kindness and is the Lord who treats us generously. Like the psalmist, we must be able to confess, “Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth” (Ps. 73:25). And I hope we can sincerely praise God “I Have Found a Friend in Jesus”: “I have found a friend in Jesus, He's everything to me, He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul; The Lily of the Valley, in Him alone I see All I need to cleanse and make me fully whole. In sorrow He's my comfort in trouble He's my stay, He tells me ev'ry care on Him to roll. He's the Lily of the Valley, the bright and Morning Star, He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul.”

## **We should love our souls. We should keep our souls.**

### **[Proverbs 19: 8, 16]**

Do you love yourself? The title of the column written by Pastor Byeong-gyu Kim, who serves the Glory Church in Seattle, was interesting, so I read it. The title was ‘Self-love is the foundation of love’ (Internet). In that column, Pastor Kim says there are two ways to be healthy self-love: (1) It is a passive level of self-love. It is knowing how to forgive and cover over one's own sins and transgressions. We must have a lot of experience in ourselves being forgiven and tolerated so that we can cover over a lot of others. So we have to feel the grace of forgiveness and the love of the gospel. (2) It is a active level of self-love. It means that a person who rejoices in his strength praises and encourages others. We need to know our strengths, know how to rejoice, and be happy about our gifts. What do you think of these statements? I think the foundation of love as well as my personal opinion is God's love rather than self-love. However, there is a part that resonates a bit when Pastor Byeong-gyu Kim said that it is the basis of his love. In other words, we think that we can love our neighbors when we can first love ourselves with the love of God. And I agree that we can forgive our neighbors when we sincerely forgive ourselves, just as God forgives us. Particularly, the words ‘people who rejoice in their strengths praise and encourage others’ come to my heart. Perhaps the reason is because I don't see my own strengths well, and I am not happy to see them. As a result, I feel that I am lacking in praising and encouraging others. In a word, I don't seem to love myself well with God's love.

In Proverbs 19:8, 16, the Bible speaks of he who loves his soul and he who keeps his soul. Today, based on these two verses, I want to meditate on two things under the heading “We should love our souls. We should keep our souls.” and receive a lesson from God.

### **First, we should love our souls.**

Look at Proverbs 19:8 – “He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; He who keeps understanding will find good.” Do you love yourself? If you answer “yes” to this question, do you think loving yourself is a little selfish? I think when we say that we love ourselves, we have to make two distinctions. First, as 2 Timothy 3:2 says, when there is terrible times in the last days, “People will be lovers of themselves,” that is, selfish love. Second, just as God loves us, we also love ourselves with God's love. We must not love ourselves with selfish love. But we must love ourselves with the love of God. We must love our souls as Proverbs 19:8 says. Therefore, we must enjoy the

blessing of being answered by the petition of 3 John 1:2 – “Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.” So, what must we do to make our souls prosper? In other words, because we love our own souls, what must we do to make our souls prosper? As Proverbs 19:8 says, we must gain wisdom in order for our souls to be prospered.

What is “wisdom”? Wisdom is the fear of God. What blessing does it give us when we gain wisdom and fear God? Look at Proverbs 19:23 – “The fear of the LORD leads to life, So that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil.” The Bible says that the fear of God not only leads us to life, but also makes us satisfy and untouched by evil. This blessing is the blessing given to us when we gain wisdom and fear God. So what must we do to gain wisdom? We can think of it in two ways. First, in order for us to gain wisdom, we must meditate on the word of God day and night. Look at Psalms 1:2 – “But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.” So, for several years, we have already meditated on the books of wisdom out of 66 books of the Bible such as the book of Ecclesiastes every weekly Wednesday night prayer meeting, and now we are meditating on the book of Proverbs. The reason we meditate on the books of wisdom, Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, is, of course, to gain wisdom. And it is because we must first receive a discipline through the word of God in order to gain wisdom. Look at Proverbs 19:20 – “Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days.” Clearly, the Bible commands us to listen to counsel and accept discipline. The reason is because as we hear counsel and discipline, we will eventually become wise. But if we hate to be disciplined, this is an act of despising our own souls. Look at Proverbs 15:32 – “He who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding.” Contrary to this saying, if we value (love) our souls, we should love to be disciplined. In order for us to gain wisdom, we must meditate on God's word day and night and like to receive instruction from God through His word. However, the more we meditate on the book of wisdom, the more we become aware of the lack of wisdom when we receive the instruction that God gives us. I think this is very natural phenomenon. In other words, I think the more we meditate on the book of wisdom, the word of God, the more we will realize how much wisdom we lack and how foolish we are. Therefore, in order to obtain wisdom, we must ask God for wisdom. Look at James 1:5-6a: “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting ...” As we thoroughly realize our own lack of wisdom, we must ask God for wisdom without doubting at all by faith alone in order to obtain wisdom. Then God will give us wisdom generously.

### **Second and last, we should keep our souls.**

Look at Proverbs 19:16 – “He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, But he who is careless of conduct will die.” Here, the Bible speaks of keeping one's soul. What does it mean to keep one's soul? To answer this question, we need to look more at the word “soul” in today's text. In the original Hebrew, “soul” can be interpreted as “heart”. Indeed, the word “wisdom” in Proverbs 19:8 means “heart” in the original Hebrew language

(Swanson). In other words, the Bible says, 'He who gets heart loves his soul ...' (v. 8). But in the second half of verse 8, the Bible says, "He who keeps understanding will find good." In the first half, "heart" refers to the wisdom of the heart that fears God as "understanding". That is why the Bible says, "He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; He who keeps understanding will find good" (v. 8). Then, coming to Proverbs 19:16, the Bible talks about keeping one's soul. Here, the word 'keeping one's soul' can be interpreted as keeping one's heart.

Are you keeping your heart well? Many people now think that their health is the best, so they are striving to keep it. My personal opinion is that I don't think health is the best. But I think we have responsibility to keep good health as we take good care of the physical health God has given us as stewards of the Lord. However, I think that it is to keep our hearts (souls) healthy that we Christians should do more than to keep our bodies healthy. The reason is because this is what the Bible Proverbs 4:23 says: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (KJV). In particular, we must keep our hearts so that we don't have distrust toward the Lord. The reason is that Satan is constantly trying to deceive and tempt us to distract us from our faith in Jesus. If we fail to keep our hearts well and fall into the Satan's temptation, then it isn't keeping our lives well. Also, we must keep our hearts well so that our hearts may not be defiled (Tit. 1:15). We must keep our hearts well so that we don't get give them over in the lusts of our hearts to impurity (Rom. 1:24). We must keep our hearts well so that the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness may not proceed out of our hearts (Mk. 7:21-22). What, then, can we do to keep our hearts well? In Proverbs 19:16, the Bible teaches us two lessons:

(1) We must keep the commandments of the Lord well.

Look at Proverbs 19:16a – "He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, ...." Here what is "the commandments"? Look at 1 John 3:23: "This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us." In other words, the commandment we must keep to protect our souls is to believe in Jesus and love each other. In fact, Jesus said in John 6:29, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." And Jesus commanded, "He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Lk. 10:27). Keeping this twofold commandment of Jesus is to keep our own souls.

(2) We must be careful with our actions.

Look at Proverbs 19:16b – "... But he who is careless of conduct will die." This means that if a person isn't careful about his actions, he will be destroyed. This is a warning of the destruction of those who do it contrary to the words in the first half of verse 19 (Park). In order to keep our own souls, we must strive to believe in and love each other. But if we don't keep this commandment, we will be destroyed. The only

thing that has to be done is to believe in Jesus. And if we don't keep that commandment, we will have no choice but to perish because there is no eternal life. Those who don't keep the commandment to believe in Jesus cannot keep His commandment to love each other.

Last Tuesday, I read an article on my friend's Facebook about a word that changed the life of a Korean soccer player Ji-sung Park (Internet). That one word that changed Ji-sung Park's life was what coach Hiddink spoke to him, and the interpreter translated to Park: 'Park Ji-Sung has great mental power.' According to Ji-sung Park, his heart was palpitating and was strength when he heard what Hiddink said. The reason is because that single word penetrated his heart. And this is what Park said: 'If I had not met coach Hiddink, there wasn't me now. It doesn't mean that I became a famous star with a well-known name, or that I have enough money to buy a pretty big apartment for my parents. It means that I have become the "I" who love myself more than before. The words that the coach threw in less than a minute changed my life for the rest of my life.' As I read this last part, it came to my mind that Ji-sung Park, who had been a national soccer player in Korea, became "I" who love myself more than before. And I thought about this: If Park became more in love with himself like this because of what coach Hiddink said to him, how much I should love myself with the love of God, that the fact that Heavenly Father loves me so much that He gave His only begotten Son Jesus on the cross for my salvation. We should love ourselves with God's love. In other words, just as God loves us, we should also love ourselves. To love ourselves means to protect our own soul (heart) because we love our own souls. In order to do that, we need heavenly wisdom. We must ask God for wisdom. And we must keep Jesus' twofold commandment well with God's wisdom. In the meantime, we must be careful with our actions. May God keep our souls.

## **A foolish son**

### **[Proverbs 19:10, 13-14, 18, 26-27]**

Have you ever read the Korean traditional fairy tale ‘A foolish salt merchant’s son’? The story goes like this: ‘Long time ago, there was a salt merchant who live in a town. He had a son. He was always worried about his son because he is foolish and dull. Although his son was grown up, he couldn’t do calculation and couldn’t distinguish between rice and barley. Worrying about his son was a matter of course. He was always worried about his son. When his son said that he wanted to be salt merchant too, he let his son to carry an Korean A-frame on his back and told him to go and sell the salt. The foolish son went to the place where the miners gathered and shout to them to buy the salt. But he wasn’t able to sell any salt to the miners who were busy working. Rather, he was reviled by them. Then the father, who heard what happened, told his son to go and help them to dig the earth and then sell the salt while they are resting. The next day, the son went to a wedding party this time and went to the bride and bridegroom and started digging the earth very hard because he thought about what his father said to him. The people were surprised and tried to get rid of him with the sticks. So the son ran to the house because he was shock. When the father heard this, he told his son to say ‘Happy, happy occasion’ and to dance and sell the salt. The next day, his son went out to sell salt and ran to the place where people gathered. And as his father told him, he said ‘Happy, happy occasion’ and danced. And the son told the people to buy the salt. But the place was the yard of burned house. So the son got beat up and returned his home. The father told his son that if that kind of situation, he had to throw water and turn off the first and then sell the salt. But the next day, the foolish son rushed to the people who were fighting and he threw water on them and told them to buy the salt. So the people rushed to the son and got angry. After all, the son said that he wouldn’t sell the salt anymore and blamed on his father because even though he obeyed his father he wasn’t’ able to sell the salt but got beat up (Internet). What do you think of this fairytale story? Don’t you think that a foolish son is a cause of his parent’s worry? Although the foolish son acted upon what he heard from his father, he didn’t have wisdom to apply what his father told him in the appropriate situations.

In Proverbs 19:13, King Solomon said, “A foolish son is his father's ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping.” Here, the foolish son refers to the son who doesn’t fear God, disobey his parents and always does evil (Park Yun-sun). Based on this passage, I would like to meditate on two things under the title of "A foolish son": (1) What kind of person is the foolish son, and (2) What should his parents do to their foolish son.

### **First, what kind of person is the foolish son?**

There are three things we can think of:

(1) The foolish son is an extravagant.

Look at Proverbs 19:10 – “It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury-- how much worse for a slave to rule over princes!” I remember reading the news article about Korea (formal) president Park Geun Hae, what kind of bag she was carrying. People were saying that her bag was a brand-name bag that was made by an ostrich skin and it might cost around \$1,000. But it was actually hand made by a small domestic company. The idea that I went through while I was reading that news at that time was ‘Many people may buy that bag.’ The reason was that since the president was carrying such bag, I thought that many people would like to buy it and carry it too. My personal thought is that a lot of people seem to want to buy luxury stuffs. Actually, in Korea, the lineup of expensive luxury goods is becoming widespread, and some popular items are not available because so many people are buying them (Internet). What do you think about "luxury"? One of the websites I read talked about ‘Who is a luxurious woman?’ Let me ask a question. What are the criteria of "luxury"? Which of the five lists do you think is the right answer? (1) There are two Louis Vuitton bags that cost \$2,000 each. (2) Louis Vuitton is not luxury but Chanel is. (3) Eating lunch lightly and drink coffee in Starbucks is a luxury. (4) It is good to use money that you earned but it is luxury when you use your parent money. (5) If you travel overseas once a year, it is a luxury. The answer is not in the above five. The man who wrote the article says that the criterion for a woman who is extravagant is the question of whether or not she can afford her consumption pattern at the income level he is currently earning or he will be able to afford. I think this is an interesting answer. Although this is a man’s standard of the extravagant woman, but I think it is a reasonable view. When I look at another website, there was an article titled ‘Emotionally luxurious age ... So solitude and despair got deeper.’ So I read that article. It was an interview with a literary critic, who commented, ‘The frustration of the younger generation is a big problem.’ And this is what he said that I sympathize with: ‘This is a generation which is luxury emotionally and sentimentally. Although this generation is richer and more convenient economically and free than the past, but young people feel loneliness, despair and frustration more than before’ (Internet). What do you think of these words?

What do you think is the standard of luxury in the Bible? Look at Isaiah 47:8 – “Now, then, hear this, you sensual one, Who dwells securely, Who says in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one besides me I will not sit as a widow, Nor know loss of children.’” This word tells us what the minds of the luxurious ones are. In other words, even though there are neighbors who are suffering, they just live however they want to without concerning about their neighbors because they are not suffering. It’s like we are boasting about our husband in front of a widow without considering the widow’s heart. It’s like we are boasting about our children to the parents who lost their child. It is luxury to live however you want to without mindful of



other people's situations and their difficulties. It is not to say how much money you spend that is luxury but not being mindful about other people's matters and situation at all, it is the act of covering the love of God. In that sense, the Bible doesn't want us to be extravagant. If we don't care about our neighbors, then we won't be willing to share with them, and we will live a life that will miss all opportunities to show God's love to our neighbors. God's reproach for luxury is to reproach a life that doesn't show God's love (Internet). In other words, luxury in the Bible refers to unmindful of the poor and ignoring them and using our possession however we want to, thinking that the possession is ours (Internet). In Proverbs 19:10, King Solomon says, "It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury." In other words, it is unworthy for the fool to enjoy and rejoice in this world (Park). But the fool not only finds pleasure in evil conduct (10:23) but enjoys the pleasures of this world (19:10). Especially in the home, the foolish son inherits his parent's house and their wealth (v. 14), and enjoys the pleasures of this world while living a prodigal life. A good example is the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. The second son asked the father for his share of estate (Lk. 15:12), set off for a distant country and there he squandered his wealth in wild living (v. 13). Likewise, the foolish son inherits his parent's wealth and lives a luxuries life. The Bible Proverbs 19:10 says it is not fitting for the fool to live in luxury. Then what is fitting in God's sight? When I think of this question, I recall Hebrews 2:10 – "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings." What is fitting in God's sight is to perfect Jesus, the author of our salvation, through sufferings for the glory of our salvation. If we apply this word to us, we can say that it is fitting for God to perfect us through sufferings. Why? The reason is because Jesus learned obedience from the things which He suffered even though He was a Son (5:8). Therefore, we as the children of God also must learn obedience through suffering as Jesus did. This is fitting in God's sight.

(2) The foolish son is destruction to his father.

Look at Proverbs 19:13 – "A foolish son is his father's ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping." Translation of this Word in Hebrew is as follows: 'A foolish son is destruction to his father, and the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping' (Park). The Bible says that the foolish son is a grief to his parent (10:1, 17:21, 25). There is no joy for the father of the fool (17:21). Then, in today's passage Proverbs 19:13, the Bible says that the foolish son is destruction to his father. Why is foolish son destruction to his father?

- (a) The foolish son is destruction to his father because the parent is suffering because of his son and the father cannot do anything about it. Don't you agree? Have you not already experienced that you suffer because of your child and you can't do anything about it? How many parents are suffering because of their children? The foolish children are pain and destruction to their parents.

- (b) The reason why the foolish son is destruction to his father is because the father suffers damage of his honor or his property. We actually see some parents around us who lose their wealth and honor because of their children. So many foolish children bring reproach to their parents. And how many prodigal children are there who squandered their parents' wealth with their wild living? The foolish children are loss and destruction.
- (c) The reason why the foolish son is destruction to his father is because such troublesome things also come to the good people. In other words, we know that even though the parents are good and have strong faith, that doesn't mean their children will grow well. This is a phenomenon that we cannot understand. What would you think if you planted the apple seeds, gave water and fertilizer, but the fruit is not apple but it is different fruit? How many parents are doing their best in nurturing their children, but their children are foolish? It is a painful thing.

In Proverbs 19:13, the Bible says that the foolish son is destruction of his father, and we can see this in the Bible. For example, in Genesis, we know that Adam's first son Cain killed his younger brother Abel in the home of Adam, the first human being. And as we know, the Bible tells the story of ten sons of Jacob trying to kill their own younger brother Joseph. Is that it? In the house of David, David's son Amnon raped Tamar, his half-sister, and her older brother Absalom killed Amnon. In all of these stories, we cannot deny that the foolish sons have brought sorrow and misery to their fathers. Such people like us, we became Heavenly Father God's children through the death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross. Can we understand this? This is what Zephaniah 3:17 says, "The LORD your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." The Bible says that God takes great delight in us. Do you understand? How did we become such great joy to our Heavenly Father? This is because the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, was crucified. It was because Jesus died on the cross for all our sins, receiving all God's wrath and calamity. That's why we became God's children. And God takes great delight in us.

(3) The foolish son is a shameful and disgraceful son.

Look at Proverbs 19:26 – "He who assaults his father and drives his mother away Is a shameful and disgraceful son." The Bible says that the foolish son assaults his father, it means that the foolish son steals from his father (Swanson). How do you think the foolish son steals his father's goods? When I think of this question, of course, I think about the prodigal son in Luke 15 who squandered the wealth that he got from his father (v. 13) but also Malachi 3:8 came to my mind: "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings." And I thought that if the sons and daughters don't honor their parents and don't give money for them to use, then that can be robbing their

parents. What do you think? This is what Proverbs 28:24 says: "He who robs his father or his mother And says, "It is not a transgression," Is the companion of a man who destroys." It is sin to steal the things of the parents. The foolish son is committing this sin to God and his parents. The foolish son also drives his mother away from home. Rather than taking care of his mother, the foolish son makes his mother's heart very uncomfortable in order to drive her out of home and live elsewhere. In short, the foolish son does not fulfill his filial duty. He doesn't honor his parents and doesn't care for them. Rather, the foolish son causes his parents to be shameful and insults them by abusing them and drives them out. The Bible says that the foolish son who is shameful, insulted and dishonor his parents is 'the maker of idols'. Look at Isaiah 45:16-17: "All the makers of idols will be put to shame and disgraced; they will go off into disgrace together. But Israel will be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting." But the Bible says that Israel will never be put to shame or disgraced forever. The reason is because God will save them with everlasting salvation (v. 17). We who believe in Jesus are saved by God's eternal salvation. Therefore, we will never be put to shame or disgraced forever. This is because we are children of God, not foolish sons and daughters. Since the children of God loved God, they honor their parents (Lk. 18:20) and fulfill their filial duty (1 Tim. 5:4).

### **Second and last, what should the parents do to their foolish son?**

There are at least three things:

#### **(1) The parents must have hope for their foolish son.**

Look at Proverbs 19:18a – "Discipline your son while there is hope ...." Why should we, the parents, have hope for our foolish son? Why is the reason? The reason is because we believe in God. In other words, we have hope for our foolish son because we believe in God. Look at Jeremiah 29:11 – "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

#### **(2) The parents must discipline their foolish son.**

Look at Proverbs 19:18 – "Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death." Not only must we have hope for our foolish son by faith in God, but we also must discipline him because we love him. Look at Proverbs 13:24 – "He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently." Why should we discipline our foolish son? Look at Proverbs 22:15 – "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him." The reason we should discipline our foolish son is because the rod of discipline will remove his foolishness far from him.

(3) The parents should not let their foolish son to stray from the words of knowledge.

Look at Proverbs 19:27 – “Cease listening, my son, to discipline, And you will stray from the words of knowledge.” We, the parents, must not only hope for our foolish son by faith in God, but also to discipline them out of love for him. But we must not end in discipline. We must not only discipline our foolish son, but also must not let him listening to discipline that will stray him from the words of knowledge. I think the best way to do that is to continue training our son in the way he should go. Look at Proverbs 22:6 – “Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.” When we train our son the way he should go, he will not go astray or depart from it when he is old. I think this is the best way to keep our son from listening to discipline that will stray him from the words of knowledge.

No parents want their children go astray and do wrong. All of us, the parents, want our children to be well, so we will try our best to do our parental responsibility and nurture them and pray for them. Nonetheless, when we look at some children who go astray even though their parents are doing their best, we cannot but acknowledge that child-rearing is not accord to our plan. That’s why we should leave our child-rearing to our Heavenly Father God. At the same time, we must strive to fulfill our responsibilities faithfully as a parent. One of those efforts is to seek wisdom from God when we pray for our children. As we do so, we must show our children God’s given wisdom to us rather than our foolishness. And that wisdom is to fear God and obeying God’s commandments. And the lesson God gives us in Proverbs 19:10, 13, 14, 26 is to live a thrifty life and not a luxurious life. Also, the lesson God gives us is that if we have foolish children who bring shame and disgrace to us, we must discipline them while there is hope and let them not listen to discipline that will stray them from the words of knowledge even though they are destruction to us. I hope and pray that we may humbly receive these lessons and obey.

## **We shouldn't be this kind of people.**

### **[Proverbs 19:19, 25, 28, 29]**

What kind of person do you want to be? Personally, I think 'What kind of person should I be?' is more important than the question 'What should I do?' So if we look at our church membership class, there is an important statement regarding the spiritual attitude that we all need to pursue: "The kind of person you are is far more important than the kind of work you do". Here we must be clear about the priority of our spiritual life. The priority is what kind of person should I be before God. In other words, our priority is being, not doing. The reason is because deeds must come from being, not other way around. It means that in the transformation of character, that is as we become like Jesus, we must follow the example of Jesus.

What kind of person should we be? I would like to share with you a poem written by Haein Lee, 'Let me be this kind of person in the New Year'. The reason is because by reading this poem, we can think a little bit about what kind of person we should be: 'Let me be 'a woman of prayer' who doesn't despair in the midst of difficulties with the warmth of ordinary but has a sun in my heart and proceeds with trust and courage. No more, no less, let me become 'a woman of hope' who live bright and clear with a bright and round heart that is as bright as the full moon of the New Year. Please make me 'a person of love' who is a neighbor who approaches everyone as a friend with a color that doesn't stand out too much, but who takes action rather than words. Cherish the peace of mind that is the fruit of long waits and pain, and let me become 'a peaceful woman' who first practices reconciliation and forgiveness. Even in ordinary everyday life like that day, let me pray for new thanksgiving, and find meaning in small things and become 'a woman of joy' who doesn't know boredom' (Internet). Shouldn't we all be people of prayer' and people of love? As Haein Lee says, if we all become people of hope, people of peace, and people of joy, wouldn't we be good at playing the role of light and salt in this world? The Bible teaches us what kind of person we should be. For example, if we look at the Book of Proverbs that we meditate on every Wednesday prayer meeting, the Bible teaches that we must be wise people. The Book of Proverb teaches us to be a wise person who fears God with His wisdom and obeys His commandments. At the same time, the Bible instructs us not to be this kind of person. For example, the Bible Proverb teaches us that we should not be a fool.

In Proverbs 19:19, 25:28-29, there are 3 types of people. When I think of these 3 kinds of people, I think I shouldn't be like this. So, I would like to learn the lessons God gives us by thinking about these three kinds of people under the heading "We shouldn't be this kind of person."

## **First, we shouldn't be "A hot-tempered man".**

Look at Proverbs 19:19 – “A hot-tempered man must pay the penalty; if you rescue him, you will have to do it again.” Have you ever been fiercely angry? If you haven't, have you ever seen someone like that? Is there anyone you think who is really furious? “A hot-tempered man”, a person who has a temper easily explodes anger. It is said that there are six kinds of anger (Internet): (1) Sudden Rage. This anger is a sudden, unexpected, sudden change of personality. It is a situation in which feelings, thoughts, or actions aren't completely or partially controlled. (2) Seething Rage. This anger is a cumulative reaction. He is pathologically obsessed with situations where he feels unfair as it boils like lava under the veil of reason. (3) Survival Rage. This anger explodes when a threat is inflicted on a specific part that determines the value of one's existence. (4) Impotent rage. This anger is feeling of helplessness. (5) Shame-based Rage. This anger is a sensitive reaction even though it isn't deliberately ignored. (6) Abandonment Rage. This anger occurs when we have difficulty withstanding loneliness and anxiety. In a word, rage is powerful and extreme as Total Rage. Talking is useless. We fall into our own world. But as time goes by, great guilt and remorse come. Interestingly, the word “A hot-tempered” is also referred to as “furious” from the original Hebrew dictionary meaning (internet). But looking at the word “furious”, in ancient Greek and Roman mythology, the name of the three goddesses of revenge is “Furies” (Internet). The Romans called the goddess of vengeance Furia (Furies in English), which is the etymology of the word fury (anger, passion). Originally, it meant a kind of violent fluctuating madness. This means that someone is out of control of his behavior. In the United States, the women who specifically act like this are called Fury. As the years have passed, this meaning has weakened and furious contains only the meaning of ‘to be very angry’ (internet).

As we have already learned in Proverbs 15:18, the hot-tempered man stirs up dissension. And if we look at Proverbs 29:22, the Bible says, “An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.” So the apostle Paul said in Ephesians 4:26-27: “In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.” When we are angry, we should not give the devil an opportunity to tempt us so that we don't sin. If we become angry like the hot-tempered man in Proverbs 19:19, then we have a lot of chance that we will sin against God. Therefore, in Proverbs 19:19, the Bible says, “A hot-tempered man must pay the penalty ....” Don't you think this is true? The reason why it is natural for he who is fiercely angry to be punished is because he commits many sins. One of those sins is not listening to God's reproof. Even if he listens, he who is fiercely angry distorts God's rebuke and doesn't truly repent of his sins. In addition to this, as the second half of Proverbs 19:19 says, even if God rescues the man who is fiercely angry, it will happen again. In other words, the man who is fiercely angered commits the sin even after being punished. He who is fiercely angry with these repetitive sins is bound to be punished. We shouldn't be those who are fiercely angry. Rather, we should be those who are slow to anger (v. 11; 14:29; 15:18; 16:32). The reason is because our God is slow to anger (Ex 3:6, Num. 14:18, Ps. 86:15, 145:8, Na. 1:3, Jo. 2:13, Jon. 4:2). If we quickly become angry, we are fools (Prov. 14:17). But if we are slow to get angry, the Bible says we are wise (19:11). I hope and pray that we all become wise and be slow

to anger.

### **Second, we shouldn't be "A corrupt witness".**

Look at Proverbs 19:28 – “A corrupt witness mocks at justice, and the mouth of the wicked gulps down evil.” Here, who is a corrupt witness? The corrupt witness is a worthless and wicked witness who deliberately distorts justice and ignores it. The Bible says that the mouth of such wicked gulps down evil, which means that the mouth the corrupt witness pursues sin with an insatiable desire (Walvoord). Here, the sin that the corrupt witness pursues is to tell lies (6:19). In other words, the corrupt witness is a false witness (19:5, 9). Whenever I watch Korean dramas, I don't understand why there are so many lies. I don't know if this is a cultural difference. But I'm not sure whether they're lying in a respectful way or trying to hide something from the other person. But one thing's for sure is a lie lead to other lies. Then, in the end, I see them telling the truth only when they got caught. I wonder why they don't tell the truth in the first place. What do you think? Do you think you have to tell the truth from the beginning, or do you think you should lie (good lie?) when you have to lie?

While meditating on Proverbs 19:28, I came across Proverbs 6:19 that we have already meditated on. And this thought came to my mind when I meditated on these two words together: ‘The corrupt witness may lie and deliberately distort the truthful words so that he can stir up dissension among brothers.’ The Bible clearly states that the corrupt witness will not escape punishment and will be perished (19:5, 9; 21:28). Why, then, do you think the corrupt witness deliberately distorts the truth and lies with his mouth? I found the answer in Psalms 59:12 – “On account of the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips, Let them even be caught in their pride, And on account of curses and lies which they utter.” What does it mean? The reason why the corrupt witness deliberately distorts the truth and the lie with his mouth is because he is proud. The proud and the corrupt witness distorts the truth and continues to lie with his lips. If we look at Proverbs 14:5, 25, the Bible says: “A truthful witness does not deceive, but a false witness pours out lies. ... A truthful witness saves lives, but a false witness is deceitful.” As witnesses of Jesus Christ, we must be true witnesses (14:5, 25). We must not lie with our mouths. In particular, we must not falsely testify against our neighbors (Deut. 5:20). We must not falsely testify against our neighbors (Prov. 25:18). We must hate lies (13:5). The reason is because God hates lies (12:22). All lies don't come from the truth (1 Jn. 2:21). Therefore, we must speak the truth, not the lie (Prov. 12:17).

### **Third and last, we shouldn't be mockers.**

Look at Proverbs 19:29 – “Penalties are prepared for mockers, and beatings for the backs of fools.” Here, who are “mockers”? Usually, when we say ‘That man is a mocker’, we seem to think that ‘He is proud and boastful and despises others’. Or, when we say ‘That person is a mocker,’ we seem to think that the person doesn't even know himself and is arrogant’. Is there anybody like this around you? Or do you ever think that there are times when you are so arrogant? When I look at a Hebrew-English dictionary, I see that “a mocker” is defined like this:

‘A mocker is a proud, arrogant man who delights in contempt and is unable to discipline or rebuke. No wisdom can be found in such a person’ (Whitaker). In other words, the mocker is a proud person and a scoffer who doesn’t know himself. Thus, he is a fool who rejoices to think he is better than others, despises others and hates to be admonished and rebuked. God never shows grace to this man. Rather, if we look at Proverbs 3:34, the Bible says that God mocks proud mockers. And in Proverbs 9:12, the Bible says “if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer.” The Bible clearly states that the mocker alone will suffer. What should we do if we see arrogance in our children? What should we do if we love our children and they don’t listen to our reproofs? The Bible Proverbs 19:25 says, “Flog a mocker, and the simple will learn prudence; rebuke a discerning man, and he will gain knowledge.” Look at Proverbs 10:13b – “... but a rod is for the back of him who lacks judgment.” Look at Proverbs 14:3a – “A fool’s talk brings a rod to his back, ....” Look at Proverbs 26:3 – “A whip for the horse, a halter for the donkey, and a rod for the backs of fools!” After all, the Bible tells us to use the rod to discipline our arrogant children. What is the reason? Look at Proverbs 22:15 – “Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.” Look at Proverbs 29:15 – “The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother.” Look at Proverbs 23:14 – “Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.”

We should never be arrogant. Rather, we should be humble. We must not consider ourselves wise (26:12). And we shouldn’t pretend to be somebody (12:9, 25:6). We must not be proud (Rom. 12:16). In a word, we should not be arrogant (1 Cor. 4:18). Rather, we must humble ourselves (2 Chron. 12:6). We must lower ourselves before God and people. We must be humble like Jesus (see Phil 2:6-8). And, like the apostle Paul, we must become slaves to all people (1 Cor. 9:19). What is the purpose? The purpose is so that we may win more souls (v. 19).

What kind of people should we not be? We must not be the hot-tempered people who are fiercely angry. We must not be the corrupt witnesses. We must not be the mockers. Rather, we must be humble like Jesus. Also, we must be true witnesses of Jesus. And we must be slow to anger like Jesus. In a word, we must all become like Jesus. I sincerely hope and pray in the name of Jesus that we all become more and more like Jesus.



## An ideal president

### [Proverbs 19:12; 20:2]

What do you think of the president of this country where you live? Do you think he is the ideal president? What I think about “President”, I remember the QT (Quiet Time) title that I meditated based on 1 Samuel 15:23 after I heard the news that the late President Moo-hyun Roh's impeachment was passed by Congress in March 2004 in Korea. The QT title was ‘The forsaken king’. What I still remember vaguely is that the timing was a bit surprised. In other words, I didn’t deliberately meditate on King Saul, who was forsaken by God in 1 Samuel 15:23 because I heard the news of the late President Moo-hyun Roh's impeachment. I remember that I meditated on King Saul because the word of 1 Samuel 15:23 came to my heart. So, while I was meditating on Proverbs 19:12 and 20:2, I read the QT that I did before based on 1 Samuel 15:23. And I looked at the seven reasons why King Saul was forsaken by God. They were disobedience, pride, hypocrisy, excuses, greed, idolatry, and fearing people. At that time, while meditating on the words about King Saul, who had been forsaken by God, I remember being comforted by the fact that there was also King David who was a man after God’s own heart even in the midst of King Saul who was forsaken by God in the midst of suffering and crisis. How shocked would it have been to all the Israelites when King Saul of a nation was forsaken? However, God was preparing King David who was the man after His own heart. Why was King David the man after God’s own heart? This is because David listened to God and obeyed His word, as 1 Samuel 15:22 says, “... Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams” Although he committed a married woman, Bathsheba, and killed her husband, a loyal soldier, Uriah to cover his adultery, David immediately confessed and repented of his sins when God rebuked him through the prophet Nathan. At that time, I ended the QT with the words, ‘I earnestly hope and pray that God will raise up ‘a king’ (President) who is after God’s own heart in Korea. And when I looked at the QT file that I meditated on ‘a king’, I read it again in June 2008 as I meditated on the word under the heading ‘The ideal king and his ideal people’ based on Psalms 101. At that time, in TV news, one of the pastors representing American evangelicalism, Pastor James Dobson, pointed out that he had "confused theology" in his remarks to Senator Obama, a Democratic candidate who was a US presidential candidate. And the time when I meditated the word of this Psalms was a candlelight demonstration in Korea under the slogan of renegotiation of beef, shortly after Elder Myung-bak Lee, a Christian, became president. At such a time, God made me to meditate on Psalms 101 and made me to think about the ideal king's heart. I meditated on three things: (1) The ideal king's heart is a heart that yearns for mercy and justice. (2) The ideal king’s heart is a humble. (3) The ideal king's heart stays away from a perverse heart (deceitful heart, a different life inside and outside). And the last QT I meditated on “a king” was “A good king who pleases God’ on last May 2012. This

meditation was based on Proverbs 16:10-15, and at that time there was an article in the Korea Hankook Ilbo Internet article under the heading 'Obama is the first gay president.' It was meditation on His word that gave me an opportunity to think about whether President Obama, who supported same-sex marriage for the first time, is indeed a good president who pleases God or not. I thought about the good king who pleases God in three ways: (1) The good king who pleases God makes right decisions with God's wisdom. (2) The good king who pleases God hates doing evil. (3) The good king who pleases God receives an advice from his faithful servants. While meditating on the word of God about the king, we see that in Proverbs 19:12 and 20:2, King Solomon is talking about the ideal king. So, I would like to pray for the president of our country to become a worthy president in God's eyes, while meditating on the ideal king that God teaches us under the title of "An ideal president".

### **First, the ideal president rules the country with justice.**

Look at Proverbs 19:12a and 20:2 – "A king's rage is like the roar of a lion, ... A king's wrath is like the roar of a lion; he who angers him forfeits his life." Here, King Solomon says that a king's anger (wrath) is like the roar of a lion. And here we can ask 2 questions. The first question is "Why is the king's rage?" The reason the king is angry is not because he is a tyrant, but because as a righteous king who hates the sins of the country he is governing. Look at Proverbs 16:12 – "Kings detest wrongdoing, for a throne is established through righteousness." Therefore, the king's rage that is spoken of in Proverbs 19:12 and 20:2 is a wrath that shows righteousness. As I meditated on the wrath of the king that manifests this righteousness, I remembered the righteous wrath of God, the King of kings. In particular, I remembered the words from Romans 1:18 as I heard the news about the Supreme Court's examination of same-sex marriage these days. Obviously, the Bible says that "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness" (Rom. 1:18). What is one of the results? Look at Romans 1:26-27: "Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion." It is natural function for a man and a woman to marry. But it is the result or retribution of God's wrath that a man will lust for a man and a woman for a woman. The second question is, 'The Bible says that the king's rage is like the roar of the lion. What does that mean?' Here, "like the roar of a lion" means that the lion is heard anywhere in the mountain where the beast dwells, so the administrative power of the ruler should scare the wicked people in the country everywhere (Park). So the apostle Paul said in Romans 13:7, "fear to whom fear." Then he said, "Each person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities" (v. 1). The reason is because "there is no authority except from God" (v. 1). And Paul said that "rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil" (v. 3). What does it mean? It means that the rulers should be fearful to those who do evil because the rulers practice righteous with the authority set by God. Look at verse 4: "... But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil." In one way or another, the president

of a country is a minister of God who responds according to his wrath against those who do evil. In other words, he is the authority established by God to rule a nation with justice. That is why he must punish those who do evil and reward those who do good (1 Pet. 2:14). We must honor this righteous king (1 Pet. 2:17).

But when I think of the president of this country in which we live, I wonder if he is a president who deserves honor from our citizens from the biblical perspective. For some reason, he is like a president with confused theology, as Pastor James Dobson said. And I can't help but question whether his faith (if he has faith) is truly biblical. Obviously, the Bible says that the king should rule the country with righteous. But when I consider whether the president of this country is doing it, I cannot personally say 'Yes, he does.' As an example, I don't think this can be said to be governing this country with the righteous of God, given that our president and the government not only support same-sex marriage but also try to legalize it. Although the Bible says, "And the work of righteousness will be peace, And the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever" in Isaiah 32:17, I doubt whether there is peace, quietness, and confidence in this country. I think that in the age of our children and descendants that continue to go forward in this way, it will become an unstable society in so many ways. As Proverbs 14:34 says, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people," our president should rule this country well with righteousness and thus exalts our nation. But I think he is a disgrace to the citizens by making this country to commit sins against God. King David, the father of King Solomon, walked before the Lord in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart toward Him (1 Kgs. 3:6). Therefore, the Lord showed great favor to King David and made his son Solomon king of Israel. And God made Solomon king of Israel to do righteous and justice in order to make him strong forever because He loved Israel (2 Chron. 9:8).

### **Second and last, the ideal president rules the country with love.**

Look at Proverbs 19:12b – "... but his favor is like dew on the grass." Who do you think is the king's favor? Would those who disobey the king's command likely receive the king's favor or would those who obey his command? Of course, whoever obeys the king's command will be favored by the king. Now King Solomon is talking about two reactions of the king in Proverbs 19:12. The two reactions are: (1) The king is very angry (like a lion's roar to those who disobey the king's commands). (2) But to those who obey the king's commands, the king will show favor (kindness). So, King Solomon said in Proverbs 14:35 – "A king delights in a wise servant, but a shameful servant incurs his wrath." Who is a wise servant? In Proverbs 16:13, wise servants are faithful who have "honest lips" and speak honestly to the king. King Solomon says that the king delights these servants. However, based on Proverbs 16:12, the scornful servants, especially those who do wrongdoing and evil, are bound to face the wrath of the king. This principle also applies to the relationship between God as King and us as His people. In other words, when we, as God's people, obey the Lord, the King of kings, God show His favor to us. Look at Psalms 5:12 – "For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield." God blesses the righteous who obey God's will and He surrounds him with favor as with a shield. Can you

imagine? Can you imagine that you can see the signs of God's favor even if you look east, west, north, south, and everywhere? Even though those who disobey the Lord's words will have problems and difficulties in all directions, those who obey the Lord are filled with God's favor everywhere. King Solomon says that favor is like dew on the grass (Prov. 19:12). What is the king's favor like dew on the grass? "Grass" is an analogy to the common people, and it seems very weak and has no name. And the words that the king's benefits are like the dew on the grass means that the king doesn't come to the people with dignity, but with a calm and tender love of mercy (Park). In other words, the ideal king doesn't focus solely on receiving the service of his people, but loves and respects them (Park). Of course, this is when the people obey the king's command. If the people disobey the king's command and do evil, the righteous king hates evil and has no choice but to punish them in the midst of wrath. However, when the people live according to God's will by obeying the king's command, the ideal king loves them and treats them with respect. As a result, the people of that country enjoy the king's favor (16:15).

As I meditated on these words, I thought about the country we live in. Then I asked these questions: 'Is the president of this country really giving the citizens the favor?', 'If so, what favor are they enjoying?', 'Is this really loving and respecting the citizens of this country?' What do you think? I personally doubt whether this is true when I see that our president is trying to get all the health insurance to the whole people to enjoy medical benefits and to legalize same-sex marriage for few homosexual people. I wonder whether this is to love and respect the people with gentle and tender love of compassion. I'm not sure about health insurance. But at least when I see the president and government who are trying to support and legalize same-sex marriage, I think this isn't about loving the people and making them enjoy the favor. The reason is because such love is not God's love, but a love that deviates from the truth. Love that is not based on God's truth is meaningless love.

Today we meditate on the ideal king in two ways. We learned that the ideal king rules the country with justice and love. As I meditated on these words, I was compelled to think of the president of this country in which we live. At that time, I couldn't help but wonder: 'Is the president of our country the ideal president in the light of God's word?' Let us pray to God together for our president at this time.

## **Let's not show our own foolishness with alcohol.**

### **[Proverbs 20:1]**

Why do you think people get drunk? I saw an article on the internet and this is what it says regarding why people drink from Monday to Sunday (Internet): 'Monday is - the day of drinking; Tuesday - a hot day to drink; Wednesday – a day to drink from time to time; Thursdays - the day of drinking with a long neck; Friday - the day of drinking soon and drinking again; Saturdays - a day of drinking until you vomit; Sunday - the day of drinking until you cannot get up. The same internet article mentions about following as well: 'A cup is said to drink for health. If it is hot, you drink for pleasure. And if it gets drunk, there will be indulgent behavior and madness (Internet). One of the reasons for drinking is that it feels good. Why do people feel better when they drink alcohol? The reason is that when you drink a little alcohol, the central and peripheral nerves are initially excited, the secretion of the stomach is promoted, and the neurotransmitter called dopamine is secreted. However, alcohol overuse or long-term abuse can lead to brain cell destruction, which, unfortunately, inhibits brain function. If not, normally 100,000 brain cells die automatically every day. Drinking a lot of alcohol causes more brain cells to die. Both academic and memory or thinking abilities decline and their decline is directly proportional to the concentration of alcohol. When you drink alcohol too much, you cannot remember what you said and what you did. This is called 'film break' phenomenon. Another man says he drinks because these reasons: 'I drink when I have good things. I drink when I have bad things. I drink when I have something to celebrate. I drink to get acquainted. I drink to confess. I drink in order to forget a person whom I missed. I drink alcohol when I am upset. I drink when I want to see someone. I drink when my heart is depressed and when it rains. I drink when I am tired of exhaustion. I drink for unity. I drink because of curiosity. I drink when I am lonely' (Internet).

What do you think about drinking? As a Christian, do you think you can drink alcohol or do you think you shouldn't? What is the reason? When I went to the website of an anti-Christian club, there is writing that said, 'Ten reasons why I don't want to attend church ....' And the fourth reason was written like this: 'Fourth, there was a time when a pastor said that I shouldn't drink. So I didn't take a drink in a difficult situation. Everyone in the world understood. However, people who claim to be Christians rather pointed at me.. A few drinks are okay .. Take it. I was shocked .. Moreover, they were the sons of the deacons and the elders of the church who said that to me. ... I was completely deceived. Because I listened to the pastor innocently, I was ruined. These days I have been drinking. I like it... These days, if we live according to the Bible, we will die. The reason is because we will be criticized by Christians' (Internet). As I read this fourth reason, I thought that at least the person who wrote this

article thought that he shouldn't drink according to the pastor's words and to him it was considered as living according to the Bible. But the problem is, as the writer said, those who are the sons of the elders and deacons of the church think it's okay to drink. That's why he seems to have been drinking to avoid being criticized by Christians. Actually, I heard that the elders or deacon's sons of the church drink alcohol, not to mention that there are a lot of pastors who drink alcohol these days. In particular, I heard that some of the second-generation pastors drink alcohol, even though they are from conservative seminary in the United States. So I remember that one day a brother in Christ who visited our conservative seminary came to me and told me that he was disappointed to see some of the students drinking alcohol. One day I went to a Christian bookstore and saw the title of the book, which is '77 Reasons I Don't Want to Go to Church.' The author Man-jae Lee, who received Jesus in their late 40s and has written steady seller books called 'The Steamed Bun with Red Bean Paste Filling' and 'The Steamed Bun in the World'. Among the many religious information obtained through broadcasting life, this person saw the decrease in the growth rate of new recruits and the successive departure of the church among the younger generation as the cause of the slowdown in overall social growth, especially since the mid to late 1980s. That was why he wrote that book '77 Reasons I Don't Want to Go to Church'. The sixth of the 77 reasons is 'I don't understand a church that doesn't even understand alcohol and tobacco!' 'Although I am not entirely advocating alcohol and cigarettes, I believe that both sides of understanding coexist in all things. Nevertheless, if I must go to church, I will consider it after quitting alcohol and smoking later' (Internet). Actually, as Man-jae Lee said, I think there are many unbelievers who will consider going to church after quitting alcohol and smoking. The reason is because they think that in order to go to church they shouldn't smoke and drink alcohol. Of course, not all unbelievers think so. Many other people are going to church while smoking and drinking. And some of them don't feel guilty about drinking alcohol and smoking. Actually it seems that many Christians think it's okay to smoke and to drink.

When we discuss whether it is okay for us Christians to drink alcohol or not, the important thing is what the Bible says. A theologian concluded on this matter, demonstrating that the Bible clearly states not to get drunk, explaining that drunkenness is a serious sin and forbidden. Then he distinguished between drunkenness and drinking and pointed out that it was true that Jesus and his disciples drank wine to the extent they were not drunk. And he said that drinking is a matter of "adiaphora" in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8. In other words, he said it was a problem that could be like this or that. 'The believer may or may not eat the food prohibited in the Old Testament in accordance with the principle of freedom and knowledge in Christ, that is, in Christ that the shadow of the Old Testament is materialized and therefore doesn't need to be restricted by the Old Testament food regulations. You may or may not smoke. It is not a biblical attitude to condemn too much from the standpoint of a non-drinking believer for a glass of alcohol as a courtesy at a public stand, or to condemn too much for seeing a theologian or missionary from another country smoking. However, on the contrary, it is not a biblical attitude that a believer who drinks and smokes moderately within the limit of not being drunk, sees a believer who doesn't, and condemns that believer that he has weak faith and smokes in front of him boldly. Moreover, defiantly smoking alcohol in order to

educate and strengthen 'weak believers' who don't smoke and drink alcohol is in direct conflict with the attitude of the apostle Paul. Paul didn't say that he would eat meat and drink alcohol in order to strengthen the faith of the 'believers with weak faith' in this sense. On the contrary, if wine or meat causes the brothers to stumble, he determined not to drink wine or eat meat (meat prohibited in the Old Testament) forever' (Internet). In conclusion, this theologian's conclusion is that in light of the perception that alcohol and tobacco are harmful to the body and to the family, applying the principle of love and good health [the principle of tolerance fundamentally established for those who are weak in faith (Internet)] is that it makes sense not to smoke and not to drink (Internet).

Rather than answering the question of whether or not we should smoke and/or drink, I want to think about 3 things based on Proverbs 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise," and receive the lessons that God gives us.

### **First, what we need to think about is what "wine" or "strong drink" is in Proverbs 20:1.**

The reason I thought that we need to think about this is because in the days of King Solomon and the Old Testament, it was questionable whether "wine" and "strong drink" could be equated with "alcohol" in our time. Do you think "wine" and "strong drink" in the Old Testament can be equated with the alcohol of our day? Perhaps you may say "No" to this question. In fact, "wine" is said to have been the most intoxicating liquor (beverage) in those days. All wines at that time were light wines, that is, wines with low alcohol content in today's words. Alcohol with strong concentration is said to have been known since the Arabs invented distillation in the Middle Ages ['Distillation' refers to collecting vapor and discharging liquid when making alcohol to make the alcohol content higher than that of original alcohol (Internet)]. And the word "alcohol" is also Arabic. It is said that "liquor" or strong liquor began to emerge from the Middle Ages. Therefore, it is said that 20% fortified wines are unknown in Bible times (Vine). Therefore, in Bible times, drunkenness was not as common as it is today, unlike alcoholism as it is spoken of in our time (Harris). Nevertheless, God forbade people to get drunk in the Bible times. So, what should we do now living in the 21st century?

The Bible Proverbs 20:1 refers to "strong drink" in addition to "wine". What is "strong drink" here? Here, "strong drinking" is a drink made of barley, jujube, or pomegranate to make drinkers drunk (Isa. 28:7). Therefore, in the Bible, the priests (Lev. 10:9) and the Nasilites (Num. 6:1-3) and others (Isa. 5:11) also forbade drinking (Walvoord). For example, in Isaiah 28:7, the Bible says, "And these also reel with wine and stagger from strong drink: The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, They are confused by wine, they stagger from strong drink; They reel while having visions, They totter when rendering judgment." Can you imagine how God's servants, priests and prophets, stumbled over wine and strong drink and made mistakes when they misresolve visions and misjudge them? What would you think if pastors were drunk and preached during Sunday worship? So God said to

Aaron in Leviticus 10:9 – “Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you will not die--it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations.”

In this age we are living in, there are a lot of alcohols with very high alcohol content, and there are so many alcoholics because they drink them. Do you know what the world’s most alcoholic beverage is? It is called Vodka called Spiritas of Poland. The alcohol content is a whopping 96 degrees and is said to be close to pure alcohol. It is said to be strong liquor that makes your whole body feel on fire with just one sip. Then do you know what the lowest alcohol content in the world is? Many people think that it is “HI-CHU,” the new product of Lotte Chilsung in Korea. But it is said that HI-CHU contains 5-6% alcohol and 1% fruit juice. It is said that the alcohol content is similar to that of beer. However, there are even lower 4% beers. It is said to be the lowest alcohol content (Internet). In the US alone, it is said that 15 million people are alcoholics (Internet). In Korea, the number of alcoholics reached 2.2 million, and alcohol dependence, the predecessor of alcoholism, is said to be about one in five adults. Moreover, according to statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO), Koreans' per capita alcohol consumption is second in the world after Slovenia (Internet). If so, shouldn't we not listen to Ephesians 5:18, “And do not get drunk with wine ...”, more than people in the Bible time?

**Second, what we need to think about is the negative effects of “wine” and “strong drink” that are mentioned in Proverbs 20:1.**

Look at Proverbs 20:1a – “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler ....” When we translate this phrase into Hebrew, it says ‘Wine makes you haughty, and strong drink makes you fight ...’ (Park). Here, the Bible is teaching us two things about the negative effects of wine and strong drink. It is none other than that wine and strong drink makes us haughty and fights. Do you think alcohol makes people arrogant? Have you ever seen a drunken person pretending to be selfish and despising others? When I thought of this, I remembered the feast of King Ahasuerus in Esther 1. In the third year of his throne, the Bible records that the feast was held for all his nobles and officials and military leaders, the princes, and the nobles of the providences (v. 3) for a full 180 days. King Ahasuerus displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and glory of his majesty (v. 4). Then the king gave a banquet, lasting 7 days (v. 5) and let each guest to drink in his own way (v. 8) in goblets of gold, each one different from the other because the royal wine was abundant (v. 7). The king instructed all the wine stewards to serve each man what he wished (v. 8). Then, on the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded seven of his eunuchs to bring the queen Vashti to him in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles (vv. 10-11). But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command and the king became very angry and his wrath burned within him (v. 12) and eventually abolished the queen. In the end, didn't King Ahasuerus try to boast of his beautiful wife, but became angry and divorced her because she didn't listen to him? When a person becomes drunken like this, Satan will take away his understanding (Hos. 4:11), showing off his pride and arrogance, not only showing off himself, but also revealing his anger (Ref.: Isa. 16:6). That is why quarrels and fights even



arise in the drinking seat (Prov. 20:1). So King Solomon said in Proverbs 22:10 – “Drive out the scoffer, and contention will go out, Even strife and dishonor will cease.”

In Proverbs 20:1, if we say in one word about the adverse effects of wine and strong drink on us, it is wine and strong drink leads us astray. Wine and strong drink leads us to the foolish way. And as it leads us to foolishness, not only it causes us to show anger right away (12:16), causes contention (20:3), but also causes us to mock at sin (14:9). After all, wine and strong drink makes us to display our own foolishness. In addition to this, the Bible tells us about the negative effects of wine and strong drink on us, which makes us poor. Look at Proverbs 23:21 – “For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe one with rags.” And another negative impact displays our shame. A good example is the drunken Noah in Genesis 9. Look at Genesis 9:21 – “He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.”

**Third and last, what we need to think about is what we must do to avoid being deceived by the wine that makes us proud and the strong drink that makes us fight.**

Look at Proverbs 20:1b – “... And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.”

(1) We must seek God’s wisdom.

The reason is because when we have the wisdom of God, we fear God and keep away from evil. We can also hate the pride and arrogance that God hates. Look at Proverbs 8:13 – “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverted mouth, I hate.” And when we have wisdom, we will not be deceived by wine or strong drink and walk on the foolish way. So we must long for God's wisdom and ask God for it (Jam. 1:5).

(2) We must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Look at Ephesians 5:18 – “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” The apostle Paul is telling us to save time by paying careful attention to how we walk, not like the unwise, but like the wise (vv. 15-16). What is the reason? The reason is because the days are evil (v. 16). Then Paul said, “So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit” (vv. 17-18). That is why the prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 5:11, “Woe to those who rise early in the morning that they may pursue strong drink, Who stay up late in the evening that wine may inflame them!” This time we live is an evil time. We can know this because there are more and more fools. Who are the fools? Aren't they drunk without understanding the will of the Lord? See more and more alcoholics. In this time, we should not get drunk and should be filled with the Holy Spirit. Then we can glorify God by acting wisely in this evil time. I

remember the words of Luke 1:15 I heard through the revival meeting guest pastor: “For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb.”

(3) We must not be with heavy drinkers of wine.

Look at Proverbs 23:20 – “Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat.” King Solomon recommends us not to be with heavy drinkers of wine, that is, who enjoys pleasure (Park). In Ecclesiastes 2, we can see King Solomon's pursuit of pleasure in order to test himself with pleasure and so enjoy himself (Eccle. 2:1-2). So what he tried on a trial was “wine” (v. 3). He tried to stimulate his body with wine while his mind was guiding him wisely (v. 3). King Solomon enjoyed drinking wine, as claimed by the Cyrene school in ancient Greece, by becoming the master of wine rather than becoming a slave to it. In other words, as the Cyrenes argued, King Solomon attempted to please himself with wine while controlling the pleasure of wine with his wisdom. However, his conclusion is that it was “embracing folly” (v. 3). In a word, it is foolish to try to enjoy pleasure by getting drunk. Why does King Solomon seem to be telling us not to associate with liquor lovers? The reason is so that we don't imitate their foolishness like those who enjoy alcohol. If you can't be influenced by them so badly that you don't imitate their foolishness, I think that the purpose of associating with a drinker is to win his soul, that is his salvation.

(4) We should not get drunk.

Dr. Yoon-sun Park said that there are three reasons why the New Testament forbids all believers from getting drunk: (1) It is because a person cannot immediately discern the holy truth with a drunken spirit. (2) It is because it is easy for a person to commit many other sins by being drunk. (3) It is because people love the pleasures of alcohol more than God as much as they are ensnared by alcohol (2 Tim. 3:4). So I personally think that not drinking at all is better than drinking.

I personally know two people who died from alcohol. Both of them were shot dead in a bar. One was shot and killed by a security guard of the bar, and the other was quarried in another bar and was shot by other drinker. My unforgettable memory is that after the funeral of the friend who was shot and killed by the security guard of the bar, we had a meal at a restaurant, and his mother tried to witness to us, his friends. And yet, one more unforgettable memory is that when another friend's uncle cried and read the letter at the funeral of another friend, I still remember that he was kind of blaming his nephew's friends, us. That's why I still pay a lot of attention when I am with my friends when they are drinking. And these are my friends whom I want to witness and share the gospel for their salvation. One of the things I care about is their safety. I am concerned if something will happen to them when they get drunk because they tend to drive their cars even after getting drunk. The reason I share my personal memories in this way is because when I think about Proverbs 20:1, I don't think strong drink is beneficial. Rather, I

think strong drink harms us. One of those harms is that we show ourselves our own foolishness when we are drunk. That foolishness indicates our own arrogance and also causes contention. Therefore, we should refrain from strong drink and never get drunk.

## A fool and a man of understanding

### [Proverbs 20:3-7]

Do you think times are evil, as the apostle Paul already said in Ephesians 5:16? Sometimes, when I hear crimes on the news, I think about to what extent the evil of man is. It must be a world filled with sinful things. At this time, the Bible tells us in Ephesians 5:15, “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise.” Who is the unwise and who is the wise? He who isn’t wise that is, a fool (v. 17), wastes his time (v. 16). And he doesn’t understand what the Lord’s will is (v. 17). That is why he gets drunk and dissipates (v. 18). However, he who is wise is filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 18). And he understands what the Lord’s will is (v. 17). Therefore, he saves time (v. 16) and lives according to the will of the Lord.

In Proverbs 20:3-7, the Bible teaches us about the fool and the man of understanding. I hope and pray that all of us who receive this instruction will not become fools, but are raised up as the people of understanding.

The first thing I want to think about is the fool. I would like to think of two things:

#### **First, the fool quarrels.**

Look at Proverbs 20:3 – “Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, But any fool will quarrel.” We have already been admonished in Proverbs 20:1 not to show our own foolishness with alcohol. Here we have already learned that our own foolishness that we can manifest with alcohol is our arrogance and fighting. So King Solomon said in Proverbs 17:14, which we have already meditated on, “... So abandon the quarrel before it breaks out.” In other words, we must stop arguing before conflict or strife arises. But why do we not stop arguing before conflict or strife arises? The reason is because we aren’t slow to anger. Look at Proverbs 15:18 – “A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger calms a dispute.” So why are we not slow to anger? The reason is because we aren’t wise and don’t know (or ignore) that it is our own glory to overlook a transgression. Look at Proverbs 19:11 – “A man’s discretion makes him slow to anger, And it is his glory to overlook a transgression.” In Proverbs 20:3, the Bible says “Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man ...” Isn’t it interesting that Proverbs 19:11 says, “And it is his glory to overlook a transgression,” and then comes to 20:3 and says, “Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man. ....” As I relate these two verses, I am instructed to forgive the other person’s transgression in order to avoid strife. However, if we don’t forgive the other person’s transgression, it will eventually lead to strife. And the Bible says that “any fool will quarrel” (20:3).

We must not be fools. We must not quarrel. Rather, we must avoid strife. The reason is because keeping away from strife is our honor (20:3). In order for us to keep away from strife, we must stop anger and conceal dishonor (12:16). We must be slow to anger (19:11). When we are slow to anger, we can stop dispute before a fight occurs (15:18, 17:14, 29:22). Also, we must not forget that it is our own honor to forgive the other person's transgression (19:11). When we forgive others, we will not quarrel.

### **Second, the fool is lazy.**

Look at Proverbs 20:4 – “The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, So he begs during the harvest and has nothing.” We have already been meditating on the book of Proverbs and have been taught about laziness. The point of that lesson is that the lazy person becomes poor (10:4). The reason is because the lazy person doesn't work diligently. Because he works with the negligent hand (10:4), he is bound to become poor. Although he works with the negligent hand, he diligently put his brain to work, especially the evil and lazy slave. How do we know this? As we have already meditated on in Proverbs 15:19, the wicked and lazy man uses a lot of tricks. Therefore, he is lazy and doesn't think of laboring and sweating. As a result, the Bible says that the life of the evil and lazy slave is surrounded by difficulties such as thorns from east to west and north to south. Also, we have already learned from Proverbs 18:9 that he who is slack in his work is “brother to him who destroys.” What does it mean? It means that the lazy man is a great waster. That means that the lazy man is like a prodigal man. What is the problem? The most serious problem for the lazy man is that he “is wiser in his own eyes”. Look at Proverbs 26:16 – “The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes Than seven men who can give a discreet answer.” Isn't this funny that the sluggard is wiser in his own eyes? Although the lazy man is a fool (1:32), he considers himself wise. This shows that the lazy man is arrogant. In Proverbs 20:4, the Bible says that the lazy man doesn't plow after the autumn. However, in the original Hebrew, it is not “autumn” but “winter”. And here, “winter” refers to November or December (Swanson). So, if we translate verse 4 again, it looks like this: ‘The lazy man does not plow because of the cold. When there is reaping, he will beg, but he will not get anything’ (Park). Is November or December warm or cold? Isn't it cold, of course? And it is said that the wind blows mainly from the north in November or December in Israel (MacDonald). In this windy and cold winter weather, the lazy man doesn't plow. Don't we understand? Will the lazy man go to the field in cold weather and work hard? So in the end, no matter how much the lazy man seeks to reap in the harvest, he can't find anything. Isn't this obvious? Since the fields were not plowed, nothing could be planted. And since nothing could be planted, of course there is nothing to harvest (MacDonald).

We must not be lazy. Rather, we must be diligent. The wise Christians who fear God are diligent (Prov. 12:27, 15:19). We must become wise Christians and work diligently. We must work diligently and cooperate with each other voluntarily, even if there is no supervisor like ants (6:7). And, like ants, we must prepare diligently in advance for the future (v. 8). Just as the ants prepare for winter in the summer harvest, we must diligently prepare things to prepare in advance while thinking about the future. In particular, we must prepare diligently for our death,

as well as prepare to meet the Lord. Also, we must diligently prepare for the Lord's Second Coming.

Finally, what we want to think about together is the man of understanding. I would like to think of three things:

### **First, the man of understanding draws a plan in the heart of a man.**

Look at Proverbs 20:5 – “A plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, But a man of understanding draws it out.” Whenever I personally think of this word, I pray to God that God gives me understanding to become a comforter who draws out deep plans or thoughts or feelings in the hearts of people. I am asking God for wisdom to draw out the wounds and pains that are deep in the heart of the people, as if I am drawing water from the depths of a well. In Proverbs 20:5, King Solomon says that the man of understanding draws a plan in the heart of a man. In other words, the man of understanding draws the thoughts or the intentions (purposes) deep in a person's heart to the surface. A good example is the judgment given by King Solomon in 1 Kings Chapter 3. The judgment was made when “two women who were harlots” came to King Solomon (v. 16) and argued who owned a living child (v. 22). At that time, wise King Solomon said, “Give me a sword ... Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other” (vv. 24-25). What was the reason? The reason was to determine the true mother of the baby and to make the right judgment. At that time, the true mother was deeply stirred over her son. So she begged King Solomon, “Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him” (v. 26). But the fake mother told her real mother, “He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide him!” (v. 26) Upon hearing these words, King Solomon gave the living child to his true mother and ordered not to kill the child (v. 27). In other words, he wisely ruled who was the real baby's mother. The Bible says this: “When all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had handed down, they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice” (v. 28). The Bible records that all the Israelites saw King Solomon's judgment and saw that “the wisdom of God” was in him (v. 28).

How can the man of understanding draw the thoughts or the intentions (purposes) that are deep within a person's heart to the surface? I looked for the answer in Proverbs 18:4 – “The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; The fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.” In other words, it is possible through his full mouth of wisdom that the man of understanding can reveal the thoughts or intentions of the person deep in a person's heart. It is that the man of understanding who speaks in the fullness of wisdom like a bubbling brook draws the thoughts or the intentions deep in the other person's heart to the surface. Should we not ask God for this fulness of wisdom? Therefore, I hope and pray that we can all be filled with God's wisdom and be used as God's comforters.

### **Second, the man of understanding is trustworthy.**

Look at Proverbs 20:6 – “Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, But who can find a trustworthy man?”

This is what 1 Corinthians 4:2 says: “In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.” The apostle Paul, who said this, said in 1 Timothy 1:12 that Christ Jesus considered him faithful and put him into service. The same Christ Jesus regarded us as faithful and put us into service. And the Bible says that we must be found trustworthy. Therefore, like the apostle Paul, we must be faithful to the Lord with gratitude (v. 12). But in Proverbs 20:6, King Solomon asks, “... But who can find a trustworthy man?” Somehow, when I tried to think about this from the standpoint of King Solomon, I remembered the words of Proverbs 16:13 that we have already meditated on: “Righteous lips are the delight of kings, And he who speaks right is loved.” The lesson we have already received from this verse is that a king who is pleased with God is well advised by his trustworthy servants. In other words, the wise king who fears God puts his trustworthy servants next to him and receives their advice well, even in the midst of abandoning wicked servants. What is the reason? The reason is because the lips of the faithful are righteous lips, and they speak right (16:13). When I think of the wise King Solomon, I don't think there were so many trustworthy servants next to him. The reason I think so is that if he had had many trustworthy servants next to him, then they would have spoken right to King Solomon when he was old and when his Gentile women turned his heart to follow other gods (1 Kgs. 11:4) and would have turned him away from the sin of idolatry. And as King Solomon said in Proverbs 20:6, I think there were many people who proclaim their own loyalty. It seems that these people were never loyal and trustworthy servants, but officials who loved King Solomon only with words. So I think King Solomon groaned in the second half of verse 6, “But who can find a trustworthy man?”

We must be trustworthy people. We are to be faithful workers of Jesus Christ. And as the Lord's faithful workers, we must imitate Jesus Christ, the faithful witness. Look at Revelation 1:5 – “and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood.” The apostle John, who wrote this word, was a faithful witness of Jesus Christ. At some point, I have meditated on the apostle John, who wrote the book of Revelation, who was a faithful witness centering on this word. Again, I want to give each of us an opportunity to remind ourselves of these three things:

(1) The faithful witness testifies all that he saw.

Look at Revelation 1:2 – “who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.” Here, the Bible says that the apostle John testifies to all that he saw. What did he see? It was the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ (v. 2). That is, what the apostle John, the faithful witness, testified is the vision of heaven he saw and it was “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (v. 1). And this revelation of Jesus Christ points to things that must soon take place, given by God to the Apostle John (v. 1). One of the things that will surely happen soon is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Therefore, as faithful witnesses of the Lord, we must testify of Jesus Christ coming again.

(2) The faithful witness reads, hears and obeys God's prophetic words.

Look at Revelation 1:3 – “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.” The Bible says that things that will surely happen quickly in the future, that is, those who read, hear, and obey the words of this prophecy are blessed. We who testify while waiting for the return of Jesus to come again must become readers, listeners, and keepers of the words of prophecy about things that will happen soon in the future.

(3) The faithful witness is a fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus.

Look at Revelation 1:9 – “I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.” As a faithful witness of Jesus, the apostle John participated in Jesus' tribulation, Jesus' kingdom, and Jesus' perseverance. Tribulation is the way to heaven (kingdom), and perseverance is the power to walk that way (Park). In Acts 14:22, the apostle Paul exhorts: “... Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” And in James 5:10, the apostle James tells us, “As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.” I hope and pray that all of us as faithful witnesses of Jesus will be able to partake in Jesus' tribulation, Jesus' kingdom, and Jesus' perseverance.

### **Third and last, the man of understanding walks in his integrity.**

Look at Proverbs 20:7 – “A righteous man who walks in his integrity-- How blessed are his sons after him.” The original Hebrew word for this word is translated as follows: ‘A righteous man walks blamelessly, and after him his descendants are very blessed’ (Park). In other words, “A ... man who walks in his integrity” is a man who walks blamelessly. Who do you think of when I say ‘A man who walks blamelessly’? I remember a man named Job. The reason is that in Job 1:1, the Bible says that a man named Job is “man who was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.” This is a fact that God also admitted before Satan. Look at Job 1:8 – “The LORD said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.’” Job's blamelessness didn't change his heart for God even in the midst of tribulation, but simply believed in God and continued to fear God, living a life away from evil. This was Job's determination and confession: “‘Far be it from me that I should declare you right; Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me’” (27:5). In Proverbs 20:7, the word ‘integrity’ or ‘to be blameless’ in the word “in his integrity” or ‘in his blamelessness’ means ‘to be simple’. And its meaning internally refers to integrity (Park). And the word “integrity” means that the inner motive of the life of faith (or godliness) is perfect and pure innocence (Park). This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘He who does this isn't hypocrite and remains faithful. He is a man who simply serves God and doesn't serve two masters (Mt. 6:24). And he doesn't look back after he put his hands



to the plow (Lk. 9:62)' (Park). Shouldn't we be like this?

We must walk in our integrity. We must be blameless. In order to do so, what do we have to? We must receive the word of God with integrity. Look at 2 Corinthians 2:17 – “For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.” We must never peddle the word of God for profit. Instead, we must receive the word of God in purity (simplicity). Like the Thessalonian church members, we must accept the word of God that we heard from the servants of God, not as the word of men, but for what really is, the word of God (1 Thess. 2:13). Why should we do that? The reason is because “Every word of God is flawless” (Prov. 30:5). And we must obey God's word and walk in the right way. Look at Proverbs 10:9 – “He who walks in integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will be found out.” What does it mean? That is, we must live a righteous (blameless) life. Therefore, we must do our best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before people (Acts 24:16). In doing so, we will enjoy peace in our hearts.

At this time when the times are evil, we Christians should become the people of understanding rather than the fools. Today we have learned who the fool is and who the man of understanding is. The fool quarrels and is lazy. But the man of understanding draws a plan in the heart of a man, is trustworthy and walks in his integrity. I hope and pray that God may raise us up to be the men and the women of understanding.

## A king who sits on the throne of justice

### [Proverbs 20:8-12]

We have already received a lesson from God on Sunday a few weeks ago under the heading 'Let's not criticize' based on Matthew 7:1-6. The lesson was, 'If you don't want to be criticized, don't criticize.' In other words, Jesus said to us, 'If you don't want to be judged, don't judge.' What is the reason? Why did He forbid us to judge? The reason is because judgment and condemnation can only be done by God. In other words, since God is the only Judge, we should not sit in His place and judge others.

If we look at Proverbs 20:8, the Bible tells us this: "A king who sits on the throne of justice Disperses all evil with his eyes." Based on this verse, I would like to receive a lesson from God under the title of "A king who sits on the throne of justice".

### **First, the king who sits on the throne of justice distinguishes between good and evil and disperses all evil.**

Look at Proverbs 20:8 again – "A king who sits on the throne of justice Disperses all evil with his eyes." Here, the verb 'to disperse' as used by King Solomon is translated "winnows out" in New International Version, which is the original Hebrew literal meaning (Gesenius). Its literal meaning is 'to winnow out (to sort out chaffs, etc. from grain)' (Naver Dictionary). Another literal meaning is 'to sift something (unwanted)' (Naver Dictionary). What does it mean to winnow? It refers to the act of separating grains and chaffs with a key (Internet). So King Solomon says in Proverbs 20:26 – "A wise king winnows the wicked, And drives the threshing wheel over them." In the end, the point that King Solomon is making is that the king who sits on the throne of justice is wise and separates good from evil, as if separating grain from chaff. Then the king filters out unwanted evil. As I meditated on these words, I thought of two verses in the Bible:

- (1) The first Bible verse that came to mind is Matthew 3:12 – "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

This word is spoken by John the Baptist and refers to the future judgments of Jesus Christ who comes after him. The result of this judgment of Jesus is that the grain is gathered and put into a barn, and the chaff is

burned in an unquenchable fire. Here, grain refers to the righteous who believe in Jesus, and the chaff refers to the wicked who don't believe in Jesus. And Jesus said that He will gather the grain and will put it into a barn. Here, in a word, He said that the barn is heaven and burns the wicked who are chaff in a fire that doesn't extinguish.

(2) The second word that came to mind was the end times in Matthew 25:31-46. These are words of prophecy that will happen.

Look at Matthew 25:31-33: "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left." In the end, when Jesus comes to this world again, as the King who sits on the throne of justice, He will gather all the nations before Him and separates them, as if the shepherd separates the sheep from the goat. Thus, the Bible says, Matthew 25:46, that the Lord, the King of kings on the judgment seat, will bring the wicked like goats into eternal punishment and the righteous like sheep into eternal life. Do you believe in the Lord who will sit on the throne of justice and will set apart the righteous from the wicked? In the future, when the Lord comes and judges, He will filter out the wicked from among the righteous and punish the wicked forever. And the Lord will lead the righteous to eternal heaven.

**Second, no one can say "I am clean and without sin" before the king who sits on the throne of justice.**

Look at Proverbs 20:9 – "Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin"?" Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure"? Who can say confidently in this world, "I am clean and without sin"? This is what the Bible Romans 3:10 says: "As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one." Look at 1 John 1:8 – "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us." Nevertheless, in Job 33:9-11, we see Job's friend telling Job: "I am pure, without transgression; I am innocent and there is no guilt in me. Behold, He invents pretexts against me; He counts me as His enemy. He puts my feet in the stocks; He watches all my paths." If Job thought this way as Job's friend said, would Job really be a clean person in the sight of God? When I thought about this question, I remembered the lyrics of the hymn "One Thing I of the Lord Desire", verse 4: "I watch to shun the miry way, And stanch the springs of guilty thought, But, watch and struggle as I may, Pure I am not, Pure I am not." Who can boast "I am clean" in the presence of a holy God? Who can boast that "My sin has been cleansed" in the presence of God, who searches us (Gen. 16:13) with His eyes like a flame of fire (Rev. 2:18) and who also searches our deepest hearts (Prov. 20:27)? There is no one in this world. But there is only one, perfect God and perfect human being, only Jesus, the Son of God, is pure and sinless. But this innocent Jesus was crucified and died. God made Jesus, who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf (2 Cor. 5:21). Its purpose is that God cleanse all our sins

in Jesus Christ (Ps. 51:2). In other words, in order for God to blot out all our iniquities and create a pure heart in us (vv. 9-10), Jesus died on the cross, who had no sin. Not only that, we were justified before God because God raised Jesus from the dead (Rom. 4:25). That is, the purpose of God's making Jesus, who didn't know sin, as a sin for us was to make us God's righteousness in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21). The apostle Paul said this in Ephesians 5:25-27: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless." The apostle Paul said that the purpose of which Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for it was to make us a glorious church before God. And the glorious church is a church that is clean and holy and without flaws. This glorious church is referred to as "the bride, the wife of the Lamb" in Revelation 21:9. In other words, the wife or bride of Jesus, who is the Lamb, is the church. And this glorious church is the blessed ones invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb (19:9). This is what Jesus said in Matthew 5:8 – "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." We will definitely see God. When the King, who sits on the throne of justice to come, separates the righteous from the wicked, the Lord will bring us who have been justified by the merits of Jesus into eternal life. Therefore, we will be able to say 'I am clean and without sin' in front of the Lord, the King of kings who sits on the throne of justice. The reason is because sinless Jesus took our sins and died on the cross to cleanse all our sins.

### **Third, we must be honest before the king who sits on the throne of justice.**

Look at Proverbs 20:10 – "Differing weights and differing measures-- the LORD detests them both." There are two more similar verses in the book of Proverbs: "The LORD detests differing weights, and dishonest scales do not please him" (v. 23) and "A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, But a just weight is His delight" (11:1). In summarizing these 3 verses, it is 'What God hates is to deceive.' In other words, God hates dishonesty. Then why do you think King Solomon talked about dishonesty that God hates three times? Perhaps in the days of King Solomon, some of the merchants tricked customers into using the scales, cheated on the quality, weight, or quantity of goods and took more from them (Park). The way those merchants deceived their customers was 'double scale' and 'double measure'. In other words, the dishonest merchants used light scales and small stalks to give less grain when they sold grain, and when they bought grain, they used heavy scales and large scales to get more grain (Internet). So Deuteronomy 25:13-16 says, "You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a large and a small. You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. You shall have a full and just weight; you shall have a full and just measure, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you. For everyone who does these things, everyone who acts unjustly is an abomination to the LORD your God." Can you imagine a dishonest merchant putting two types of scales in his pocket, the big and the small, and using a double scale to trick a customer? That's why the Bible Leviticus 19:35-36 says, "You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measurement of weight, or capacity. You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin; I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt." While watching Korean news,

you may have come across news that merchants tricked into selling their country of origin and caught by the police. For example, I remember seeing on the news that some merchants caught by the police while making unrighteous profits by selling stuff that were made in China and made in Korea. In addition to this, some dishonest merchants don't cheat the origin but the weight of the contents, and even modify the meter to take unjust profits from customers. I think all this is the same as using the uneven scales and uneven weights that the Bible says in today's text. Why are merchants using uneven scales and weights to make unjust profits from customers? The reason is because of greed. The merchants who are dishonest are taking advantage of injustice because of their greed. What should we do as Christians? Look at Proverbs 20:11 – “Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right.” We must do our actions right. In other words, we must conduct our behavior right. We must be pure and right in our conduct. And we must hate the inconsistent scales and the inconsistent weights that God hates (v. 10). In other words, we must hate dishonesty. If we Christian merchants are dishonest in their commercial practices, we must keep in mind that God hates all such commercial practices. We must never act dishonestly to gain unrighteous profits. Rather, we must be honest in our commercial activities (Park). May God renew the right spirit within us (Ps. 51:10, KJV).

#### **Fourth and last, the king who sits on the throne of justice hears and sees everything.**

Look at Proverbs 20:12 – “Ears that hear and eyes that see-- the LORD has made them both.” It is said that the Creator God, who made us, made our ears to hear and eyes to see. It means that God, who made our ears and eyes, hears everything and sees everything (MacArthur). Our God is the God who hears whatever we ask for. Look at 1 John 5:14-15: “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.” Also, our God is a God who oversees the whole world. Look at Job 28:24 – “For He looks to the ends of the earth And sees everything under the heavens.” Also, God examines the heart and conscience of man (Ps. 7:9). God's eyes see the wicked and the good everywhere (Prov. 15:3). But the wicked man, in the haughtiness of his countenance, doesn't seek God and there is no room for God in his thoughts (Ps. 10:4, 13). Therefore, the Lord, the King who sits on the throne of justice, will punish the wicked whom His soul hates (11:5). This is what Psalms 34:15 says: “The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous And His ears are open to their cry.” And this is what 1 Peter 3:12 says: “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” Obviously, the Bible says that God's eyes are toward the righteous and His ears are directed to the petitions of the righteous. But the Bible says that God's face is against those who do evil. And when Jesus comes to this world again, as King who sits on the throne of justice, He will gather all the nations before Him and separate them from each other. He will separate the righteous and the wicked so that the wicked will go into eternal punishment, and the righteous will enter eternal life (Mt. 25:46).

Do you believe in the “last judgment”? This is the final judgment (Mt. 25:31-46, Rev. 20:11-15) on the

day Jesus comes to this world again. Look at Revelation 20:11-15: “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” On that day, all people, including believers and unbelievers, will put on a resurrected body and stand before the judgment seat of Christ, the Lord of Judges (2 Tim. 4:1, 1 Pet 4:5, Luke 14:10, Jn. 5:26-27, Acts 10:42, 1 Cor. 3:12-15, 2 Cor. 5:10). Also, all believers, living and dead, will be judged. However, because “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1), judgment on believers who have already passed from death to life (Jn. 5:24) doesn't jeopardize their eternal salvation. Of course, even the secret sins of believers will be revealed in the last days (1 Cor. 4:5, 2 Cor. 5:9-10). So we must live godly (Internet). How should we live in order to live godly? We have received four lessons about the king who sits on the throne of justice based on Proverbs 20:8-12: (1) The king who sits on the throne of justice distinguishes between good and evil and disperses all evil. Therefore, we must also live a life that separates good from evil and avoids evil. (2) No one can say “I am clean and without sin” before the king who sits on the throne of justice. But we are forgiven and cleansed of all our sins through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must live in the Lord with the assurance of forgiveness of sins. (3) We must be honest before the king who sits on the throne of justice. Therefore, we must be honest. In this dishonest world, we must live honestly. (4) The king who sits on the throne of justice hears and sees everything. Therefore, we must live godly before God who observes our hearts and consciences and hears our crying petitions.

## **The upright life of the Christians (1)**

### **[Proverbs 20:13-18]**

A few months ago, we had a time to read and share the words of Titus 2 in our small group Bible study. At that time, one of the brothers in Christ said that the people who believed in Jesus seemed worse than the non-believers. I didn't know exactly what he meant. But when he explained to us what happened to him after the Bible study and during the meal time, I was able to understand the meaning of his words in more detail. And I had to agree with what he said. There are so many times we become speechless because we Christians not only be the light and the salt in this world but rather we are worse than unbelievers. When I think about what the cause is, I think one of the reasons is that we are not very good at learning "sound doctrine," as Titus 2:1 says. As a result, we are not "sound in speech" (v. 8) and sound in life.

I would like to learn four lessons from Proverbs 20:13-18 under the heading "The upright life of the Christians." I hope and pray that we may be able to live as true Christians in this world by taking these lessons and keeping them as best as we can.

#### **First, we must have the right lifestyle.**

Look at Proverbs 20:13 – "Do not love sleep, or you will become poor; Open your eyes, and you will be satisfied with food." When we meditate on the Book of Proverbs, there are many teachings about laziness and diligence. One of the teachings can be found in Proverbs 6:9-11: "How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? 'A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest'-- Your poverty will come in like a vagabond And your need like an armed man." When we meditate this Proverbs 6:9-11 in connection with Proverbs 20:13, the conclusion we can make is that a lazy person likes to sleep and s/he will become poor. Therefore, the Bible says "Open your eyes," that is, stay awake (20:13). In other words, stay awake when we need to work. For example, in Proverbs 6: 6-11, like the ant who prepares her food in the summer and gathers her provision in the harvest, we shouldn't sleep but should work when we have to work. Then we will be satisfied with food (20:13).

In the Bible, God has told us many times to stay awake. For example, look at 1 Thessalonians 5:6 – "So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled." Then what should we do as we stay awake and are alert? We must pray. Look at Colossians 4:2 – "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving." In the Bible, the topic that is often associated with the word 'be alert' is prayer.

In other words, the Bible tells us to stay awake, be alert and continue to pray. Why does the Bible command us to stay awake, be alert and continue to pray? The reason is so that we may not be tempted. Look at Matthew 26:41 – “Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Another related theme in the Bible that is in connection with ‘be alert’ is the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. Look at Matthew 24:42 – “Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.” We must be awake and be alert because we don’t know which day the Lord will come again. This is what Luke 21:36 tells us: “But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” The Bible says that we should keep on the alert at all times and pray.

Here, the thing that we should know is that the right lifestyle of the Christians is not to like to sleep but to wake up and work diligently. This reminds me the hymn “Work, for the Night is Coming”:

- (1) Work, for the night is com-ing: Work through the morn-ing hours;  
Work while the dew is spark-ling; Work 'mid spring-ing flowers;  
Work while the day grows bright-er, Un-der the glow-ing sun;  
Work, for the night is com-ing, When man's work is done.
- (2) Work, for the night is com-ing: Work through the sun-ny noon;  
Fill bright-est hours with la-bour, Rest comes sure and soon;  
Give ev-'ry fly-ing min-ute Some-thing to keep in store;  
Work, for the night is com-ing, When man works no more.
- (3) Work, for the night is com-ing: Un-der the sun-set skies,  
While their bright tints are glow-ing, Work, for day-light flies;  
Work till the last beam fad-eth, Fad-eth to shine no more;  
Work, while the night is dark'-ning, When man's work is o'er.

Like these lyrics, we cannot deny that there is a night when we will no longer able to work. And we know that that night will come quickly. Therefore, we must work when we need to work and not play. And when we need to work, we should like to sleep, but we must work diligently. This is the right lifestyle of the Christians.

## **Second, we must speak the right word.**

Look at Proverbs 20:14 – “Bad, bad," says the buyer, But when he goes his way, then he boasts.” How do you bargain with a seller when you go to buy something, whether it's a department store or a market? I still remember that in December 2003, when I came back to the United States from South Korea and went to buy a car with my father-in-law, I went to few car dealerships in the Buena Park area. And I remembered that I had an impression that I should buy a car like my father-in-law. When he was dealing with the salesman, he kind of said



that the price of the car was too expensive. And he told him that we would go to another dealership. Then the salesman seemed to say that he would be able to lower the price of the car. So he actually lowered the price and my father-in-law bought Honda Pilot for us. I also tried to deal with a person in the car wash when I went to wash my car. The person said that since my car was SUV, I had to pay \$15. But I told him that whenever I came her, they charged me \$12.99. So the guy changed the price from \$15 to \$13. In Proverbs 20:14, what King Solomon tried to say was that the buyer who tried to bargain with the seller said “Bad, bad” in order to intentionally cut the price of the item. He does so in order to show off his cleverness (MacArthur).

Have you ever experienced this? In this age of purchasing various kinds of goods over the Internet, we as buyers of goods must not only like the things we want to buy, but also the prices must be low. But for the people who sell them, I am sure they want a higher price. Therefore, the buyer and the seller must negotiate with each other, but at a price that is already set, the buyer can't do anything much with the seller. Most of the things we buy on the Internet seem to be like that (except for the auction sites). However, if it is possible to control the price of the goods, the buyer of the goods wants to negotiate with the seller. But in negotiations with the buyer who want to buy the goods cheaply and the seller who need to earn more income, I think it's hard to be pure and honest in their conversation. In particular, in the salesman's point of view, it won't be easy for him to be honest with the buyer about price and the goods because he has to earn more money. So he may have to exaggerate and maybe even lie. But we Christian salesmen should say the right thing. In other words, we should not lie and deceive people who buy things from us. What is the reason? The reason is because the Lord detests it (v. 10). Our God hates differing weights and differing measures (v. 10). God hates lying and deceiving. Look at Proverbs 20:17 – “Food gained by fraud tastes sweet to a man, but he ends up with a mouth full of gravel.” What does it mean? At first, food gained by fraud tastes sweet, but later on, the result is very unpleasant and uncomfortable, like eating sand in the mouth (Walvoord). In other words, the food that is cheated and is eaten at first but it will be later woe to us. This reminds me Proverbs 9:17 – “Stolen water is sweet; And bread eaten in secret is pleasant.” Food that has been deceived and water that is stolen or secretly eaten rice cake seem to taste good at first, but later on the consequence of the dishonest behavior can never taste good. The problem is that even we Christians later lie and deceive others, even to some degree, knowing the consequences of our wrong choice.

We must not lie. As Christians, we should not deceive others. Rather, we must say the right thing. We must speak the truth. We must say the right thing, speak the truth, and our lips must be wise lips. Look at Proverbs 20:15 – “There is gold, and an abundance of jewels; But the lips of knowledge are a more precious thing.” In order for our lips to be wise, we must speak knowledge with our lips. As Christians, we must speak our knowledge of God. We must speak of knowledge of the Bible and of knowledge of Jesus. We must speak the wise words and the right words in right times (Walvoord).

**Third, we must do the right love.**

Look at Proverbs 20:16 – “Take his garment when he becomes surety for a stranger; And for foreigners, hold him in pledge.” What if your loved one asks you to hold you in pledge, what will you do? Especially if you know that your loved one is incapable of paying you back with money, will you still stand surety for your loved one or will you gently reject it? The Bible Proverbs 6:1-5 teaches us about standing surety our neighbor. The point of the lesson is that if we have become surety for our neighbor (v. 1) and we have been snared into the hands of our neighbor (vv. 2-3), if we assume the responsibility of paying the debt of our neighbor, then we must deliver ourselves (v. 5). Here, what the author of the Book of Proverbs King Solomon warns us is the act of foolishness. And the foolish act is to promise ourselves a responsibility of pledge for the person who defaults, knowing that s/he is indebted to others and s/he cannot pay back. Of course, I don't think the Bible warns that making a pledge here is in itself the foolish act. The reason is because when our neighbor is in financial trouble, being a guarantor for that neighbor can be a practice of Christ's neighbor love. But the foolish act that King Solomon warns here is that if a guarantee is given, it will not be a guarantor who is not prepared to take responsibility in the event of an accident, a person who is deceived by another, a guarantor, or an insurer who is incapable of performing responsibilities.

In Proverbs 20:16, King Solomon warns of a possible mistake in people's acts of pledge. And the mistake is that the person who makes a pledge for another person whom s/he doesn't know well cannot get anything back. The question we can ask here is why do we make pledge for the person whom we don't know well? Dr. Park Yun-sun is referring to this behavior as 'economic adventure' (Park). How big is this economic adventure? Whether we lend money to someone who is unable to pay off our debts or make a pledge, these actions can result in significant economic loss to the person who gave the loan. Of course, we may say that the moneylenders are earning a lot of money by lending their money to people who can't even pay back their debts by forcing them to even pay the interest of the their money. But many times the Bible warns us the adventurous acts of pledge (6:1-5, 11:15, 17:18, 22:26-27). Dr. Yun-sun said: 'The people (especially believers) fail when they are economically adventurous, because their excessive economic adventurous is a kind of unbelief. Such an adventure is to disregard God as if to claim tomorrow's work by human power (Jam. 4:13-17)' (Park). What do you think about the phrase 'excessive economic adventure is a kind of unbelief'? Do you agree?

As I meditate on the Book of Proverbs, I feel more desperately in need of God's wisdom in loving my neighbor with God's love. For example, in my introduction, I mentioned about how I talked with the brother in Christ after the Bible study. We also talked about how we should love our neighbors. I shared with him some things that God taught me in my life, and one of them was devoted to trust another person as I trust in God. The reason is because even though we trust our neighbor, entrusting everything and loving him or her like a family member, but s/he can betray us and we will be hurt and thus we cannot trust anybody anymore. Another thing I shared with him is that in loving our neighbor, we don't have to tell all the truth of our hearts to our neighbor. I personally like to share my life transparently. But one day when I was reading the story of Samson in Judges 16, I was little bit shock. The reason is when Delilah pressed Samson daily with her words and urged him to tell the

secret of his great strength, Samson's soul was annoyed to death (vv. 15-16) so he told her everything (v. 17). So I shared that lesson with the brother in Christ that no matter how dear other person may be to us, we don't have to tell everything to him or her. It is lesson that we need to be self-control in loving our neighbors. And among the self-control, we must know how to say "No" politely but firmly when we should say no. I think one of thing that we must say "No" politely but firmly is when our neighbors ask us to hold a pledge for them. Of course, if we have the economic ability to pay off the debt and make the pledge for our loved one, then we can do so because it will be no problem. But if we hold the pledge for our neighbor even if we don't have economic ability to pay off the debt but borrowing money from other people here and there, then that's not loving our neighbors wisely. I think we need to take seriously what Dr. Park Yoon-sun said that such economic adventure comes from distrust of God. The lesson that the Bible teaches us is that we give financial help to our loved ones who need financial help rather than to guarantee it for them (Deut. 15:1-15; 19:17) or to lend money without receiving the interest (cf. Leviticus 25:35-38; 28:8).

We must love right in the sight of God. The right love is to love in the Lord and in the truth. Love that is outside of the truth of God is never right love. We must love our neighbors according to the Word of God. In particular, as Proverbs 20:16 says, we must be careful of making pledge for others. If we make a mistake in the guarantee for our neighbor's debt, the consequences cannot be avoided. Furthermore, the result is that we will hide the glory of God. Therefore, in loving our neighbor, we should wisely judge about guaranteeing our other person's debt and shouldn't make the mistake.

#### **Fourth, we must do the right management.**

Look at Proverbs 20:18 – "Prepare plans by consultation, And make war by wise guidance." Wal Mart, which has been very successful in the U.S. market, has made inroads around the world on the basis of its success in the U.S. market (1998 in Korea). But the company suffered so much just in the Korean market. Do you know why? The reason is because the low price that wasn't right for the Korean consumers' propensity. For example, the Korean consumers hate the warehouse-type store, which is a representative form of large discount stores, and they want to display products in the same way as department stores. But Wal-Mart completely ignores this customers' inclination. As a result, Wal-Mart was completely defeated in competition with Korean companies, who are familiar with Koreans like E-Mart, and sold all their business in Korea to E-Mart (Internet). In relation to this result and today's text, Proverbs 20:18, there must be "consultation" and wise "guidance" in management. A good example is an advice given by Moses' father-in-law Jethro to Moses in Exodus 18:17. The background of the advice was that Moses sat down to serve as judge for the people of Israel, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening (v. 13). As a result, his father-in-law Jethro knew that that will only wear Moses out because the word was too heavy for Moses and he couldn't handle it alone (v. 18). So Jethro advised Moses to select capable men from all the people – "men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain" – and appointed them as officials over

thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens and have them serve as judges for the people at all times (vv. 21-22). When Moses heard the words of his father-in-law Jethro, he did everything he said (v. 24). “He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens” (v. 25). And they served as judges for the people at all times (v. 26). “The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves” (v. 26). Like this, in management, consultation (advice) and guidance is necessary and important. In addition to Proverbs 20:18, look at Proverbs 15:22 – “Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they succeed.” And the Bible says “many advisers make victory sure” (11:14). In order to win the war, we need to have wise guidance (20:18).

One economics professor says that the Bible emphasizes more on the economy than any economics textbook. It is said that there are 1,600 times the passage that mentions economy and management throughout the New and Old Testament. In that sense, the Bible is an excellent economic and management textbook (Internet). ‘An example of a biblical economy and management model is the Torah economy. This economy is characterized by the separation of ownership and management. The Bible separates ownership and management from the beginning. If so, who is the owner? God. Who is the manager? We who are delegated management. We are delegated and managing God's own property or wealth’ (Internet). This is one of the three aspects that we Christians must have, that is the biblical perspective of wealth. In other words, the biblical perspective of wealth is that God is the owner of the wealth and we are the managers. The difference between the biblical economy and the general economy is that while the general economy mainly studies what we earn, the Bible teaches us how to use what we earn (the Internet). This is what Proverbs 16:1 and 16:3 says: “The plans of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD. ... Commit your works to the LORD And your plans will be established.” What do these verses teach us? We must commit our works to the Lord. What is the reason? The reason is because only God's plan and His work will be done. Look at Isaiah 14:24 – “The LORD Almighty has sworn, “Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand.”

We are Christians. We must live right lives as Christians. In order to live a right life, we must have the right lifestyle, must speak the right word, do the right love, and do the right management. Then we will be able to faithfully play the role of light and salt as Christians in this world.

## The upright life of the Christians (2)

### [Proverbs 20:19-25]

During the past two weeks, we have been taught four lessons on how to live a upright life as Christians under the heading “The upright life of the Christians (1)” based on Proverbs 20:13-18. Those four were lessons on the right way of life, right words, right love, and right management. A Christian's right way of life was to work diligently (v. 13), a right word was not to boast of ourselves (v. 14) and not to deceive (lie) (v. 17), and instead speak the wise words (v. 15). And we were taught that the love of the Christian is to be careful not to be a guarantee for others, and the love of neighbor also needs self-control (v. 16). Finally, we receive a lesson that Christians need advice and guidance in the correct management of Christians (v. 18). In particular, because we entrust our management to God, only God's management should be done through our management. Today, I would like to receive five lessons on how to live a right life in the sight of God as Christians under the title of “The upright life of the Christian (2),” based on Proverbs 20:19-25.

**First, in order for us as Christians to live the right life in God’s sight we must have the right relationship.**

How should we be in good relationship with others as Christians? Don’t you think that sometimes having good relationship with other people is beyond your capacity? I think there are people around us who are very hard to accept and to build relationship with. The relationship is very difficult because there are people who make us hard and hurt our hearts. In particular, those who are working will know how difficult relationship is as they work with their bosses and co-workers. One study found that there are two major workplace difficulties. One is the difficulty of work and the other is the difficulty of human relations. But here, the difficulty of human relations is twice that of work. What do you think?

When I think about the right relationship of the Christians, it reminds me Proverbs 3:27-25. As I meditated on that passage, I learned three principles about the relationship of the wise:

- (1) The first principle about the relationship of the wise is that we shouldn’t withhold good from those to whom it is due.

Look at Proverbs 3:27-28: “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in your power

to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it," When you have it with you." When it is in our power to do it, we shouldn't withhold good from those to whom it is due. We shouldn't say to our neighbor to go and come back, and we will give it tomorrow.

(2) The second principle about the relationship of the wise is that we shouldn't contend with another person without cause.

Look at Proverbs 3:29-30: "Do not devise harm against your neighbor, While he lives securely beside you. Do not contend with a man without cause, If he has done you no harm." We shouldn't start an argument and contend without cause.

(3) The third principle about the relationship of the wise is that we shouldn't envy a man of violence.

Look at Proverbs 3:31 – "Do not envy a man of violence And do not choose any of his ways." The reason is because God detests a perverse man (v. 32), His curse is on the house of the wicked (v. 33), He mocks proud mockers (v. 34) and He holds up the fools to shame (v. 35).

In Proverbs 20:19-22, we can think of three lessons about the right relationship of the Christians that God teaches us:

(1) We shouldn't associate with a gossip.

Look at Proverbs 20:19 – "He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip." Here, a person who talks a lot is a person who goes about as a slanderer. And the person who goes about as the slanderer reveals secret. S/he especially reveals other person's confidential information. In fact, s/he is a gossip. The Bible tells us not to associate with the gossip (v. 19). Then why shouldn't we associate with the gossip? The reason is because such a person reveals the secrets of others (v. 19, 11:13). In other words, the reason we shouldn't associate with the gossip is because such a person loses trust. In addition to this reason, reading the book of Proverbs teaches us another reason why we shouldn't associate with the gossip. And the reason is that gossip causes quarrels. Look at Proverbs 26:20 – "Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down." Another reason is that gossip separates close friends. Look Proverbs 16:28 – "A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends." Don't you think that the gossip who likes to talk about other people stirs up dissension and separates close friends? Not only the gossip separates close friends, but also siblings and even the couple relationship. How does the gossip separates them? They do so by lying. Look at Proverbs 6:19 – "a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers."

Therefore, we shouldn't associate with the gossipier.

(2) We shouldn't curse our parents.

Look at Proverbs 20:20 – “He who curses his father or his mother, His lamp will go out in time of darkness.” When you hear this word, won't you think in your mind that who will curse their own parents? However, in the original Hebrew, the word "curse" means not only "curse" but also "belittle" (Vine). That means that the phrase “He who curse his father or his mother” can mean ‘He who belittle his father or his mother’. Now, doesn't that change the problem? Although we have never cursed our parents, we may have belittled them. We may have esteemed them lightly, underestimated them and despised them. This is what Matthew 15:4 says: “For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.’” In the Old Testament, those who curse their parents or belittle them violate the command of “honor your parents,” which is the fifth commandment of the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:12). The penalty for the violation is stated in Exodus 21:17 – “Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death” (cf. Lev. 20:9). One commentator says that this punishment not only applied to those who curse their parents, but also those who rebel against their parents (Walvoord). In Proverbs 20:20, the lamp of he who curses his father or his mother will go out in time of darkness refers to death (Walvoord). Therefore, we shouldn't curse our parents, but rather we should bless them. And we shouldn't belittle our parents but value them highly. We should also respect and honor them without disregarding them.

(3) We shouldn't revenge.

Look at Proverbs 20:22 – “Do not say, "I will repay evil"; Wait for the LORD, and He will save you.” If someone has hurt us in a relationship, our nature is to repay him for the pain we've suffered. In fact, we prefer the word “hate your enemy” rather than “Love your neighbor” (Mt. 5:43). It's our nature to “Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot” (Deut. 19:21). So God tells us in Proverbs 24:29 – “Do not say, "I'll do to him as he has done to me; I'll pay that man back for what he did.” Also Proverbs 20:22 says “Do not say, ‘I will repay evil’.” That means that even the other person hurt us, we shouldn't hurt him or her back. Don't we say that if we do that, we will be the same person? If we are true Christians, shouldn't we be different from the people in this world? One of the things that we should be different is waiting for God instead of repaying evil (Prov. 20:22). In order to understand what it means to wait for God we must look at Romans 12:19 – “Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.” The reason why we should wait for God instead of repaying evil is because it is God's to avenge and not us. Therefore, we must wait and believe that God will repay for us. This is what Deuteronomy 32:35 says: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near and their doom rushes upon

them.” What does it mean? It means that revenge is God's. Look at Nahum 1:2 – “The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The LORD takes vengeance on his foes and maintains his wrath against his enemies.” When it is time for God’s vengeance (Jere. 51:6) God will repay for us. Therefore, we must not repay. We must believe in God and wait. God will take revenge and deliver us in God's time.

**Second, in order for us as Christians to live the right life in God’s sight we must have the right inheritance perspective.**

What is “inheritance”? According to the Internet Wikipedia inheritance is the comprehensive succession of property and status by the death of a person and the center of inheritance lies in inheritance of fortune (Wikipedia). Look at Proverbs 20:21 – “An inheritance quickly gained at the beginning will not be blessed at the end.” The phrase “An inheritance quickly gained at the beginning” probably indicates that the child had asked his father for a fortune to be passed on to him (Walvoord). A good example is the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-20. The second son said to his father, “Father, give me my share of the estate” (v. 12). So the father divided his property between them (v. 12). Think about how the second son felt when he received his property. Wouldn't it be nice to receive a portion of your parents' property as your inheritance little bit earlier? But what does the Bible say? The younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living (v. 13). After all, the younger son was not blessed by his inheritance (Prov. 20:21). Dr. Park Yoon-sun interpreted Proverbs 20:21 in relation to verse 20. He said that “a man curses his father or mother” (v. 20) is the man whose behavior and character is bad. Also, he said verses 20 and 21 are talking about this man who speaks against his parents and disobey them because of the property problem. He said that the people whose behavior and character is bad often conflict with their parents by forcing their rights without having to fulfill their responsibilities, mainly because of the financial problem. As they do so, they also use abuse and curse (Park). I think it makes sense. And I personally think that it is ugly to see children fighting over their parents' inheritance. Not long ago, I noticed that the couple of Korea's big business presidents who have a lot of wealth were fighting over their father’s inheritance. When I heard the news about that, I don’t think that was good example to others. That is why I fully agree with Proverbs 20:21. One interesting point is that verse 21 has both the word “the beginning” and “the end”. After all, when we inherit our inheritance from our parents quickly, we may feel happy at the beginning because we think that we are materially blessed. But at the end that inheritance will not be blessed. Not only that, I think that the children will dispute with each other over their parents’ inheritance and their sibling relationship will be cut off.

I read one of the articles published in the Internet Korean Newspaper that introduced fifteen rich people who refused to give their property to their children. They were referred to as ‘The rich people who refused their inheritance.’ Among those fifteen people, we are familiar with some of the names such as Warren Buffett, Microsoft founder Bill Gates, eBay founder Pierre Omidar, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Hong Kong



Actor Jackin Chan. Their motto is that inherited wealth can ruin humans. So an important figure in oil industry Pickens said: 'I like to make money and donate. ... But I don't like to inherit my money (to my children) because it usually does more harm than good.' A Hong Kong action star Jackie Chan said, 'If my son is capable, he will make money on his own. If not, he will just waste my money.' And this is what Warren Buffett said: 'I want to give my children enough money to think that they can do something with it. But I don't want to give them so that they don't have to do anything.' What do you think? What do you think about inheriting your wealth to your children?

If non-believers have this kind of inheritance perspective, how about us, the believers? Shouldn't we have the right inheritance perspective in God's sight and not in the eyes of people? What is the right perspective of inheritance in God's eyes? What does the Bible says about the inheritance that we the children of God should have?

(1) We must remember that we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

Look at Romans 8:17 – “Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” Who is a heir? Isn't it a person inheriting the property? It means a property inheritor of God's kingdom. By God's grace, we have become heirs of God through faith in Jesus Christ. We also became heirs with Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:6). We have become property inheritors of the kingdom of God. We must keep this in mind.

(2) We must be thankful for the fact that we have inherited eternal life.

Look at Matthew 19:29 – “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.” As heirs of God, we have inherited eternal life through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is God's total grace. Apostle Paul said in Titus 3:7 – “so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.” By the grace of God we became the heirs who have the hope of eternal life. We should be grateful for this grace of God.

(3) We must seek for the glorious new body and the heavenly dwelling heirs prepared in heaven.

Look at Philippians 3:20-21: “But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.” The day that Jesus will come again, we will be like His glorious body. And we will enter the heavenly dwellings that the Lord has prepared (Jn. 14:1-3) and live with Him forever. Therefore, we, as heirs of God, those who have eternal life, are to live on earth, longing for the body of glory and eternal heavenly dwelling which will be inherited by us in the future.

(4) We should value the wisdom of heavenly Father God more than inheritance from our physical parents.

Look at Proverbs 19:14 – “Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.” The inheritance we receive from our parents (house or riches) is precious, but even more precious is a wise wife from God. The focus here is “wisdom” rather than wife. In other words, the inheritance we receive from God is wisdom. We should value this wisdom more than our homes or our wealth.

**Third, in order for us as Christians to live the right life in God’s sight we must have the right business perspective.**

Look at Proverbs 20:23 – “The LORD detests differing weights, and dishonest scales do not please him.” If I think about “scales”, Proverbs 16:11 comes to my mind: “Honest scales and balances are from the LORD; all the weights in the bag are of his making.” Here, “scales,” “balances,” and “weights” refers to “scale.” And this scale measure accurately. In other words, this scale is a “fair” scale. In other words, it is the consistent scale. In addition to Proverbs 20:23, in verse 10, King Solomon says as follow: “Differing weights and differing measures-- the LORD detests them both.” What does it mean? It means that a wise Christian who fears God hates the differing scale that God hates. In other words, the wise Christians hate deception, which God hates. Thus we must hate the dishonesty that God hates. Rather, we must delight in accurate weights just as the accurate weights are God’s delight (11:1). In other words, we must be honest.

Perhaps in King Solomon's day some of the merchants deceived their customers by using their weights to deceive them from the quality, weight, or quantity of their goods (see Prov. 11:1). The way that the merchants deceived their customers was by using the 'double scale'. In other words, while the dishonest merchants used the light and small scale to give less grain when they sold grain, they used the heavy and bigger scale when they bought grain. If this applies to the reality in which we live, we can receive valuable lessons about how Christians in business should do the right work in the sight of God. In short, the lesson is to do business with the right business perspective. Here, the right business perspective is to seek honesty that God is pleased with, but hate the dishonesty that God hates. If we Christian merchants are dishonest in our commercial conduct, we must remember that God hates dishonest commercial conduct. Never should we do dishonestly for unrighteous gain. Rather, we must be honest in our commercial conduct.

In addition, the Bible tells us more about the right business perspective. One of them is found in James 4:13-17: “Now listen, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.’ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord's will, we will live

and do this or that.’ As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.” There are three lessons that Christian businessmen should learn from this Word:

(1) The Christian businessmen must do good.

Look at James 4:17 – “Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.” The Christian businessmen need to know how to do good. The Bible says that even though they know they suppose to do good but don't do it, it's sin. Look at 1 Timothy 6:18 – “Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.” The Christian businessmen should be generous. They should be willing to share and do a lot of good work. Look at Hebrews 13:16 – “And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.” The sacrifices that God is pleased with is doing good and sharing with others. Look at 2 Thessalonians 3:13 – “And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.” If the Christian businessmen do good in their own strength, they will one day get tired and discouraged. But they will not be discouraged if they do good by the power of grace that God supplies.

(2) The Christian businessmen should not boast in their arrogance.

Look at James 4:16 – “But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.” The Bible says that it is evil for the Christian businessmen to boast in their arrogance. Look at Jeremiah 9:23 – “... let not a rich man boast of his riches.” Look at Psalms 49:6 – “Even those who trust in their wealth And boast in the abundance of their riches?” The Bible says not to trust in our wealth and not to boast our wealth. Rather, the Bible tells us to depend on God. And this is what the Bible says about boasting: “But, ‘Let him who boasts boast in the Lord’” (2 Cor. 10:17), “If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness” (11:30). The Christian businessmen should not boast of their strong things, but of their weaknesses. And they must boast in the Lord. Look at Jeremiah 9:23-24: “Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD.” We should boast of knowing God. God is pleased with this.

(3) The Christian businessmen should have attitude and habit of saying that “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that”, knowing that they are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away in the midst of planning to make a profit by doing business.

Look at James 4: 14-15: “Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor

that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.'" I think it's not easy to have this attitude and habit. We need to intentionally strive to do so with God's help while we are praying to God. One of those efforts we can make is, in my case, I meditate on the words of James that we are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away as I drive on a foggy day. When I see the fog, I think about the fact that my life is like a mist that appears for a little while and quickly disappears. When I keep on doing so, then I have more view of death. The Christian businessmen should also have the death perspective and ask themselves what kind of profit they should make. It is necessary for them to think and pray about what is more valuable and eternal and what God wants from them through their business.

In addition to James 4:13-17, there is another Bible verse that the Christian businessmen must know. It is Deuteronomy 8:17-18a: "'Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.' "But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, ...." We must keep in mind that it's not our power and the strength of our hands that made us our wealth. We must never forget that we have wealth because God has given us the power to make wealth. The Christian businessmen who believe this truth will surely use their God-given wealth wisely for God's glory and not in vain.

The Christian businessmen must have the right business perspective. The right business perspective is to do business honestly. And the Christian businessmen must do good and don't boast in arrogance. And they should know that their life is a mist that disappears after a short time. So they need to have attitude and habit of saying, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." And when they have gained wealth, they should not say "My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth." Rather, they must remember that it is God who is giving them power to make wealth.

**Fourth, in order for us as Christians to live the right life in God's sight we must have the right future perspective.**

Look at Proverbs 20:24 – "A man's steps are directed by the LORD. How then can anyone understand his own way?" Have you ever made plans in your own life and pursued for your purpose, and eventually didn't go according to your plan? When that happens, what do we usually think about? Have you ever thought that 'My work doesn't go as well as I want'? If our work doesn't go as well as we want, how can it go well as we planned about our future and work hard to achieve it? Sometimes it goes well with our plan, but more often, it doesn't go well as we plan and we face difficulties. I remember what the Bible says in Ecclesiastes 7:14 – "When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, a man cannot discover anything about his future." What does it mean? It means that we should rejoice when everything goes well,

but we must think when we go through difficulties. God gives to us both happiness and difficulties so that we cannot know what will happen next. We must realize that we don't know what will happen next.

We can be happy when things are going well. We can rejoice and feel happiness when everything is successful. The question is, what should we do when we are in trouble? When the Shepherd Lord makes us lie down in green pastures and leads us beside quiet waters (Ps. 23:2), there is no problem. But what should we do when we choose to walk through the valley of the shadow of death? (v. 4) The Bible says to consider (Eccle. 7:14). What does it mean? It means that we need to look back on the past when we faced hardships and difficulties. And as we look back on the past, we must remember how God delivered us from our hardships and difficulties and how He showed His grace of deliverance to us. This is the right perspective of the past. Then we can believe that the God of salvation will save us from the difficulties we face in the present. Then we can face the present difficult reality with faith and with confidence in deliverance. Although the difficult circumstances have not changed yet, we have changed in which we can boldly go through those difficult circumstances by faith. Why does God not only give us the happiness of prosperity, but also allow us to go through hardships and difficulties? The reason for this is so that we cannot discover anything about our future (Eccle. 7:14). Although we may look better if we know what will happen in our future, we will surely sin more and more against God if we know our future. If we know our future, we will certainly be proud and not trust in God. And we will try to live our lives as our own. Not only we can be lazy, but we can also live our lives however we want to live. It is better not to know the future. It's no fun to know the score before the soccer game is over. We don't want to see it at all. We need not to know. We must not know our future. But what is certain is that only God knows our future. This is what God says in Isaiah 44:7 – “Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come-- yes, let him foretell what will come.” Who can say what is going to happen in the future? Who can tell us about the future work? There is no one in the world who can speak boldly with confidence what will happen in the future. Only the omniscient God knows the future. And all future work is done only by God's sovereign will in His providence. Therefore, we should listen to these words: “To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the reply of the tongue. ... In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.” What does it mean? It means that even though we plan our way with our hearts, it is God who leads our steps. God, who guides our paths, tells us: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” We must know this thought of God. We must believe in this God's thoughts toward us. And this thought of God must be our thought as well. In other words, we must live by faith with the future and hope in the Lord. In prosperity as well as in hardship, we must live by faith with the future and hope.

What is our future and hope? Isn't it the Second Coming of Jesus? We must hope and be convinced by faith in the Second Coming of Jesus. And knowing that we will stand before the Lord and will settle account with Him in the future, we must faithfully take on the mission the Lord has entrusted to us on earth. We believe that

Jesus, who was the same yesterday, today, and forever, will be with us (Heb. 13:8).

**Fifth, in order for us as Christians to live the right life in God's sight we must have the right devotion perspective.**

Look at Proverbs 20:25 – “It is a trap for a man to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider his vows.” Who do you think of in the Bible when you think about a person who made a vow in prayer? I think of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1. As we already know, “Hanna” was a woman whose womb the Lord closed (1 Sam. 1:5-6) who offered a vow to God. Look at 1 Samuel 1:10-11: “In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD. And she made a vow, saying, “O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.” God remembered Hannah, who had made the vow to God (v. 19), and she conceived and gave birth to a son named Samuel (v. 20). Hannah, after weaning the baby Samuel as she had made the vow to God, actually took him to the house of the Lord (v. 24) and gave the child to God for the rest of his life (v. 28). Listen to what she said to the priest Eli: “... As surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD.” And he worshiped the LORD there.” Hannah gave her precious son Samuel to God. This is the dedication that we should learn. Another good example of dedication comes out in the Jesus' story in the New Testament. It is none other than the story of a woman named Mary who poured “a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume” on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair (Jn. 12:3). Here, the woman “Mary” is not the mother of Jesus, but the younger sister of Lazarus who died and was raised again and of Martha. She was the woman who broke the jar of perfume and poured the perfume on the head and the feet of Jesus who came to Bethany before going to Jerusalem. “But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ‘Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages’” (vv. 4-5). He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief. As keeper of the money bag, Judah Iscariot used to help himself to what was put into it (v. 6). When we think of these words, we may think that there are devotees like Mary in the church and thieves like Judas Iscariot. When I think of these two groups of people, I think there are people in the church who have the right devotion and the wrong devotion.

Let's think about who are the Christians who have the wrong perspective of devotion in three ways:

(1) The Christians who have the wrong perspective of devotion devote their lips only.

Honestly, how many people in the church are dedicated to the Lord by word only and serve the Lord's church only by word? They are just talkative. They talk about serving but they have no action. These

devotees who serve the Lord's church with only their mouth never benefit the church. Rather, it is more likely them to cause problems in the church.

(2) The Christians who have the wrong perspective of devotion are coveted people in their hearts.

There are people within the church who not only talk about serving but also actually serving the Lord's church but with impure motives. These are those who serve the church with covetousness in their hearts. There is danger for these devotees to harm the church.

(3) The Christians who have the wrong perspective of devotion are those who are rashly devoted to God.

Look at Proverbs 20:25 – “It is a trap for a man to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider his vows.” Here, dedicate something rashly refers to a person who vows to give something to God and thinks again. And the rash devotee says: “My vow was a mistake” (Eccl. 5:6). For example, you dedicated your life to God when you received the word of God and His grace at the revival meeting. But after the revival meeting, you don't keep your vow to God because when you think about it again, you cannot dedicate your life to Him. Look at Deuteronomy 23:21-23: “If you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the LORD your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin. But if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty. Whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do, because you made your vow freely to the LORD your God with your own mouth.” Look at Numbers 30:2 – “When a man makes a vow to the LORD or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.”

Then who are the Christians who have the right perspective of devotion?

(1) The Christians who have the right perspective of devotion are the ones who faithfully fulfill their vows to God and don't think twice.

(2) The Christians who have the right perspective of devotion are the ones who devote to God joyfully.

Look at Psalms 110:3 – “Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You as the dew.” The Christians who have the right perspective of devotion are willing to devote themselves and their hearts are honest. This is because they know that God searches their hearts and delights in honesty. Look at 1 Chronicles 29:17 – “Since I know, O my God, that You try the heart and delight in uprightness, I, in the integrity of my heart, have willingly offered all

these things; so now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here, make their offerings willingly to You.”

(3) The Christians who have the right perspective of devotion humbly offer what they have to God.

Look at 1 Chronicles 29:14 – “But who am I and who are my people that we should be able to offer as generously as this? For all things come from You, and from Your hand we have given You.”

We should not be devoted to God rashly. We should not dedicate ourselves to God with impure motives. And we should not dedicate ourselves to God only in words. Rather, we must keep our vows carefully to God. And we should devote to God humbly and joyfully.

Today we have five lessons about the upright Christian life. We learned about the right relationship between Christians, the right view of inheritance, the right view of business, the right view of the future, and the right view of devotion. May we all practice and live a righteous life as a Christian and give glory to God.



## “A wise king”

### [Proverbs 20:26-30]

We have already received four lessons under the title of “A king who sits on the throne of justice” based on Proverbs 20:8-12. If we review the lesson again, first, the king who sits on the throne of justice distinguishes between good and evil and disperses all evil (Prov. 20:8). Second, no one can say “I am clean and without sin” before the king who sits on the throne of justice (v. 9). Third, we must be honest before the king who sits on the throne of justice (v. 10). Fourth, the king who sits on the throne of justice hears and sees everything (v. 12). In addition, there are three lessons we have received under the heading “A good king who pleases God” based on Proverbs 16:10-15, when we think about the subject “king”. If we review those lessons again, first, the good king, who pleases God makes right decisions with God's wisdom (16:10). Second, the good king who pleases God detests wrongdoing (v. 12). Third and last, the good king who pleases God is well advised by loyalists (v. 13). In addition, we meditated on the “king” based on the words of Proverbs 19:12 and 20:2, and considered two things under the heading “An ideal president”. First, the ideal president rules the country with justice. Second and last, the ideal president rules the country with love.

Today, I would like to receive five lessons by meditating on Proverbs 20:26-30 under the title of “A wise king”.

**First, the wise king discerns and separates the good from the wicked and punishes the wicked.**

Look at Proverbs 20:26 – “A wise king winnows out the wicked; he drives the threshing wheel over them.” Here, the word ‘to winnow’ means to separate the grain from the chaff, as we have learned in Proverbs 20:8. That means that the wise king separates the good from the wicked, as if shedding grains and chaffs. And in the phrase “he drives the threshing wheel over them”, “threshing wheel” refers to the ‘threshing wheel pulled by a cow’, usually having 3-4 wheels. These threshers rotated and pressed the grain to peel it off and reveal the grain. Likewise, the wise king clearly distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked, just as the peasant distinguishes between the grain and the chaffs through the shedding. And just as a farmer separates the grain from the chaff, collects the grains and puts them into the warehouse, and the chaff is blown by the wind or burned in the fire, the wise king also sorts out the righteous and the wicked through fair trial and imposes appropriate punishment on the wicked. (Internet).

Can you imagine what would happen to a country if the president of a country could not distinguish between the good and the evil? I was listening to a Korean radio broadcast two weeks ago, and I heard the news that there are a lot of setbacks in work due to the fact that the heads of agencies are not appointed to the Korean government. I heard why the heads of agencies aren't being appointed quickly. It is said that it takes a long time because the person who is in charge of personnel in the government has thoroughly investigated the appointment of heads of agencies. It is said that it usually takes one week for the head of an agency and more time for appointing a minister. After hearing this news, when President Geun-hye Park's administration came into power, and when I thought of the people who had a problem because of wrongdoing, the government felt that it would have to do a thorough check in the appointment of public officials. Can you imagine what would happen if the Korean government could not properly discern people in appointing ministers or heads of agencies and put wicked people in such important positions? It is a principle that should apply not only to the president or government of a country, but also to the church as well. Can you imagine what would happen if the Korean government could not properly discern people in appointing ministers or heads of agencies and put wicked people in such important positions? It is a principle that should apply not only to the president or government of a country, but also to the church. I think that the effect of the wrongdoing is not so small if the session doesn't properly discern the people in appointing workers in the church. If we apply this principle in raising our children at home, the wise parents should know and understand their children's friends so that they can discern and separate good and bad friends. Isn't that obvious? But if the parent cannot discern whether the friends around his or her child are good or bad, and therefore cannot separate between them, then what will happen to the child?

After King Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings to God at Gibeon (1 Kgs. 3:4), at night God appeared in Solomon's dream and said, "Ask what you wish me to give you" (v. 5). What did Solomon ask? Look at 1 Kings 3:9 – "So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" What King Solomon asked of God was "discernment to understand justice" (v. 11). Isn't this the prayer topic we should ask God for? Like King Solomon, we must ask God for wisdom to discern good and evil. In particular, when we pray for the President who serves our country, we must pray, 'God, please give the President of our country the wisdom to discern good and evil.' When God listened to our prayers and gave the President of our country the wisdom to discern good and evil so that he can discern between the good and the wicked and punishes the wicked, there will be order and justice in our country. And when we pray for ourselves too, we must ask God for discerning wisdom. When God answers our prayer, we will be able to discern between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean (Lev. 10:10). Then we will be able to separate ourselves from deceitful and unclean things (Neh. 13:3).

## **Second, the wise king conscientiously rules the kingdom before God.**

Look at Proverbs 20:27 – "The lamp of the LORD searches the spirit of a man ; it searches out his inmost

being.” Not long ago, a pastor in Korea asked a question in my Facebook message: ‘... What is the most important thing to care about in the pastor's work?’ When I was asked that question, I wrote to the pastor: ‘... As a pastor, I think the most important, most caring, and most interested in my work is to look at myself in front of God. It is important to reflect on myself in the word of God, a spiritual mirror.’ Then the pastor replied: ‘... What you said seems like saying that before preaching to anyone, as a believer you are trying to stand one-on-one with God first and try to live as a true member of the church.’ One of the reasons I wrote like that to that pastor was because it seemed to me that the most important, most caring and interested thing as a pastor is to look at myself in front of God. This is because if I don't live my Christian life right first, I cannot tell my church members to do so. In other words, I want to be a conscientious Christian in front of God. So it is important to examine myself diligently in the word of God. Looking at the first half of Proverbs 20:27, “The lamp of the Lord searches the spirit of a man ...”. Here “the spirit of a man” refers to the conscience of man (MacArthur). What King Solomon is talking about now is saying that the conscience of man is the lamp of God. This word “the lamp” appears two more times in the book of Proverbs: “The light of the righteous rejoices, But the lamp of the wicked goes out” (13:9), “For there will be no future for the evil man; The lamp of the wicked will be put out” (24:20). What does it mean? It means that the lamp of the wicked will definitely go out. But when we see that King Solomon says that the light of the righteous shines brightly, it means that the wise king, as a righteous man, rules the country with a good conscience, revealing the darkness of the wicked since he looks into the deep inside of the wicked. And because the wise king punishes the wicked with justice, he turns off the lamps of the wicked.

The Bible Psalms 7:9 says that the righteous God tries the hearts and minds. Therefore, the apostle Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:19, “keeping faith and a good conscience.” Indeed, the apostle Paul said that he did his best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men (Acts 24:16). And the apostle Paul said, “Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day” (23:1) in front of the high priest, Ananias, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees. The apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 3:16 – “and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.” But what is our conscience now as Christians? Do we really have a good conscience? Are we really doing good in Christ with the good conscience? If we are doing this now, as Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, our light shines before people so that they may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. Also, as the apostle Peter said, “... in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame” (1 Pet. 3:16). However, if we don't have good conscience now, but rather our conscience is weakening and defiled (2 Cor. 8:7), what is phenomenon of Christians now? Then we will not be put to shamed by those who curse us (1 Pet. 3:16). And now we have nothing to say about their slander and will be put to shame.

We must be wary of hardening and paralyzing our conscience. Can you imagine? If all the traffic lights on the street are not working properly and the green light comes on when the red light should come on, and the red light comes on when the green light should come on, what will the traffic be? Perhaps great confusion will come. There

will be many car accidents, many people will be injured, and even traffic jams and deaths will occur. Just imagine. If the conscience of the president, the leader of a country, is paralyzed, what will happen to that country? Wouldn't the wicked be infested with it? What about the church? If the conscience of a pastor who is the leader of a church is hardened, what will happen to that church? The wise king will strive to be free from his conscience before God. And he will conscientiously rule a nation before God. Therefore, the light of the righteous will shine brightly, and the lamp of the wicked will go out.

### **Third, the wise king protects himself with love and faithfulness.**

Look Proverbs 20:28 – “Love and faithfulness keep a king safe; through love his throne is made secure.” One of the memories that I still can't forget while teaching my second generation students as a pastoral intern is the memory of taking some students out of state and sitting in a circle in front of the main hall of the church and kneeling down and crying out to God. After that, the father or mother of a student who prayed together later told me what his child had said to him or her, ‘The students are looking at whether I truly love God or not.’ Since then, I didn't try to act to show my students that I love God as a pastoral staff. But I decided and tried to become more and more loving God in my relationship with Him in order to be an example to the students. The citizens of a country think the same. Those citizens know whether their president loves them or not. If the President simply says he loves them, the citizens will not follow him with sincere respect for the President. Also, if the President made promises for the citizens during the election, and if he didn't follow his promises as President, the citizens would never respect and follow the President. To that extent, a leader must have love and faithfulness.

In Proverbs 20:28, the Bible says that the wise king protects himself with love and faithfulness. What does it mean? It means that the king defends his throne with love and faithfulness and strengthens him. In other words, the wise king loves the people and faithfully does what he promises them. Isn't that obvious? If the king loves his people, will he not keep his promises to them? It is said that the king with this love and faithfulness protects himself, and strengthens his throne. The wise king who has love and faithfulness in the end prays to God like this: “You, O LORD, will not withhold Your compassion from me; Your lovingkindness and Your truth will continually preserve me” (Ps. 40:11). In other words, he prays that the Lord will always protect him with the His love and truth, as well as revealing His love and truth to the people in governing a nation entrusted by the Lord. Like this, the wise king's prayer and practice goes together. Therefore, he is under the protection of the Lord to strengthen his throne.

### **Fourth, the wise king has strength and wisdom.**

Look at Proverbs 29:29 – “The glory of young men is their strength, gray hair the splendor of the old.” When we think about a young man, we all know that the young man has strength. But when we think about an old man, what do we think he has? It is wisdom through his many experiences. The very wise king is the one who combines both of these things. In other words, the wise king has strength and wisdom through many experiences.

When I think about the “strength” and “wisdom” of the wise king, I think of God's words about the king in Deuteronomy 17:15-20. “Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes” (vv. 18-19). The Bible says that the king should not multiply horses for himself (v. 16), should not multiply wives for himself (v. 17) and should read the book of the law all the days of his life (v. 19). When I think about these words, my conclusion is that the king must have the strength of the word rather than strengthen his national power by having lots of horse and lots of wives. Why does the Bible say that a king must have the book of the law next to him and read it all his life? What is the reason? It is to learn to fear God. Why should the king learn to fear God? The reason is because when the king learns to fear God, he will hate evil and keep away from evil. Look at Proverbs 14:16 – “A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, But a fool is arrogant and careless.”

The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. The wise king fears God means he has the power of wisdom. Look at Proverbs 24:5 – “A wise man is strong, And a man of knowledge increases power.” The wise king has strength like a young man and wisdom through experience like an old man. He has the strength of the word of God and of wisdom.

### **Fifth and last, the wise king disciplines.**

Look at Proverbs 20:30 – “Blows and wounds cleanse away evil, and beatings purge the inmost being.” There is a Korean saying, ‘You must be beaten to be awakened.’ I think that means that we can’t be awakened until we are disciplined. That’s why Proverbs 10:13b says, “... But a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding.” Also, Proverbs 19:29 says, “Judgments are prepared for scoffers, And blows for the back of fools.” What does it mean? Doesn’t it mean that there is a whip for the back of a fool who has no wisdom? The fool needs to be beaten to be awakened. That means that the rod is effective for foolish children. That's why Proverbs 22:15 says, “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.” If the parents truly love their children, they must discipline their beloved children in order to drive away foolishness in their hearts. It is our Heavenly Father who disciplines us to drive away the foolishness in our hearts. Look at Hebrews 12:4-11: “In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: ‘My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,’ because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at

the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” The Bible tells us that God disciplines us because we are God's children. In other words, God disciplines us because He considers us His sons or daughters. And God disciplines us because “there is hope” (Prov. 19:18). And the Bible says that the reason God disciplines us as God's children is because He loves us. Look at Proverbs 3:12 – “For whom the LORD loves He reprove, Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.” Also, look at Proverbs 13:24 – “He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.” That is why God is saying that He disciplines for our good. What are the benefits of His discipline? It is to participate in the holiness of God. And through discipline, God trains us to produce the fruits of righteousness and peace. Look at Psalms 89:32 – “Then I will punish their transgression with the rod And their iniquity with stripes.” God punishes us with the rod and with stripes to punish our sins. Why the rod and stripes? This is because “The rod and reproof give wisdom” (Prov. 29:15). As a result, we confess our sins and repent and return to God. As a result, even we rescue our souls from Sheol (23:14).

The wise king disciplines his people in ruling his country. And he lifted up the rod and disciplines them to get rid of the sins of his people. The reason he does so is because “beating purge the inmost being” (20:30). It distinguishes and separates the good from the wicked and disciplines the wicked with justice. Therefore, he protects the citizens of his country and establishes the order of his country. If those who are disciplined are wise, they will be disciplined and will repent of their sins and turn away from them. But what would happen if the disciplined one is a fool? It may be one of two things: (1) Being disciplined, either the foolish will gain wisdom [(19:25) “Strike a scoffer and the naive may become shrewd, But reprove one who has understanding and he will gain knowledge”] or (2) Whether they continue to sin even after being disciplined [(17:10) “A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding Than a hundred blows into a fool”].

Today we meditated on 5 things about the wise king: (1) The wise king discerns and separates the good from the wicked and punishes the wicked, (2) The wise king conscientiously rules the kingdom before God, (3) The wise king protects himself with love and faithfulness, (4) The wise king has strength and wisdom and (5) The wise king disciplines. Let's pray to God for the president of our country at this time. May God give wisdom to our President.

## **The honor of old men is their gray hair.**

**“The glory of young men is their strength, And the honor of old men is their gray hair” (Proverbs 20:29).**

Last Wednesday morning, I heard some shocking news through a Korean radio broadcast. The news was that a Korean man in his 50s in Florida locked his 80 some years old mother in a barn with no electricity and didn't give her food and water for about two weeks. What was shocking was that when the police found the old mother, there were earthworms and maggots on the old mother's neck and face. In other news, the old mother seems to have lived on worms. However, her son, caught by the police, felt no remorse and took it for granted. His excuse was that due to financial difficulties, his house was renovated and moved from the room where his mother was used to lodge other people into a warehouse. As I heard this news, anger arose in my heart. And I decided to meditate on God's word on 'the old man' by changing the subject and text of the sermon on Sunday, and meditating on Proverbs 20:29.

In this age we are living in, it seems for some reason that the prophetic word of Isaiah 3:5 is being fulfilled: “And the people will be oppressed, Each one by another, and each one by his neighbor; The youth will storm against the elder And the inferior against the honorable.” We are living in a world where children rise up and abuse the elderly. Looking at the Internet site titled ‘Preventing Elder Abuse’, the elderly population has more than tripled over the past 37 years, and it is estimated that the elderly population will reach about 7.36 million by 2019. However, the problem is that abuse of the elderly, who are economically weak, is a serious social problem (Internet). In other words, there is an increasing number of cases of not caring for old and sick parents or physically and mentally abused for economic reasons. In fact, when looking at the types of elder abuse, mental abuse was the most common at 40% of all abuses. In addition, there are cases of neglect, physical, economic, abandonment, and other elderly people who complain of sexual abuse. And when I went to the website of the ‘Central Senior Protection Agency’ and looked at the status, “son” was the most common type of abuser. The total number of elder abusers, from 3,019 to 1,544, were sons (compared to that, daughters were 342) (Internet). We are living in an age where the elderly are abused. What should we do?

In the Old Testament, the word ‘old man’ uses three words in Hebrew (Internet): (1) The first word is “Zaken”, which means ‘the beard is white’. This word refers to a 60-year-old old man, and it is often mentioned in the Bible. It is said to be used as a person who has reached the end of the year, an elderly elder or father. (2) The

second word is “Seybah”, which means ‘white hair,’ referring to a 70-year-old old man. This word means gray hair or silver hair, really old. (3) The third word is “Yases”, which refers to the elderly in their 80s. It means ‘shake’, ‘older’, and ‘old and feeble’. And “Yases” means to honor the elderly as an object of respect, meaning respectable and virtuous. In the end, we can see that the Hebrew language centered on the Old Testament mainly refers to the elderly in their 60's and 80's, whose hair and beard are white and their energy is declining. I would like to receive a lesson from God to the elderly in our church and also to our young people under the heading “The honor of old men is their gray hair” centered on Proverbs 20:29.

### **First, the Bible says that the honor of old men is their gray hair.**

Look at Proverbs 29:29 – “The glory of young men is their strength, And the honor of old men is their gray hair.” Although the glory of the young man is his strength, the old man no longer has such strength that the young man has. The old man no longer has strength as the young man, and if there is anything, he has gray hair. What do you think about gray hair? I went to a hair salon two or three weeks ago, and the woman who cuts my hair said, ‘I have a lot of prematurely gray hair.’ Haha. Although I don’t have that much compared to old men, I suddenly have more white hair than last year. However, even though the two pastors whom I know are 2-3 years younger than me, they all have more gray hair than me. But nowadays, everyone dyes their hair, so it doesn't seem that they place much importance on the beauty of gray hair. However, Proverbs 16:31 of the Bible says about “gray hair”: “Gray hair is a crown of splendor, it is attained by a righteous life.” What does it mean by “Gray hair is a crown of splendor”? What we can see here is that the old man is a glorious being. And the gray-haired crown that the elderly will receive is not from the king of this earth, but from the eternal God. In other words, the glory of those who serve God appears from the gray hair, and the true course of life is revealed there. Therefore, the age of the elderly is a time to receive glory from God and a time to enjoy true joy. As we generally think, the age of the elderly is not a period of suffering or alienation (Internet). Although in the Bible the negative side of the elderly is the weakness and depressed appearance of the body's aging, we must not forget that the positive side is shown as a ‘symbol of longevity, blessing and wisdom’ (Internet).

Therefore, the old people must remember that their hair is now gray because they enjoy the blessing of longevity from God and serve God forever. And now they must live with the glorious reward they will receive from the eternal God. In particular, the gray-haired old people must meet the glorious Lord in eternal heaven where the elderly will never be again, and live with faith in the remaining life given with the hope of living with the Lord forever. Look at Isaiah 65:20 – “No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Will be thought accursed.” And we young people should honor and respect the elderly. Look at Leviticus 19:32 – “You shall rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD.” The wise young men who fear God see God's glory through the gray hair of the elderly. And those



wise young people see the glory of God through the gray-haired old people and respect them.

## **Second, the Bible says that children’s children are a crown to the aged.**

Look at Proverbs 17:6 – “Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.” The word “Children’s children” used here means ‘sons of sons’. Here, this word means ‘offspring’ in a broad sense. Also, the word translated “the aged” should originally be translated as “old men”, which refers to ‘ancestors’. This verse means that the wise descendants who obey God's commandments glorify the elderly (ancestors). The foolish offspring bring harm and pain to parents and ancestors, while the wise offspring glorify families and bring joy to parents (Internet). One example is David's grandfather Obed. In Ruth 4:14-15, when Boaz and Ruth married and gave birth to Jesse's father, Obed, the women said: “Then the women said to Naomi, ‘Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.’” The women are compelled to say that the grandchildren are the crowns of grandparents, seeing that Obed, born of Naomi's daughter-in-law, Ruth's beloved, married to Boaz, is Naomi's life-recoverer and her ancestor in her old age. Especially for Obed, when we consider his grandson David, the grandson David is the crown of the old man Obed. Therefore, what the old man should do is to convey the strength (power) of the Lord to the future generations. Look at Psalms 71:18 – “And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to all who are to come.” The psalmist wanted to convey the power and strength of the Lord to all people in his future generations. He said, “I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord GOD; I will make mention of Your righteousness, Yours alone” (v. 16). His tongue uttered the Lord's righteousness all day long (v. 24). The reason is because the unmeasurable righteousness and salvation of the Lord has been given in life, relying on the Lord who is hoped for, from his youth to old and gray (v. 15). The psalmist could not endure the Lord's unmeasurable grace of salvation without conveying it to all future generations. The beautiful old man passes on a legacy of faith to his children and descendants. He tells his children and descendants the grace of God received by relying on the hopeful Lord from childhood to old and gray. Rather than speaking of what he has done in his life, he testifies of the great things that God has done in his life. I hope and pray that all of you who are elderly be like him. We young people must listen carefully to the teachings that come from the mouths of the old men, a symbol of wisdom, and live by them. Look at Deuteronomy 32:7 – “Remember the days of old, Consider the years of all generations. Ask your father, and he will inform you, Your elders, and they will tell you.” We young people should ask the wise old people. We must hear and remember stories of the old days through them. The reason is that they are living witnesses of the old days. In particular, we should take advice from wise old people because from them we can get wisdom. We never, like Solomon's son King Rehoboam, consulted with the boys who had grown up with him without the advice of his father, King Solomon's loyal old man (12:8) and must not commit foolish sins.

**Third and last, the Bible says that God never abandon the old, but rather embraces them.**

Look at Psalms 71:9 – “Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone.” One day, I was proclaiming the word of God, centered on Psalm 71:9, under the title ‘A beautiful old man’. At that time, I meditated on the beautiful old man in three ways, and the first one was that the beautiful old man depends on the Lord who has been his hope. Look at Psalms 71:5 – “For you have been my hope, O Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth.” Like the psalmist, the beautiful old man grew up receiving instruction from the Lord from an early age (v. 17). And he lived by always relying on the Lord who has been his hope from childhood to old and gray. In particular, he relied on God who was more and more hopeful when he faced many and bitter troubles (v. 20). In the eyes of God, who lives only on the Lord, he believes that God will not forsake him and leave him. And rather, he hopes because he relies on the Lord. What do the old people hope for because they rely on the Lord? It is to go to heaven and sit in the arms of our glorious Heavenly Father. Look at Isaiah 46:4 – “Even to your old age I will be the same, And even to your graying years I will bear you! I have done it, and I will carry you; And I will bear you and I will deliver you.” God has clearly promised that we will embrace us through old age and into gray hair. And God has promised to carry us, bear us, and save us. The beautiful old men who believe in this promise of God praise God (Ps. 71:14). Not only do they praise the Lord more and more as time goes by (v. 14), but when they die, they praise the Lord whenever possible. I hope and pray that you may be beautiful in the sight of God.

As I meditated on today's text, I thought about the elderly members of our church who are from 60s to 80s. Dear church members, I hope and pray that you enjoy the blessings of longevity that God has given you. And since you serve God all your life, I hope and pray that you remember that your hair is now gray, and live in anticipation of the glorious reward you will receive from the eternal God. Also, since you rely on the Lord who has been your hope, I hope and pray that you will tell your children and descendants the grace of God that you have received throughout your life. Rather than talking about what you have done in your own life, I hope and pray that you will tell your children and descendants the great things that God has done in your life. I hope and pray that all of you will be beautiful people in the sight of God, who live only by relying on the Lord, and believe that God will not forsake you and will not leave you, but will carry you and sit in the arms of His love, and be joyful in hope.

## Our hearts

### [Proverbs 21:1-4]

If you look at Proverbs 15:13, the Bible says: “A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, But when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.” In light of this word, I would like to ask you a question: “Do you have a joyful heart or do you have sad heart?” If our heart is joyful, then that joyful heart is “good medicine” for us (17:22). But if our spirit is broken, then it will dry up our bones (v. 22). If there is brokenness in our hearts, our hearts will be sad (15:13).

I would like to receive lessons from Proverbs 21:1-4 while meditating on our hearts in four ways:

#### **First, God directs our hearts.**

Look at Proverbs 21:1 – “The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.” Do you think that the heart of our president is in God's hand? Do you think that even though the president of our country is an unbeliever, his heart is in God's hand? In Proverbs 21:1, King Solomon says, "The king's heart is in the hands of the Lord." Here, “the king's heart” refers not only to King Solomon himself, but to all kings. Even here, “The king's heart” refers to the hearts of Gentile kings who aren't the kings of Israel. That means “The king's heart” includes the hearts of the kings of the Gentiles who don't believe in God. What King Solomon is saying now is that the hearts of all the kings in the world are in the hands of God. That means that God is directing the hearts of all those kings. For example, God directed not only the heart of King Solomon who believed in God, but also the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt who didn't believe in God. Exodus 10:1-2: “Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the LORD.” As God directed the heart of King Pharaoh, He hardened his heart. What was its purpose? There were two. The first purpose was to show the signs of God among him and his servants. And the second purpose was to convey to the ears of the Israelites and their descendants the signs that God had done among them. Another example is that in the time of Ezra, God also led the heart of King Artaxerxes and made him to order all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates to province with diligence whatever Ezra might ask of them (Ezra. 7:21). Ezra 7:27-28 tells us why God did this: “Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to adorn the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem, and has extended lovingkindness to me before the king and his counselors and before all the king's mighty princes Thus I was strengthened according to the hand of the LORD my

God upon me, and I gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me.” What does it mean? It means that God has a will in the heart of King Artaxerxes to beautify the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. And God gave Ezra grace, and God's hand was on him. So he was strengthened and made him come up to Jerusalem with the leaders of Israel, and in the end, he made the temple of God beautiful. In this way, God directs the heart of the king “like a watercourse wherever he pleases” (Prov. 21:1b). It means that God directs the heart of the king as He pleases, just as He directs the watercourse according to His will. So the Bible says: “The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps” (16:9), “The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD” (v. 33), “Many plans are in a man's heart, But the counsel of the LORD will stand” (19:21), “Man's steps are ordained by the LORD, How then can man understand his way?” (20:24). Looking at these words, the point is that even if we plan our way with our hearts, only God's will stands completely. In other words, only God's sovereign will will be fulfilled. How, then, should we interpret the case when King Solomon was old and his wives turned his heart to follow other gods? In 1 Kings 11:4, the Bible says, “his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.” In Proverbs 21:1, King Solomon said that God directs the king's heart. But he himself rejected God's guidance and turned his heart to follow the idols his wives served. This was doing evil in the sight of the Lord (1 Kgs. 11:6). King Solomon's heart was not wholly devoted to the Lord his God. This kind of heart is a perverse heart (Prov. 11:20). The lesson we need to learn here is that we, like King Solomon, should not reject God's guidance and live our own way. Rather, we must yield our hearts to God and live according to God's guidance.

## **Second, God weighs our hearts.**

Look at Proverbs 21:2 – “Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts.” Are all your actions right in your eyes? Do you think all of your actions are right in your eyes? Among the stories of Samuel that we are familiar with, there is a scene where Samuel goes to Bethlehem by obeying God's word (1 Sam. 16:4) to find out whom God will anoint (v. 6). In that scene, when Samuel saw Eliab among Jesse's sons, and said, “Surely the LORD'S anointed is before Him” (v. 6), God said to him: “... Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (v. 7). Even Samuel saw Eliab and thought he was God's Anointing One. The reason is because he saw a person's appearance. In other words, Samuel thought that his way was right in his own eyes, but even he could not look at the heart of a man. So he misrecognized the one who was to be anointed by God. But the Bible clearly says: “But the LORD weighs the hearts” (Prov. 21:2b). Also, in Proverbs 16:2, the Bible says: “All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the LORD weighs the motives.” Proverbs 24:12 says this: “If you say, ‘See, we did not know this, Does He not consider it who weighs the hearts? And does He not know it who keeps your soul? And will He not render to man according to his work?’” What does it mean? It means that the omniscient God knows all of our hearts. God, who weighs our hearts and knows our hearts, knows all the thoughts and motives of our hearts. So the psalmist confessed in Psalm 139:1-4: “O LORD, You have

searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all.” God knows us. The Bible says that God knows us clearly. God is saying that there is nothing that He doesn’t know about us. But what is the problem? The problem is that we humans are foolish and mistaken that our ways are right in our own eyes. Look at Proverbs 12:15 – “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.” We humans are foolish and don’t know that we are sinners and say that we are right. Pastor Yoon-sun Park said five reasons why humans cannot see their sins: (1) It is because they forget their sins in the past, and (2) because they cannot predict their future sins. And (3) it is because, even though they feel hardly that they have done something wrong, they don’t know how much they are short before God. (4) This is because they don’t know that not believing in God is the biggest cause, and (5) their heart is false, and they have the thought of defending their wrongdoings (Park). Our sin that is even more foolish than this is to try to deceive the God who weighs our hearts (Job 13:9). The reason for doing so is because we humans think that the Lord won’t call us to account (Ps. 10:13). The reason is because we are proud (v. 4).

Our God is a God who sees (Gen. 16:13). From heaven God looks down and sees all mankind (Ps. 33:13). He looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens (Job. 28:24). “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good” (Prov. 15:13). God sees our iniquities (Ps. 130:3). And God sees our affliction (Lam. 1:9). His eyes are upon the ways of a man, and He sees all his steps (Job 34:21). The righteous God tries the hearts and minds (Ps. 7:9). God not only examines our actions, but also sees and knows all of our hearts (Park).

### **Third, God desires the hearts that do righteousness and justice.**

Look at Proverbs 21:3 – “To do righteousness and justice Is desired by the LORD more than sacrifice.” Remember what Samuel said to King Saul that “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam. 15:22)? Apparently Samuel said to King Saul, “Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD?” (v. 22) When I meditate on this word again, I think that we too, like King Saul, are loving and serving God from our standpoint. In other words, since we think that God likes worship, we try to prepare Sunday worship from our point of view. But aren’t we living six days after worship disobeying the word of God? The reason is because from God's point of view, we are more pleased to live a life of obedience to God's word than to offer such worship to God countless times. In Proverbs 21:3, King Solomon says that God is more pleased with doing righteousness and justice than in offering sacrifices to God. In other words, God is pleased that we worship God, but what is more joyful than that is that we do righteousness and justice in this world. However, if we reflect on this word, King Solomon went to Gibeon and offered a thousand burnt offerings at the altar of the great high place (1 Kgs. 3:4). But when he was old, his 1,000 women turned his heart and made him follow other gods (11 :3-4) and disobeyed God's command. As I meditated on this fact, this thought came to me: ‘When we worship

God 1,000 times, Satan deceives us by his 1,000 servants. From our point of view, we may think that having a thousand worships to God will be pleasing to God. But from God's point of view, we are more delighted to obey God's first command.' In regard to sacrifices, God demands our religious and ethical obedience from our hearts rather than sacrifices. That religious ethical obedience is to obey God's commands and to do righteousness and justice. However, the Israelites in the days of the prophet Isaiah didn't practice righteousness and justice, but offered sacrifices while receiving countless offerings to God (Isa. 1:11). Regarding these sacrifices, God said: "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" (v. 11), "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats" (v. 11), "When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts?" (v. 12), ""Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly" (v. 13), "I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them" (v. 14). The prophet Jeremiah said, neglecting to obey God's word, and offering sacrifices was nothing more than to give relief to a criminal life (Jere. 7:8-10) (Park). Look at Jeremiah 7:8-10: "But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless. 'Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, 'We are safe'-safe to do all these detestable things?" In the end, the Israelites lied, stole, murdered, committed adultery, swore false swearing, and committed the sin of idolatry. But they entered the temple of God and said in front of God, "We are safe" – "safe to do all these detestable things" (v. 10). If we apply this to us, we say that since we believe in Jesus and saved, we will never lose our salvation. So we go out to into the world and commit sins. And we go up to the Lord's house every Sunday and say, 'Once we are saved, we are saved forever.' We think that we are safe because we have already been saved. God is never pleased with our act of worship that we offer to God as we comfort and reassure ourselves like this.

It is right worship and right life that God is pleased with. It is that God is pleased when we live a life of worship that obeys God's word along with worship that is appropriate in God's sight. That God's word says that it is to do righteousness and justice (Prov. 21:3). Why should we do righteousness and justice? The reason is because the Lord executes justice and righteousness (Ps. 99:4). And the reason is because those who keep justice and practice righteousness are blessed (106:3).

#### **Fourth and last, the heart that God regards as a sin is a proud heart.**

Look at Proverbs 21:4 – "Haughty eyes and a proud heart, The lamp of the wicked, is sin." Here King Solomon points out three sins. In other words, he is saying that there are three things that God considers to be sinful.

##### (1) "Haughty eyes"

Here, "haughty eyes" refers to 'a person looking to get something beyond his degree or limit.' Such a

person has an empty heart and even pretends to be such a high person (Park). So the psalmist David said: “O LORD, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; Nor do I involve myself in great matters, Or in things too difficult for me” (Ps. 131:1). David tried not to be proud of his heart. He tried to keep his eyes low. So he didn't work on his big things and wonder that he couldn't reach. We may be able to say that we have done great things by faith and that taking adventures outwardly in order to achieve the vision that the Lord has given us. But it only expresses our desire to achieve ambitions in our hearts.

## (2) “a proud heart”

Here, the pride of the heart is indeed a more terrifying and dangerous sin because the pride in the heart doesn't manifest outwardly and is latent. Such pride is difficult to control (Park). We shouldn't think beyond our degree or limit. We shouldn't be striving for a big thing that is beyond our degree or limit. In other words, we shouldn't go too far (Num. 16:7). Rather, we must not boast beyond our measure, as the apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 10:13, 15. And we should think, speak and act “according to the proportion of his (our) faith” (Rom. 12:6). The reason we should not be proud is because “Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling” (Prov. 16:18). The reason is because “Before his downfall a man's heart is proud” (18:12).

## (3) “the lamp of the wicked”

I think there is no sin as dangerous as the wicked prosper in the midst of haughty eyes and pride. Especially if their eyes haughty and their hearts are proud, but they aren't in trouble as other men and no plagues like mankind (Ps. 73:5), then how much more will their eyes be haughty and their hearts be proud? Also, if their income is more than the wishes of their heart (v. 7), always at ease and have increased in wealth (v. 12), and their body is fat (v. 4), how much more will the wicked be proud? The end of the wicked (v. 17) is destruction (v. 18), utterly swept away by sudden terrors (v. 19). The prosperity of the wicked, their haughty eyes, and the proud heart are considered sin by God (Prov. 21:4).

We must be humble in heart. We must be with the lowly (16:19). Each of us should be humble and think of others better than ourselves (Phil. 2:3). What is the reason? The reason is because before honor comes humility (Prov. 15:33; 18:12). The reason is because God gives grace to the humble (3:34; Jam. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). The reason is because God will save the humble people (Job 22:29). I hope and pray that we can all have the humble heart of Jesus (Phil. 2:5).

Our hearts are in the hands of God. What we should not forget is that God is directing our hearts. And it is the fact that God weighs our hearts. Therefore, we must do righteousness and justice that God desires. And we must abandon the proud heart that God regards as a sin and have a humble heart.

## “The way of a guilty man”

### [Proverbs 21:5-8]

One of the books that I’m reading these days is Oswald Chambers’ “The Philosophy of Sin”. The reason I bought this book, was because of the author of the book was Oswald Chambers even though the title of the book got my attention. He is the author of the book “My Utmost for His Highest”, which has become a classic among Christian classics, loved all over the world. Regarding the common nature of all sins, he said: ‘The common nature of all sins is a departure from the love of God. The desire to depart from God’s love and achieve a selfish goal set by a man rather than a goal set by Him is a common attribute of the trend of the world (the general flow of thoughts of an age) and the fundamental sin of mankind’ (Chambers). What do you think of this statement? Do you think that the general flow of thoughts of this time and the common nature of mankind’s fundamental sin is not desiring and pursuing God’s goal but to achieve the selfish goal? One of the clear and sure works of Satan is ‘exchange’. What does Satan change? Satan changes God’s goals into our selfish goals. Therefore, Satan is making us sin against God. How can we know this work of Satan? We can be found in Romans 1:23, 25, 26: “and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures” (v. 23), “For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen” (v. 25), “For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural” (v. 26). Satan exchanges what is the natural function of man and woman for that which is unnatural. Therefore, Satan is making us to sin against God.

I would like to receive the lessons that God gives to us while meditating on the four sins centering on the words of Proverbs 21:5-8.

#### **First, we should not be hasty.**

Look at Proverbs 21:5 – “The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage, But everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty.” Do you know anybody who is hasty? Have you ever thought that hastiness could be a sin? Once, I talked to a person whom I got to know through Facebook about “hastiness” and I shared the words of 2 Timothy 3:4 – “treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God--.” Then, when he saw the word “rash”, he said that he had never known that rash or hastiness was a sin. What do you think? Do you think rash or hastiness is a sin? In Proverbs 21:5, King Solomon says, “... But everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty.” What does it mean? If people are hasty, they cannot prosper at work or in business because they cannot



continue to do one thing (Park). The Bible tells us that those who are hasty not only cannot prosper, but also comes surely to poverty. Perhaps one of the reasons is because the hasty people may often err on the job since they work hastily by relying on their own understanding and trying to earn a lot of income in a short period of time rather than working diligently. That's why Proverbs 19:2 says, "Also it is not good for a person to be without knowledge, And he who hurries his footsteps errs."

Why does the Bible say that "he who hurries his footsteps errs"? What do you think is the reason? Maybe that's because, in my opinion, the hasty man hurries with no knowledge of passion. In particular, the man who is hasty in business may ruin the business rather than earning money and enriching it because he hurries his footsteps with no knowledge. That's why Proverbs 28:20 says, "A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who makes haste to be rich will not go unpunished." What does it mean? He who wants to get rich quickly will be punished. Also, Proverbs 28:22 says: "A man with an evil eye hastens after wealth And does not know that want will come upon him." It means that he who is in a hurry to acquire wealth will become poor. We must be wary of being hasty. One of the reasons is because if our minds are hasty we are at high risk of speeding. In other words, when our hearts become hasty, there is a high risk of wrongdoing God's work because it will overtake God's speed and push forward with our speed. For example, if a Christian businessman is hasty and wants to get rich quickly, he will certainly use tricks to make more money in a short amount of time rather than diligently planning and working faithfully. At that time, the problem that I think is really serious is that at first it seems like our business is going well according to our plan even though we do business with such tricks. If the business isn't going well, we would look back at ourselves and think at least once and say, 'Oh, I'm not doing business well because I used tricks.' But when our business goes well, then we will become proud and will justify ourselves of using tricks for the business. Therefore, we should wary of being hasty. And we must pursue the attitude of diligence (Prov. 21:5) and loyalty or faithfulness (28:28). The reason is because the plans of the diligent, not the hasty, lead to profit (21:5). And "A faithful man will be richly blessed" (28:20).

## **Second, we should not make fortune by a lying tongue.**

Look at Proverbs 21:6 – "A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare." Do you believe that if you don't lie and do business honestly, you will gain wealth? Clearly, Proverbs 21:6 says, "A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare". What does it mean? To collect wealth by lying means that it will eventually be like a fleeting vapor and will soon disappear. Also, it is a trap that leads us to death. Although at first it may seem like you are making a lot of money by doing business by the lying tongue, in the end, the money you earn will disappear quickly. That's why Proverbs 23:4-5 says, "Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle." Can you imagine a scene where wealth spreads its wings and flies like an eagle in the sky? Not long ago, when I looked at the online Chosun Ilbo (Korean newspaper), there was an article titled

'Foreclosure Min-jong Kim, investment-fraud, I signed, but the money I saved for 25 years was blown away... Confession'. So I read it for a while and a Korean actor Min-jong Kim said, 'There was money but not anymore. There was something I earned, but somehow it all disappeared' (Internet). This is what Proverbs 27:24 says: "For riches are not forever, Nor does a crown endure to all generations." Riches cannot last forever. In particular, all wealth that we earn by lying, not only will not last forever, but also it will disappear in an instant. In addition, it is said that the wealth earned by lying will only end up driving the person to death (21:6). This is because lies are the devil's method (Jn. 8:44) (Park). In other words, as John 8:44 says, those who are born of the devil do according to the greed of their father, the devil because the devil "was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies." Therefore, it is by no means our Heavenly Father's way for a business owner to earn money by lying to deceive others without having a way out of the desire to collect wealth. It's the devil's way. So in the end, it will be woe to him. The reason for this is because the devil is a being who only tries to bring woe to humans (Park).

The Bible clearly says "Ill-gotten gains do not profit" (Prov. 10:2). Also, the Bible clearly says, "Wealth obtained by fraud dwindles" (13:11). What does it mean? It means that wealth gathered in dishonest or unrighteous ways is useless and diminishes. Therefore, we Christians must work honestly and do business in a righteous way. When we work according to God's will for His glory, God will also give you the power to obtain riches (Deut. 8:18).

### **Third, we should not imitate the violence of the wicked.**

Look at Proverbs 21:7 – "The violence of the wicked will drag them away, Because they refuse to act with justice." As a Christian, who would try to imitate the violence of the wicked? But what we need to think about is that Asaph, the psalmist, was envious of the prosperity of the wicked (Ps. 73). That means we won't try to imitate the violence of the wicked in the first place. But when our economic situation gets very bad, we can be envious and jealous of the prosperity of the wicked. Especially as a business Christian, if his financial situation is getting worse and worse, if he sees unbelievers around him earning more money dishonestly and in unrighteous ways, his envy and jealous mind can develop more. And eventually he can be tempted to take others' money in an unrighteous way. Proverbs 21:7 can be translated into Hebrew, the original language, as follows: 'The robbery of the wicked destroys themselves, because they refuse to do justice' (Park). When I meditate on this word, the Scripture that comes to my mind is Matthew 21:13 – "It is written," he said to them, My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers." Who made the temple, the house of God, a den of robbers? It is all those who buy and sell in the temple, money changers and pigeon sellers (21:12). They turned the holy temple of God into the den of merchants, that is, the den of scammers who extort people. These were none other than religious leaders at that time. They dominated their financial income centered on the temple. For example, the Sadducees who ran the temple handed over the rights of the beast market to their own people (the Sadducees), and then collected tremendous

wealth in the center of the temple through them (Internet). Upon seeing this, Jesus entered the temple and “drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves” (v. 12). And then Jesus said to them, “It is written, ... ‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it a ‘den of robbers’” (v. 13).

Although God's temple should be the house of prayer now, has it been transformed into the den of robbers like the temple of Jesus' day? Aren't our church leaders now attracting great wealth through the church? We must be wary of those who want to get rich. What is the reason? Look at 1 Timothy 6:9 – “But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.” The reason we should be wary of those who want to get rich is because they can fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires. And the result is that greed desire gives birth to sin when conceived, and death when sin is full-grown (Jam. 1:15). Rather, we should like to do justice. In other words, we should enjoy doing what is right in the sight of the Lord (Prov. 21:8). As righteous people who believe in Jesus and are justified, it should be a pleasure for us to do justice (v. 15). But now, as in the days of the prophet Habakkuk, the wicked surround the righteous. Therefore justice comes out perverted (Hab 1:4). Therefore, the law is now ignored and just is never upheld (v. 4). Therefore, we Christians should strive to do more and more justice. We must walk in the path of righteousness and in the midst of the paths of justice (Prov. 8:20).

#### **Fourth, we must not walk on a crooked way.**

Look at Proverbs 21:8 – “The way of a guilty man is crooked, But as for the pure, his conduct is upright.” Personally, the way that comes to mind when I think of the crooked way is San Francisco's Lombard Street, the most winding road in the world. It is said that this road consists of 8 hairpin courses at intervals of 5 meters on a road of about 400 meters. I remember driving down that road once slowly. It's because it's too winding. In my memory, in addition to this winding road, there seems to be a straight down hill road in San Francisco. But I remember that it was so inclined that I was very careful to drive. I think there are two kinds of paths in our lives. There are straight roads, and there are also winding roads in our life path. If we apply these two kinds of paths to our spiritual life, we can think of the right path and the crooked path. We Christians know that we must walk the right path that Jesus walked. But the problem is that Satan doesn't want us to walk the right path. That's why Satan is tempting us and making us to walk on the crooked path. In order to do so, what Satan does first is to make our hearts crooked. As a result, even we who call ourselves Christians are walking on the crooked path with the crooked hearts. The world in which we live is “a crooked and perverse generation” (Phil. 2:15). People in this world aren't walking on the straight and the right path that God has commanded. Instead, they are walking on the crooked path. Still, they think that the crooked path is the right path. The world denies (rejects) the absolute truth of God and regards lies as truth. The mind is also crooked. Because the heart is crooked, both words and actions are crooked.

In Proverbs 21:8, King Solomon says, “The way of a guilty man is crooked, But as for the pure, his conduct is upright.” The translation of this word into the original Hebrew is as follows: ‘The deeds of those who have sinned are bent and strange, but the deeds of the clean are honest’ (Park). Of course, the term “those who have sinned” here refers to a natural human being who is not born again. And unregenerated natural humans are false because they belong to darkness (Jere. 17:9). Therefore, they make an effort to conceal their actions. That is the ‘crooked’ behavior (Park). There is a woman who walks along this crooked path and acts crookedly in the Bible, and that person is “an adulteress”. Look at Proverbs 5:6 – “She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths are crooked, but she knows it not.” King Solomon says that the adulteress doesn’t realize it even if her way is crooked. And her feet go down to death and her steps lead straight to the grave (v. 5). This is what Isaiah 59:8 says: “The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths. They have turned them into crooked roads; no one who walks in them will know peace.” What does it mean? The Bible says that we don’t know peace if we walk on a winding road without justice. In other words, the crooked road is not the path of peace. So Proverbs 10:9 says, “The man of integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out.” If we walk in the right way, it will be peaceful. But if we walk in the crooked way, we cannot but find peace.

We must walk in the right way (Prov. 10:9). We must walk on a straight path (21:8). We must walk the path of the clean man. Walking the path of the clean man means that we must be honest. Rather than trying to conceal our sinful acts like those who commit great sins, we must make honest confession for what we have done wrong as clean people (Park).

We can only become hasty when we have the common attribute of all sins we have already contemplated: the desire to leave God's love and achieve a selfish goal that we have set rather than the goal He has set. And we will accumulate wealth with deceitful words, and will imitate the violence of the wicked. Further, we will walk on the crooked path. What must we do? We must dwell in God's love. And we must move toward the goal set by God. Also, we must obey God's commandments. In Proverbs 21:5-8, the commandment that God gives us is not to be hasty, do not collect wealth by the lying tongues, don’t imitate the violence of the wicked, and don’t walk in the crooked path. Rather, what God is commanding us to do is to work diligently and to accumulate wealth honestly. God is commanding us to do what is right in His sight. And God is commanding us to be honest as we walk in the right way. May we all obey this Lord's word.

## The wise who is instructed

### [Proverbs 21:9-20]

Personally, when I think of our church members, I am hoping and praying that all of us can be raised up as the Word-centered Christian who stands firmly in the Word of God. If I express this prayer in Acts 17:11, I hope and pray that all members of our church will be raised up as ‘noble-minded Christians’: “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.” Here, what does the word “noble-minded” mean? Mainly, “noble-minded” refers to an attitude and manner. It is a character that treats others with respect, gentle, honest manners. The literal meaning of the word is that a person was born from a good family (Sang-seop Yoo), that is, from a noble family (Park). In Acts 17:11, the word “noble-minded” means that the people in Berea had more noble spirit than those in Thessalonica (Park). Then, what is the ‘noble spirit’? It is an attitude of searching the Bible every day with all of their zeal (Park). Therefore, the saying that the Berea people were noble-minded means that they were people who searched the Bible with all their zeal every day. One of the characteristics of these noble-minded Christians is that they receive the word of God with “great eagerness” (v. 11). Here, the phrase “they received the word with great eagerness” means that the people in Berea received the word of God “with all zeal” (Park) or “with all willingness” (Yoo). When the apostle Paul preached the gospel of Jesus Christ, the people in Berea accepted the word of the gospel with full willingness (Yoo). Just as the roots of a tree planted by a stream suck in the water flowing by the stream, the noble-minded Christians have the capacity to accept the word of God. Just as if we press a sponge firmly and put it in a bucket, it sucks in water, so the noble-minded Christians yearn for God's word, read it hard, learn it, and plant it in their hearts. I hope and pray that we have this capacity to accept His word. Like a sponge, every time we read, study, or listen to the word of God, I hope and pray that His word comes into our ears and hearts like the sponge that sucks in water.

This is what Proverbs 21:11 says: “When the scoffer is punished, the naive becomes wise; But when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge.” It means that when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge. Focusing on this verse, I would like to receive a lesson given by thinking about five kinds of knowledge that the wise man who is instructed and receives knowledge under the heading “The wise who is instructed”.

**First, the knowledge that the wise who is instructed receives is that reconciliation is better than quarrel.**

Look at Proverbs 21:9, 10: “Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife. ... Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.” Do you want to live in a big house or do you want to live in a small house? A small house is uncomfortable in many ways, but a large house is comfortable in many ways. Then we all probably want to live in the large house that is comfortable in many ways. Isn't it? By the way, if you are comfortable living in a large house, but the marital relationship is not reconciled and your spouse often quarrels, while living in a small house is uncomfortable, but the marital relationship is harmonious, would you choose a large house with quarrels or a small house with reconciliation? Perhaps both you and I will choose “reconciliation” over “the big house”. The reason is because we all want a more harmonious home than a big house.

Among the words of Proverbs that we have already meditated on, we have received four lessons on how we can avoid quarrels and build a harmonious family based on Proverbs 17:1 under the title of “A peaceful family”. In review again, it looks like this: (1) A peaceful family covers each other's offense. In order to avoid quarrels in our family, we must not repeat each other's offense (v. 9). (2) A peaceful family receives rebuke from each other. We must humbly receive each other's rebuke in order to avoid quarrels in our family (v. 10). (3) A peaceful family doesn't pay back evil for good. We must pay back good for good in order to avoid quarrels in our family (v. 13). (4) A peace family drops the matter before a dispute breaks out. We must drop the matter before the dispute breaks out in order to avoid strife in our family (v. 14). As you think about these four lessons again, what about applying them to each of you in your home, especially in a marital relationship? Are you really covering each other's offense? Are you taking each other's rebuke? Are you paying for good with good? Are you dropping the matter before a dispute breaks out?

If we look at Proverbs 21:9, the Bible says “a quarrelsome wife”. But in verse 19 the Bible says “a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.” The reason for this is that the reason we quarrel is because we can control our anger and are angry. We know this because in Proverbs 15:18 the Bible says “A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension”. But the Bible says “a patient man calms a quarrel” (v. 18). In a marital relationship, if we are unable to manage our anger and are easily outraged, then we will inevitably cause contention. What is the reason? One of the reasons is because when we are angry, we speak a harsh word (v. 1). So when we meditate on “a quarrelsome wife” or “a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife”, Proverbs 19:13 says, “a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping” (Ref.: 27:15). What does it mean? A wife who has a habit of quarreling with her husband often quarrels with her husband so that there are few days of peace. And when quarrels begin, she doesn't stop talking like “a constant dripping” water (Park). How would her husband react if such a quarrelsome and angry wife pours out words in anger from the continuation? In Proverbs 21:9, 19, King Solomon says that it is better to live on a corner of the roof or in a desert than in a large house with a quarreling wife. What does it mean? It is better to live peacefully with your wife on the corner of the roof or in the desert even though it's uncomfortable than in the comfortable big house with the quarreling wife. We must take this lesson. And we must put the lessons we receive into action. We must

become wise who seek reconciliation rather than quarrel. The reason is because the Lord has given us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18). All of us should be peacemakers from home to church or wherever we go.

**Second, the knowledge that the wise who is instructed receives is that the heart of the wicked desires evil.**

Look at Proverbs 21:10 – “The wicked man craves evil; his neighbor gets no mercy from him.” Do you know what the heart of the wicked is saying? In Proverbs 12:12, the Bible says that the wicked man desires the plunder of evil men. The reason is because the heart of the wicked chases fantasies (v. 11). Here, there is greed in the heart of the wicked man who chases fantasies, and that greed follows fantasies and vain things of no value. So, the wicked man plunders others' things even by using all the unrighteous methods. His thoughts are perverted (v. 8) and he doesn't intend to work with his own hands (v. 11). But he only thinks of plundering someone else's. Also, in Proverbs 13:2, the Bible says that the desire of the treacherous is violence. It means that the desire of the wicked man is unfaithful and longs for violence. And the wicked man who longs for violence in his heart not only does violence, but also deceives with his lips. If we look at Proverbs 21:10, the Bible says that the heart of the wicked man craves evil. The English Bible translates the heart of the wicked as crave for evil, which is a better translation of the original Hebrew. It can be thought that the wicked man's heart's longing for evil is almost addicted to evil (Walvoord). So Proverbs 4:16 says, “For they cannot sleep unless they do evil; And they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone stumble.” Isn't it like being addicted to evil that the wicked man can't sleep unless he does evil and unless he makes someone stumble? Why is the wicked man doing so much evil? The reason is said in Ecclesiastes 8:11 – “Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.” The reason why the wicked man yearns for evil and does evil is because punishment is not carried out quickly. Therefore, he is bold in doing evil. He is courageous to do evil and wants disaster for his neighbor. And he never shows mercy to his neighbor (Prov. 21:10). As a result, the Bible says that the righteous Lord who considers the houses of the wicked will turn the wicked to ruin (v. 12). Clearly, our just God will judge the wicked in His time and will destroy the wicked (14:11). And if we look at Proverbs 21:18, the Bible says that God makes the wicked a ransom for the righteous. What does it mean? It means that the wicked will try to kill the righteous, but instead he will be killed (Park). An example of this is a wicked man named Haman from Esther who tried to kill Mordecai the righteous, but he himself was killed (Esth. 6:1-7:10). This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘It is so evil for the wicked to make various schemes to kill the righteous. So God intervenes and judges the wicked in particular’ (Park).

Therefore, we should not crave evil like the heart of the wicked. Rather, we must yearn for righteousness as those who have become righteous in Jesus Christ. Here, the word that we yearn for righteousness means that we should show favor to our neighbors (Prov. 21:10) as those who were justified by Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection from the tomb (Rom. 4:25). The reason is because we are saved totally by God's grace and become

righteous. Therefore, we must show favor to our neighbors. In a word, we must be committed to loving our neighbors as ourselves, like the commandment of Jesus.

**Third, the knowledge that the wise who is instructed receives is that wisdom is gained through punishment.**

Look at Proverbs 21:11 – “When the scoffer is punished, the naive becomes wise; But when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge.” Among the things we will guard against in order to keep our hearts well, in addition to the ‘quarrels’ (v. 9) and ‘craving evil’ (v. 10), there is ‘mocking’ mentioned in Proverbs 21:11. In other words, we must be on the lookout for and be on the guard for our hearts to become arrogant. The reason is because when our hearts become arrogant, we become arrogant enough to despise God (Park). Look at Proverbs 29:1 – “A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed--without remedy.” We can know that our hearts are haughty by seeing that we don’t receive rebuke in love. Not only are we not rebuked, we are not rebuked by anyone, even a rebuke by God. Like Proverbs 15:12 says, “A mocker resents correction ....” That is why Proverbs 9:8 says, “Do not rebuke a mocker ....” The reason is because “he will hate you” (v. 8). As a result, we sin against God by disobeying His commandments. Even then, we are not only unrepentant of our sins, but we have no desire to repent. The reason is because if our hearts become haughty, not only we will not consider sin as sin, but we cannot do so. When we come to such a state, the only thing left for us is God's punishment.

If we look at Proverbs 21:11, the Bible says, “the simple gain wisdom” even when they are punished by God. Here, “the simple” are people with an open mind, who don’t know the truth well and follow a proud person. These are the ones who can become right if they receive the right guidance (Park). The problem is that these people don’t know the truth well, so they lack wise judgment (7:7; 9:4, 16). Therefore, they believe anything and don’t give thought to their steps (14:15). As a result, they fall into the temptation when a harlot tempts them and sin against God (9:4, 16). And the foolish people don’t hide and escape even when they see the disaster. Rather they go out and get hurt (22:3; 27:12). Therefore, these people gain wisdom by seeing the haughty ones they followed are punished. The similar to Proverbs 21:11 is Proverbs 19:25: “Flog a mocker, and the simple will learn prudence; rebuke a discerning man, and he will gain knowledge.” When we meditate on this passage, I think we are talking about 3 kinds of people in Proverbs 21:11. Those three kinds of people are the proud, the fool, and the wise. The proud man, even if he is punished, continues to harden his neck. The reason is because even though he seeks wisdom, he finds none (14:6). As a result, the proud man will eventually be broken beyond remedy (29:1). The foolish man who follows the proud man may at least see the proud man perishing and gain wisdom (right discernment) so that he no longer follows the proud man, and may turn and walk on the right path. However, the wise man not only receives instruction (21:11) but also reproofs (19:25) through the defeat of the proud man, and thus gains wisdom.



What kind of wisdom do you think the wise will get? In my opinion, the wisdom that the wise man acquires is the wisdom of repenting when he sins and when he is rebuked. A good example is King David in the Old Testament. When King David was rebuked by the prophet Nathan for the sin of taking Uriah's wife, he didn't hesitate to confess and repent of his sin, saying, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Sam. 12:13). This repentant wisdom adds to the wise. What a great grace and blessing is this? Wouldn't you like to yearn for this wisdom? Wouldn't you like to ask God for wisdom to repent like David did? In addition to this wisdom, other wisdom is said in Proverbs 21:20 – "In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has." Here, "a foolish man devours all he has" means that the fool wastes everything in his home, such as precious treasures and oil. The fool wastes everything he has in his luxury life. On the other hand, the wise save his materials for the Lord. He generously devotes material things for the Lord, but doesn't waste it for himself (Park). King Solomon compares the wise man with "ant" in Proverbs 6:6-8. He says, "Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise" (v. 6). And he says, the ant prepares her food in the summer and gathers her provision in the harvest (v. 8). In other words, the wise man works diligently at the time of harvest, like ants, in order to prepare and save material. So, in his house there is choice food and oil (21:20).

The Bible Proverbs 9:9 says that if a wise person receives instruction, he will become wiser. But the simple man, that is, he who follows the arrogant because he doesn't know the truth well will gain wisdom by seeing the arrogant being punished (21:11). He not only gains the wisdom of repentance, but also the wisdom of ants, turning away from sin, walking on the right path, working diligently and preparing, saving materials wisely and well. May we also have this kind of wisdom.

#### **Fourth, the knowledge that the wise who is instructed receives is that doing justice brings joy.**

Look at Proverbs 21:15 – "When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers." The Bible Proverbs 21:7 says, "The violence of the wicked will drag them away, for they refuse to do what is right." In other words, the wicked man refuses to do justice. What is the reason? Why does the wicked refuse to do justice and hate it? The reason for this is explained in the second half of Proverbs 19:28 – "... And the mouth of the wicked spreads iniquity." In other words, because the mouth of the wicked man pursues sin with an insatiable desire, the wicked never loves nor does justice. The wicked man cannot do justice. Think about it. Would the wicked man who pursues insatiable desires like to do justice? It is not justice, but injustice that can satisfy the wicked's desire for sin. Actually, if we revised the Hebrew word of Proverbs 21:15, it's like this: 'To do justice is a joy to the righteous, but to the unrighteous it is destruction' (Park). King Solomon is contrasting with 'those who do justice' and 'those who do injustice'. In relation to Proverbs 21:7 regarding those who practice injustice in this contrast, what can be concluded is that the unrighteous refuses to do justice because they hate to do justice. To some extent, the unrighteous people hate and refuse to do justice, and suffer as if doing righteousness leads to destruction (Park).

Doesn't it make sense to say that the unrighteous doing righteousness has afflictions like falling into destruction? After all, it means that the suffering of the unrighteous is to do justice. If we think about this in reverse, it means that the joy of the unrighteous is to do injustice. Look at Proverbs 10:23 – “Doing wickedness is like sport to a fool, And so is wisdom to a man of understanding.” On the contrary, it is joy for the righteous to do justice (21:15). And for the righteous, it is affliction to do injustice. As those who believe in Jesus and are justified, our joy should be doing justice. At the same time, doing injustice should be a pain for us. Why should our joy be doing justice? The reason is because doing justice is acceptable to God (21:3). Therefore, we should enjoy doing justice.

What is the justice we must do? First of all, we must think about the fourth blessing out of the Beatitudes that Jesus said in Matthew 5:6 – “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” In other words, the first thing we must pursue is to become hungry and thirsty for righteousness. But we should not be those who pursue “self-righteousness” like the Pharisees at the time of Jesus. In other words, we must not live a life that pursues self-righteousness by deeds, which is our human effort. Rather, we must yearn for the righteousness of God. Longing for this righteousness of God on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ means that we must believe in the fact that we are forgiven and saved because Jesus shed blood on the cross and paid the price for our sins with His own life. When we believe in Jesus Christ, who is God's righteousness, we will enjoy the happiness of contentment. In such a situation, the righteousness (justice) we must pursue is the words of Matthew 6:33 – “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” We must first seek God's kingdom and His righteousness. We should enjoy seeking God's kingdom and doing His will. And, like Asa king of Judah in 2 Chronicles 15, we must do justice in the sight of God (vv. 2-5). Who is the King Asa? King Asa was the king who initiated the Reformation by listening to the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah (v. 8) in the time of trouble (v. 6) when the Israelites were afflicted with various afflictions (v. 8). He did good and righteousness in the sight of God, destroying the Gentile altars and high places, breaking down the columns, cutting down the Asherah table, and commanding the people of Judah to seek the LORD, the God of their ancestors, to fulfill his laws and commands, and to make high places and sun statues in all the cities of Judah (14:2-5). To what extent did King Asa make the people of Judah search for God? They made an oath to God (15:14) that “whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman” (v. 13). Because they entered into the covenant to seek God with all their heart and soul, God let them find Him and gave them rest on every side (v. 15). Eventually, the kingdom of Judah was at peace under King Asa (14:5). Because God gave Asa peace, the land was peaceful and there were no war with him for many years (v. 6). In this way, in the days of King Asa, his land was peaceful for 10 years (v. 1). For peace in this country in which we live, and for peace in this society, church, and family, we must seek God earnestly like King Asa and the Israelites. We must get rid of sinful things in our home, church, society, and nation. We Christians must repent and turn to God. I hope and pray that all of us may practice justice in this way.

**Firth and last, the knowledge that the wise who is instructed receives is the ending of those who stray from the path of understanding and who loves pleasure.**

Look at Proverbs 21:16-17: “A man who strays from the path of understanding comes to rest in the company of the dead. He who loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich.” What choices would we make when we knew some of the consequences of our choices? Let me give you an example. Have you ever saw such an advertisement in a TV commercial that a person who keeps smoking cigarettes has a hole in his neck? I've seen that advertisement many times and thought it was terrible. I even thought of how to put out such an advertisement on TV. But it turns out that the TV advertisement is effective. In other words, it is said that people who smoked quit smoking after seeing that advertisement. According to one study, about 200,000 smokers quit smoking in one and three months after the commercial appeared on TV in March 2012 (Internet). I didn't know that TV commercials worked this much. If we see 200,000 people quit smoking in three months, I think it's a worthwhile advertisement. If we look at Proverbs 21:16-17, the Bible speaks about the ending of two kinds of people. The first kind of people is those who stray from the path of understanding (v. 16). These are people who have deliberately turned their backs on the path of understanding, that is, the path of wisdom (Walvoord). Dr. Yoon-sun Park says that “A man who strays from the path of understanding” refer to apostates who have left the truth of God (Park). They have deliberately left the path of a godly life and say that the ending is to dwell in the “company of the dead”. Soon, their end is death. The second kind of people is those who love pleasure (v. 17). In short, they are lovers of worldly pleasures. In other words, these aren't the degree to which they like pleasure, but those who are attached to it and don't know how to detach from it (Park). To make it easier to understand, those who love pleasure can be thought of as those who are addicted to the worldly pleasures. The end of these people is that they will never become rich and will become poor. In 2 Timothy 3:4, the Bible says, when the last days of difficult times comes (v. 1) men will be “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” and we have faced such an age now. In this age where people love pleasures more than God, we must heart the voice of God saying that those who love pleasures will be in need. This is what Proverbs 28:19 says, “He who tills his land will have plenty of food, But he who follows empty pursuits will have poverty in plenty.” When we depart from the truth of God and refuse to live a godly life but follow worldly pleasure and debauchery, then we will be in need of a lot. Therefore, the wise people who receive instruction hear the word of God's truth and are guarded. However, the Bible Proverbs 13:18 says that poverty and shame will come to the fool people who neglect discipline. I hope and pray that we be wise to receive this instruction.

We must become Christians who receive the word of God with earnest heart (with zeal, willing heart) (Acts 17:11). We must become wise Christians who diligently receive instruction and get knowledge (Prov. 21:11). We must never stray from the words of knowledge (19:27). Today we have learned five things about what knowledge that the wise who is instructed receives: (1) It is the knowledge that reconciliation is better than quarrel. (2) It is

the knowledge that the heart of the wicked desires evil. (3) It is the knowledge that wisdom is gained through punishment. (4) It is the knowledge that doing justice brings joy. (5) It is the knowledge that the ending of those who stray from the path of understanding and who loves pleasure. I hope and pray that this knowledge will become fuller in our life of faith.

# Victory rests with the Lord!

## [Proverbs 21:21-31]

In December 2013, as I looked back on this year, I started to meditate on 1 Thessalonians 2:1 at the early Morning Prayer meeting a while ago: “You know, brothers, that our visit to you was not a failure.” While meditating on this word, I evaluated this year in my own way: ‘I made this year in vain (failed).’ But when I look back on this year, I have no choice but to confess that ‘I have failed this year’ when I think of myself because I wasn’t victorious in my spiritual battle against sin, this world and Satan, and was defeated countless times. As I was thinking about why I was so defeated in the spiritual battle, I came to meditate on the words of Proverbs 21:31 – “The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD.” I would like to receive lessons from today's words as we meditate on what spiritual battle we Christians must fight under the heading “Victory rests with the Lord!” and what the Lord is commanding us to do in order to win that spiritual battle.

First of all, I would like to think about four kinds of spiritual wars that we must fight.

### **First, we must fight pride.**

Look at Proverbs 21:24 – “The proud and arrogant man-"Mocker" is his name; he behaves with overweening pride.” Can you imagine we, the disciples of Jesus, who say that we believe in Jesus, doing the Lord's work and walking with “overweening pride”? In Proverbs 21:24 the Bible says that such a person is “Mocker”. And the Bible says that such “Mocker” is “The proud and arrogant man” (v. 24). Such proud and arrogant man is “a mocker” (v. 11) who not only “does not love one who reproves him” (15:12) but also “hardens his neck after much reproof” (29:1). So the Bible says, “Do not rebuke a mocker” because “he will hate you” (9:8). Such mocker doesn’t like to be reproved. Therefore, he continues to act with overweening pride.

If we have pride in our hearts that overweens and continue to serve the Lord, then the greatest sin we are committing now is to cover the glory of God and even steal the glory of God. Think about it. In fact, if we say that we are doing the Lord's work and are doing it with an overweening pride, then will we boast of the Lord or will we boast of ourselves? Of course, with our lips we would say that we boast and glorify Him. But in our hearts, we will want to show off ourselves and receive all the praise, recognition, and respect from people. That is why we have many prospects to become like Saul, the first king of Israel in the Old Testament. He set up a monument for himself after victory in the war (1 Sam. 15:12). And after he disobeyed God's word, he asked Samuel to honor him before

the elders of his people and before Israel (v. 30) without repenting his sins. If our hearts are as proud as Saul, we will not confess 'I am a worthless servant' after we have done the Lord's work. Rather we will set the monument in our hearts and long for ourselves to be exalted in front of the members of the church. Do you know what is characteristic of the proud and arrogant man that is mocker, who continues to do the Lord's work with overweening pride? The characteristic of such a person has the idea that he is superior to others (Walvoord). In other words, the proud and arrogant mocker has a sense of superiority. If we have proud hearts, we will compare ourselves with other people and have the thought of 'I am still better than them'. To put it more seriously, if we have pride in our hearts, we can even pray to God, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men", like the Pharisee who went up to the temple and prayed to God (Mt. 18:10-11). Can you imagine? What would the church like if I, who have sense of spiritual superiority, think I am better than other brothers and sisters in Christ and consider them inferior to me and thus even criticize and condemn them in my heart? Also, the characteristic of the proud and arrogant mocker who continues to do the Lord's work with overweening pride is not satisfied unless he is at the center. And such a mocker doesn't like to listen to rebuke (Prov. 13:1). Rather he despises the word of God (v. 13). And the proud mocker honors himself (12:9) and pretends to be rich (13:7). What if this man or woman is in the church?

This is what Proverbs 22:10 says: "Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended." If we drive out the mocker and the proud who have sense of spiritual superiority in the church, strife quarrels and insults in the church will be ended. Don't you think it's true? Why are there strife, quarrels and insults in the church? It is because there is pride. Because we have sense of spiritual superiority that we think we are better than others, there are strife, quarrels and insults in the church. Therefore, we must guard our hearts not to have sense of spiritual superiority. We must fight pride so that it doesn't enter our hearts. We must fight pride with the word of God. One of those words of God is Philippians 2:3 – "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves." When fighting pride with this word, we have to ask ourselves many times over two questions: (1) Am I not doing the Lord's work now from selfishness or empty conceit? Am I trying to fulfill my selfish ambitions with my heart while saying with my lips it is a vision from the Lord? Also, now am I not saying that I am doing the Lord's work for His glory with my lips, but actually pursuing my own glory in my heart? (2) Am I doing the Lord's work with a humble heart? Do I really think of others better than myself? Or am I not saying that others are better than me with my lips, but actually thinking that they are inferior to me? We must fight pride. God hates those who are proud of their hearts (Prov. 16:5). We must keep in mind that the result of pride is destruction and fall (v. 18; 18:12).

## **Second, we must fight laziness.**

Look at Proverbs 21:25 – "The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work." As we have already meditated on the Book of Proverbs, we have thought about laziness in many ways. In summary, these thoughts are: (1) The lazy man craves and gets nothing (13:4). (2) The lazy man desires the plunder

of evil men (12:12). (3) The lazy man plunders what is left, even through all means of injustice (v. 12). (4) The lazy man pursues worthless and vain prodigality (13:11). (5) The lazy man is a great waster (18:9). (6) As a result, the Bible says that the lazy man becomes poor (10:4). In Proverbs 21:25, the Bible says “The sluggard's craving will be the death of him ....” In other words, the lazy man's earnest desire will kill himself (Park). What is the lazy man's earnest desire? Isn't it like playing and eating? If we look at the second half of Proverbs 21:25, the Bible says that the lazy man's hands refuse to work. However, the bigger problem is that the lazy man craves for more all day long, even in the midst of an earnest desire to play and eat (v. 26). In other words, the lazy man doesn't want to work with his own hands, but he craves wealth with his heart (13:4) and only desires the plunder of evil men (12:12). Isn't it funny that the lazy man hates to work with his own hands, but craves for more all day long? How funny is this because he doesn't sit around and work, but wants riches in his heart and craves for more all day long? This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park says: ‘The devil dwells in the heart of the lazy man. Covetousness and lust move stronger in the heart of the lazy man. The reason is because he doesn't pour his mind and energy into labor, but focuses only on pleasure’ (Park). Do you think covetousness and lust move stronger in the heart of the lazy one? As we have already meditated on, the lazy man lazily moves his hand, but diligently turns his head. In other words, the wicked and lazy servant does a lot of tricks (15:19). At the same time, since he is lazy, he doesn't even think about working hard and sweat. Also, the lazy man focuses only on pleasure and doesn't devote his heart and energy to labor. What is the result? The Bible says that the result is that he will put himself to death (21:25).

How should we fight laziness?

(1) To fight laziness, we must fight covetousness in our hearts.

The reason is because the underlying problem of laziness is the covetousness of the heart rather than not working with one's own hands. How, then, must we fight against covetousness in our hearts and overcome it? To do this, we must learn the secret of contentment like the apostle Paul (Phil. 4:11-12). We must know what it is to be in need and what it is to have plenty. And we must learn to live a life of contentment only with Jesus alone. Then we can fight the temptation of covetousness that permeates our hearts. Also, in order for us to fight against covetousness, we must live a life of giving without sparing like the righteous (Prov. 21:26). When we live a life giving to our neighbors with joy and love, we will be able to fight the covetousness of our hearts and be victorious.

(2) To fight laziness, we must remember 2 Thessalonians 3:10.

Look at 2 Thessalonians 3:10 – “For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: ‘If a man will not work, he shall not eat.’” What we need to keep in mind is that if we don't like to work, we shouldn't even eat it. But do we actually stop our children from eating when we see them living in the house lazy and they don't like to work? At the time of the apostle Paul, in the church of Thessalonica, there were those who

were idles and busybodies who didn't work (v. 11). What Paul commanded and urged such people to settle down and earn the bread they ate (v. 12).

(3) To fight laziness, we must go to the ant and consider its ways and be wise (Prov. 6:6).

Ants work willingly, diligently and cooperatively, even without a supervisor (v. 7). In addition, the ants are considerate of each other, mutually cooperate, and divide professional occupations according to size. And even in the hot summer, the harvest season, the ants prepare food for the cold winter. Therefore, we must go to the ants and learn to prepare for the future (v. 8).

**Third, we must fight evil.**

Look at Proverbs 21:27 – “The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable-- how much more so when brought with evil intent!” After reading the news about the purge of Mr. Seong-taek Jang from North Korea, I learned a new four-character idiom. I listened to it with attention because it is said that the four-character idiom expresses his purging. That four-character idiom word is “陽奉陰違”. It means that betraying in the heart while pretending to obey on the outside (Internet). In a way, the wicked man spoken of in Proverbs 21:27 is a person who practices “陽奉陰違”. That wicked man carries the evil that God hates in his heart, but makes a sacrifice to God. In other words, the wicked man is wicked on the outside while offering a sacrifice to God on the outside. Dr. Yoon-sun Park says, ‘It is an act of rebelling against God on the inside while pretending to obey God on the outside. It’s kind of flattering’ (Park). The Bible says that the sacrifices of the wicked man that is offered to God in flattering manner are detestable in God’s sight (Prov. 21:27). But how much would it be abominable to God when we offer sacrifice to God “with evil intent”? The sacrifice of the wicked man who deliberately performs a sacrifice to accomplish his evil intent is abominable in the sight of God (Park).

So did the Israelites in the days of the prophet Isaiah. They sacrificed countless offerings to God without doing right and justice (Isa. 1:11). Regarding these sacrifices, God said: “The multitude of your sacrifices-- what are they to me? ...” (v. 11), “... I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats” (v. 11), “... this trampling of my courts?” (v. 12), “Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me ...” (v. 13), “... I cannot bear your evil assemblies” (v. 13), “Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them” (v. 14). Also, in the days of the prophet Jeremiah, the Israelites committed these abominable sins. They took the word of God spoken through the prophet Jeremiah as a reproach and they had no delight in it (Jer. 6:10). Obviously, the word of God was not reproach. But the Israelites considered it so. The reason is because their ears were not circumcised. It is because their hearts and ears liked this world and hated the word of God (Park). So they replied that they would not listen to the word of



God (v. 17). And they did not listen to God's word proclaimed diligently from early morning (7:13). They didn't even answer when God called them (v. 13). Rather, the Israelites listened to the false prophets. They delighted to listen quickly to the false prophets who were greedy for gain (6:13) and lied "'Peace, peace,' But there is no peace" (v. 14). They trusted in deceptive words to no avail (7:8). And they followed false gods (v. 9). They refused to listen to God's word (6:19) and didn't obey His voice (7:28). Although God commanded them, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it", the Israelites replied, "We will not walk in it" (6:16). And they did something detestable in the sight of God (v. 15). Nevertheless, they were not ashamed at all, nor were their faces blushed (v. 15). Then they entered God's house (temple) to worship God (7:2) and stood before God and said, "We are safe" (v. 10). In other words, the Israelites had committed many sins up to this time, and after performing some ordinances, they regarded themselves as being forgiven before God and were comforted (Park). Then they went out into the world and did all this abomination again (v. 10). Eventually, the Israelites went into the temple of God and held hypocritical religious ceremonies in order to go out into the world and continue to do something abominable in the sight of God. What an evil act that provoked God? (v. 19) Still, the Israelites didn't take their actions as shameful (6:15). They kept God's hated evil in their hearts and made sacrifices to God. They offered sacrifices to God differently on the outside and on the inside in a flattering way that was abominable in the sight of God. They deliberately offered sacrifices to God to fulfill their wickedness.

Like the Israelites, we must not offer these abominable sacrifices to God in the sight of God. We must not come to the Lord every Sunday to worship God with sins in our hearts, worship just outwardly, and worship just to comfort the sins we have committed for a week. Rather, we must come before God with a pure heart, honest and sincere heart, and humbly worship God with faith in Jesus Christ. Like the psalmist, we must worship God with a prayerful heart, saying, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10).

#### **Fourth, we must fight lies.**

Look at Proverbs 21:28 – "A false witness will perish, and whoever listens to him will be destroyed forever." From Proverbs 6:19, we have learned that one of the seven sins that God hates and detests is "a false witness". God hates the false lips of those false witnesses, the false witnesses who unwillingly spit out lies to harm the other person they hate (12:22). These false witnesses open their mouths of deceit (6:12). That is, they speak lies and deceitful words with their deceitful mouth (12:17). They deliberately distort the truthful words and spit out lies out of their mouth (Note: 19:28). Particularly in business, those who speak lies and deceit with a crooked mouth gather wealth with deceitful words (21:6). So, although it may seem prosperous at first with a lot of wealth, it is "a fleeting vapor, the pursuit of death," (v. 6). And the false tongue has "hate" involved in human relationships. Look at Proverbs 26:28 – "A lying tongue hates those it crushes, And a flattering mouth works ruin." What does it mean? It means that the liar hates the other person who has been hurt by his false tongue. And because he hates the other person, he tries to hurt and harm the other person even if the liar is lying. This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: 'It is

his business that false witnesses pretend to lie and testify. He feels no remorse for his lie, as if he had been fine with his conscience (1 Tim. 4:2). He feels pleasure to lie' (Park). When we lie, our conscience must feel remorse. And we should never have pleasure in lying. And what we need to keep in mind is that the false witnesses will perish (Prov. 21:28). Look at Proverbs 19:5 – “A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who tells lies will not escape” (Note: v. 9).

We are to be hearers of the truth. In Proverbs 21:28, the Bible says, “, But the man who listens to the truth will speak forever.” What does it mean? That means that those who listen closely to others but only accept truths with solid evidence have strength (Park). First, we must devote ourselves to listening carefully to the word of God's truth. The reason is because in doing so, we can gain strength through the word of truth. And it is because when we listen carefully to the word of truth, we can stand firmly on the word of truth and discern lies. Then like Jesus we can fight against the temptation of Satan, the father of lies, with the written word of God. And we must be truthful witnesses (Prov. 14:25). We must be truthful and faithful witnesses of the Lord who speak the truth without lying (12:17, 14:5). Look at Proverbs 12:19 – “Truthful lips will be established forever, But a lying tongue is only for a moment.” We must grow up in the knowledge of Jesus Christ as those who have been saved through faith in Jesus Christ, who is our true Wise Man. Then we will become more and more wise believers. And the wiser we become, the more we will obey God's commandments in awe of God. And the more we obey God's commandments, the more we live a life that becomes the personification of the word of God so that we will live to introduce God's wisdom, that is, Jesus Christ, into this vain world. The true wise man is a true witness. Jesus' witnesses preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and bring many people back to Jesus. I hope and pray that we may become truly wise Christians.

Finally, in order for us Christians to win spiritual battles, I would like to think about three things the Lord is commanding us to do.

### **First, the Lord commands us to do righteousness and love.**

Look at Proverbs 21:21 – “He who pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity and honor.” Here, “righteousness” refers to doing right in front of God and man, and “love” refers to loving people (Park). What the Lord commands us is to walk right before God and man and to love people. And one of the ways of loving our neighbor right in front of God and man is giving without sparing (v. 26). On the contrary, if we don't act right in front of God and man, we are coveting the things of our neighbor (v. 26). There is such a desire in the heart of the wicked man (12:12) who chases fantasies (v. 11), and is only craving for more all day long (21:26). In order to overcome this sinful old nature, we must act right in front of God and people as the Lord commands by loving our neighbors. We must strive to live a life of love in giving without sparing.

Our Jesus did right before God and people according to Heavenly Father's will by loving our neighbors.

Jesus gave us love until He gave His life generously on the cross. The Bible says that God gives “life, prosperity and honor” to us who believe in this Jesus (21:21). That is, God gives us eternal life, God's righteousness and glory.

## **Second, the Lord commands us to act wisely.**

Look at Proverbs 21:22 – “A wise man attacks the city of the mighty and pulls down the stronghold in which they trust.” Do you think “wisdom” is better or “power” is better in war? Look at Ecclesiastes 9:16a – “So I said, “Wisdom is better than strength.” Look at Ecclesiastes 7:19 – “Wisdom strengthens a wise man more than ten rulers who are in a city.” Clearly, the Bible says that wisdom is better than strength. And the Bible says that wisdom makes the wise more powerful than the ten powerful men. In Proverbs 21:22, King Solomon says that the wise man wars with wisdom and breaks down the walls of the strong city that the enemy warriors rely on and trust. What does it mean? The secret to winning the war lies in wisdom rather than strength (Park). As I meditated on these words, I remembered a wise woman from 2 Samuel 20. Look at 2 Samuel 20:16 – “Then a wise woman called from the city, ‘Hear, hear! Please tell Joab, Come here that I may speak with you.’” The background story of this word is the story of when General Joab came to the city of Abel Beth Maacah (v. 14) against a man named Sheba, the son of Vigri from the hill country of Ephraim, who was against King David (v. 21). At that time, when Joab wanted to destroy the city wall with all the people (v. 15), a wise woman in the city cut off Sheba's head and threw it on Joab from the wall (vv. 21-22). Thus, she delivered the city from Joab’s hand. This wise woman was able to prevent the city from destruction by acting wisely.

In order for us to win spiritual battles, we must have wisdom. The spiritual battles must be overcome with wisdom that God gives rather than strength. Look at Matthew 10:16 – “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.” The Lord has sent us to this world, and there are many false prophets in this world who come to us in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves (7:15). That is why Jesus says, “I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves” (10:16). Therefore, Jesus commands us to be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. In order for us to fight and win in spiritual battle, as the Lord says, we must be wise like serpents (KJV). Here, what does the phrase “wise as serpents” (KJV) mean? There are two interesting interpretations:

- (1) First interpretation: “The word serpent is very negative for us. It feels bad and if we look at Genesis 3:1, the serpent appears cunning. But the serpent is not only cunning, it is also a symbol of wisdom. Thus, the Egyptians represented the serpent as a symbol of wisdom in their commercial script. The Lord spoke of the wisdom of the serpent above all else, saying that the serpent carefully copes with the various difficulties that come to it and escapes those difficulties. Among animals, the serpent is said to be the one which best grasp the difficulties that face them and quickly avoid them technically. The serpent has the ability to quickly foresee and avoid difficulties like this. Therefore, the Lord said that

when His disciples preach the gospel in the world, they need wisdom, discernment, and vigilance against the threats of those who interfere with the gospel of Christ in a world that seeks their lives. He tells you that you must have the power of wisdom that will never be harmed by the crowd who are trying to harm God's kingdom, people, and church in order to know in advance who will harm you. ... And that the serpent is wise speaks of careful discernment. The serpent's wisdom speaks of the ability to discern and judge all things. ... Wisdom like the serpent means that we don't look for disaster by thinking about what will happen to us, but use wisdom to go wherever we go and to do what we should do' (Internet).

- (2) Second interpretation: When Jesus sent His disciples to many towns, he said, "... be as shrewd as serpents ...," this word means to speak wisely in the symbolic meaning of the Jews. In the Jewish symbolic sense, the serpent is connected with "wisdom," which is said to be due to a split tongue. All beasts have one tongue but the serpent has two. So, from the standpoint of the ancients, the body organ called the "tongue" was something that allowed us to speak well. So the people came to think that having two tongues would be able to speak much better than having one tongue. And it is said that being good at speaking is said to be that much wise. The Pharisees and the scribes quoted the Torah and spoke wisely. But the result was that the words that the disciples had to convey should be words of life, compared to the words that were like killing poison. It is not the snake that speaks with a tongue full of killing poison, but rather the snake that saves people, and we must speak wisely. It was the gospel that testifies of Jesus Christ (Internet).

Both interpretations seem to make sense. But I think the second interpretation is a little more valid. The important thing is that we, as Christians, must speak wisely and act wisely in preaching the gospel in this world and living the worthy life of the gospel. We must win the spiritual war with the wisdom of God. Since victory belongs to the Lord, I hope and pray that we will be victorious with the wisdom that the Lord gives us.

### **Third, the Lord commands us to guard our mouths.**

Look at Proverbs 21:23 – "He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity." King Solomon already said something similar in Proverbs 13:3 – "He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin." As Christians, we must guard our mouths and not lie with our lips. We shouldn't lie habitually. The reason is because if our lips are deceitful and habitually lie, it will bring shame and disgrace to us (v. 5). Furthermore, our path will be rough as well. Then, in the end, we will come to ruin (v. 3). A little while ago, we thought about two interpretations of the Lord's words, 'You must be wise as serpents' (Mt. 10:16). Regarding the second interpretation, I would like to think of two more explanations regarding our lips (Internet).

- (1) The first additional explanation is Genesis 3:1a – "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made ...." Here, the Hebrew expression 'to be crafty' [Hebrew

word is “arub”] is used as the same word in the expression that David hid well when King Saul was chasing David. Look at 1 Samuel 23:22 – “Go now, make more sure, and investigate and see his place where his haunt is, and who has seen him there; for I am told that he is very cunning.” Therefore, this word is a word for being wise in every way it does or says or thinks, and it was applied to the serpent who persuaded Eve. Eventually, the image of a serpent was settled as an image that twists and deceives other people with words. This serpent again appears in the book of Revelation and is also described as ‘the one who deceives the whole world.’ Look at Revelation 12:9 – “And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.” Therefore, according to the Jewish concept, of all the wild beasts of God, the serpent was the most well speaking and wise beast.

- (2) The second additional explanation is Matthew 3:7 and 23:33 – “But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?” (3:7), “You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?” (23:3) John the Baptist and Jesus said to the Pharisees and the scribes, “You brood of vipers,” “You serpents, you brood of vipers.” Here, the expression “You brood of vipers” contains the fundamental character of the Pharisees. The scribes and the Pharisees were those who taught the law and explained the Torah. They were all good speakers. However, from the standpoint of Jesus or John the Baptist, the scribes and the Pharisees were not speaking the words that save people's lives according to the true law, but they were people who were speaking words that eventually lead to destruction and ruin. They seemed wise because they spoke well, but they were those serpents full of killing poison inside. Their words were the same subtle words as the serpent who twisted Eve into cunning words in the Garden of Eden and eventually killed them. It is an expression that the Pharisees and the scribes spoke well as the serpent in the Garden of Eden, just as Adam and Eve eventually died through the serpent’s cunning words.

The reason for sharing these two additional explanations is that the Bible Proverbs 21:23 says, “He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.” It is to receive a lesson that we must not deceive and twist others with our words like the serpent in Genesis 3 and we must not speak well that are full of poison that kills others with our word like the Pharisees and the scribes in Matthew 3:7 and 23:33.

Look at Proverbs 12:13 – “An evil man is trapped by his sinful talk, but a righteous man escapes trouble.” The Bible says that the evil man is trapped by his sinful talk. Our mouths shouldn’t be like this evil man’s mouths. Also, as Proverbs 14:3 says, we should not be like a fool whose talk brings a rod to his back. Instead, our mouths must speak the truth, And we must truthfully and faithfully preach the gospel of Jesus Christ that saves people's lives.

As I already mentioned in the introduction, when I look back at this year 2013, I thought 'I have failed this year'. At the early Morning Prayer meeting on that day when I had that thought, I meditate on the words of 1 Thessalonians 2:1 and I was comforted by His word. Although I failed and made this year in vain, I was comforted when I came to think that my covenant God, the true and faithful God, alone made me succeed through my failure this year. I am grateful for God's grace for the fact that despite my sins against God, repeatedly loss the spiritual battles against myself, sins, the world, and Satan, and covering the glory of God, God has been faithful in fulfilling His good, perfect and pleasing will. In the midst of this, with the focus of Proverbs 21:21-31, God has taught me and us four kinds of spiritual wars that we must fight and three things the Lord is commanding us to do in order for us to win spiritual battles. We must fight pride, laziness, evil and lies. We have been taught by the Lord to do righteousness and love, to act wisely, and to guard our mouths. By receiving these instructions, we will continue to fight spiritual battles by believing that victory rests with the Lord. May we all enjoy the grace of the Lord who gives us victory.

## A wise rich man

### [Proverbs 22:1-16]

In the New Year, I read and meditate on the Book of Genesis every Morning Prayer meeting. In particular, when I personally meditate on Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and think of the blessings God has given them, I believe that our God is a God who is pleased to bless and that a true covenant God who faithfully fulfills the promised words. I see that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, despite being incomplete and unfaithful before God, God has fulfilled his promise to bless them faithfully. The God of the covenant promised Abraham that “I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing” (Gen. 12:2), and God blessed him in every way according to His promise (24:1). This God of Abraham also gave words of blessing to Isaac, the son of Abraham: “... I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands ...” (26:3; Note: v. 24). And in the end, God blessed Isaac, and he was “became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy” (v. 13). But what about Jacob, Abraham's grandson and Isaac's son? He was blessed by his father Isaac (28:1, 4), went to the house of his maternal uncle Laban and worked for 20 years, eventually God made him “exceedingly prosperous” (30:43). Therefore, he prayed to God like this: “I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies” (32:10). When I meditate on God's faithful blessing to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I remembered the words of 2 Timothy 2:13 – “If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.” So, while reading and meditating on the Bible words about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I meditated on Genesis 28:15, the word of God's promise to Jacob – “Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” And as I remembered the words of the promise the Lord gave me again, I reaffirmed and reconfirmed that the true covenant God will fulfill those promises. So I praised God “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”: (v. 1) “Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing, tune my heart to sing Thy grace Streams of mercy, never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise. Teach me some melodious sonnet, Sung by flaming tongues above Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it, Mount of God's unchanging love.”

The Bible Proverbs 10:22 tells us: “The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it.” I would like to receive a lesson from God while meditating on six things about what kind person a wise rich man is under the title of “A wise rich man” centering on the words of Proverbs 22:1-16.

**First, the wise rich man makes the right choice.**

Look at Proverbs 22:1 – “A good name is to be more desired than great wealth, Favor is better than silver and gold.” The right choice is that the wise man chooses “A good name” over “great wealth” and “Favor” over “silver and gold.” Have you chosen “A good name” or “great wealth”? When I think about “A good name”, I think of Ecclesiastes 7:1 – “A good name is better than a good ointment, And the day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth.” There is a reason I read Ecclesiastes 7:1, not just the first half. The reason is because I think there is connection between “A good name” and “the day of one’s death”. The connection is that on the day of our death, our names are evaluated for good or bad. In other words, on the day of our death, when the condolers think of our names, they will evaluate our lives in their own way and we may have a good or bad reputation. Whether that reputation is good or bad depends on how we lived before God and people when we were alive.

In Proverbs 22:1, King Solomon says, “A good name is to be more desired than great wealth.” Here “A good name” is an honorable reputation for good character (Walvoord). King Solomon says that this good name is better than great wealth. That’s why he’s telling us to choose the good name over great wealth. Do we really think that the good name is better than great wealth, or do we still believe that great wealth is better than the good name? Think about it like this. We believe that great wealth is better than the good name, and we have accumulated a lot of wealth by working hard so far. But if we had gathered great wealth so hard and even heard the reputation of our poor character, then our funeral would not be that beautiful. However, if we prioritize our good names, work hard and diligently, and gain wealth as we are gracious to other people, what would be our reputation from them? That is why King Solomon said, “Favor is better than silver and gold” (v. 1b). In other words, it means to choose favor more than gold and silver. To be more specific, we should choose to do our best to help or do good to our neighbors rather than gold and silver for ourselves. When God gives us wisdom to make these right choices and live our lives, we will be able to earn good name or honor on the day we die. In other words, the people's reputation for us will be good. Furthermore, because the glory of God is revealed through our death, the condolers will also see the beauty of God in our lives.

Let's keep in mind that our great wealth is practically useless to us without being honored. Rather, that great wealth will ruin our honor (Walvoord). Therefore, as the Bible says, let us choose good name or honor over great wealth. This is the right choice of the wise rich man.

### **Second, the wise rich man has right knowledge.**

That right knowledge is the fact that God made them all, both the poor and the rich. Look at Proverbs 22:2 – “The rich and the poor have a common bond, The LORD is the maker of them all.” The foolish rich who choose great wealth than good name and favor don’t know that God is the maker of both the poor and the rich. And in ignorance, they don’t show favor to the poor, but rather are proud before them. Those foolish rich people are busy showing their pride in ruling over the poor that God has made (v. 7). They boast of themselves (2 Chron. 25:19) and



like to show off their glory. And they speak arrogantly to the poor with pride and contempt (Ps. 31:18). They even utterly deride them (119:51). And they hotly pursue the poor (10:2). These foolish rich people don't love the poor and don't help the poor and needy (Ezek. 16:49). Rather, they oppress them. This is what Proverbs 14:31 says: "He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God."

The Bible says that the foolish rich man who oppresses the poor is a man who shows contempt for their Maker of the poor. However, the Bible says that he who is kind to the needy honors God. It is the wise rich man who honors the Lord. The reason is because, unlike the foolish rich man, the wise rich man knows that the Maker God made the poor as well as the rich. So he is particularly interested in the poor and is kind to them (Prov. 19:17) in loving his neighbor as Jesus commanded him and gives to the poor (28:27). I remember the words of James 1:27 – "Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world." Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of God is to visit orphans and widows in their distress. The very wise rich man knows this truth and obeys it. He cares for orphans and widows during their trouble. He also helps and rescues the poor and needy. The Bible Proverbs 22:12 says that God protects this wise rich man.

### **Third, the wise rich man has right attitude.**

That right attitude can be thought of in two ways in today's text:

#### **(1) The right attitude of the wise rich man is humility and fear of the Lord.**

Look at Proverbs 22:4 – "The reward of humility and the fear of the LORD Are riches, honor and life." The foolish rich man is arrogant (v. 10). So, strife and dishonor will not cease for him (v. 10). But the wise rich man is never arrogant (v. 10). Rather, he is humble and fears God (v. 4). But in Proverbs 22:7, the Bible says that the rich man rules over the poor. Even so, the wise rich man humbles himself over the poor. The reason is because he fears God (v. 4). The wise rich man knows that even though he rules over the poor the Lord is the Maker of both the poor and the rich (v. 2), and acknowledges that the Lord rules over both the wise himself and the poor. Thus the wise rich man humbly rules over the poor.

This is an important principle and ethics in the relationship between master and slave in the New Testament Books of Ephesians and of Colossians. Look at Ephesians 6:9 – "And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him." Look at Colossians 4:1 – "Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven." The important principle is that the masters also have their Master in heaven. And the important ethic is that the masters, therefore, should not threaten their servants, but provide them with what is right and fair. The wise rich man glorifies God

by obeying this important biblical principle and ethic. Do you know what God rewards this humble, God-fearing wise and rich man? The reward is “riches, honor and life” (Prov. 22:4). d

(2) The right attitude for a wise rich man is diligence.

Look at Proverbs 22:13 – “The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion outside; I will be killed in the streets!’” This is the wrong attitude of the foolish rich man. His wrong attitude is laziness. In other words, the foolish rich man is lazy. The lazy rich man doesn’t go out of the house to work as an excuse that he will be torn and killed when he goes out on the street because there is a lion outside (MacArthur). In other words, the lazy rich man doesn’t go out from his house to work, not because there is actually lion outside and he is afraid of it but because he doesn't want to go to work, so he makes a ridiculous excuse (MacDonald). As for how to guess this, we can find out a bit by looking at the similar words in Proverbs 26:13 – “The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!’” What would a lion, king of the jungle, do in the middle of a city and wander on the road where people live? Perhaps the lazy man hears the cat outside the street and makes the ridiculous excuse of being a lion and not going out of the house to work. The lazy man is busy making excuses when he tries to do something and gets scared and makes excuses when he isn’t confident. Such a foolish rich man is lazy and doesn’t work with tricks by rolling his head hard rather than working hard with his hands. Ecclesiastes 4:5 says that such a fool man consumes his own flesh. It means that the foolish man is lazy and doesn’t get any income, but only leads to destruction (Park). On the contrary, the wise rich man is never lazy. Rather, he is diligent. Therefore, he doesn’t just not go to work, play and eat, making excuses like the foolish rich man. His work philosophy is “If a man will not work, he shall not eat” (2 Thess. 3:10). Therefore, the wise rich man works diligently. The heart of such a person will find abundance (Prov. 13:4).

**Fourth, the wise rich man behaves right.**

There are four things to think of to behave right here:

(1) The wise rich man sees the evil and hides himself.

Look at Proverbs 22:3 – “The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, But the naive go on, and are punished for it.” When we meet a dangerous thing, saying that we have faith, it is not the best way to meet the dangerous thing unconditionally. In other words, when we encounter dangerous things, we must escape if we have to. For example, when King Saul was jealous of David and wanted to kill him, David didn’t say he was courageous and went to fight against King Saul like he did with Goliath. Rather, he fled from King Saul and hid himself when Saul tried to kill him. Proverbs 22:3 says that the wise man sees the evil and hides himself. Here, ‘hiding himself’ means that ‘The believer behaves wisely in order not to sacrifice his

life without purpose for the Lord during the tribulation or suffer meaningless suffering' (Park). But for some reason, sometimes when I watch Christian news, I come across things that make me think that we Christians are acting recklessly. For example, if we say we are prepared to be martyred and go to a country where terrorism is frequent, and recklessly do missions, then we can get kill without doing the mission properly. Isn't it possible to question whether this is behaving wisely. Dr. Yoon-sun Park said that Proverbs 22:3 tells us three things, one of which is that 'for the Lord, we must not suffer dangerous things without wisdom until the right time comes (until the guidance of God).' Another thing is that we should not cause the opponents of the Lord recklessly to persecute us for the sake of the gospel (Park). But now, among us who say that we love the Lord and work hard for Him, how recklessly are we doing things that cause the opposition from the anti-Christians?

We need to make a distinction between 'brute courage' and 'courage'. We also need to distinguish between "blind obedience" and "obedience". What is the reason? The reason is because blind obedience and brutal courage are by no means wise actions of the believers. The wise action of the believers is that we sometimes flee when we are in danger. But in the midst of such a situation, we don't forget and give up the mission that the Lord has given us. That's what the wise rich man does. They don't forget the mission given by the Lord. And when they are in danger, they escape for a while. But they also preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in other places.

(2) The wise rich man is far from the perverse people and thus guards himself.

Look at Proverbs 22:5 – "Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; He who guards himself will be far from them." Here, "the way of the perverse" refers to the path of the crooked person (Park). When his heart is crooked, it means that his way is also crooked. And the Bible says that there are thorns and snares in the way of such perverse people. Therefore, the Bible says that we must be far from them in order not to get stuck in the thorns and snares. For example, it is "a deep pit" of an adulteress that is mentioned in Proverbs 22:14. The wise rich man doesn't fall into that trap of the adulteress. The reason is because he avoids the adulteress' perverse way (v. 5). And the reason he wants to guard himself and keeps away from the way of the perverse people is because he loves the purity of heart (v. 11). But the foolish rich man walks toward her house near the adulteress' perverse way. Look at Proverbs 7:7-8: "I saw among the simple, I noticed among the young men, a youth who lacked judgment. He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house." God is commanding us, "Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way" (4:14-15). Since the wise man keeps this command of God in his heart and obeys it, he avoids the way of the wicked and doesn't travel on it. However, the foolish man doesn't listen to God's command in his heart. Rather he ignores it and walks in the way of the wicked.

One of the young men in Proverbs chapter 7 was such a fool. When he was going down the street near the corner of the adulteress's corner (v. 8), he should have avoided it and not travel on it but turn from it and go on his way (4:15). But the foolish young man didn't turn from the adulteress' way, but rather walked closer to the street of her corner and headed toward the adulteress' house. He did so at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in (7:9). Why did the young man go to the adulteress' house during the dark night, not in broad daylight? It was because he wanted no one to see him. In other words, the foolish young man went secretly to the adulteress' house in the deep night to hide his action from others (Park).

(3) The wise rich man doesn't oppress the poor to gain profit.

Look at Proverbs 22:16 – “He who oppresses the poor to make more for himself Or who gives to the rich, will only come to poverty.” The foolish rich man doesn't hesitate to oppress the poor for his own benefit. In his covetousness, he even oppresses the poor and leads the poor to court for his own benefit (Jam. 2:6). And the foolish rich man even bribes an evil judge in court to judge the poor unfairly and deprives the poor of their rights (Isa. 10:2). Also, the foolish rich man gives gifts to the richer man than himself (Prov. 22:16). Those gifts are for bribe. The reason he gives these bribe gifts to the richer man than himself is because he wants to gain greater wealth. But there is something the foolish rich man doesn't know is that to covet his own interests until he oppresses the poor harms not only himself, but also his whole family. Look at Proverbs 15:27 – “A greedy man brings trouble to his family, but he who hates bribes will live.” And another truth that the foolish rich man does not know is Proverbs 28:8 – “He who increases his wealth by exorbitant interest amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor.” After all, when the fool increases his wealth, he saves it for those who have pity on the poor. The Bible Proverbs 14:31 says, “He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker.” What is the result? Look at Proverbs 22:8 – “He who sows iniquity will reap vanity, And the rod of his fury will perish.” In the end, it is said that the foolish rich man sows evil and will reap vanity. Such foolish rich man seeks and covets his own interests and eventually suffers disaster. But the wise rich man never oppresses the poor in order to gain his own profit. Rather, he cares about justice for the poor (29:7), takes pity on him (Ps. 72:13), gives to the poor (Prov. 28:27), helps and cares for him. And he saves the poor and delivers him from the hand of the wicked (Ps. 82:4). Why does he do that? The reason is because he loves the poor with God's love. Therefore, he doesn't seek his own interests, but that of the poor [love is not self-seeking (1 Cor. 13:5)].

(4) The wise rich man gives some of his food to the poor.

Look at Proverbs 22:9 – “He who is generous will be blessed, For he gives some of his food to the poor.” The wise rich man is a generous man. In the original Hebrew, it says “a man of a kind eye or of merciful eye” (Gesenius). The reason why this man of a kind eye or of this merciful eye is blessed is because he

gives his food to the poor (v. 9). In other words, the wise rich man sees the poor, powerless, and helpless with the merciful eyes of God, pities him, and shares his food with the poor. God said in Deuteronomy 15:10 – “Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to.” The wise rich man who obeys this word gives his own food to the poor without saving. 1 Timothy 6:18 is the very words that apply to the wise rich man: “Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.” We must not forget to do good and to share with others (Heb. 13:16).

### **Fifth, the wise rich man has the right lips.**

Look at Proverbs 22:11 – “He who loves purity of heart And whose speech is gracious, the king is his friend.” Here, the right lips refers to virtuous lips. That is, there is virtue in the lips of he who loves the purity of the heart. Here, the ‘virtuous lips’ is just ‘gracious lips.’ In other words, it means that the words that come out of the lips of he who loves purity of heart is gracious. Then here, who is “He who loves purity of heart”? When King Solomon says “the king is his friend” (v. 11b), I think “He who loves purity of heart” is the king's faithful servant. In other words, a faithful servant is a person who longs for purity of heart and speaks virtuous words to the king with his lips. What does it mean to say that the faithful servant speaks virtuous words to the king whom he serves? In Psalm 15:2, the Bible says that he who walks with integrity and works righteousness “speaks truth in his heart.” Therefore, the faithful servant is the one who tells the truth to the king he is serving when the king is doing something wrong. He is the one who wants to awaken the wrongdoing of the king by telling his king what he should be honest with. So the Bible Ephesians 4:15 tells us that we must speak the truth in love. But what about a disloyal servant? He never tells the truth in his heart. He doesn't speak honestly to his king who is wrong. Rather, he flatters to the king. The Bible Proverbs 22:12 says that he speaks “the words of the unfaithful”. In other words, he speaks treacherous word word, unlike what it looks like (Walvoord). This is not the word that edifies the king to be right. In other words, flattery is by no means a virtuous word.

The wise rich man speaks words that edify others. The words that come out of his mouth are gracious words that edify other people. Look at Ecclesiastes 10:12 – “Words from a wise man's mouth are gracious, but a fool is consumed by his own lips.” The Bible says that the words of the wise man's mouth are gracious. The words that come out of our mouths should be gracious. God commands us in Ephesians 4:29 – “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” May we all be able to obey this word of God.

### **Sixth and last, the wise rich man properly raises his children.**

How does the wise rich man properly raise his children? Of course, he has the right choice, knowledge, attitude, behavior, and lips to raise children right. However, in Proverbs 22:6 and 15 we can find two right ways to

raise our children properly. The two right ways to raise children are to train them up in the way they should go (v. 6) and to discipline them (v. 15).

(1) First, let's think about the first way to raise our children. Look at Proverbs 22:6 – “Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

When I reflect myself on this word, I can't help but ask the question whether I am teaching my three children the right way to go. First of all, in order to raise children properly, we must not forget that our children belong to God. And we must teach our children what they deserve to be taught according to the word of God. Until now, whenever I meditate on the words of Proverbs 22:6, I have exhorted myself and the parents of our church that we should teach our children three things. The three are Right Value, Clear Purpose, and Eternal View of Life. Most importantly, we must teach our children the word of God. We must teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must teach them “the right way” they should walk (1 Kgs. 8:36; 2 Chron. 6:27). Meanwhile, as parents, we must help them to discover and to develop the talent God has given to each of our children. We should be a stepping stone to them, not a stumbling block. Just as there are times when flowers bloom, we must have faith and hope that God will use them in His time.

(2) Second, let's think about the second way to raise our children. Look at Proverbs 22:15 – “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”

In raising our children, we must bring them up as wise children of God. Look at Proverbs 17:2 – “A wise servant will rule over a disgraceful son, and will share the inheritance as one of the brothers.” Here, King Solomon's contrast between the wise servant and the master's disgraceful son. One has the status of “slave” and the other has the status of “son”. Nevertheless, King Solomon says that a person who has the status of “slave” obtains an inheritance from his master, just like a person holding the status of “son”. How is this possible? How can the slave obtain an inheritance like the son with his master? That's because the servant has wisdom. When we think of this wise servant we are compelled to think of Proverbs 16:20. The reason is because this word explains “wisdom”: “Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.” What does it mean? Wisdom means to pay attention to the word of God. In Proverbs 19:20, the Bible says: “Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.” When we pay attention to God's word and accept His advice and instruction, we can become wise people.

The Bible says that the wise man gets a good thing. The good thing is that he shares the inheritance just like the master's son (17:2). However, Proverbs 17:25 says that the disgraceful son of the master is grief to his father and bitterness to his mother: “A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him.” And the Bible Proverbs 17:21 says that the parents who give birth to the foolish son brings grief to the parents and there

is no joy for his parents. The foolish child is not only dull and dumb, he lives as he pleases and does shameful things because he lacks spiritual insight and sensitivity and thus cannot discern the will of God. Therefore, he is grief and bitterness to his parents.

The Bible Proverbs 10:22 says, “The blessing of the LORD brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it.” We learned six things about how the wise rich man who was blessed by God and became rich, does. We have learned that the wise rich man make the right choices, have the right knowledge, have the right attitude, and do the right thing. And we have learned that the wise rich man has the right lips and that he also properly raises his children. I hope and pray that all of us maybe raised up as the wise rich Christians who are right in the sight of God.

## He who guards his soul

**"In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares, but he who guards his soul stays far from them"(Proverbs 22:5).**

I saw an article titled 'Who found garbage dumplings? ... Due to a policeman's holiday fishing' in Korea Yahoo Internet News and read it because it seemed interesting. According to the article, a police officer went fishing to Bongam in Paju City, Gyeonggi in South Korea on a holiday. And he heard the residents saying, 'The water is dirty because of the factory' and 'I can't live because of the bad smell'. So he went into an investigation and raided a leading food factory. As it turned out, he saw bun stuffing is made in an impure environment with pipes connected to waste wells. As I read this article, it seems that due to that police instinct, the investigation gave the opportunity to prevent 'garbage dumplings'. I think it was a great opportunity to protect food so that people can eat healthy food. If so, we are going to ask a question whether we are really investigating by questioning that our souls or hearts are being contaminated with "garbage" or not. As if people try to make a lot of money easily by putting rotten Chinese radish into dumplings, we should ask ourselves whether we really know that our own souls are decaying as Christians who strive for our spiritual growth while living our faith easily. We have to guard our souls more than anything else. We must at least ask ourselves seriously at least once how actively we are devoting ourselves to guard our souls.

In Proverbs 22:5, the Bible says that he who guard his soul stay far from "thorns and snares." Here, "thorns and snares" refer to adversity and hardships that are the result of the evil deeds of the rebellious, that is, the crooked. There seems to be too many times when we disobey God's commandments like the Israelites in the Old Testament and put ourselves in our own lives with snares and thorns on our sides. The reason is because of the fruit of disobedience, the result of sin. But the guardian of the soul is not the crooked heart but the upright heart (16:17). He who has the upright heart avoids evil. If so, it can be said that the one who guards his soul is upright in heart, and the he who is upright in heart avoids evil. Therefore, he is the one who avoids "thorns and snares."

How, then, are we to guard our souls as the upright Christians? Dr. Yoon-sun Park suggests seven things in his commentary on the Book of Proverbs:

(1) We must have God in our hearts who protects our souls.

(Prov. 24:12) "If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?"



Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?"

(2) We must possess the wisdom (faith) that fears God.

(Prov. 8:36) "But whoever fails to find me harms himself ...."

(3) We must keep the commandments of God.

(Prov. 19:16) "He who obeys instructions guards his life, ...."

(4) We must be merciful to others (we must love others).

(Prov. 11:17) "The merciful man does himself good, ...."

(5) We must endure God's admonition (discipline).

(Prov. 15:32) "He who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding."

(6) We must keep our mouths.

(Prov. 21:23) "He who guards his mouth and his tongue, Guards his soul from troubles."

(7) We must avoid special sins that harm the soul.

Adultery, extortion, oppression, anger, resentment, partner with a thief (Prov. 22:24-25, 29:24).

Although the 'garbage dumplings' were found by the policeman, the "garbage" of our souls is very difficult to find. I don't think we can't even smell it without seeing one's soul deeply in front of the holy God by reflecting ourselves with His word. We will never be able to manifest the fragrance of Christ if we live our Christian lives misunderstanding that we are upright even though our hearts are crooked and our souls are getting rotten. The food we eat must be kept well. But above all, we must do our best to guard our souls. I sincerely hope and pray that God protects our souls, and our souls are upright, our souls that avoid evil and "thorns and snares", the souls that seem beautiful in God's sight.

## **Train up a child in the way he should go**

**“Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)**

I heard about the news that there was an explosion at a train station in North Korea. As a result, it is known that there are many casualties. I heard that a lot of people are in danger of blindness because of the tremendous post-busting and glass debris, causing serious eye injuries. Especially, I heard the unfortunate news that most of the children injured at a near elementary hurt their eyes. The poet Kim Yong-taek, who had heard the unfortunate news of the children, said in his poem "Yongchun Elementary School": ‘... the children of Ryongchon! You children who are like new grass leaf from the ground ! You who lost your school, your friends, your homes and your parents and siblings, you whose faces were burned by fire. Ah! Ah! Sudden death, suffering, sorrow, cold, hunger, what must we do with these fears. What must I do now ...’

I was challenged by his saying ‘What must I do now.’ There are so many times in our lives that we don’t know what to do when we look at the sad reality. Especially, when we look at our children whose spiritual eyes are injured and they are in a crisis of spiritual blindness, we as parents cannot but help to ask ourselves ‘What must I do?’ The sadder reality is that we are spiritually blinded as well as our children so that now the blind parents are leading the blind children (Mt. 15:14). So based on Proverbs 22:6, I want to meditate on three things that we should teach our children.

### **First, we should teach our children the Right Value.**

We should look back our lives to see whether we are showing our children what is truly valuable or not. Is it faith? Do we think that our children are seeing in our family lives that faith is very precious? Or aren’t we busy living with the values of the world that God hates (Lk. 16:15)? The Bible says “for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Mt. 6:21). What is that "treasure" that we value? We must listen carefully the word of Matthew that where our treasure is, there is our heart. The person who had the right values was Moses. Moses regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasure of Egypt (Heb. 11:26). Who likes to suffer? Isn’t it our instinct to love treasure? But Moses, by faith, regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as greater value than treasure of Egypt because he was looking ahead to his reward (v. 26). We should teach this value to our children.

### **Second, we should teach Clear Purpose to our children.**

Too many of our children are wondering and wasting their lives for no apparent purpose of their lives. They run about in confusion, not knowing what to do. With the wrong purposes of their lives, they are wasting God's time. Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 1 says "What is the chief end of man?" The answer is "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever" (Internet). But how many of us are trying to live for the glory of God and are enjoying him? Aren't we rather burdened by God? Don't we feel burdened even serving the Lord's church? We must learn the Daniel's clear purpose and show to our children. Look at Daniel 1:8 – "But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself." Although it was a good opportunity in the worldly perspective, he chose not to eat the king's choice food and drink his wine because he was pursuing the clear objective purpose, God's holiness. He was able to overcome his circumstance because he lived his life that was driven by his determination not to defile himself. Won't God be delighted to see our children resolved not to defile themselves with the worldly things but pursue God's holiness?

### **Third and last, we should teach our children the Eternal View of Life.**

Too many of our children are committing suicide without considering God's precious gift of life. What a sad reality? Why do they take their own precious life? It is because they don't have eternal view of life. It is because they have lost the will of life. The reason is because there is no hope in eternal kingdom, heaven. This world cannot give us hope. This world cannot give us hope to live a day. In this vain and futile world, we have no hope. But the eternal comfort that is given to us in Jesus Christ is the eternal life. This is what Apostle James said in James 4:14 – "... What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes." Although our life is like the mist, why are we living now as if we will live on this land forever? Those without deep meditation and prayer for death cannot say that they have an eternal view of life. The reason is because only those who think about the gate of death look at the gate of eternal kingdom. While living in this land, Apostle Paul looked upon the eternal kingdom and preached the gospel to all souls who were his joy and crown. He said to the Philippian church saints that they were his joy and crown (Phil. 4:1). Those who have many joy and crown, the fruit of their beautiful life at the end of their life, is a beautiful people who have eternal view of life and devote their whole life to eternal souls. We have to show and teach this to our children.

Like a poet, who thought about the children of Ryongchon Elementary School in North Korea who lost their sights, and said 'What must I do now?', we must look at our children whose are spiritually blinded and ask ourselves 'What must I do now?' And as we pray in our struggles, we must find the answer in the Word of God. We must instill right value, clear purpose, and eternal view of life to our children.

## **Am I raising my children properly?**

**"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." (Proverbs 22:6)**

Am I teaching my children my son Dillon and two daughters Yeri and Karis whom God has given me and my wife as gracious gifts rightly so that even after I die, they will not depart from the way that should go? Am I training them in the way they should go?

Until now whenever I meditated on Proverbs 22:6, I encouraged myself and our church parents to teach our children three things: Right Value, Clear Purpose, and Eternal View of Life.

But today when I was meditating on Proverbs 22:6 again, I was taught that I should teach my children five things.

**The first thing is I should teach my children that a good name is to be more desired than great wealth.**

Look at Proverbs 22:1 – “A good name is to be more desired than great wealth, Favor is better than silver and gold.” The Bible tells us to choose good name and favor more than silver or gold or great wealth. This reminds me Noah. The Bible says “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. 6:8). Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time and he walked with God (v. 9). I want my three children Dillon , Yeri and Karis find favor in the eyes of the Lord like Noah. Therefore, I hope and pray that they have the good names that God knows and approves.

**The second thing is I should teach my children that the Lord made the rich and the poor.**

Look at Proverbs 22:2 – “The rich and the poor have a common bond, The LORD is the maker of them all.” Naked the poor and the rich came to this world, naked they will leave this world. We came to this world with empty hands and we will leave this world with empty hands. Our lives can be abundant, but it can also be in need. The important thing is not to be rich or to be poor, but to learn the secret of contentment (Phil. 4:11). Therefore, as Dillon, Yeri and Kari live in this world where the rich and the poor live together, I hope and pray that they are satisfied with the Lord.

**The third thing is I should teach my children that the prudent sees the evil and hides him/herself.**

Look at Proverbs 22:3 – “The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, But the naive go on, and are punished for it.” The foolish ones who cannot discern sins are the naïve ones who go on even when they see the evil. How foolish is this? I want to nurture my children so that they can hide when they need to hide. Like David who ran away from King Saul and hid in the cave. I don’t want to raise my children like the fools who recklessly harm themselves and drive their lives into a crisis.

**The fourth thing is I should teach my children that the reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor and life.**

Look at Proverbs 22:4 – “The reward of humility and the fear of the LORD Are riches, honor and life.” How important is humility in Christian virtues? I want myself to be humble before God and before people. And I hope that my three children can see Jesus’ humility in my life. I also seek God’s wisdom. One reason is that those who have the wisdom of God fear God. Also, those who fear God hate evil. Therefore, I hope and pray that God gives Dillon, Yeri and Karis wisdom so that they can fear God and hate evil.

**The last fifth thing is I should teach my children that those who guard themselves will be far from thorns and snares.**

Look at Proverbs 22:5 – “Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; He who guards himself will be far from them.” The righteous God punishes the rebellious. And that punishment is thorns and snares. I don’t want Dillon, Yeri and Karis to walk in the way of thorns and snares. In order for them not to walk in the way of the perverse is to teach them how to guard their hearts. I want them to be humble and fear God so that they can be far from the way of the rebellious and walk in the way they should go. I hope and pray that God gives my children humility and wisdom.

As I was meditating on Proverbs 22:1-6, my shortcomings were exposed in that I didn’t faithfully teach my three children in the way they should go in a holistic and balanced way so that even when they are old they will not depart from it. When my children are old I won’t be in this world anymore. So before I die, I must diligently teach Dillon, Yeri and Karis in the way they should go. I hope and pray that they learn throughout their lives that the good name is to be more desired than great wealth, the Lord than rich or poor, wisdom than foolishness, humility and fear of God than arrogant and evil, those who guard their hearts than being rebellious so that even when they are old they won’t depart from them.

## **Listen to the words of the wise.**

### **[Proverbs 22:17-29]**

Not long ago, after taking my father-in-law and mother-in-law home, I went to the Tucson, Arizona airport after having a service on the Monday with them. When I got out of their house, I asked my wife who was at home to book a shuttle bus for me to get to Tucson Airport. So the so called shuttle bus came but it was a small car. An old bearded man over 70 came and took me to the airport. So we headed toward the airport which normally took 1 hour 15 minutes. That was how long we talked to each other. He told me that he got baptized as an infant and kept saying strange things about the Bible. As I listened to him all the way, I thought his conclusion was that we are all God and that everything in the world is God. He repeatedly asserted that what he believed is “I AM.” And he even said that he could go to and from Mars in seconds, even in a hypnotic trance, but it is very dangerous. It was definitely absurd saying. But I kept listening to him and asking questions like this and that based on the Bible. Conclusively, I said John 14:6 to him: “Jesus said, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life.’” When I told my wife about this experience, my wife said that legally now federal judges could no longer be affiliated with Boy Scouts. Perhaps the reason had to do with homosexuality. Perhaps, as my wife said, there may be a day when judges will not be able to connect to the church in the future. It is a very scary world. The world is radically changing strangely. In the meantime, the word that comes to mind is Luke 16:8 – “And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light.” Aren’t we seeing the reality of Jesus’ words in this world? In these times, we must be more and wiser. We must seek the wisdom of God more and more. And we must ask God for wisdom with a longing heart. We must seek wisdom from “God, who gives to all generously and without reproach” (Jam. 1:5), in faith (v. 6). Also, we must listen to His word.

If we look at Proverbs 22:17, the Bible says “Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise; apply your heart to what I teach.” Focusing on this verse, I would like to receive the lessons God gives us while meditating on Proverbs 22:17-29 in three ways under the heading “Listen to the words of the wise.”

### **First, what are the words of the wise that we should listen to?**

The words are taught by the wise and are “sayings of counsel and knowledge” and also “true and reliable words”. Look at Proverbs 22:20-21: “Have I not written thirty 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?” The Bible is the

words of the wise that we must hear. The Bible is the word of trustworthy truth, which is the words of advice (counsel) that give us wisdom and knowledge (Swanson). Why, then, should we take the advice of this wise man's truth? The reason is to give sound answers to him who sent us (v. 21). When someone asks us a question about our faith, we must know how to answer with the word of truth. For example, when someone who doesn't believe in Jesus comes to us and asks about the hope for heaven in us, we must know how to answer with the words of the Bible. Look at 1 Peter 3:15-16: "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." How would we answer if, as in this 1 Peter's words, those who speak maliciously against our good works or those who slander us ask the reason for the hope in us? Are we really ready to answer that question? We must read, hear and learn the words of the Bible. So we must be ready to answer any question about our faith. We must listen to the words of trustworthy truth and advice that give us wisdom and knowledge, as Proverbs 2:20-21 says.

What, then, are the sure words of trustworthy truth that we should listen to? Five things are taught in Proverbs 22:22-29:

(1) Don't exploit and crush the poor.

Look at Proverbs 22:22 – "Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court." We learned that the wise rich man cares for the needy, be merciful to them (19:17) and rescues them (28:27). But the foolish rich man shows his pride in taking control of the poor (22:7), boasting of himself (2 Chron. 25:19), acts disrespectfully with stubborn words to them (Ps. 31:18), ridicule them (119:51) and hotly pursues them (10:2). In Proverbs 22:22, the lesson that the wise man is teaching us is that we must not exploit the poor and do not crush the afflicted at the gate. Why did he say not to crush the afflicted at gate? The reason is because the poor sat at the gate of the crowded city and begged. And at that time, the gate was a place dealing with civil or legal matters (Ref.: 31:23), because the inhabitants earnestly seek justice and compassion there (MacArthur). But in front of the gate, the wicked people (for example, the wicked rich people) oppressed the poor and needy people and took their possessions. That is why the wise man is instructed not to do so in Proverbs 22:22. In 1 Thessalonians 5:14, the apostle Paul says, "... encourage the timid, help the weak ...." Not only did the apostle Paul say this, but in fact he helped the weak (Acts 20:35). We must help those who are weak. We should never oppress them and exploit the poor.

(2) Don't make friends with a hot-tempered man.

Look at Proverbs 22:24 – "Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily

angered.” We have learned lessons from meditating on the Proverbs about our anger. Here are some of the lessons we received: “A fool's anger is known at once, ...” (12:16), “A quick-tempered man acts foolishly ...” (14:17), “A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, ...” (15:18), “A man's discretion makes him slow to anger ...” (19:11) and “has great understanding” (14:29), “A man of great anger will bear the penalty ...” (19:19), etc.. Even in Proverbs 22:24, the wise man tells us not to make friends with the hot-tempered man and associate with one easily angered. What is the reason? Look at Proverbs 22:25 – “or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared.” The reason is because if we associate and walk with the hot-tempered man and one easily angered, we too can imitate his behavior and eventually fall into a snare. As we learned in Proverbs 22:5 and 14, there are thorns and snares, or deep pit, in the path of the wicked or the path of the adulteress. Therefore, we have been taught to stay away from that path. It means that we should not get close to the hot-tempered man and one with easily angered who aren't an example to us. The reason is because if we walk with him, then we can also quarrel and sin against God (29:22).

### (3) Don't put up security for debts.

Look at Proverbs 22:26 – “Do not be a man who strikes hands in pledge or puts up security for debts.” We have already been taught in Proverbs 6:1-5 about putting up security for debts or becoming surety for our neighbor. The point of that lesson is that if we have become surety for our neighbor (v. 1) and then have been snared with the words of our mouth and come into the hand of our neighbor (vv. 2-3), that is, when we were to assume responsibility for fulfilling that neighbor's debts, then we must deliver ourselves (v. 5). What King Solomon warns us here is a foolish act, and that foolish act is that we take the responsibility of paying debts, that is putting up security for debts for the person who defaults, knowing that he owe it and cannot repay it. That is why the Bible says that the unwise pledges and becomes guarantor in the presence of his neighbor (17:18). This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘... Being a guarantor for someone else's debt without financial strength is only giving vain comfort to the debtor's heart, and it is also easy to bring bankruptcy to oneself as well’ (Park). Therefore, we must not put up security for debts (22:26).

### (4) Don't move an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers.

Look at Proverbs 22:28 – “Do not move an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers.” If we look at Deuteronomy 19:14, a similar statement is found: “You shall not move your neighbor's boundary mark, which the ancestors have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God gives you to possess.” Here, the word that we should not move an ancient boundary stone set up by our forefathers (ancestors) means not to infringe on others' possessions (Park). What is the reason? Look at Deuteronomy 27:17 – “Cursed is he who moves his neighbor's boundary mark.’ And all the people shall say, 'Amen.’” The reason is because those who infringe on others' possessions will be cursed by God. Dr.



Yoon-sun Park said that it meant not to invade the territory of another country by interpreting Proverbs 22:28 more broadly (Park). In other words, since God has allotted the territory of the nations (Deut. 17:26, 32:8), the reason why one nation should not invade the territory of another nation is that the principle of respecting the possessions of others should be taken as a principle (Park). The lesson that the wise is giving us when we think about this principle is that we must clarify the boundaries of our hearts, as well as be wary of coveting others.

(5) Be a man skilled in his work.

Look at Proverbs 22:29 – “Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men.” Here, “a man skilled in his work” refers to a person who is diligent and skilled. The wise man says that such a man does things quickly and even serves before the king, never serving the lowly. We must be the people skilled in our works. In particular, we must become skilled people in serving the church that is the body of the Lord. May the Lord establish us as skilled people who will do the Lord’s work quickly and well.

## **Second, how are we to listen to the wise?**

We must listen to the words of the wise. Look at Proverbs 22:17a – “Pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise; ...” Shortly after I started serving Victory Presbyterian Church as a senior pastor, I had a Bible study centered on Professor Jay Adams’ book, “A Consumer’s Guide to Preaching” in the Bible study class on Sunday afternoon. The reason I studied that book at that time was because I thought that the church members should prepare to listen to the sermons just as I prepare the sermons. And one of the preparations to listen to those sermons was that I thought that I had to train their ears. So I made a Bible study material based on that book and led the Bible study. In particular, the reason I thought I should train their ears was because what the Bible 2 Timothy 4:3-4 says: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.” Personally, I think this “time” has already arrived. What time is it? That’s when people don’t endure sound doctrine. I think the time has come for people to listen to lies like empty stories that scratch their itching ears. So, I read Professor Adams’ book first, and made it into the Bible study material and studied the Bible with my church members. When I look back at the challenge from that book, there is a post on my personal homepage that I want to share with you: ‘It is eager anticipation. It means that attitude preparation is necessary. The Bible says ‘to receive the word with an earnest heart’ (Acts 17:11). You can hear it well when you have anticipation. When listening to a sermon in church, pay attention to only one thing. ‘What is the word that God will give me today?’ There must be childlikeness. It can be heard only when there is a pure mind and an open mind. Even when you search the Bible, you must search the Bible because of your eagerness to find the truth. If

you take prejudice, you get nothing. Listening in order to find fault is a sick ear. The Bible Hebrews 5:11 says, “We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn.” It means that there are ears that are dull to hear. Listening to a sermon is not ‘finding faults’ but ‘finding the truth’. Maybe don't we have sick ears? Aren't we listening to the pastor's sermon to find faults or flaws? Do you think that there are dull ears in listening to His words?

I recently met with the brothers in Christ and their family members who were roommates in college and had a meal and prayer time. At that time, in conversation, a brother in Christ said this about his elementary school son. Since his son's school teacher asked him or his wife to meet at school, he went to see the teacher. So he went and the teacher told him that his son is reading only books without listening to the teacher. However, it was interesting to see why his son didn't listen to the teacher and read books. The reason is because his son isn't a good auditory learner. At the same time, he said that he himself isn't a good auditor who learns well with his ears. So I asked him how he would listen to the pastor's sermons. From my perspective, I think that brother is a person who learns well by seeing even if he isn't a good auditor who learns well by ear. But then, after talking with that brother, the question was, how should I preach to those who cannot learn well by ear? Of course, it is a question that also applies to Bible study. But at least during the Bible study, I can try how to get such people to speak. Also, I can lead the Bible study as I show the Bible study materials. But the question is how can I preach preach to them. So, I think many pastors show scriptures on the screen when they are preaching, or even a sermon summary, and some even show a video about the sermon.

The word “listen” in Proverbs 22:1, in the original Hebrew meaning, implies listen to obediently (Harris) in order to obey the words of the wise. For example, when God speaks to us through the Bible, it means that we must listen to God's words with an attitude to obey His word. But what if we don't listen to God's words in an obedient manner like the Israelites in the days of the prophet Jeremiah? Look at Jeremiah 17:23 – ““Yet they did not listen or incline their ears, but stiffened their necks in order not to listen or take correction.” One thing we have to think about here is what happens if we don't listen to God's words in an obedient manner. If we listen to God's words but don't have an attitude to obey in our hearts, we will surely become proud. We will be stiff-necked, will turn our backs on God's words, and live disobedience in the world. This is what Proverbs 4:20 says to us: “My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words.” And this is what Proverbs 5:1 says: “My son, pay attention to my wisdom, listen well to my words of insight.” We must listen to the words of the wise. Not only that, we must listen to the words of the Lord who is the true wisdom. And we must listen carefully to the words (wisdom) and obey them.

### **Third, what must we do after we have heard the words of the wise?**

We must listen to the words of the wise and put them in our hearts. Look at Proverbs 22:17b – “... apply

your heart to what I teach.” We must listen to the knowledge taught by the wise and put it in our hearts. In order to do that, we must devote our hearts to that words. To say that we should be devoted to the words of the wise here means that we should put our hearts on them, put our minds on them, and devote ourselves to them. How should we be immersed in God's words? How should we devote our whole mind to His words? I looked for the answer in Proverbs 24:32 – “I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw.” The word that we are immersed in God's words can be summarized in three ways: (1) We must see (read) the words of God. And we must observe that words. (2) We must ponder the words of God. That means we must reflect ourselves on His words. And we must learn from them. (3) We must apply the words of God. The most important thing for us to keep His words in our hearts is to obey the lessons we receive from them. It is only when we obey His words of the instruction we have received that the words are written in the tablet of our hearts. Then, like the psalmist, the words of God will be ours (Ps. 119:56).

Why, then, does the Bible say that we should be immersed in the wise words of God? There are two reasons:

(1) The reason is to keep His words in our hearts.

Look at Proverbs 22:18 – “for it is pleasing when you keep them in your heart and have all of them ready on your lips.” The reason why we should be keen to keep all our minds on God's words is that then we can preserve (keep) the words of God in our hearts. And the reason we have to keep His words in our hearts is that when we do that we can quote them. The Bible says that it is good (beautiful) to frequently quote God's words (v. 18). In other words, we must keep God's words in our hearts and quote them often. We should cultivate the habit of frequently quoting what we hear, learn, memorize, and know. That should be our joy. So why should we keep God's words in our hearts? Why is it so good? Look at Ecclesiastes 7:12 – “Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge is this: that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor.” The reason why knowledge (wisdom) is more important than money is because wisdom will preserve our lives. That's why we must preserve (keep) the words of God in our hearts.

(2) The reason is to trust the Lord in our hearts.

Look at Proverbs 22:19 – “So that your trust may be in the LORD, I teach you today, even you.” The reason why we should be devoted to God's words with all our minds is because our faith can grow so that we can fully trust in God more and more. For example, when we didn't know God's words well and didn't put them in our hearts, we trusted people rather than God. Then, the more we listen, learn, meditate, and immerse ourselves in the words of God, the more we come to realize that the word of Psalm 118:8 is the truth: “It is better to take refuge in the LORD Than to trust in man.” Not only that, but the more we are immersed in God's words and put them in our hearts, the more we trust God rather than humans, so that we

can be protected by God's unfailing love (32:10). Furthermore, by trusting in God, we are empowered and saved by God (Isa.30:15). We must listen to and immerse ourselves in His words. Therefore, we must put His words in our hearts. What is the reason? Look at Psalms 119:11 – “Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.” We must keep the words of God in our hearts in order not to sin against Him.

The words of the wise that we need to hear are the words of trustworthy truth, words of advice that give us wisdom and knowledge. The words of advice that give wisdom and knowledge are: (1) Don't exploit and crush the poor. (2) Don't make friends with a hot-tempered man. (3) Don't put up security for debts. (4) Don't move an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers. (5) Be a man skilled in his work. The reason we should listen to this wise man's advice of truth is because we may respond to those who send us with the word of truth. We must listen to the words of the wise. We must listen carefully in an attitude to obey the words of the wise. And we must listen to the words of the wise and put them in our hearts. In order to do that, we must devote our hearts to His words. We must put our hearts on His words and devote ourselves to them. Then we can keep His words in our hearts. Then we can trust God.

## **“Do not crave his delicacies”**

### **[Proverbs 23:1-8]**

Do you know what are some of the best foods in the world? In a Facebook survey of 33,000 people over a three-week period from a group, I saw an article that published ‘The 50 Best Foods You Picked in the World’ (Internet). Looking at that article, all of the oriental foods were ranked #1 to #10 among the 50 best foods in the world. 1st, 2nd and 6th place were Indonesian foods. These were foods I had never tried. However, sushi and ramen, the Japanese foods we know, are ranked 3rd and 8th. And the Thai food Pad Thai was 5th. As for the Korean foods, Kimchi and Bulgogi ranked 12th and 23<sup>rd</sup>. Vietnamese Noodle Pho was 20th, and Mexican Taco was 27th. Don't you want to eat these delicious foods? Perhaps you want to eat when you are hungry. So why do we feel hungry? The reason is said to be a sign that we need to eat something because our body is running out of energy. It is said that this hunger is caused by two main mechanisms. One is blood sugar and the other is when the stomach is empty. A person named Sang-man Kim, a professor at the Cha Medical University, who is the leading authority in chronic fatigue, detoxification, obesity, and clinical nutrition, said, ‘When our brain detects that sugar in the blood has fallen, it stimulates the appetite center, which is the feeling of hunger that we feel.’ It is said that when we feel this hunger, we develop a desire to eat. When the stomach is empty, as we all know, it is when the stomach makes rumbling sounds. This is mostly evidence that the stomach is empty. Professor Sang-man Kim said, ‘Then, when the stomach contracts, it secretes ghrelin, an enteric hormone’ and when it gets to our brain, we feel hungry and we're looking for something to eat.’ But the problem is we overeat. Why do we fall into the temptation of food and overeat? Professor Kim said 'stress' as the biggest culprit in overeating. Stress is not just the emotional stress we get from our boss. It's a more comprehensive concept. In other words, ‘Every situation that doesn't go according to my will all acts as stress on my body without knowing it.’ For example, when we fight or get angry because of a relationship, it certainly puts stress on our body. When this happens, energy decline appears in our body, which is called a hypoglycemic state. The brain then immediately signals that it needs fuel to generate energy, and what it needs is sugar, not fat or protein. The reason is because our brain uses only sugar to create energy. That's why we eat the foods with high sugar content when we are hungry. Another important secret to stress-provoking overeating is the hormonal secret. Professor Kim said, ‘When we are under stress, we must also provide a substance that can overcome the stress.’ ‘The representative of that substance is serotonin’. Therefore, in order to relieve stress, a hormone called serotonin must be secreted so that we can overcome stress and live. There are many ways to secrete serotonin, and some people say that they exercise and eat spicy foods. They drink alcohol and even use drugs. Professor Kim said, ‘Even if we eat what we want to eat, serotonin, a hormone that overcomes stress,

comes out' and 'that's why if we feel stressed out without our knowledge, we will covet food' (Internet).

If we look at Proverbs 23:3, 6, the Bible says twice, "Do not crave his delicacies." I would like to receive the lessons God gives us while meditating on three things.

### **First, what does it mean to crave delicious food?**

In Proverbs 23:3, 6, the Bible says "Do not crave his delicacies" and it is talking about 'gluttons'. Look at verse 21a: "for drunkards and gluttons become poor, ...." Here, the Latin word for "gluttons" is "gluttire" which means "to gulp down or swallow," which also means to swallow food quickly and loudly. That means "over-indulgence" or over-consumption of food. There are 613 commandments in the Torah of Judaism, but the 169th commandment says that overeating or excessive drinking is prohibited (Wikipedia). The Bible says a lot about food cravings. Sodom and Aunt, as we know, were committing sexually promiscuous sins against God. But in the first half of Ezekiel 16:49-50, the prophet Ezekiel says: "Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. ...." In these Scriptures, the prophet Ezekiel said that among the sins committed by Sodom and Gomorrah, it was "overfed". In other words, they ate too much food. In addition to this, Sodom and Gomorrah are said to be "unconcerned." In other words, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah ate too much food and were overfed, so they were unconcerned. This is also their sin. When I think of these words of Ezekiel, I remember the words of Deuteronomy 31:20 and 32:15 that I meditated on at the morning prayer meeting last week: "When I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, the land I promised on oath to their forefathers, and when they eat their fill and thrive, they will turn to other gods and worship them, rejecting me and breaking my covenant" (31:20) and "Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; filled with food, he became heavy and sleek. He abandoned the God who made him and rejected the Rock his Savior." (32:15). Moses knew that when the Israelites entered Canaan, the Promised Land in the future, they would eat and be full, fat, enlarged, and prosperous. In Deuteronomy 8, the Bible describes the land of Canaan as follow: "a good land" (v. 7), a land that the Israelites have no shortages and lack of food (v. 9), and "the good land" (v. 10). Moses feared that when the Israelites eat and are satisfied, build fine houses and settle down, and when their herds and flocks grow large and their silver and gold increase and all they have is multiplied, then their hearts will become proud and you will forget the LORD their God (vv.12-14). That fear was specifically that the Israelites would say to their hearts, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me" (v. 17). In connection with this passage, when we meditate on Proverbs 23:1-8, the craving for delicious food means that we eat like the Israelites and become full, fat, and bloated, and eventually our heart becomes arrogant. In other words, it has to do with the cravings for food and the pride of the heart. Not only do we gain weight when we are greedy for food, and we are full and gain weight, but we also gain weight in our hearts and become arrogant. At that time, our human instinct tries to enjoy carnal security in vain. Regarding such a person, Jesus said in Luke 12:19 – "And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years.

Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”

Another Bible passage about food craving is Philippians 3:19 – “Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.” The Bible says that the god of the wicked man who will be destroyed is “stomach”. In other words, evil people are addicted to coveting and eating food (Torrey). Do you think a person can become addicted to eating? When we say “addicted” we will mainly think of alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling addiction, sex addiction, etc. But nowadays, when it comes to “addiction”, there is also Internet addiction and shopping addiction as well. But is there any food addiction? The Journal of the Canadian Medical Association (CMAJ) (March 9, 2010) said that 'food addiction' is an important part of obesity, the 21st century epidemic that is currently showing the fastest growing trend. The cause of obesity is that the body consumes more calories than it spends. If excessive calorie intake (overeating) is 'compulsive' and cannot be controlled by one's own will, some scholars refer to that condition as 'food addiction (Internet). In the end, I think it's good to say that “Do not crave his delicacies” in Proverbs 23:3, 6 as saying that we should not become addicted to food.

### **Second, whose delicious food is the Bible telling us not to crave?**

In Proverbs 23:3, 6, the Bible tells us not to crave “his” delicacies. Who does “his” refer to here? Look at verse 1: “When you sit to dine with a ruler, note well what is before you.” In fact, the Bible says not to crave the ruler’s delicacies. And here, “a ruler” isn’t just ordinary ruler, but the luxuries of a wealthy ruler (MacArthur). And this lavish rich man is an influential person (MacDonald). When such a person gave a banquet, the Bible is telling us not to crave the delicious food he prepared. By the way, this influential, luxurious and wealthy ruler is “a stingy man” (v. 6). Look at Proverbs 28:22 – “A stingy man is eager to get rich and is unaware that poverty awaits him.” By the way, the opposite of “a stingy man” here is “A generous man”. Look at Proverbs 22:9 – “A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.” The generous shares his food with the poor while the stingy man doesn’t share his abundant foods. The stingy man is a scrooge. This is what Proverbs 23:7 says about this scrooge, the stingy man: “for he is the kind of man who is always thinking about the cost. ‘Eat and drink,’ he says to you, but his heart is not with you.” In other words, the ruler (v. 1) is the one who is always thinking about the cost first. It is hypocritical to pretend that he is generous when he provides food for a banquet even though he is so stingy (Walvoord). His heart is never with us (v. 7). Such a person even abuses the poor in order to gain his own advantage. Also, he treats delicious food and even bribes to the richer people than himself (22:16).

When I think of the stingy man in the Bible, I think of "Nabal," the husband of Abigail, a wise woman, who is the lavish rich man who doesn’t share his abundant food with others. Who is Nabal? Nabal was a man who lived in Carmel in Judah. In 1 Samuel 25:2, he said, he was very wealthy and had 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats. His name “Nabal” means “Fool” (v. 25). In other words, he was a fool even to his wife's eyes. And in the words of his wife

Abigail, Nabal was a “wicked man” (v. 25). Even the servants of Nabal told Abigail about their master: “He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him” (v. 17). Nabal, who couldn’t communicate with other and whose wife and even his servants said he was the wicked man “was harsh and evil in his dealing” (v. 3). So he returned David's good for evil (v. 21). In other words, David was very good to Nabal (v. 15). David's young men were with Nabal's servants day and night to protect them and all of Naba’s flock (vv. 15-16). Therefore, none of theirs was lost (v. 7). However, Nabal was bad and stubborn, and his conduct was wicked. He despised and treated the servants sent by David poorly. When David's servants came to Nabal and told what David said, “... let my young men find favor in your eyes ... Please give whatever you find at hand to your servants and to your son David” (v. 8), this is what Nabal said to them: “Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants today who are each breaking away from his master” (v. 10).

When we eat with a stingy person, we have to think about who is sitting in front of us. Even if he seems to be generous to us, we must not forget who he is. And we shouldn't crave the delicious food he serves.

### **Third and last, why is the Bible telling us not to crave his delicious food?**

Look at Proverbs 23:3 – “Do not crave his delicacies, for that food is deceptive.” The reason why they don't want the ruler's delicious food is because it is a deceitful food. In other words, the reason why we should crave his delicious food is because that food can be a bait to deceive us. Do you think food can be deceiving bait? When I asked this question, I was reminded of the scene of a stingy rich man living luxuriously in a Korean drama dining with a politician. Mainly in such scenes, we see a rich man getting what he wants to get by offering a bribe while serving a meal to a powerful politician. Then the politician has a meal with the rich man in order to get the bribe. In the end, the rich man treats the politician with food and gets what he wants with the bait of money. And both of them are attracted to greed when they see that the politician falls for the bait of the money and meets the demands of the rich man. After all, what is important here isn't the meal that they have together but their motivation when they share the meal together. What would you do if the rich man served you as a meal to gain something from us with impure motives? What would you do if someone bribes you for something he wants to get from you while eating together? Look at 2 Peter 2:13 – “They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you.” What does it mean? The false teacher, who doesn't keep the truth, craves food, and deceives us even at the feast where he sits with us. If we fall for the trick, we will feel unpleasant in our heart to vomit what we ate later when we realize that the trick is for us (Prov. 23:8) (Park). And the word of gratitude to him when he was offered a meal will go back to vain (v. 8). Therefore, we should not crave the false teacher's delicious food. It is clearly deceitful food (v. 2).

Why do so many people fall into the false teacher's ‘deceptive food’? Why do so many people fall into the



bait of the stingy rich man? Can't it be because people are in need? Wouldn't it be easy to fall for the bait of the wicked rich man in a desperate situation where money is desperately needed and there is no money? But even more persuasive than that, the lure of money is bound to be tempting enough if there is greed in our hearts. Especially, as in Proverbs 23:4, if we are wearing ourselves to get rich in our greed, we can fall into the bait of money thrown by the wicked rich man. If we were struggling to get rich, what would we pay attention to? Isn't it riches? (v. 5) This is what the Bible 1 Timothy 6:9-10 says: "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." Those who want to get rich fall into temptations and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires. They will fall into ruin and destruction. Those who love money and covet it are deceived, depart from the faith, and pierce themselves with many grief. That is why the Bible says, "But you, man of God, flee from all this" (v. 11).

In Proverbs 23:4, the Bible says, "Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint." We should not wear ourselves out to get rich. But we should have the wisdom to show restraint. We must abandon our human wisdom that doesn't obey God's word and try to collect wealth in a false way of man (Park). We must have self-restraint wisdom. What is the self-restraint wisdom here? There are two things we can think of:

(1) Self-restraint wisdom is thinking.

We must think about who is in front of us now (v. 1). As we eat together, we have to think about what kind of person is sitting in front of us. In other words, it means to spread your wings of thought and think wisely rather than freely thinking about the other person. We must restraint out thinking. We need to be able to grasp the motives of the other person's heart by listening carefully with discernment and not believing all of the other person's words unconditionally.

(2) Self-restraint wisdom is self-control.

Look at Proverbs 23:2 – "and put a knife to your throat if you are given to gluttony." We must not only abstain from our thoughts, but also from food. Here, self-control of food is self-control of the mind, especially when considering the context. We must not set our hearts on our riches even when it increases (Ps. 62:10). I think that self-control of the heart is to resist the temptation of greed of any kind and to keep our hearts content. If we don't control our hearts in this way, we will fall into the temptation of covetousness and become slaves to covetousness. What must we do to obtain this self-controlled wisdom? Of course, the most important thing is to ask God for wisdom (Jam. 1:5). We must not only seek wisdom, but also ask for "self-control", the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23). In the midst of that, we need to realize a little desperately that the desire for riches is futile. Look at Proverbs 23:5 – "Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle." Therefore, we

must not put our hope in wealth which is so uncertain (1 Tim. 6:17).

If we think that we are overeating and think that it makes us fat, Professor Sang-man Kim says that it belongs to a dangerous habit with our own life as collateral (Internet). There are two reasons, one is 'because overeating threatens blood vessel health' and the other is 'because overeating causes a lot of active oxygen'. 'Because overeating eats more than the energy available to that person, the remaining energy must be accumulated everywhere. It is the fat cells that accumulate. As fat cells increase, they store nutrients that come from keep on eating. However, there is also a limit to the storage of these nutrients by fat cells. When fat cells can no longer store, the nutrients float in the blood vessels and commit various kinds of brutality. This is because fat accumulates in the blood vessels, causing hyperlipidemia, and the accumulation of sugar in the blood vessels weakens the blood vessels, causing intravascular bleeding. So, overeating becomes the source of all the diseases leading the 21st century. ... The food we eat uses oxygen to metabolize energy. However, at this time, oxygen, which inevitably burns unsafely, remains. That is active oxygen. This active oxygen is known to be the main culprit in promoting aging. In addition, it indiscriminately attacks organs in our body, causing chronic diseases. However, when we overeat, we also make a lot of active oxygen in our body. Professor Sang-man Kim emphasizes, 'Preventing overeating can be the most reliable way to prevent aging and keep health.' So how can we prevent overeating? Four lifestyle practices to prevent overeating are to eat slowly, make serotonin secretion well, refrain from foods high in sugars, and don't get spoiled with taste. In order not to overeat, it is also necessary not to eat MSG. That is the secret to ending the temptation of taste and of overeating. Professor Kim said, 'Today, it is like a heaven of salty, sweet, and delicious food all around us. The wisdom of living in this era is to eat as bad as possible, and not to eat unless we are hungry (Internet).

The Bible Proverbs 23:1-8 commands us, "Do not crave his delicacies". We must not covet the delicious food of the stingy, luxurious rich man. The reason is because that food is deceitful. We shouldn't covet his delicious food because that food can be deceiving bait. We should not try too hard to get rich and have the wisdom to restrain ourselves. We must ask God for self-restraint wisdom. So we need to know how to control ourselves. In particular, we must know how to control our hearts. Then we will be able to resist any temptation of covetousness and be content with Jesus alone.

## 4 Lessons

### [Proverbs 23:9-14]

Do you think there are Christians who view faith as a means of profit? I think there are. I looked for the basis in 1 Timothy 6:5 - “and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.” One of the reasons why the quarrels in the church don’t cease is because there are people who think of faith as a means of their individual gain. Then the question we can ask here is, 'Why are there people in the church who think of faith as a means of profit?' The reason is because they have depraved mind and deprived of the truth (v. 5). As a result, they are proud, have unhealthy interests in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people (vv. 4-5). Then why did their mind become deprave and deprive the truth? The reason is because they don’t agree with sound words, those of the Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness (v. 3).

I would like to think about the four lessons of God that the Bible gives us, focusing on the words of Proverbs 23:9-14. I hope and pray that we all humbly receive these four lessons and follow them.

#### **The first lesson is, “Do not speak to a fool.”**

Look at Proverbs 23:9 – “Do not speak to a fool, for he will scorn the wisdom of your words.” As we meditate on the Book of Proverbs, we have learned a lot about “the fool”. Let me give you few examples: The fool speaks carelessly (10:8). In particular, he hurts the other person's heart (18:8) because he carelessly speaks a harsh word in anger (15:1). Nevertheless, the fool doesn’t know how much he hurts the other person's heart with the words poured out of his mouth in his anger. And when he's angry, he only thinks about himself and doesn't care whether the other person is hurting or not. That is why the mouth of the fool brings strife (18:6). And his mouth invites a beating (v. 6). In other words, the mouth of a fool is his ruin (vv. 6-7). Especially the fool tells lies (19:5). Also the fool acts impatiently and rashly with zeal without knowledge (v. 2). And the fool does things and his heart rages against God (v. 3). The fool seeks ill-gotten treasure (10:2) and is lazy (v. 4). Even if the fool knows his fault, he continues to act foolishly without fixing it (14:24). As a result, the fool is bound to suffer in his heart (v. 10). Also, the fool is a selfish person who knows only himself because he has a closed mind. Yet he delights in airing his own opinions with his open mouth (18:2).

The Bible Proverbs 23:9 teaches us not to speak to the the fool. What is the reason? The reason is because the fool will despise our wise words. The fool who mocks at making amends for sin (14:9) doesn’t accept anyone's

reproof (1:25). What can be said to the ears of a proud man, hardened by sin? No matter how wise you speak, he will not only listen to you, but will despise you. The reason he despises you is because his heart is proud. So he will look down on you from his proud heart. What is the reason? The reason is because the fool hates wisdom. Look at Proverbs 1:22 – “How long will you simple ones love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?” Therefore, the Bible Proverbs 9:8 says: “Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you.” We must not rebuke the foolish and arrogant man. The reason is because he will hate us. Rather, we must rebuke the wise. The reason is that he will love us.

### **The second lesson is, ‘Do not go into the fields of the fatherless.’**

Look at Proverbs 23:10 – “Do not move the ancient boundary Or go into the fields of the fatherless.” Here, regarding the phrase “Do not move the ancient boundary”, we have already meditated on the words in Proverbs 22:28, “Do not move an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers.” In Deuteronomy 19:14, the Bible says, “Do not move your neighbor's boundary stone set up by your predecessors in the inheritance you receive in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess.” Here, the phrase “Do not move your neighbor’s boundary stones set up by your predecessors” means not to infringe on others' possessions (Park). The reason is because those who infringe on others' possessions will be cursed by God (Deut. 27:17). Dr. Yoon-sun Park said that it meant not to invade the territories of other countries by interpreting this word more broadly. Why should we not invade the territory of another country? The reason is because God divided the territories of the nations (32:8, 17:26). The reason why one nation should not invade another nation's territory is because it is a rule to respect others' possessions. Respect others' possessions, but especially in the second half of Proverbs 23:10, the Bible says not to go into the fields of the fatherless. That said, respect the possessions of the orphans and don’t invade their fields. What is the reason? The reason is because God, who is “A father to the fatherless” (Ps. 68:5), loves the fatherless and established their territory. Not only God has decided the boundary for the fatherless, but also the boundaries of the widows (Prov. 15:25).

However, if we look at the Old Testament, especially in the days of the prophet Isaiah, some of the Israelites didn’t love the orphans whom God loved, but tormented them. We can know this by looking at Isaiah 1:23 or 10:2 – “Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them” (1:23) and “to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless” (10:2). Can you imagine a bribe-loving judge who not only doesn’t judge the fatherless with truth, but judges them unfairly? Can you also imagine the judge not only deprives the orphan's rights, but also plunders them? How can they plunder the orphan’s fields that aren’t that much? In Psalms 94:6, the Bible says that they even slayed the widows and murdered the fatherless.

However, there is something they don’t know, that is the word of Proverbs 23:11 – “for their Defender is

strong; he will take up their case against you.” Here, “Defender” refers to a person who is responsible for meeting the needs of those who cannot defend themselves (Walvoord). Then, who is the “Defender” the Bible speaks of here? He is God. God is the Defender of the fatherless. In Psalms 68:5, the Bible says, “A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.” God defends the cause of the fatherless (Deut. 10:18). When the lonely orphans trust in the Lord, the Lord helps them (Ps. 10:14). The Lord commands us not to oppress or harm widows and orphans (Jer. 7:6, 22:3; Exod. 22:22; Zech. 7:10), but rather to help them (Deut. 14:29, 24:19-21, 26:12). This is pure godliness in the sight of our Heavenly Father (Jam. 1:27).

### **The third lesson is, ‘Apply your ears to the words of God.’**

Look at Proverbs 23:12 – “Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge.” Here, “instruction” or “words of knowledge” refers to the words of God (Park). Now the Bible is telling us to apply our hearts and our ears to His words. Then, what does it mean to apply our hearts to the word of God? That means to attach our hearts to His words. Since the hearts of God's children are devoted to the words of God, they are close His word all the days of their lives and meditate on them day and night. The Bible is with them and they read it all the days of their lives (Deut. 17:19). And they are committed to keeping and doing all the words and commandments of those words of the Bible (v. 19). As a result, they learn to fear God, and they don't consider themselves better than others and turn from the God's commandments to the right or to the left (v. 20). In this way, we must attach our hearts to the words of God and listen to it. And when we listen to His words, we must listen to them with an attitude to obey. What is the reason? I found the reason in Psalms 116:1-2: “I love the LORD, because He hears My voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live.” Since God is listening to our petitions, we are listening to His words. In particular, when we see the psalmist confessing that he loves God because He listens to his voice and petition, we also confess that we love God because God listens to our prayers. Then what do we do who love God? Look at John 14:21 – “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.” Those who love God keep His commandments. Therefore, because God listens to our prayers, we who profess to love God keep His commandments. Therefore, if we love God, we will listen in an attitude to obey God's word.

### **The fourth and last lesson is, ‘Discipline your child.’**

Look at Proverbs 23:13 – “Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die.” As the parents raise their beloved child, the Bible says “Do not withhold discipline from a child” (v. 13). But for some reason, it seems that many parents these days are trying not to discipline their children. In other words, these days the parents who love their children don't discipline their disobedient children. Does this really mean that the parents love their children in the sight of God? Look at Proverbs 13:24 – “He who withholds his rod hates his

son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.” The Bible says that the parents who truly love their children are faithful in disciplining their children. Of course, disciplinary action here refers to holding a rod. Why is the Bible saying that if parents love their children, they discipline their disobedient child with the rod or whip, even to the point of beating? Look at Proverbs 22:15 – “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.” The reason why we must discipline our children is because we can drive away the foolishness in their lives. Look at Proverbs 29:15 – “The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.” Another reason why we must discipline our children is to give them wisdom. Look at Proverbs 29:17 – “Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.” We must discipline our children because they will give us peace and joy to our hearts. Proverbs 23:14 tells us why we should discipline our children: “Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.” The reason we have to discipline our children whom we love is to save our children from death even by discipline (Walvoord). And it is also to make our children walk on the way of life (10:17).

In Hebrews 12:6-8, the Bible says about Heavenly Father's discipline: “because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.” Because Heavenly Father treats us as sons, He disciplines us when we disobey Him and don't repent of our sins. He disciplines us for our good (v. 10). Here “our good” is that God disciplines us in order to make us share in His holiness (v. 10). Also, He disciplines us so that we may produce “a harvest of righteousness and peace” (v. 11). Therefore, the Bible says: “My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you” (v. 5).

Today we have received 4 lessons based on Proverbs 23:9-14: (1) “Do not speak to a fool,” (2) ‘Do not go into the fields of the fatherless,’ (3) ‘Apply your ears to the words of God’ and (4) ‘Discipline your child.’ Let us commit ourselves in applying these four lessons into action.

## Children who make their parents really happy (1)

### [Proverbs 23:15-23]

Among 304 who died due to the sinking of the Korean passenger ship (Seowol), there was a student named Cha-woong Jung (17 years old). He was a third-grade kendo holder who developed the dream of athleticism. He sacrificed his life by giving his life jacket to his friend and trying to save others at that time of the accident, a day before his birthday. At the time of his funeral, however, the highest price for shroud was more than \$4,000. But his family got him the lowest one that costs only around \$400. The reason was because the family thought that they couldn't use the people's tax money on the expensive shroud. According to a funerals official, because Jung's family ordered the cheap funeral supplies, other two families who lost their kids also ordered the same kind of funeral supplies and joined the Jung's family's wishes' (Internet). When I first got to this article, I was wondering what the Jung's parents' hearts were. I think the parents were proud of their dead children.

The Bible tells us to discipline a child (Prov. 23:13-14). We should discipline our children because we love them. "He who spares the rod hates his son" (13:24). Another reasons why we must discipline our children are to drive out the foolishness from our children's life (22:15), to give wisdom to our children (29:15), to save our children from death (23:14) and to lead them to the way of life (10:17). In doing so, they will give us joy and peace to our hearts (29:17). Therefore, we must discipline our children.

This is what Proverbs 23:15-16 says, "My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad; my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right." If we apply this word to the relationship between the parents and their children, if the children's hearts are wise and their lips are honest (speaking the right things), their parents' hearts will be glad and will be delighted and joyful. Here, we can see who the children who really make their parents happy. And those children whose hearts are wise and who speak right. In other words, the children who really make their parents happy are children who listen to their wise parents, received the lessons of truth from them, and obey them. Apostle John had such joy. Look at 2 John 1:4 – "It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us." Look at 3 John 1:4 – "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." Dr. Park Yoon-sun said: 'The only joy of the one who communicates the truth is that the people live by that truth' (Park). Do we have this joy?

I would like to think about five truths that the children who really please the hearts of their parents based on Proverbs 23:15-23 and want to accept those truths and to live by them. I hope and pray that all of us will first

receive these truths and live according to those truths, so that our children will be filled with grace and the Spirit to live according to those truths as well.

**The first truth is, do not let your heart envy sinner, but always live in the fear of the Lord.**

Look at Proverbs 23:17 – “Do not let your heart envy sinners, But live in the fear of the LORD always.” There are two Korean words that I don’t like to hear personally when I talk to other people. I often see people chatting on the internet and writing those two words when people reply. Those two Korean words are “덕분에”(by your favor) and “부럽습니다” (I envy you). Of course, it would be better to say ‘by your favor’ than ‘because of you’. But somehow, when people say ‘by your favor’, I feel like they are just saying for ‘hello’. That’s why I don’t like it very much. And when people tell me, ‘I envy you’ I don’t know why they envy me. I don’t think we need to envy each other. I think that we can just accept our own situation that the Lord has given to each of us, and be thankful and satisfied. One day, when I was chatting with group of people, one member said to another member: 'If you envy, you lose.'

In Proverbs 23:17, the Bible says, "Do not let your heart envy sinner." But it is very difficult for us not to envy the sinner's prosperity with our hearts, as the Bible says. Especially when we are in need and financially suffering, I think it is impossible to live by this truth without God’s grace. Think about it. If you are trying to believe in Jesus and want to live according to the Word, but there is only painful things. And you see non-believers around you live in in prosperity. Wouldn’t you envy that people? If the righteous are suffering but the sinner continues to prosper, won’t you envy the sinners and their prosperity? I personally remember Psalm 73, when I think that the righteous who are suffering and is jealous of the sinners who are prosperous. The psalmist Asaph saw the prosperity of the wicked and envied the arrogant (v. 3). Here, the prosperity of the wicked is “They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills” (vv. 4-5). They are “always carefree, they increase in wealth” (v. 12). That’s why they are arrogant and their greed knows no limits (vv.6-7). “They scoff, and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression” (v. 8). They even oppose God with their mouths (v. 9). But there are many people who are getting their evil influences (v. 10). Asaph, the righteous man who saw this, was suffering all day long and had been punished every morning unlike the wicked (v. 14). That was why when Asaph saw the prosperity of the wicked, he envied them. To the extent in which he said, “Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence” (v. 13).

In Proverbs 23:17, the Bible says “Do not let your heart envy sinners.” What is the reason? I found the answer in verse 18: “Surely there is a future, And your hope will not be cut off.” Although this verse explains why we should always fear God, I thought in opposite way. In other words, the reason why shouldn’t envy sinners in our



hearts is because the sinners have no future and hope. The psalmist Asaph understood the future of the sinners, “their final destiny”, when he entered the sanctuary of God (Ps. 73:17). What is their final destination? Look at Psalm 73:18-20: “Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies.” This is what David said in Psalm 37:1-2: “Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward wrongdoers. For they will wither quickly like the grass And fade like the green herb.” This is the end of the wicked. They will wither quickly like the grass and fade like the green herb. Their end is destruction. That’s why the Bible commands us not to envy the sinners with our hearts. Rather, the Bible tells us, "But live in the fear of the Lord always" (Prov. 23:17). Why is that? It is because “Surely there is future” for those who always fear God (v. 18). Here, the "future" means the "end." And the end of the believer refers to the afterlife (Park). In other words, the wise Christians who always fear God have hope of the afterlife that is eternal life. What is our hope of the future here? This is what Psalm 73:24 says: “... And afterward receive me to glory.” This is the hope that the Lord will receive us to glory. So the Bible says, "... the righteous has a refuge when he dies" (Prov. 14:32). I hope and pray that with this hope of the future life in the Lord, we always live in fear of God and not envy the sinners in our heart because they have no future or hope.

**The second truth is that you must listen and be wise and direct your heart in the right way.**

Look at Proverbs 23:19 – “Listen, my son, and be wise, And direct your heart in the way.” What does it mean by directing our hearts in the right way? For example, in verse 17, the Bible says, "Do not let your heart envy sinners." Directing our hearts in the right way means we make sure that our heart does not envy the sinners and their prosperity. Then how can we direct our hearts in the right way? The Bible teaches us that we must listen and be wise (v. 19) in order to direct our hearts in the right way. If we meditate on verse 19 with verse 17, the conclusions that we can get is that in order to direct our hearts in the right way we must always fear God and be wise. But if we are foolish, then we will despise wisdom and instruction (1:7). Here, if we despise wisdom and instruction, that means we don’t fear God. And if we don’t fear God, we do evil (8:13). Then we can never direct our hearts in the right way. And if we don’t direct our hearts in the right way, then we will leave our hearts to envy sinners (23:17). Not only that. If we don’t direct our hearts in the right way, then we will live in sin according to our sinful nature. .

What is the sinful instinct of our hearts? Although we can find many passages in the Bible, let me just mention three verses: (1) “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders” (Mt. 15:19), (2) “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, ...” (Gal. 5:19-21), (3) “For men will be lovers of self, lovers of

money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy” (2 Tim. 3:2). Here, one of our sinful natures is love of money. And this is what the Bible 1 Timothy 6:10 says: “For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” Do you know who loved money at the time of Jesus? It was the Pharisees (Lk. 16:14). When Jesus said, “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other You cannot serve God and wealth” (v. 13), the Pharisees scoffed at Jesus (v. 14). The lesson we can learn from here is that even if we are a very religious person in the church and people think that we serve the church very passionately, we can become lovers of money like Pharisees and commit sins against God with our covetous hearts if don’t direct our hearts in the right way by fearing God and be wise.

We all need to listen to the words of our Father God and be wise so that we can direct our hearts in the right way. In order to do that, we must listen to the Father God's words first diligently. Look at Proverbs 4:10-11: “Hear, my son, and accept my sayings And the years of your life will be many. I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths.” Through the Word of God, God teaches us the way of wisdom and of the right way. We must listen to His Word and receive His teachings humbly. In doing so, we can get wisdom. And when we get wisdom, we can fear God and can keep ourselves us from evil way. Also, we must keep the Word of God in our hearts and keep it. Look at Proverbs 4:4 – “Then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live.” Not only we should hear and receive the Word of God, we also should keep it. When we put His Word in our hearts, we can direct our hearts in the right way. And in such right hearts, we will fear God and keep His Word and we can walk in the right way without leaning toward left or right.

### **The third truth is that you shouldn’t be with heavy drinkers of wine or with gluttonous eaters of meat.**

Look at Proverbs 23:20 – “Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat.” We must not associate with immoral people of this world or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, or a reviler, or a drunkard (1 Cor. 5:9-13). Here, the Greek literal meaning of the word “do not associate” (v. 9) is ‘do not mix.’ In other words, the Bible teaches us not to mix with immoral people of this world or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, or a reviler, or a drunkard. Here, Apostle Paul wasn’t talking about unbelievers but believers. What Paul was talking about is that the Corinthian church saints shouldn’t associate with those believers who were continued to commit sins (v. 11) without any repentance. Paul wanted the saints to judge those believers who were having sinful influences to the Corinthian church saints and not associate with them. Actually, Paul told the saints to break the relationship with them. He even told them to remove them from among themselves (v. 13). In other words, Paul told the Corinthian church saints not only to break the spiritual fellowship with those believers but also the table fellowship with them (v. 13). Why is that? The reason is to continue to keep the purity of the Lord’s church.

In Proverbs 23:20, the Bible says, “Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat.” Here, who are those heavy drinkers of wine and gluttonous eaters of meat? They are people who enjoy the life of pleasure (Park). In other words, these are those who live a life of prodigal. Why does the Bible tell us not to associate with those kinds of people? One of the reasons is recorded in Proverbs 20:1 – “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.” Why shouldn’t we associate with those heavy drinkers of wine? The reason is because wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler. We must not associate with those who are heavy drinkers of wine because they have no wisdom. Another reason is written in Proverbs 23:29-30: “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long over wine, Those who go to taste mixed wine.” The reason why we shouldn’t be with heavy drinkers of wine is because there are woe, sorrow, contentions, complaining and wounds to the heavy drinkers of wine. Not only that, the reason why we shouldn’t be with heavy drinkers is because our mind will utter perverse things (v. 33) and we will be without sensation (v. 35) and won’t be able to quick drinking. This is what Proverbs 23:21 says about the reason: “For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe one with rags.” The reason why we shouldn’t be with heavy drinkers is because the drunkards will become poor. Why do drunkards become poor? The reason is because the drunkards will live a life of debauchery (Eph 5:18), will waste their own possessions (Lk. 15:13), and will be lazy and love to sleep (Prov. 23:21). That’s why the Bible keeps on saying ‘Do not get drunk’ (Eph. 5:18; Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 5:11, 6:10).

Then who are those gluttonous eaters of meat? (Prov. 23:20) They are those who eat greedily. What is gluttony? Gluttony is called one of the seven deadly sins. It is characterized by a limitless appetite for food and drink and overindulgence to the point where one is no longer eating just to live, but rather living to eat (Internet). Gluttony is a disorderly way of taking in the food that makes our thinking dull, weakens our control of reason, and declines the man’s dignity. Ultimately, drunkenness and gluttony are over-consumed that make us drowsiness and eventually make us poor (Walvoord). Therefore, the Bible tells us not to associate with those heavy drinkers and gluttonous eaters of meat. We must listen and be wise so that we can direct our hearts in the right way. We must walk on the right way, not the way of debauchery.

**The fourth truth is that you should listen to your father and don’t despise your mother.**

Look at Proverbs 23:22 – “Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.” Are you, the parents, happy when you think about your children? When are you happy because of your children? Aren’t you happy when your children obey you? How would you feel if your children disobeyed your words? What would your heart be like if your children even despise you? Especially mothers, when your children ignore your words and even despise you, how would you feel? The Bible Proverbs 23:15-16 says that children who makes their parents’ glad and rejoice are wise children in heart and speak what is right). These wise children hear

the words of their parents (vv. 19, 22). Even if the words of his parents are reproof, they humbly listen to their parents (25:12). And they get more wisdom and direct their hearts to the right way (23:19). They never let themselves go to the way of debauchery (v. 20). And the wise children don't despise their parents because they are old (v. 22). But the children who despise their parents when they are old are without wisdom (11:12). They are fools. The reason they despise their parents is because they despise the word of God (13:13). Think about it. Although the Bible Ephesians 6:1 says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right", the foolish children despise that word of God so they don't obey their parents. The foolish children who are without wisdom not only don't despise the word of God, but they also despise the wisdom of their parents' words (v23:9) and don't listen to their words. This is not right in God's sight. This is committing sin against God (14:21).

This is what Proverbs 17:25 says: "A foolish son is a grief to his father And bitterness to her who bore him." The foolish children who despise their parents by despising the word of God are the grief to their fathers and bitterness to their mothers. They mock their fathers and hate to obey their parents (30:17). So they depart from the discipline and instruction of their parents (cf.: 1:8, 6:20) and are shameful and disgraceful children (19:26). But wise children make their parents glad (10:1, 15:20). They listen to their parents. The reason is because they respects and honor their parents. God has commanded us to obey and honor our parents in the Lord (Eph. 6:1-2). If we obey this word of God, God will bless us (Deut. 28:2). And we will make our parents glad and happy.

### **The fifth truth is that you should buy truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding and don't sell it.**

Look at Proverbs 23:23 – "Buy truth, and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding." Usually the mind of a business person is to buy things cheaply and sell them more expensive. The reason for doing so is to make profit for the business. However, I think there are at least two kinds of psychology in terms of people buying things. One is to buy something cheaply and the other is to get something that is really worth by making investment. In Proverbs 23:23, the Bible says to buy truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding. Why does the Bible say so? The reason is because the value of truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding is worth it. Look at Proverbs 4:7 – "The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding." What does it mean? It means that since wisdom is the best obtain wisdom at any cost. If we apply this word of Proverbs 4:7 to Proverbs 23:23, the Bible say that we should buy truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding, and don't sell it because truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding are the best. But as we already know, we cannot buy and sell the truth. Truth is to gain. But the truth was given by God in Jesus Christ to us as a gift. Look at Isaiah 55:1 – "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost." The Bible says 'Come, who have no money. Come without money and without cost.' What does it mean? It means that we make the truth our own even without paying anything. The reason is because Jesus already paid the price on our behalf. That's why we have received the truth

for free (Park). We must value this truth that we have received for free. And as the Proverb says, we must consider wisdom the best. So we have to do our best to get that truth and wisdom. We must pray to God in faith to understand the truth and gain more wisdom (cf. Jam. 1:5). And we must meditate the Word of God day and night. I hope and pray that we listen the truth and obey the truth so that we can gain wisdom.

We must become children of God who truly please our Father God. In order to do so, we must become God's wise children (Prov. 23:15-16). And the wise children of God hear the five truths and obey them. Those five truths are: (1) The first truth is, do not let your heart envy sinner, but always live in the fear of the Lord (v. 17). (2) The second truth is that you must listen and be wise and direct your heart in the right way (v. 19). (3) The third truth is that you shouldn't be with heavy drinkers of wine or with gluttonous eaters of meat (v. 20). (4) The fourth truth is that you should listen to your father and don't despise your mother (v. 22). (5) The fifth truth is that you should buy truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding and don't sell it (v 23). I hope and pray that we may obey these five truths so that we can truly please God.

## **“Do not let your heart envy sinners”**

**“Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD” (Proverbs 23:17).**

I try to ask myself the question, “Who or what am I really envious of?” Am I envious of the pastors who are pastors in large churches or am I envious of churches with a large number of members? I also ask the question, 'Am I not comparing with a pastor and his church?' The reason is because some of the causes we envy are comparing. Who or what do you really envy? I think we can envy financial riches, the rich who enjoy it, and those who have what we don't have and their circumstances. This will be true for children as well as for adults. You don't have yourself, but if your friends have something, you can be envious them. However, the situation that is difficult for us to understand and accept is that the righteous who believe in Jesus suffer while the wicked prosper. When we see the prosperity of the wicked in this way, we who believe in Jesus will have enough questions. If God lives, we will be able to ask questions about how come God doesn't judge the wicked and allow them to prosper. The Bible has a clear answer to this question. It is a command to “Do not let your heart envy sinners” (Prov. 23:17).

Why does the Bible command us not to let our hearts envy sinners and their prosperity? The reason is because there is no future hope for sinners and evildoers, and their lamps will be snuffed out (24:20). Therefore, the Bible commanded us not to fret and be envious of the wicked (v. 19). We don't need to envy the prosperity of the wicked because their end is destruction (Ps. 73:17-20). Rather, the Bible commands us to fear God (Prov. 23:17). The reason is because those who fear God have a future and their hopes will not be cut off. We must hear this. We should listen to this and gain wisdom. So we must let that wisdom lead our hearts to the right path (v. 19). Therefore, we should not turn to the right or to the left, but walk the path of the right path that the Lord walked. Let's not be envious of the prosperity of the wicked.

## **Children who make their parents really happy (2)**

### **[Proverbs 23:24-35]**

During last Wednesday prayer meeting, we meditated on Proverbs 23:15-23 under the title “Children who make their parents really happy”. The reason I chose that title is because of verses 15-16: “My son, if your heart is wise, My own heart also will be glad; And my inmost being will rejoice When your lips speak what is right. Looking at this, the Bible says that if our children's hearts are wise and their lips speak what is right, then the parents' hearts will be glad and their inmost being will rejoice. Here, we can see who are the children who really please their parents’ hearts. Those children are the children with wise hearts. And their lips speak what is right. In short, the children who make their parents really happy are the children who listen to the teachings of truth received from their wise parents and obey them.

If we look at Proverbs 23:25, the Bible says the similar word: “Let your father and your mother be glad, And let her rejoice who gave birth to you.” The Bible again tells us to make our parents to be glad and the mother who gave birth to you to rejoice. In other words, what God is commanding us to make our parents happy. How can we make our parents happy? I found the answer in verse 24: “The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him.” In order for us to make our parents happy, we must be “wise children” and “righteous”. Furthermore, in order for us to make our Heavenly Father happy, we must live righteous lives as children of God who have been justified by believing in Jesus and live wisely with the wisdom God has given us. Then, how can we live wisely as righteous Christians? Look at verse 26: “My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways.” In order for us to live wisely in this world as those who believe in Jesus and have been justified, we must offer our hearts to Heavenly Father and look to the path of the Lord and walk that path. Then, we must offer our hearts to God, look at the path that He shows us, and walk that path. What is the Lord's path? In Proverbs 23:24-35, the Bible tells us not to look at the two ways, give no heart, and don’t walk those two ways. What are those two ways?

### **The first way is a way of a prostitute.**

Look at Proverbs 23:27 – “for a prostitute is a deep pit and a wayward wife is a narrow well.” As we have been meditating on the Book of Proverbs, the Bible has warned and exhorted us again and again about the adulteress. Among them is Proverbs 2:16 – “It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words.” The Bible says that wisdom protects and rescues us from the adulteress. Here, the adulteress

flatters with her seductive words (v. 16). Proverbs 5:3-4 says, “For the lips of an adulteress drip honey And smoother than oil is her speech; But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword.” What a terrifying temptation is this? It is a terrifying temptation that can take away our lives and faith. When I meditate on these words, I think of the words from Proverbs 7:6. A foolish young man without wisdom goes into an adulteress’ street at night and is heading toward her house. The cunning woman dressed in a prostitute grabbed the young man, kissed him, and told the young man with a shameless face: “I was due to offer peace offerings; Today I have paid my vows. Therefore I have come out to meet you, To seek your presence earnestly, and I have found you. I have spread my couch with coverings, With colored linens of Egypt. I have sprinkled my bed With myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with caresses. For my husband is not at home, He has gone on a long journey; He has taken a bag of money with him, At the full moon he will come home.” This lustful woman seduced the young man with a lot of fine words and lured him with words on her lips, and the young man immediately followed her. The Bible says, “Suddenly he follows her As an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as one in fetters to the discipline of a fool” (v. 22). How can you resist and overcome these temptations of the adulteress like Joseph? Look at Proverbs 7:1-5: “My son, keep my words And treasure my commandments within you. Keep my commandments and live, And my teaching as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,” And call understanding your intimate friend; That they may keep you from an adulteress, From the foreigner who flatters with her words.” Only with the wisdom that God gives us can we avoid falling into the temptation of the adulteress flatters with seductive words to us. Only wisdom can protect and deliver us from her. Also, the adulteress has no chastity. Look at Proverbs 2:17 – “That leaves the companion of her youth And forgets the covenant of her God.” The adulteress is the one who has forsaken her marriage partner, her husband, and destroyed the marriage covenant made before God (Gen. 2:24). In a word, the adulteress has no chastity. The adulteress is the one who abandons her purity by sleeping with this man and that man. The house of the adulteress sinks down to death and her tracks lead to the dead (Prov. 2:18). What does it mean? If we follow the adulteress, we will be destroyed in the end (v. 19). How, then, does wisdom protect and deliver us from the adulteress? God's wisdom protects us and rescues us because it prevents us from participating in the path of the adulteress (v. 12). The adulteress constantly seduces us because she wants us to leave the right path and walk the crooked and the evil path. And her temptations seem good, can be pleasing to the eye and desirable to make us wise. But wisdom makes us see the way of the adulteress with our spiritual eyes. As a result, wisdom makes us know that the way of the adulteress is the way of destruction, and not only keeps us from participating in her way, but also not with her at all. The Bible Proverbs 23:27 says, “for a prostitute is a deep pit and a wayward wife is a narrow well.” What does it mean? To fall into her temptation is like falling into a deep pit and a narrow trap that we cannot escape. Already Proverbs 22:14 said “The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit.” In other words, she digs the deep trap and lies in wait like a bandit (23:28), and sees one of the fool without wisdom (“A young man lacking sense”) (7:7) to seduce him. The adulteress seduces only one man and causes him to fall into the deep trap, not only to sin against God, but also to multiply the unfaithful among men



(23:28). What does it mean? She seduces many people, especially many married men, making them unfaithful. Therefore, it not only makes them unfaithful to their wives but also to God. Isn't this happening these days? How many women come to men to seduce sex as bait and later use it as an excuse to get money? If we look at Proverbs 7:21, the Bible says that the adulteress entices him with her many persuasions and seduces him with her flattering lips. When he falls into her seduction, then an arrow will pierce through his liver (v. 23). In other words, he will lose his life (v. 23). The Bible says that her house is "the way to Sheol" and "the chambers of death" (v. 27).

What must we do? We must not look at the path of the adulteress, must not give our hearts to her and must not walk to her path. In order to do that, we must listen to the words of Proverbs 7:1-4: "My son, keep my words And treasure my commandments within you. Keep my commandments and live, And my teaching as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," And call understanding your intimate friend." We keep the word of God (commandment) in our hearts by obeying it. We must engrave the word of God on the plate of our hearts. We must become wise Christians. When we do so, what is the result? Look at Proverbs 7:5 – "That they may keep you from an adulteress, From the foreigner who flatters with her words." This is what Proverbs 7:24-25 says: "Now therefore, my sons, listen to me, And pay attention to the words of my mouth. Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her paths." In order for us not to look at the path of the adulteress at all and not to walk to her path without giving our hearts to her, we must pay attention to and listen carefully to Heavenly Father's words. We must listen to the word of God and do not abandon it (5:7). Then we will not be deceived by her way. Look at Proverbs 5:8 – "Keep your way far from her And do not go near the door of her house." This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: 'Since sexual temptation is attractive, we can overcome only by avoiding it' (Park). One of those representative figures, I think is Joseph. Potiphar's wife took notice of Joseph (Gen. 39:7), who was well-built and handsome (v. 6) and asked him to come to bed with her (v. 7) day after day (v. 10). But Joseph refused to sleep with her because he feared God, or even be with her (v. 10). But one day, when there were only Joseph and Potiphar's wife at the Potiphar's house (v. 11), the Potiphar's wife caught Joseph by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" (v. 12) But Joseph left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house (v. 12). Therefore, even though Joseph was accused of wrongdoing and imprisoned, he was able to resist her temptation. However, many of young Christians these days cannot resist sexual temptation like Joseph, fall into temptation, sin against God, and live in prison of their hearts. They are bound by the chains of sexual sin and are living in sexual slavery. Unlike Joseph, if the Bible tells us to select someone who has been tempted by a woman, we can say "Samson" besides David. Not only did he see one of the Philistine daughters at Timna, and made him a wife (Judges 14), but at Gaza he saw a prostitute and went in to spend the night with her (16:1). Also, because he loved a woman named Delilah of the Valley of Sorek (v. 4), he fell for her and is caught by the Philistines, and eventually died with the Philistines.

What should we do? We must stay away from things that tempt us sexually. It is foolish to try to overcome sexual temptation by getting close to them. I remember hearing the story I heard a long time ago that a

pastor who worked as a prostitute eventually committed a sexual sin. I also remember hearing a female missionary who is interested in working with the prostitutes in the mission field. I don't think it's easy. I think it will be a tremendous challenge. The apostle Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:22, "Flee the evil desires of youth." And he said in 1 Corinthians 6:18, "Flee from sexual immorality..." We must flee from sexual immorality and lust. We shouldn't even go to the door of the prostitute's house at all. We must stay away from the prostitute. We must stay close to the word of God, but stay away from the words of prostitutes. And we must stay away from the prostitute by staying close to God.

### **The second way is a way of those who linger over wine.**

Look at Proverbs 23:30 – "Those who linger long over wine, Those who go to taste mixed wine." As we have meditated on the Book of Proverbs so far, the Proverbs writer has repeatedly warned and exhorted us about alcohol. Among those words is Proverbs 23:20-21. We were taught that children who make their parents really happy don't associate with the "heavy drinkers of wine" and "with gluttonous eaters of meat" (v. 20). The Bible instructs us not to associate with those who love pleasure or those who live a prodigal life. Why does the Bible tell us not to associate with the "heavy drinkers of wine"? Proverbs 23:21 says the reason for this: "For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe one with rags." The reason why the Bible tells us not to associate with the heavy drinkers of wine is because they will become poor. Why do they become poor? The reason for this is because the heavy drinkers will not only waste their possessions while living in debauchery (Lk. 15:13; Eph. 5:18), but also they are lazy and like to sleep (Prov. 23:21). Also, looking at Proverbs 20:1, the Bible says, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, ..." If we translate this in Hebrew, it says 'Wine is to make you haughty, and strong drink is to make you fight ....' Here the Bible teaches us two things about the negative effects of wine and the strong drink on us. It is none other than that wine and the strong drink make us haughty and fight. Do you think alcohol makes people arrogant? Have you ever seen a drunken person pretending to be selfish and despising others? When I thought of this, I remembered the feast of King Ahasuerus in Esther 1. In the third year of his throne, the Bible records that the feast was held for all his nobles and officials and military leaders, the princes, and the nobles of the provinces (v. 3) for a full 180 days. King Ahasuerus displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and glory of his majesty (v. 4). Then the king gave a banquet, lasting 7 days (v. 5) and let each guest to drink in his own way (v. 8) in goblets of gold, each one different from the other because the royal wine was abundant (v. 7). The king instructed all the wine stewards to serve each man what he wished (v. 8). Then, on the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded seven of his eunuchs to bring the queen Vashti to him in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles (vv. 10-11). But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command and the king became very angry and his wrath burned within him (v. 12) and eventually abolished the queen. In the end, didn't King Ahasuerus try to boast of his beautiful wife, but became angry and divorced her because she didn't listen to him? When a person becomes drunken like this, Satan will take away his understanding (Hos. 4:11), showing off his pride and arrogance, not only showing off himself, but

also revealing his anger (Ref.: Isa. 16:6). That is why quarrels and fights even arise in the drinking seat (Prov. 20:1). So King Solomon said in Proverbs 22:10 – “Drive out the scoffer, and contention will go out, Even strife and dishonor will cease.” In fact, quarrels or fights stop when we drive out the scoffer out of the drinking seat. In Proverbs 20:1, if we say in one word about the negative effects of wine and strong drink on us, it leads us astray. Wine and strong drink leads us to the foolish path. Not only does it cause us to show anger right away (12:16), causing contention (20:3), but also causing us to mock at sin (14:9). After all, wine and strong drink make us show our own foolishness.

If we look at Proverbs 23:29, the Bible says: “Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?” The reason why we shouldn't get drunk is because there are “woe”, “sorrow”, “contentions”, “complaining” and “wounds” for the drunkards. How unfortunate is this? Not only this, but the reason we shouldn't get drunk is that once a person likes alcohol to some extent, it is difficult to quit it (vv. 31-35). Dr. Yoon-sun Park has four reasons for this (Park):

- (1) The reason why we shouldn't get drunk is because alcohol contains things like snake poison, and its shape has a tempting property.

Look at Proverbs 23:31-32: “Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it goes down smoothly; At the last it bites like a serpent And stings like a viper.” To say that if we get drunk we will be bitten by a poisonous snake, it means that the consequences of drunkenness are fatal to us. That's why the Proverbs writer is telling us not to look on wine at all.

- (2) The reason why you shouldn't get drunk is because when we are drunk, we become obscene and vain.

Look at Proverbs 23:33 – “Your eyes will see strange things And your mind will utter perverse things.” Here, the word “strange things” refers to a prostitute. What does it mean? To say that when we get drunk, we see the prostitute means to have a lewd heart. Also, when we say “perverse things”, it means that the drunkard becomes vain.

- (3) The reason we shouldn't get drunk is because we don't feel dangerous.

Look at Proverbs 23:34-35: “And you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, Or like one who lies down on the top of a mast. They struck me, but I did not become ill; They beat me, but I did not know it ....” If we are drunk, then we don't know that we are in danger. That's why we don't know that we drive into an accident, which could lead to the loss of our lives or someone else's life.

(4) The reason we shouldn't get drunk is because we are stuck with drinking and we can't quit it.

Look at Proverbs 23:35b – "... When shall I awake? I will seek another drink." Why do we drink a lot of alcohol and then go back to drinking the next day after waking up? Isn't it because we are addict to alcohol?

In order for us to really please our Heavenly Father, we must live righteous lives as God's children. We must live wisely with the wisdom God has given us. In Proverbs 23:24-35, we learned how to live wisely as the righteous children of God. We must offer our hearts to our Heavenly Father, look at the way of the Lord and walk that way. However, in looking at the way of the Lord and walking that way, the Bible tells us not to look at the two ways at all, not to give our hearts, and not to walk on those ways. Those two ways are the way of the prostitute and the way of those who linger over wine. I hope and pray that all of us will not look at these two ways, but will only walk on the way of the Lord, so that we will become the children of God who really please our Heavenly Father.

## **“A wise man is strong”**

### **[Proverbs 24:1-9]**

Have you ever heard of the Jewish standard of life, the "Talmud"? “The Talmud” is a compilation of Jewish laws, traditional customs, festivals, private transmissions, and commentary aft the Old Testament was written and it has been the spiritual support of the Jews. This includes not only the religious life of Jews, but also legal regulations and case law, and is said to be a valuable resource for knowing not only the lifestyle of the Jewish people at the time, but also the relationship with Christianity (Internet). I learned two interesting things about this Talmud. First, Jews say that the Talmud is often compared to the great sea. The reason is because the sea is huge and everything is there, but you can’t know for sure what’s there. Second, it is said that the first and last chapters of the Talmud are blank. According to a pastor who studied the Talmud, the reason is because the Talmud is a book that is always read for a lifetime, day or night, not a book that has a beginning and an end. And it is said that it is because they believe that anyone can study and record it at the same time (Internet). It is said that this Jewish Talmud says four things about wisdom: (1) Wisdom is God Himself, (2) Wisdom is the foundation of wisdom to know God, (3) Wisdom is the most important way to enter into fellowship with God, and (4) We can imitate the Lord through wisdom (Internet).

If we look at Proverbs 24:5, the Bible says, “A wise man is strong, And a man of knowledge increases power.” Focusing on this verse, I would like to receive a lesson from God by meditating on three things under the heading “A wise man is strong.”

### **First, the wise man doesn’t envy the prosperity of the wicked.**

Look at Proverbs 24:1 – “Do not envy wicked men, do not desire their company.” We have already learned in Proverbs 23:17 that the children who really please Heavenly Father don’t envy the sinner's prosperity in their hearts. The reason is because we know that sinners have no future or hope (v. 18). Rather, the children who really please Heavenly Father fear God (v. 17). Those who fear God in this way are the wise children of God.

The wise children of God know how to view the prosperity of the wicked. They know that as Psalms 92:7 says, “though the wicked spring up like grass and all evildoers flourish, they will be forever destroyed.” There are three things we need to point out in this word: (1) As we see in real life, the wicked rise up and rise quickly. The psalmist compared the wicked to the grass and said that they “spring up”, which means they succeed quickly in

cunning without labor. (2) The prosperity of the wicked may seem like the lushness of wild grass, but the important thing is that there is no fruit. In other words, the wicked aren't bearing any fruit in the sight of God in their prosperity. The Bible describes the prosperity of the wicked as fruitless grass. (3) The quick prosperity of the wicked is that they will eventually perish forever. For example, just as pigs are fed well to gain weight to lead to a slaughterhouse, the purpose of the wicked's prosperity is for eternal destruction. Regarding the prosperity of the wicked, Pastor D. L. Moody said: 'The wicked will grow like grass eventually to be fuel.' In fact, as Psalms 73:17-20 says, the end of the wicked prospering in this world is ruin, destruction, annihilation, and contempt.

If we look at Proverbs 24:1, the Bible doesn't just tell us not to be envious of the prosperity of the wicked, but it also tells us not to be with the wicked at all. What's the reason? Look at Proverbs 24:2 – "for their hearts plot violence, and their lips talk about making trouble." The reason is because the wicked's hearts plot violence, which means that their hearts study destruction (Internet). The wicked who study destruction with their hearts like this are "the schemers" who (always) plot evil (v. 8). Regarding these people, the Bible says that they are "folly" and "mockers" (v. 9). And their thoughts are "sin" and they are hated by people. Not only that, since the lips of the wicked speak of calamity, we should not be envious of their prosperity and should not desire their company. The Bible says that the violence of the wicked will drag them away (21:7). Also, the Bible says that "Misfortune pursues the sinner" (13:21). "He who sows wickedness reaps trouble" (22:8). Therefore, we should not envy wicked men and should not desire their company. May God give us wisdom so that we don't envy the prosperity of the wicked.

### **Second, the wise man builds up his house firmly.**

Look at Proverbs 24:3 – "By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established." In May 2008, I received three prayer topics while meditating on the word of God 1 Chronicles 17:16-27 under the heading "Lord, may You build our home!": (1) 'Lord, let my family be ruled by the grace of God!' (v. 16), (2) 'Lord, let the word of God become authority in my family!' (v. 23), and (3) 'Lord, let my family experience God's presence through prayer!' (v. 25) When we think about these prayer topics again, I want to reconsider whether our homes are ruled by God's grace, God's word is the authority in our families and our families experience God's presence through prayer or not. If we look at Proverbs 14:1, which we have already meditated on, the Bible says: "The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down." Looking at this word, the foolish woman who despises God does only what is good for her ["he whose ways are devious" (v. 2)], is proud (v. 3) and is mocker (v. 6) and has no knowledge because she doesn't listen to God's word (v. 7). Therefore, the foolish woman deceives herself (v. 8) and mocks at sin (v. 9). She doesn't listen to God because she thinks there is no God. And she doesn't know the truth because she doesn't listen to God. And because she doesn't know the truth, she does evil. And she still doesn't consider her sins to be sinful. She has lost the ability to do so. Rather, the foolish woman who doesn't know her truth and loses her ability to regard her sin as a sin finds pleasure in evil conduct (10:23). Therefore, the foolish woman is hardened by sin and isn't afraid to sin against God. Although God certainly takes

sin seriously, the foolish woman takes it lightly. This foolish woman eventually opens her own house with her own hands (14:1). But a wise woman builds her house (v. 1). How does she build her own house? The wise woman walks in her uprightness as she fears God (v. 2). There is knowledge on her lips (v. 7) and she is diligent (v. 4). And she understands her way (v. 8). She knows God's will for her and lives according to His will. In other words, the wise woman knows exactly what she will do that is in accordance with God's will, and she does it (1 Cor. 7:17). One of the will of God is to build her own house and also to build His church, which is the house of God. The wise woman knows the will of this Lord and is faithful to Him, strives diligently to fulfill His will. Through this wise woman, the Lord builds His house.

In Proverbs 24:3, the Bible says “By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established.” What does it mean? It means that a house is built solidly because she fears God. So she keeps away from evil and obeys the word of God. Jesus said in Matthews 7:24, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.” As a wise builder builds a house, he puts its foundation on the rock (v. 25). Here, when we think of “the rock”, doesn't the concept ‘reliable, strong or solid’ comes to mind? And in fact, the figurative meaning of “rock” that Jesus refers to is “firmness” or “stability”. That is why Jesus said to the apostle Peter in Matthew 16:18, “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.” This word means that the church is the church of Jesus, and the main spiritual foundation of the church is Jesus, who is the Rock. The wise man will set the main foundation of his house on the Rock Jesus. What is the result? Look at Proverbs 24:4 – “through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.” What does it mean? Does this really mean that when you build your house firmly on Jesus, who is the Rock with wisdom, that house will be blessed with abundant material things? This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: And “through knowledge its room is filled” doesn't mean that material becomes abundant. The Proverbs writer doesn't believe that the blessings of man's wisdom (the fear of God) are in rich wealth. ... This word is parable, and shows true believers that there will be many treasures in heaven (Internet). Would the wise try to store treasures on earth or in heaven? Isn't it in heaven? The fool man stores treasures on earth. But the wise man stores treasures in heaven. The wise man who builds a house on the foundation of Jesus, who is the rock of wisdom in this way, not only has many treasures in heaven, but also enjoys the happiness that the Lord gives by building a beautiful family that obeys the word of the Lord while living on this earth. In the end, each of our houses or the church, that is God's house, that the Lord builds are built up firmly with the wisdom that God gives. So it will be built into the beautiful home and church that are filled with precious and beautiful treasures and enjoy the happiness that God gives. I hope and pray that we all enjoy the precious and beautiful treasures that God gives us by building our homes and His church up with the wisdom of God.

### **Third, the wise man wage war by wise guidance.**

Look at Proverbs 24:6 – “For by wise guidance you will wage war, And in abundance of counselors there is

victory.” As we meditate on the Book of Proverbs, we have already learned that the Bible taught the lesson that the secret to victory is guidance. Look at Proverbs 20:18 – “Prepare plans by consultation, And make war by wise guidance.” Also, look at Proverbs 11:14 – “Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory.” To sum up the point of these words, the secret to victory in war is a lot of guidance. When we think of it, we might think that in order to win the war, we must have a lot of weapons. But the Bible says that we must have a lot of guidance. What is the reason? I found the answer in Ecclesiastes 9:18 – “Wisdom is better than weapons of war, ....” Therefore, the wise person fights with guidance and wins the war.

We must not forget that Satan engages in spiritual warfare with his own strategy. Pastor John MacArthur said this: ‘It is Satan's main strategy to deny, pollute, and confuse the truth by spreading as many lies as possible’ (MacArthur). Now our thoughts are much polluted with lies that are non-gospel and untruthful. We don’t distinguish between the truth and a lie under the trend of mutual respect. Now, many of us are confused and lead a syncretistic life of faith. We had already meditated on Satan’s strategy in the Bible. Let me just mention two: (1) This is Satan's strategy in Exodus 14:3. Satan's strategy is to get us to wander and live without a goal and to put us on the corner. (2) This is Satan's strategy in Acts 21:27-36. (a) The strategy of Satan is, first, “stir up” (v. 27). It is not a claim based on facts, but in the midst of speculation, he makes a claim about the people he hates and dislikes. (b) Also, the strategy of Satan is ‘provocation’ (v. 30). Satan stirs up people and causes provocation even in the church. (c) Satan's strategy is ‘rumor’ (v. 31). Satan spreads malicious rumors even within the church. (d) Satan's strategy is “violence” (v. 35). The reason we need to grasp this Satan's strategy is that in spiritual warfare, we must grasp the strategy of our enemy so that we can set the strategy right and fight and win.

As we build the strategy, we must know (believe) that “victory belongs to the Lord” (Prov. 21:31). And we must pray to God. How should we pray? We must pray like David. When David was chased by Absalom, a man told David that Ahithophel was among those who rebelled with Absalom. So he prayed to God: “... O LORD, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness” (2 Sam. 15:31). Here, Ahithophel was King David's counselor. But when David's son Absalom betrayed King David, Ahithophel abandoned King David and chose Absalom. So he was among those who rebelled with Absalom (15:31). The advice he gave was “as if one inquired of the word of God” (16:23). When Absalom told Ahithophel “Give your advice. What shall we do?” (v. 20), Ahithophel gave him two good advices. The first advice Ahithophel gave Absalom was to go in to his father King David's concubines (v. 21). The reason for this was that “then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself odious to your father. The hands of all who are with you will also be strengthened” (v. 21). Ahithophel's second advice to Absalom was that if Absalom gave him 12,000 troops, he would pursue David that night, and when David was exhausted and tired, he would ambush him and kill only David, and all the people with David would return to Absalom (17:1-3). What a good advice is this? After hearing this second advice, Absalom and the elders of Israel both were pleased with the Ahithophel's advice (v. 4). Nevertheless, Absalom also wanted to hear an advice of the another wise man, Hushai the Archite (v. 5). Here Hushai the Archite was King David's friend (1 Chron. 27:33).



He didn't go with David according to David's command (v. 33). Instead he returned to Jerusalem, where Absalom, the rebellious, lived (v. 34). The purpose was to thwart the counsel of Ahithophel according to what David prayed [(2 Sam. 15:31), "O LORD, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness"] (v. 34). Unlike Ahithophel's counsel (he and 12,000 troops pursuing David), Hushai counseled that "all Israel be surely gathered to you, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea in abundance, and that you personally go into battle" (17:11). In addition, Hushai's strategy was that, unlike Ahithophel's strategy (killing only David), Absalom to one of the places where David can be found and attacked him and killed not only David but also David's army without leaving a single person (v. 12). And if David withdrew into a city, Hushai told Absalom that he had to destroy that city as well (v. 13). Absalom and all the Israelites who heard Hushai's counsel thought that Hushai's counsel was better than Ahithophel's (v. 14). But was Hushai's counsel actually better than Ahithophel's? I don't think so. Ahithophel's counsel was much better than Hushai's counsel, "as if one inquired of the word of God" (16:23). If Absalom didn't choose Hushai's counsel, but chose Ahithophel's counsel, and gave him 12,000 troops to Ahithophel in order to pursue David that night, Absalom would not have been killed, but David would have been killed. And if only David had been killed as Ahithophel said, all the Israelites who followed David would have returned to Absalom. But why did Absalom abandon this good Ahithophel's counsel and choose Hushai's counsel? The reason was that God heard David's prayer (15:31) and decided to thwart the good counsel of Ahithophel "so that the Lord might bring calamity on Absalom" (17:14). Therefore, like David, we must fight with many counsels (or advices or guidance) in spiritual warfare. We must pray to God to defeat Satan's strategies.

Those who are wise are strong. Those who are wise have power. May God give us all wisdom and raise us up as strong and powerful soldiers of Jesus Christ. Therefore, I hope and pray that all of us will not be envious of the prosperity of the wicked, and that we will be able to build up our houses and the house of God, the church. Also, I hope and pray that all of us become wise and win the spiritual battle with guidance and strategy. Victory!

## Things we need to do

### [Proverbs 24:10-20]

There was a little boy sitting next to Missionary Yoo last week Wednesday night prayer meeting. The kid is the grandson of Missionary Yoo's couple. I think Missionary Yoo went home and read the Bible for her grandson and prayed before the child fell asleep and asked him what he remembered during the prayer meeting. Then the child said, 'Wisdom is better than weapons.' Haha. That is the first half of Ecclesiastes 9:18 that we meditated on: "Wisdom is better than weapons of war." Do you remember any of the words of Proverbs 24:1-9 that we meditated on during the Wednesday prayer meeting last week? I don't think it's easy for all of us. So I'm going to review the lessons that we have already received over the past two weeks, focusing on the words of Proverbs 24:1-9, in three ways how the wise do things: (1) The wise man doesn't envy the prosperity of the wicked (v. 1). (2) The wise man builds up his house firmly (v. 3). (3) The wise man wage war by wise guidance (v. 6).

I would like to receive 6 lessons about what we should do with the wisdom that God gives, based on the words of Proverbs 24:10-20. As we receive these six lessons, I hope and pray that God the Holy Spirit will give each of us enlightenment and give us grace to practice.

#### **First, we should not be discouraged when faced with difficulties.**

Look at Proverbs 24:10 – "If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength!" Living in this world can lead to discouragement when we face difficulties. In particular, when the difficulties are so difficult and overwhelming that we alone can't handle it, then we ask for help around us. But when we don't receive any help, then we can be discouraged. At that time, we realize that the only one to rely on is the Lord. So we go to the Lord and ask Him for help. However, no matter how much we pray, we can become more discouraged when we seem to have no answer from the Lord (Lk. 18:1). When we are discouraged like this, our strength will weaken a lot, and we may become exhausted and desperate.

In 1 Samuel 17:32 we can see David the shepherd telling King Saul: "... Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." Here, "this" Philistine refers to "Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath" (v. 23). When the Israelites saw Goliath, they all ran from him in great fear (v. 24). So David said, "'Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine" and that he would go and fight Goliath (v. 32). What do you think of the David's word? If we had been there, could we listen to David and not be discouraged anymore by

Goliath? When all the people around us saw Goliath and were terribly afraid and fled before him, can we not be afraid and not run away and not be discouraged? But how did David not get discouraged when he saw Goliath, but rather told King Saul that he would go out and fight him? See King Saul's reaction to the David's word: "...You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth" (v. 33). If we think in common sense, the fight between Goliath, the fighting man from his youth, and David, a boy, is a fight that cannot be compared. And it's our human nature not try to fight at all that we can't win that opponent Goliath. The reason is because we know that we are going to lose the fight. So we can be discouraged for sure. But how did David try to fight Goliath without being discouraged or afraid? I looked for the answer in the first half of verse 37: "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine. ...." David believed in the God of salvation. He believed that God would deliver him from Goliath's hand. Because David had this assurance of salvation, he was not only not afraid but also not discouraged.

The apostle Paul says in Galatians 6:9 – "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary." As we do good, we can get discouraged due to difficulties and hardships. But we should not be discouraged and should not give up doing good. Rather, like the psalmist, we must ask God, proclaiming this to our own souls (Ps. 42:5, 11; 43:5): "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him For the help of His presence." And, like David, the boy who fought Goliath and won, we must rely and trust in the Lord completely. Therefore, we must not be discouraged, but rather boldly overcome difficulties in faith. May we all move forward with boldness and confidence by faith in the Lord in the Lord (Eph. 3:12).

## **Second, we must rescue those being led away to death.**

Look at Proverbs 24:11 – "Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter." I think you have already heard it through the news. On April 15 this year, an Islamic extremist militant group Boko Haram kidnapped 276 female students in Chibok City, Borno State, in northeastern Nigeria. Since then, dozens of people have escaped, and it is said that about 219 are still being held. But, as far as I know, the Nigerian government has not been able to rescue those 219 girls yet. But when I read an internet newspaper last week (July 9th), it is said that 'there will be good news soon', the Nigerian authorities said. A man named Godwill Akfabio, chairman of the Nigerian National Committee, made up of a former president, governor, and parliamentary leader, told reporters, 'I was satisfied with the police knowing where the girls are.' He said that the key is how to safely rescue the girls (Internet). In addition to this, there are many people in this world who are unjustly kidnapped by evil people and are in prison. One example is the sex slaves of little girls and boys all over the world now. According to the Australian branch of International Justice Mission Australia in Sydney, Australia, the ministry began in 2006 to prevent young girls and boys from being sold as sex slaves in Cebu, Philippines. As a result, the

mission helped the Philippine government, police and prosecutors to rescue children who were sold as sex slaves. Through five years of ministry, 220 children who were sold as sex slaves were rescued, and more than 90 adults who exploited children were arrested (Internet). Another example is people who are unfairly accused of being jailed in the United States. According to the US media on May 21, 2012, the Michigan Law School and Northwestern Law School analyzed court data and found that more than 2,000 cases were found belatedly innocent while serving in prison after being convicted (Internet). There are many unfair people in this world. How many people have died as well as those who are about to die unjustly.

In Proverbs 24:11, the Bible is telling us not to hesitate to rescue those who are about to die unjustly. That is, the Bible is telling us to rescue them quickly. I meditated on the verse 11 in connection with the verse 10. As a result, from the standpoint of those who were dragged into the hands of a murderer and were unjustly killed (v. 11), they were to be surely discouraged (disheartened) (v. 10). If we are people who are about to die unjustly, I think we might try to give up in despair. In this way, we will be able to show the weakness of our strength. If we were these weak people who are about to die unjustly, then wouldn't we eagerly want someone to rescue us from dying unfairly? If we can do nothing on our own and can't save ourselves, and we just fall in despair and are waiting only for the day we die, then wouldn't we desperately want someone to deliver us quickly from that life and death situation? If we think about it that way, shouldn't we try to rescue him or her quickly if we see someone who is about to be killed unjustly? If we look at Proverbs 24:12, the Bible says: "If you say, 'But we knew nothing about this,' does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it?' ...." What does it mean? It means that we have responsibility to deliver those who are dragged to death. And the Bible tells us not to avoid that responsibility. Then, what is the really important responsibility we should not avoid? Look at Ezekiel 33:7-9: "Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth and give them warning from Me. When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will surely die,' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand. But if you on your part warn a wicked man to turn from his way and he does not turn from his way, he will die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your life." When I think of these words, it sounds like God is saying that if we see people dying without knowing Jesus and don't take responsibility for preaching the gospel to them, God will find their blood in our hands. Of course, if we preach the gospel to them, the Bible says that if they don't believe and die of their sins, our lives will be preserved.

Our God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live (Ezek. 33:11). Therefore, we must also rejoice that those who don't believe in Jesus and who are heading to eternal death hear the gospel through us and believe in Jesus and turn from the path of death and walk on the path of life. We have responsibility to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must not avoid this responsibility. Because God is watching our hearts, He knows that we make excuses to avoid our responsibility. We must not forget. God is the God who will repay each person according to what we have done (Prov. 24:12). May we all be praised by the Lord

by faithfully taking the responsibility of preaching the gospel.

### **Third, we must gain wisdom.**

Look at Proverbs 24:13-14: "Eat honey, my son, for it is good; honey from the comb is sweet to your taste. Know also that wisdom is sweet to your soul; if you find it, there is a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off." Do you like honey? Sometimes, when my wife makes me ginseng tea, she adds honey instead of sugar and gives it to me to drink. But do you know how honey is good for you? According to a website, honey regulates blood sugar levels to eliminate body fatigue. It has calcium and magnesium. So it is very effective in insomnia, neuralgia, arthritis, and is good for various inflammations (Internet). In addition, if we look at Hippocrates or My Monid's 'Disease-free longevity' theory, it is said that honey is the best remedy, is good for constipation, and is good to drink when we are thirsty after bathing. The reason is because honey is digested by bees in advance, so it is well absorbed, and unlike other sugars, it does not stimulate the kidneys or the inner walls of the stomach. So it has a great effect to calm the body and mind. It is said that this is because it is an alkaline food with a lot of minerals such as, zinc, and copper (Internet). On a website, it summarized the benefits of honey in 12 ways as follows (Internet): (1) Expellant effect: It is used for swelling along with detoxification. (2) Constipation effect: It is good for diarrhea or dysentery, and is also used for chronic constipation. (3) Pain Relief: It is used for pain such as heartburn, muscle pain, toothache, and mastitis. (4) Chiropractic effect: It is used for coughing and bronchitis and etc. (5) Mind and body comfort effect: It is applied to neuroses and surprises, and is good for insomnia and enuresis. Used when children show emotional anxiety and convulsions in the eyelids or the edges of the mouth. (6) Vitality·Anti-inflammatory: It makes new flesh grow, and is also used for purulent diseases such as boils, tonsillitis, otitis media, and sore throat. (7) 'Ja-eum' effect: to cure impotence. (8) Skin effect: It makes the face moist and is used for eczema or pediatric alone (a condition in which the skin becomes open and hot due to toxicity caused by heat). (9) Effect on gynecology: It is used for dyspareunia or major symptoms. (10) Preservation effect: It improves the function of the gastrointestinal digestive system and protects the stomach. (11) Effects on longevity: A survey of 200 elderly people aged 110 to 120 in the Soviet Union found that most of them were raised in beekeepers or were always eating honey. (12) Sterilization Effect: It has the effect of sterilizing bacteria, dips, and paratyptic bacteria. In other words, bacteria cannot survive in honey, Dips bacteria 48 hours, Paratyps bacteria 25 hours, Tifs virus 5 hours, Chronic bronchitis-causing bacteria 4 days, ameba that causes bloody flux (a type of dysentery that is an acute infectious disease) is destroyed within 10 hours (Internet).

This is what Proverbs 24:13-14a says: "Eat honey, my son, for it is good; honey from the comb is sweet to your taste. Know also that wisdom is sweet to your soul; ...." The Proverbs writer tells us to eat honey because it is good. He specifically says that we should eat honey from comb. He says that wisdom is sweet to our souls so we should have wisdom. Here, "honey from the comb" refers to the honey that has just flowed down from the hive among various types of honey. This honey is said to be the sweetest, purest, non-tearing honey (internet). If so, the

reason why the Proverbs writer compares “wisdom” to “honey from the comb” is because the wisdom is the sweetest and purest, and no speck is mixed, just as the honey from the comb is the sweetest and purest, and no speck or flaw is mixed. Then the question we might ask is, how could the wisdom such as honey from the comb be pure and not mixed with any speck or flaw? This is because, according to the Bible, honey comes from the rock. Look at Psalms 81:16 – “But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, And with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.” As honey comes from the rock, wisdom comes from Jesus Christ, who is the Rock, so that wisdom is the sweetest, purest, and not mixed with any speck. So the Proverbs writer said in Proverbs 4:5-7: “Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; Love her, and she will watch over you. The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding.” We must gain wisdom as the Proverbs writer said. We must gain wisdom at the expense of anything. That’s how important wisdom is. In order to do that, we must first love wisdom. If we love wisdom, we will eat the word of God as we eat honey. In other words, we yearn for the pure and flawless word of God (30:5), and will keep it by our side for life, read it, and meditate on it day and night. We should never forget or ignore His word.

Why should we gain wisdom by eating the pure word of God as we eat honey from the comb? What is the reason? Look at Proverbs 24:14b – “... If you find it, then there will be a future, And your hope will not be cut off.” The reason we need to gain wisdom is that if we gain wisdom, we will surely have a bright future and hope will not be cut off. Doesn't this remind us of Proverbs 23:17-18, which we have already meditated on? “Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD. There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.” What does it mean? It means that the wise Christians who always fear God have a hope for the afterlife. What is the hope of the future life that we Christians have? It is that the Lord will receive us to glory (Ps. 73:24). So, the second half of Proverbs 14:32 in the Bible says, “... but the righteous hath hope in his death” (KJV). I hope and pray that all of us can gain wisdom by eating the pure word of God that is like honey from the comb.

#### **Fourth, we must rise again even if we fall seven times.**

Look at Proverbs 24:15-16: “Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; Do not destroy his resting place; For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, But the wicked stumble in time of calamity.” While living in this world, we who, by God's grace, believe in Jesus and are justified, may suffer from the wicked and fall because of them. Of course, I don't think only the wicked make us fall. I am sure there are many things that cause us to fall while living in this wicked world. For example, in our fight against our sinful natures, we can fall. We may be discouraged and fall because we sin against God by falling into the temptations of this sinful world. Asaph, who wrote Psalms 73, was envious of the wicked's prosperity and almost fell. I think we can do that too. We see that the righteous are suffering, but the wicked eat well, live well, make good money, etc.

When we see such wicked, we can envy and fall.

On the second day of the last church's 34th anniversary revival meeting, a guest speaker gave a sermon under the title of 'Witness of Salvation' centering on Matthew 16:21-25. Looking back at verse 23 of those words, Jesus said to Peter: "... Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Looking at this word, it is Satan who causes Jesus to fall. Is Satan the one who causes only Jesus to fall? No, isn't it? Satan is the one who causes us, the Christians, the church of Jesus, to fall as well. How is Satan trying to make us to fall now? It is Satan who is trying to make us like the apostle Peter to think about the things of men rather than the things of God. Satan is tempting us to turn from walking the narrow path of the cross like Jesus and walk the broad path of the world. Satan continues to tempt us to make us think about the will of our people, not the will of the Lord, so that we can abandon the will of the Lord and live according to our own will.

Satan is trying to make us to fall somehow. He is trying to get us all to fall somehow, not only us, but also our homes and churches as well. What should we do? We can think of many lessons in the Bible, but I'm going to think based only on the words of Proverbs 24:16. First, we need to know that we can fall. In other words, we think that we can stumble because of the work of Satan that causes us to fall. And we can fall not only once, but seven times, even countless times. At that time, we may be disappointed because of our own fall, and may suffer from guilt. But the second thing to keep in mind is that, as the Bible says, "For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again" (v. 16). Because I believe in these words, I think that our Christians' life of faith is like a roly-poly. Just as if we hit the roly-poly and then it rises again, we must believe that even if Satan and the wicked strike us and cause us to fall, we will rise again. How can the roly-poly rise again even it falls down? The reason is because the lower part of the roly-poly is the heaviest, so even if the upper part is accidentally tilted downward, the heaviest part is going to go down again due to the effect of gravity, so in the end it always stands upright. The lesson we can learn from here is that the center of gravity must be located below to be safe. So even if it stumbles momentarily by external influences, it will be able to stand back (Internet). I believe that the "center of gravity" that makes us to stand up again and hold the center again is the Lord who is the Rock. Even if we fall countless times, the Lord is the God who raises us up again countless times. The Lord who raised up Elijah who fell down again is the God who raises us up so that we can fulfill His mission. The Lord is the God who raises us up by rekindling our discouraged souls with the perfect word of God. May the Lord reach out to us with the right hand of His power and hold our hand and raise us up again.

### **Fifth, we should not rejoice when our enemy falls.**

Look at Proverbs 24:17 – "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles." What do you think about this word? Our sinful nature is to rejoice inwardly when our enemy falls.

Isn't our nature rejoices in our hearts when our enemy fall? I think that when our enemy perishes, whether we look at it or hear the news, we can even rejoice, thinking that God is a just God and He has avenged for us. But the Bible tells us not to rejoice in our hearts when our enemy falls. What is the reason? I found the answer in Ezekiel 33:11 – “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live.” Clearly, the Bible says that God is not pleased with the death of the wicked. If we apply this word to Proverbs 24:17, we can understand why the Bible tells us, “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles.” What pleases God is that the wicked turn away from his way (Ezek. 33:11). In other words, God is a God who rejoices in repenting of our enemies, not a God who rejoices to see our enemy perishes (Prov. 24:17). So what should we, children of God, do? Our joy is that our enemies should not fall and perish, but that they should repent and return to the Lord. If not, Proverbs 24:18 says, “Or the LORD will see it and be displeased, And turn His anger away from him.” What does it mean? If we break the word of the Bible and rejoice when we see our enemies fall, then God sees us rejoicing and doesn't pleased with us. Why wouldn't God be pleased with us? The reason is because we aren't imitating our Heavenly Father's heart and aren't rejoicing when our enemies repent and turn to Him. Also, God is saying that if we rejoice to see the enemy's fall (perish), He may take away (and turn away) His wrath from him (Prov. 24:18). What does it mean? It means that a person who is pleased with the fall of an enemy may be punished by God and may fall on his own (Internet). So, this is what Proverbs 17:5 says, “... and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.” The teaching of the Bible is clear. Look at Matthew 5:44 – “But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Look at Luke 6:27-28: “But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” The teaching of the Bible is to love our enemies. In that context, considering the words of Proverbs 24:17, we must not rejoice in our hearts when our enemies fall.

### **Sixth and last, we must not get upset and angry because of evil men.**

Look at Proverbs 24:19 – “Do not get upset because of evildoers, Or be envious of the wicked” (Amplified Bible). Aren't you upset and angry when you see someone who persecutes, tortures, and makes you difficult? Wouldn't your anger rise when someone makes your loved one cry and hurts his heart? Aren't you very upset when you see truly wicked people? Aren't you angry when they eat well and live well even though they are really evil? Are you not envious of being angry and at the same time seeing the prosperity of the wicked? I think this is our natural instinctive response. When we see the wicked prosper in this world, we can be upset. Still, we may be able to subtly envy their prosperity. However, in Proverbs 24:19, the Bible tells us not to get upset with the evil men and not to be envious of the prosperity of the wicked. We have already been told in Proverbs 24:1, “Do not envy wicked men, do not desire their company.” Also, in Proverbs 23:17, we were told, “Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD.” In this way, the Proverbs writer repeatedly told us not to be envious of the prosperity of the wicked, and in Proverbs 24:19, he also said not to be upset and be angry with them. What is the reason? Look at Proverbs 24:20 – “for the evil man has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed



out.”

There is no future for the wicked. They have no bright future and their lamp of hope will go out. Although from the perspective of this world it seems that they will have a bright future for them to eat and live well in this world, and even if it seems that their lamps will not be extinguished for a lifetime, the Bible clearly says that they have no hope and their lamp will be snuffed out. However, the Bible clearly says that those who don't envy sinners' prosperity with their hearts and who always fear God have a future and our hope will not be cut off (23:18). In addition, if we look at Proverbs 24:14, the Bible says that there will be a future for those who obtain the same wisdom as honey from the comb, and hope will not be cut off. Who are those who have an unbroken hope and a clear future? They are those who have gained wisdom and who fear God. And the wise man who fears God doesn't have anger over evil men and doesn't envy the prosperity of the wicked. I hope and pray that we will not be upset and angry with the evil men, and that we will not be envious of the prosperity of the wicked who have no hope in the future.

There are things we Christians ought to do. We, who have been saved by God's grace and have eternal life, have things to do. For example, in 1 John 4:11, the Bible says, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” In today's text Proverbs 24:10-20 we learned 6 things we ought to do: (1) We should not be discouraged when faced with difficulties. (2) We must rescue those being led away to death. (3) We must gain wisdom. (4) We must rise again even if we fall seven times. (5) We should not rejoice when our enemy falls. (6) We must not get upset and angry because of evil men. I hope and pray that all of us may be able to please God more by doing these six things with the wisdom that God gives us.

## **If you get discouraged**

### **“If thou lovest courage in the day of trouble, thy strength is small” (Proverbs 24:10) (Darby Translation).**

Living in this world, we surely can get discouraged when we face difficulties. Especially when the difficulties are too difficult for us to handle alone, we can get discouraged when we try to get help around but don't get any help. Then we need to ask the Lord when we realize that there is no one but the Lord who can help us. However, no matter how many times we pray to God, we may become more discouraged when there is no response from the Lord (Lk. 18:1). When we are so discouraged and depressed, our strength will be weakened so much that we may give upon ourselves.

This is what David said to King Saul in 1 Samuel 17:32, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.” Here “this Philistine” refers to “Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath” (v. 23). To the Israelites who saw Goliath and ran from him in great fear (v. 24), David told them not to lose heart and he would go and fight Goliath (v. 32). What do you think of David's words? If you were there, would you listen to David and not be discouraged by Goliath? When everyone saw Goliath around them, they were afraid and flee before him. Can you not be afraid, not flee and not be discouraged? In our lives, when we are faced with great difficulties such as Goliath we can get discouraged, exhausted and frustrated, especially if those difficulties have to do with our family members we love. What should we do then?

We need to be thoroughly aware of how weak ourselves are through our great discouragement (Prov. 24:10b). That is because we depend entirely on the hopeful Lord only when we fully realize how weak human beings are. As the years go by, we become weaker and weaker, and we can face even greater difficulties than before. Then we realize how little our faith is. Although our bodies and minds will become weaker and weaker as the years go by, our faith in Him must be strengthened. But through our greater difficulties, we see ourselves in a state of anxiety and discouragement, and we realize how little our faith is. At that time, we realize that we can only depend on the Lord. And we ask the Lord for help: “Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God” (Ps. 42:5, 11; 43:5). So when I am discouraged, I pray like this: ‘James, why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed with me? Put your hope in God.’ At that time I experience God's help in restoring my discouraged soul with the promise of the Lord (19:7). The Lord raises my discouraged soul with the promise He has given to him (Jn. 6:1-15) and He gives me hope again to persevere in faith.

Because of Goliath, all Israel were very afraid and fled from before him. But when the boy David saw Goliath, he wasn't scared or discouraged. So he told King Saul that he would go out and fight him. And this is how King Saul responded to David: "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth" (1 Sam. 17:33). Think about it. A mighty man Goliath fought from his youth and David was just the boy. Who would win the fight? In common sense, of course Goliath would win. This wasn't even a fair fight. And our instinct is we don't even try to fight with such man like Goliath because we know we will lose. So we can get discouraged even before the fight. But David didn't. How could he try to fight with Goliath without being discouraged and fearful? I found that answer in 1 Samuel 17:37a – "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine. ...." David believed in the God of salvation. He believed that God would deliver him out of the hands of Goliath. Because of this assurance of salvation, David not only did not fear Goliath but also he wasn't discouraged.

This is what Apostle Paul said in Galatians 6:9 – "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." We can get discouraged while we are doing good because of hardships and difficulties. Even so, we should not be discouraged and we should not give up. Rather, we must rely entirely on God and trust Him like the boy David who fought against Goliath. Therefore, we should not be discouraged, but rather boldly overcome difficulties by faith. Let us all move forward with boldness and confidence through faith in the Lord (Eph. 3:12).

## **In the name of Jesus I will rise.**

**“Do not lie in wait like an outlaw against a righteous man's house, do not raid his dwelling place; for though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity” (Proverbs 24:15-16).**

In this week's news, I saw an American medical missionary, Kent Brantley, 33, arriving in an ambulance at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, USA. I didn't know at first, but I found out later that one of the two who got off the ambulance was Doctor Brantley. I was a little surprised to see him walking on his own feet to the hospital. And I was proud and happy. On July 31, last month, he was infected with the Ebola virus and was wandering around. He even called his wife in the United States goodbye. And now I am grateful to see him walking into the hospital on his own feet. Three months before he left for a medical mission to Liberia in 2013, he said, ‘When a difficult day comes, I will remember God's calling in my heart.’ And what he said to the congregation at Christ's Church in Southeastern, Indiana, USA in July last year, was recently released on Facebook as an audio file. He said, ‘I will go on a mission,’ and ‘I will live there for two years and serve those who have suffered violence and destruction for 20 years.’ As for the reason he decided to serve in a place he had never been to, Brantley said that he had affirmed that ‘because there was a call from God.’ Emphasizing the need to live boldly like the apostle Paul, he quoted 2 Timothy 1:7 and said, “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline” (Internet). As I saw Dr. Brantley, who had been on a medical mission to Liberia under God's call and was infected with the Ebola virus, called the death virus, was walking into the Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, USA, I just hoped and prayed that he would get up again so that he could continue doing God's work as he is called.

We Christians are those who are called by God. Therefore, we must continue to do God's work faithfully with a sense of calling. However, there are those who continue to watch us and try to overthrow us and destroy our houses if he sees a gap (Prov. 24:15). He is Satan. Satan is the one who causes Jesus to fall (Mt. 16:23) and the one who makes us Christians, the church of Jesus Christ, to fall. How is Satan trying to make us to fall? Satan tries to make us to be like the apostle Peter, not having in mind the things of God but the things of men (v. 23). The apostle Peter fell into the Satan's temptation. When Jesus said to his disciples that “that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life” (v. 21), Peter “began to rebuke him. ‘Never, Lord!’ he said. ‘This shall never happen to you!’” (v. 22). The apostle Peter, who thought about the things of men, didn't want Jesus to suffer and be crucified.

That was why he turned to Jesus and said, “Never, Lord! ... This shall never happen to you!” (v. 22) However, God's will was that Jesus suffered, took all our sins for us, and died on the cross. Although it was Jesus who came to this earth to accomplish this God's work, the apostle Peter didn't think of this God's work, but rather thought of men's work.

Satan is well aware of our weaknesses. And he keeps trying to attack and infect our vulnerabilities with deadly spiritual viruses like the Ebola virus. Satan continues to tempt us, not only to make us think of men's work rather than God's work. But he is also striving to go further and make us do men's work. Satan is trying to get us to walk the wide path of the world, turning away from walking the narrow path of the cross of Jesus. He keeps tempting us to make us think about our will, not the will of the Lord, so that we can abandon the Lord's will and live according to our will. Satan is trying to infect our weak point, our loved ones, with a deadly spiritual virus, making us prioritize human affairs over God's. When we and our family are infected by the deadly spiritual virus, we are drawn to the flesh by falling into self-pity rather than being drawn by His call. In that case, we not only think of our family members before God, but also think and pursue human work even at the expense of God's work. As a result, we ruin the God's work. In this way, Satan is trying to make us fall somehow. He is trying to get us all to fall somehow by watching at not only us, but also our homes and churches. What should we do? We can think of many lessons in the Bible, but I'm going to think about two things based only on the words of Proverbs 24:16: (1) We need to know that we can fall. In other words, we stumble because of the work of Satan that causes us to stumble. And we can fall not only once, but seven times, even countless times. At that time, we may be disappointed because of our own fall, and we may suffer from guilty feeling. (2) However, the second thing to keep in mind is that even though the righteous fall seven times, he will rise again.

I think that our Christians' life of faith is like a roly-poly. Just as if we hit the roly-poly and then it rises again, we must believe that even if Satan and the wicked strike us and cause us to fall, we will rise again. How can the roly-poly rise again even it falls down? The reason is because the lower part of the roly-poly is the heaviest, so even if the upper part is accidentally tilted downward, the heaviest part is going to go down again due to the effect of gravity, so in the end it always stands upright. The lesson we can learn from here is that the center of gravity must be located below to be safe. So even if it stumbles momentarily by external influences, it will be able to stand back (Internet). I believe that the “center of gravity” that makes us to stand up again and hold the center again is the Lord who is the Rock. Even if we fall countless times, the Lord is the God who raises us up again countless times. The Lord who raised up Elijah who fell down again is the God who raises us up so that we can fulfill His mission. The Lord is the God who raises us up by rekindling our discouraged souls with the perfect word of God. May the Lord reach out to us with the right hand of His power and hold our hand and raise us up again.

Among the gospel songs that I can't forget, there is a song titled “I Stand”. I learned this song through sister in Christ Jong-mi Lee of Seohyun Church in Korea. Although her physical body was "like a mummy"

because her body was burned and was bandaged and lying on her bed in the hospital room, the Lord raised her up again. When I heard the testimony of Jong-mi, who fought at the crossroads of life and death, I was compelled to praise the Lord who gave her victory in that fight: "I will stand, I will stand, I will stand in Jesus name/ For the things that God has given, I will stand in Jesus name/ Satan's host may come against me, I will not surrender ground/ For the things that God has given (2x)/ For the things that God has given, I will stand." I hope and pray that all of us to be raised up again in the name of Jesus.

## **A citizen of a country who fears God?**

### **[Proverbs 24:21-26]**

Not long ago, there was a story about the impeachment of President Obama in the US CNN news. The reason for the story was probably that the Republican Party, which took control of the House of Representatives, was a problem, and that President Obama was abusing the presidential powers. In other words, the Republicans thought President Obama was making a lot of executive orders. For example, in the course of implementing the 'Obama Care' (Health Insurance Reform Act of 2010), it was alleged that the president's powers specified in the Constitution were abused. In other words, President Obama intentionally delayed the key provisions of Obama Care through an executive order. However, as this concern was raised that if this provision was implemented as scheduled, it could cause enormous damage to small businesses and increase the number of companies firing regular employees. It is said that President Obama randomly issued an administrative order in February, delaying the application of the provision to small businesses with 50 or more and less than 100 employees to 2016 (Internet). In addition, President Obama introduced an executive order to raise the minimum wage that the Republican Party opposes, and it is said that the executive order will also take relief measures against illegal immigrants in September (Internet). So on July 30 last month, the US House of Representatives held a plenary meeting and passed a resolution that would allow President Obama to sue 225-201 in favor. How should we react as these American citizens when we hear this news? If we are Korean citizens, not American citizens, how should we react when we think of the President of Korea right now?

When asked such a question, I think one of the Bible passages we can think of is probably Romans 13:1-2: "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves." If we apply this word to us, it means that if we are those who fear God, we must obey the governing authorities. What is the reason? The reason is because all governing authorities are ordained by God. However, we must keep in mind that this doesn't mean that we must obey the governing authorities unconditionally. In other words, when the government authorities are corrupt and contrary to God's word and commands all citizens to follow it, we cannot yield to such command. An example is the attempt to institutionalize same-sex marriage. If same-sex marriage is made the law of the country, what should we do with that law? Obviously, this is the law of the country that violates God's law (the word of God). Do we have to follow this law of the country? We must obey the governing authorities that are ordained by God, but we

must obey the laws of the country within the boundary that doesn't violate the laws of God.

The Bible Proverbs 24:21 says, "Fear the LORD and the king, my son, and do not join with the rebellious." Focusing on this word, I would like to receive the lessons the Lord gives us while meditating on two ways how a citizen of a country who fear God does.

### **First, the citizen who fears God fears his president.**

Look at Proverbs 24:21a – "Fear the LORD and the king, my son . . . ." The Bible tells us to fear God and kings. If we apply this to us, it means that we must fear God and also the president of our country. Of course, the "king" that the Proverbs writer refers to in today's text refers to the ideal king that God uses (Prov. 21:1) (Park). Therefore, the president we should fear is the ideal president that God uses. So who is the ideal president? Looking back on the words of the Book of Proverbs we have meditated on so far, the ideal king is like this: (1) There are three "ideal king's heart" that we meditated on in Psalms 101: (a) First, the ideal king's heart is a heart that yearns for God's love and and justice. (b) Second, the ideal king's heart is humble heart. (c) Third, the ideal king's heart is far from perverse heart (cunning heart, a life that is different inside and outside). (2) The next word I meditated on is "An ideal king" centered on Psalms 72. I meditated in two ways: (a) First, the ideal king judges by the judgment of the Lord. (b) Second, the ideal king satisfies the Lord's people because he judges with the Lord's righteous judgment. (3) The next word I meditated on was "A good king who pleases God" centered on Proverbs 16:10-15. I meditated on the good king who pleases God in three ways: (a) First, the good king who pleases God makes right decisions with God's wisdom. (b) Second, the good king who pleases God detests wrongdoing. (c) Third, the good king who pleases God is well advised by loyalists. (4) The next words I meditated on was "An ideal president" centered on Proverbs 19:12 and 20:2. I meditated on two ways: (a) First, the ideal president rules the country with justice. (b) Second, the ideal president rules the country with love. (5) Finally, when we think about the words of Proverbs 21:1, the ideal king that God uses is the king who is guided by God as the king in God's hand. Such a king is a king who obeys the will of the Lord when He leads him according to His will. (6) In addition to these words, one more Bible passage I would like to see is Deuteronomy 17:19-20: "It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel." Here, the Bible teaches us three things about the ideal king in God's sight: (a) He learns to fear God by reading the law of God (His word) all the days of his life. (b) He carefully observes all the words of this law and doesn't turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left. (c) His heart isn't lifted up above his countrymen.

In today's text, Proverbs 24:21, the Bible says that the king who should be feared as the citizen of the God-fearing nation is a king who establishes justice. Look at Proverbs 24:23-26: "These also are sayings of the wise: To



show partiality in judging is not good: Whoever says to the guilty, 'You are innocent' -- peoples will curse him and nations denounce him. But it will go well with those who convict the guilty, and rich blessing will come upon them." Here, the Proverbs writer tells us how the king who establishes justice doesn't do and does. The first thing that the righteous king doesn't do is that he doesn't show partiality in judging or says "You are innocent" to the wicked (v. 23). Can you imagine? How the Israelites reacted when the wise king Solomon judged the two prostitutes if he show partiality in the judgment, or if he ruled a fake mother saying, 'You are a real mother, so take a living baby with you'? Would the Israelites really fear King Solomon? (1 Kgs. 3:28) Had King Solomon judged so wrong, he would have been cursed by the Israelites, as Proverbs 24:24 says, and would be denounced by them. However, as we already know, King Solomon judged correctly and judged with the wisdom that God gave him. He discerned the real mother of the living child from the fake mother and ruled that the real mother should be given the living child (1 Kgs. 3:26-27). At that time, when the Israelites heard King Solomon's judgment, they feared King Solomon. The reason was because they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice (v. 28). In Deuteronomy 1:17, the Bible says, "You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God's ...." The king who doesn't fear men doesn't justify the wicked and condemn the righteous (Prov. 17:15). The reason is because he knows that he who does so is an abomination to God (v. 15). This is what Proverbs 18:5 says: "To show partiality to the wicked is not good, Nor to thrust aside the righteous in judgment." Also, the Bible Proverbs 28:21 says: "To show partiality is not good, Because for a piece of bread a man will transgress." What does it mean? This means that the righteous king doesn't show partiality to the wicked, or deprive the innocent of justice.

What, then, does the righteous king do? If we look at Proverbs 24:25, the Bible says that the king who establishes justice convict the guilty. The righteous God is the God who rebukes the king if he show partiality when he judges (Job 13:10). In particular, God rebukes the king who judges unfairly by adding to or subtracting to God's word when judging (Prov. 30:6). God does this not only because He is just, but because He loves the king (Rev. 3:19). Furthermore, God not only rebukes sin (Ps. 39:11), but also rebukes the wicked (Jude 1:9). Therefore, the righteous king must rebuke the wicked like God, the King of kings. He must rebuke the wicked boldly. Therefore, he should show justice and set the order of the country. Also, the righteous king answers honestly (Prov. 24:26). In other words, the king who establishes righteousness makes a legitimate decision in the judgment seat. And the legitimate verdict that is given is that it satisfies it like a kiss to righteousness (Park). Therefore, Proverbs 24:25 says that the king who establishes righteousness will go well and rich blessing will come upon him. In other words, the ruler who punishes the wicked fairly receives God's blessing (Park).

This is what 1 Peter 2:13-14, 17 says: "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. ... Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king." The Bible commands us to fear God and honor the king. If we apply this word

to us, we must fear God and honor the President of our country. To apply this from the perspective of Proverbs 24:21, as we fear God, we must revere the president of our country whom God has established. Of course, the president of our country that we should revere and respect here is not any president. He is the President who does righteousness. The Bible says that if we are truly God-fearing people, we, as citizens of our country, must fear the President, who establishes righteousness which God established.

### **Second and last, the citizen who fears God doesn't join with the rebellious.**

Look at Proverbs 24:21b – "... and do not join with the rebellious." The Bible not only tells us to fear God and the king God has established (v. 21), but it also tells us not to join with the rebellious. That means don't join the rebellious people who take away the kingship. The reason is because the rebellious people or those who join with them will soon be destroyed by calamities (v. 22). If this word is applied today, an example would be the country of Syria. The Syrian President now is Bashar Al-Sad. According to the US newspaper Washington Post weekly, Bashar was once ranked 12th on the World's Worst Dictator. As part of his anti-Israel policy, Syria is said to have explicitly supported Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon, and has been designated as a terrorist support country by Western countries (Internet). Now Syria, as we know it, continues to fight government and rebel forces because of the civil war. If so, the citizens of that country may like the country's president, Bashar, but there will be many citizens who dislike him as a dictator. In that case, how should Christians who believe in Jesus among those citizens obey the word of Proverbs 24:21? Do they really have to fear and respect the President? No, isn't it? If it's not the ideal president mentioned in the Bible, nor the president who practices justice, are they supposed to fear and respect the president? But what we have to think about at the same time is that 'Can Christians among citizens living in Syria join the rebels and fight the government forces to take the president down from the spot because their president is a dictator and evil ruler?'

Dr. Yoon-Sun Park has three things to say on this subject (Park): (1) It is a matter of believer's belief in the wrong government and conscience. Although Proverbs 24:21 forbids personal rebellion against an evil ruler or an unrighteous government, it doesn't mandate the people's unrestricted obedience to such government. Even if it is a government order, if it is an unrighteous request (such as an order that violates the faith), then as the believers, they don't have to obey. We believers must act with the God-oriented in relation to the state. In other words, we must live for the purpose of glorifying God even in our lives. (2) It is the attitude of Christians toward unrighteous politics. As an individual, you cannot eliminate a monarch (even a tyrant) with violence. However, as high-ranking officials or subordinate officials, they were responsible for protecting the people by preventing the monarch's indulgence, and if necessary, they had the responsibility to eliminate the source of such an evil spirit. (3) It is the duty of Christian society to prevent the government's mistakes. Since Christianity doesn't exist for the state directly, it must be done indirectly when fulfilling its responsibilities for the state. For example, the church can exert an indirect influence on the state by affecting the conscience of its people and officials. The more the consciences of

civil servants and people become in the Christian spirit, the closer the state becomes to God's law in terms of religion and morality. This indirect influence takes place in the following ways (H. Meeter): (a) It takes place when the church preaches the gospel. In other words, when the church preaches the gospel, it teaches the principles of God's word that apply to all human life. Its teaching includes, of course, the principles of political life. (b) The Christians must clarify the principles of the Bible that pertain to people's life in educational institutions. (c) The Christianity should strive to gain public appreciation for the word of God and influence them through newspapers and all propaganda agencies.

Reading the Old Testament of the Bible, we often see that God speaks of the Israelites as “a rebellious people” (Deut. 9:7, 31:27, Isa. 30:9, Ezek. 2:3, 5, 7, 8; 3:9, 12:25; 26; 24:3, 12:2, 9). In Deuteronomy 9:24, Moses told the Israelites: “You have been rebellious against the LORD ever since I have known you.” Also, before he died, Moses told them: “For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you have been rebellious against the LORD while I am still alive and with you, how much more will you rebel after I die!” (31:27) The Israelites always rebelled against the Lord, the King of kings. Not only they always rebelled, they even forsaken God, who was King, and rejected Him as their their king (1 Sam. 8:7). So, in the days of Samuel, the Israelites said to Samuel, “You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have” (v. 5). They refused to listen to Samuel and said, “... We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles” (vv. 19-20). Upon hearing their request, Samuel prayed to God, and God said to Samuel: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king” (v. 7). To the Israelites who rebelled against God in this way, God said through the prophet Hosea: “I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them” (Hos. 14:4). What a wonderful grace of God? God promised to heal the Israelites’ waywardness and to love them freely. This is Heavenly Father's heart for us. Heavenly Father is the God who heals our rebellion and loves us freely. Our Heavenly Father is telling us not only to rebel against God any longer, but also not to join with the rebellious people. I hope and pray that we will be obedient to God's word in fear of God.

We learned how we Christians should live as citizens of a country through the words of Proverbs 24:21-26. In short, we must be citizens who fear God. And we, as God-fearing citizens, must revere our President. Also, we should not join with the rebellious people. I hope and pray that all of us can obey His word.

## Learn a lesson from what we see

### [Proverbs 24:27-34]

This world is a world with many things to see and learn. Although we can just pass them thoughtlessly, there are many things in the world that we can learn if we look at them and observe them again at least once. One example is ants. These days, I am at war with ants. Whenever I find ants all over my house, I'm not only catching them and killing them, but also discovering where the ants came in and closing the gaps or holes. But when I think of these "ants," I think of the words about ants in Proverbs 6:6-11 that we have already meditated on. At that time, we were instructed to think about the lazy person that is worse than the ant, and that the lazy person must go to the ant and see what it does and gain wisdom from it. What wisdom should the lazy man get? The lazy man should learn to work voluntarily, diligently and cooperatively, even without immediate supervision (v. 7). He must also go to the ant and learn to prepare for the future (v. 8). But the lazy man says, "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest" (v. 10). As a result, the inevitable poverty for the lazy man comes. It is a lesson that poverty comes as if the victim is overwhelmed by a robber. In this way, we have something to learn from seeing ants while living in this world. As such, we need to learn as we see and think as we live in this world.

If we look at Proverbs 24:32, the Bible says: "I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw." I would like to learn a lesson by thinking about three things we need to see and be instructed under the heading, "Learn a lesson from what we see".

### **First, what we must see and be instructed is that we must prepare ahead of time what we must prepare first**

Look at Proverbs 27:27 – "Finish your outdoor work and get your fields ready; after that, build your house." What do we think we should prepare for when we usually build a house? Perhaps the first thing we need to prepare is economic preparation. If we decide to build the house, we will need to have a good financial budget for building our house. The next thing to prepare is to buy the land for the house. We should choose the best area for our family, clarify the purchase cost and check the site. And after checking the site with the architect and checking the laws and regulations, we have to purchase the site. Next, in order to build the house, we have to carefully select an architect and design the house. Then we have to start construction (Internet). Similar words are found in Luke 14:28-30: "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule

him, saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish." Isn't that right? When we try to build a tower, shouldn't we first calculate the cost to see if we have enough money to complete the tower? If we start construction in a situation where we aren't ready for economics, we will not be able to build the foundation and complete it because we will run out of money while building the tower. At that time, what would people say when they saw that the construction wasn't completed but only the foundation work was done? In fact, few years ago, when I first went to a mission field, where a missionary resides, I was a little surprised and puzzled while taking a taxi from the airport to that missionary's place. At that time, what I saw was many buildings here and there, and a lot of crane standing on top of the buildings around them. It was the first time I saw so many big and unfinished builds in my life. I searched the Internet to see what is the cause, and found that it was suggesting one or two major causes. One is the cause of the economic fluctuations in the real estate market, and the other is the government policy. However, if we look at the specific cause, there are three types, and the first is when the successor fund is not well raised. In other words, it is said that there is a disruption in the development company's investment plan or the bank's support has been stopped (Internet).

In Proverbs 24:27, what the Proverbs writer is saying is that in order to build a house, we must prepare what we need to prepare first. In other words, in order to build a family, we must first have financial preparation (Park). What would happen to the couple if the couple to be married said that they were preparing for marriage and prepared everything, but didn't properly prepare for the economy? Would they be able to hold their wedding? Perhaps even after the wedding, the couple will continue to have conflicts due to financial problems. In fact, according to a survey on marital quarrels among 278 married workers on the job portal career, the reason for having a marital quarrel was 'economic problems' accounted for the most part with 25.5% (Internet). In addition, among the 3,537 divorce counselors who visited the counseling center in 2005, the Korean Family Law Counseling Center analyzed the current status of 1,304 separated (1,102 women, 202 men). It is said that the economic problem (33%) was the number one reason for separation (Internet). We all know these facts to some extent. If so, we must ask the question: 'How do we prepare for the economy in order to build a family well according to the words of Proverbs 24:27?' I looked for the answer in Proverbs 6:7-8: "It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest." Do you know the Aesop's fable "The ant and grasshopper"? According to that famous story, the grasshopper sang and mocked the ant which worked hard in the summer: 'Hey ant, is something wrong with your head? Why are you preparing food in summer for winter?' Despite such ridicule, the ant worked very hard for cold winters, even in hot summer days. However, the grasshopper didn't work every day and only sang. As a result, he had no food to eat in the winter so he begged for food. When I read this fable story as a child, I was taught that I should be like the ant, not the grasshopper. I learned that I must live diligently like the ant, not lazy like the grasshopper. However, as I grew older when I thought about this story, not only that I learned the lesson of being diligent like the ant, but also being wise in preparing for the future. When we are young, who cares about the future and prepares for it? In Proverbs 6:8, the Bible urges people who are worse than the ant to

go to the ant and learn the wisdom to prepare for the future. Even in Proverbs 30:25, the Bible introduces the ants as “they prepare their food in the summer”. Why do the ants prepare winter food ahead of time in summer? According to Dr. Park, summer is the harvest time in Palestine. So, at this time, the ants are said to collect food for winter (Park). In this way, the ants prepare food for winter in advance at the time of harvest. Like ants, we must prepare diligently for the future during the harvest season.

In particular, what must all of us Christians prepare for? Look at Matthew 24:44 – “So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” What we all need to prepare is the Second Coming of Jesus. We must prepare for Jesus' coming again. How should we prepare for His Second Coming? We must prepare for the Lord's Second Coming by knowing the will of the Lord and doing it (Lk. 12:47). So what is the will of the Lord? The Lord's will is for all of us to follow the Lord as His disciples as bear our own cross (14:27). What, then, should the followers of the Lord do first? We must be prepared to make sacrifices for the Lord (Park). That is why Jesus said in Luke 14 the budget for the cost of the tower builder (v. 28) and the preparation for strengthening the military power of the king to war (vv. 31-32). Hopefully, as all of us as disciples of the Lord prepare to make sacrifices for the Lord, at the same time we must prepare for the Lord's Second Coming. In particular, when we all stand before the Lord and when the Lord settle account for all of us, I hope and pray that we will all be well prepared and praised by the Lord (Mt. 25:21).

**Second, what we must see and be instructed is that we must not pay back on false evidence.**

Look at Proverbs 24:28-29: “Do not testify against your neighbor without cause, or use your lips to deceive. Do not say, "I'll do to him as he has done to me; I'll pay that man back for what he did.” Our instinct is that if the other person slaps us on the cheek, we also slap the other person on the cheek. And we can rationalize what we do to the other person in our instinct by slapping him on his cheek like this: “But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise” (Exod. 21:23-25). I think this is the Bible passage that helps us rationalize living with the urge to pay back the other person as he did to us. As far as we rationalize, it is our instinct for us to repay the other person if the other person slapped us on the cheek.

The man who tried to act according to human instincts appears in 1 Samuel 25 of the Old Testament. That man is David. David himself tried to avenge a man named Nabal. David wanted to do this because David was very good to Nabal through his young men (v. 15), but Nabal wasn't good to David, but rather scorned David's young men (v. 14). While David's young men were with Nabal's shepherds while they were in Carmel, not only did they mistreat them, but none of Nabal's sheep were lost (v. 7). In other words, while the shepherds of Nabal were guarding the sheep of Nabal, David's young men were a wall around all the time (v. 16), so they weren't mistreated

and nothing was missing (v. 15). So David sent 10 of his young men to Nabal (v. 5) so that they could be favored by Nabal (v. 8). But Nabal said, “Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse?” (v. 10). He did nothing to David, but rather he hurled insults at David’s young men (v. 14). Therefore, David ordered each of his men to wear a sword, and then took 400 men (v. 13) to Nabal's house to seek revenge on him. But Nabal's wife, Abigail, spoke wisely and acted wisely to prevent David from shedding blood and avenging himself (vv. 26, 31, 33). This is what she said to David: “my master will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. ...” (v. 31) What does it mean? If David personally avenged to Nabal, he could later become king of Israel and take revenge on Nabal, which could be a cause for his conscience. However, because the Lord blocked him through Abigail, the concern was gone. Then David said to Abigail, “May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands” (v. 33). In the end, the Lord kept David from bloodshed and from avenging himself with his own hands through the wise woman Abigail (v. 26). Why did the Lord do that? What was the reason? I looked for the answer in Romans 12:19 – “Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.” The reason the Lord prevented David from avenging to Nabal was because it is with the Lord’s to avenge his enemy. In other words, because the Lord Himself will repay for David, the Lord prevented David from avenging to Nabal.

If we look at Proverbs 24:29, the Bible says, “Do not say, "I'll do to him as he has done to me; I'll pay that man back for what he did.” What does it mean? It means not to revenge. For example, if I treat the other person nicely and that person insults me, it means that I should not insult him as he did to me. Just because he talks to me in anger, it doesn’t mean that I should do the same to him. In particular, looking at verse 28, we should not testify against our neighbor without cause. We should not deceive our neighbors with our lips. This means that even if the other person lies to us and deceives us, we should not do the same to that person. Of course, the reason we should not do so is not only because the Bible forbids us to revenge ourselves, but also as Christians we should not lie and not deceive our neighbors. If we lie and deceive our neighbors, it pleases the devil, the liar and father of lies (Jn. 8:44). Rather, we must follow the Christian Golden Rule. What is the Golden Rule of Christianity? Look at Matthew 7:12 – “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, ....” This verse is a key principle that clearly teaches how to love our neighbors in fulfilling the commandment of “Love your neighbor as yourself” in Jesus' double commandment (22:39). The principle is, 'As I want to be treated by the other person, I must treat him like that first.' For example, if I want the other person to understand me a little, I have to try to understand that person first. We should change our position and get into the habit of thinking. Then we will be able to treat others as we wish to be treated by them. In particular, we must be true to the other person first, just as we want the other person to be true. We must never tell lies. And we should never give false evidence to our neighbors. May we all be the only true witnesses.

**Third and last, what we must see and be instructed is that the lazy man will become**

## **poor.**

Look at Proverbs 24:30-34: “I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest- and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.” In the days we're living in, everything is much faster than before. Maybe that's why we have to do everything quickly and fast. Not only that, but there are many people who are busy with too much to do in their busy lives. However, one question we should ask here is 'Is it really diligent to be busy?' What do you think? Do you think living busy is living diligently? I don't think that's the case in my personal opinion. I think living busy doesn't necessarily mean living diligently. Also, I don't think the person is lazy just because he doesn't live busy. Rather, I think that in a very busy life, we have a tendency to procrastinate. I think procrastinating can make us lazy.

In Proverbs 24:30, the Proverbs writer says that he saw as he passed through the field of “the sluggard” and the vineyard of “the man who lacks judgment”. Here the Proverbs writer uses the lazy and the man who lack judgment as synonym. In other words, the lazy man is without wisdom. What is the judgment that the lazy person lacks? I think it's a priority. In other words, the lazy man lacks the ability to judge what to do first and what to do later. For example, Jesus said, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Mt. 6:33). However, at the time of the prophet Haggai, the Israelites were busy building their own houses before God's house (Hak 1:4, 9). They left the temple, the house of God, to be desolate, and they were busy building their own houses splendidly. Their priorities were wrong. As a result, God punished the Israelites. What was that punishment? Look at Haggai 1:6, 9 – “You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it. ... You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why? declares the LORD Almighty. Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house.” What does it mean? God made the crops of the people of Judah a famine (v. 11) and made the harvest little (vv. 6, 9) (Park). In the end, when we don't seek God's kingdom and God's righteousness first, God makes our finances drought and makes us needy. In other words, if we don't prioritize right in the sight of God, we will be in need. This lazy man doesn't have wisdom, he doesn't do what he should do first, so he becomes poor. Not only that, but the lazy man delays what should be done due to lack of judgment. For example, look at Proverbs 6:10 and 24:33. The Bible says that the lazy man say: “A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest.” The lazy man not only says to “A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest”, but he actually sleep a little more and slumber a little more, and lie down. In other words, the lazy man doesn't wake up when it is time to wake up, but puts it off until later. Also, the lazy man doesn't work when it is supposed to work, but puts it off later. In doing so, he doesn't blame his laziness, he blames other things (situations, people, etc.). In other words, the lazy man doesn't know how to take responsibility. What



is the result? Look at Proverbs 6:11 and 24:34 – “and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.” What does it mean? It means that the inevitable poverty comes to the lazy man and that poverty comes as if the victim was overwhelmed by a robber (24:33) (MacArthur).

The Bible Proverbs 6:9 gives the lazy man this rebuke: “How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep?” Also, the Bible Proverbs 21:25 says: “The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work.” What does it mean? It means that the lazy people hate to work with their hands. Rather, lazy people often make things happen. Look at 1 Timothy 5:11-13: “As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to.” Rather, the lazy young widow goes from house to house, gossips and busybodies, saying things she ought not to. But the lazy man has a more serious problem. That is that the lazy man is wiser in his own eyes (Prov. 26:16). In Proverbs 3:7, the Bible says, “Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.” Therefore, the lazy man should not consider himself wise, but fears God, and he turns away from the evil of laziness. And, like ants, he prepares diligently for the future in the harvest season.

We should not like to sleep. We should wake up and work diligently. What is the reason? Look at the hymn “Work, for the Night is Coming”:

(1) Work, for the night is coming: Work through the morning hours; Work while the dew is sparkling; Work 'mid springing flowers; Work while the day grows brighter, Under the glowing sun; Work, for the night is coming, When man's work is done.

(2) Work, for the night is coming: Work through the sunny noon; Fill brightest hours with labor, Rest comes sure and soon; Give ev'ry flying minute Something to keep in store; Work, for the night is coming, When man works no more.

(3) Work, for the night is coming: Under the sunset skies, While their bright tints are glowing, Work, for daylight flies; Work till the last beam fadeth, Fadeth to shine no more; Work, while the night is dark'ning, When man's work is o'er.

Like the lyrics of this hymn, the night comes when we cannot work. The day when we cannot work quickly come. Therefore, we must not play when we must work. And we should not like to sleep when we must work diligently. Whether we eat, drink or do anything, I hope and pray that we all become diligent in God's work for the glory of God.

As we live in this world, we must see and think deeply and receive instructions. In Proverbs 24:27-34, we learned three things that we should see and be instructed:

(1) We must prepare ahead of time what we must prepare first.

(2) We must not pay back on false evidence.

(3) The lazy man will become poor. So we must be diligent. I hope and pray that all of us who see and think deeply, humbly receive the instructions from the Lord, and live faithfully according to the instructions received.

## In the presence of God

### [Proverbs 25:1-7]

One of the important life mottos that dominated the life of Calvin, the Reformer in Geneva, Switzerland, was the word “Coram Deo”. Coram Deo is a Latin word for ‘Coram’ or ‘before’ and ‘Deo’ or ‘God’. In English, it means 'in front of God, before the face of God'. This means that we don't see well 'before men (coram hominibus)' and live honorably and well 'before the world (coram mundo)', but rather to live only 'before God (Coram Deo)' seeking the good and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2). This is a summary of the way the Reformers lived under God's authority, in God, in God's name, and glorifying God in the 16th century, when corruption was at its peak. This word was the basis of the five slogans that we put forward by Martin Luther and other reformers: Sola Scriptura (only by word) Sola Fide (only by faith) Sola Gratia (only by grace) Solus Christus (only Christ) Soli Deo Gloria (glory to God) (Internet). ‘For us living today, the true 'Coram Deo life of faith' is keeping the same faith of 'God-centered' - from God's point of view, fearing God who is always in front of me, trusting in God who is always with me, and keeping the same faith not only in front of the Lord but also in front of people (Internet).

In Proverbs 25:5, 6, King Solomon repeats the word “the king’s presence” twice. In the meantime, he is teaching the Israelites what to do before the king. When I think about how to apply the word of this instruction to us, I have come to think that we should apply and put into practice the instruction we received “in front of God,” the King of kings. The reason why it is reasonable to think this way is that King Solomon is comparing God and the kings in verse 2: “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.” What does it mean? First of all, King Solomon said, “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter.” What does it mean? It means God, who has a knowledge that is superior to the knowledge of all, the knowledge that we humans cannot fathom (Ps. 92:5; Eccle. 3:11), whose wonders that we cannot fathom (Job 5:9; Ps. 145:3), and who doesn't need to be counseled by anyone (MacArthur). For example, look at Job 5:9 – “He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted.” Can we fully understand the will of God why God allowed Job to suffer all those things? Can we fully understand God's heart? So the apostle Paul said in Romans 11:33-34: “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?” This reminds me the hymn “Gathered here, within this place” verse 2: “We will live as God has planned, Though at times we may not understand. Many things we may not see, But our faith will help us believe.”

Who can know (find) the heart of God? No one can measure God's judgment. No one can measure the

vastness of God, whose understanding is limitless (Ps. 145:3; Isa. 40:28). Therefore, God hides work. In other words, God has things to Himself. That is God's glory (Prov. 25:2). But what about the king? Why did King Solomon say in the second half of Proverbs 25:2, "... to search out a matter is the glory of kings"? The reason is because the king isn't God but a man, and as a king established by God, in order to properly rule a nation (Israel, God's people), we must search to know what we need to know (MacArthur). An example is King David and his son Solomon. In 1 Chronicles 22:12, King David says to his son Solomon: "May the LORD give you discretion and understanding when he puts you in command over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the LORD your God." Why did the father King David pray that God would give his son Solomon discretion and understanding that is wisdom? This is because he wanted Solomon to succeed him and rule over the nation of Israel. So, after Solomon succeeded his father David as king, at night God appeared to King Solomon and said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you" (2 Chron. 1:7). What was the reason? Why did King Solomon ask God for "wisdom and knowledge" instead of wealth, wealth, riches or honor, for the death of his enemies or long life (v. 11)? The reason was because King Solomon wanted to lead the Israelites, God's people, whom God had entrusted to him to rule (v. 11). In the end, the Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom and knowledge (1 Kgs. 3:10), and God gave him wisdom and discerning heart (v. 12). And King Solomon carefully judged the judgment of the two women with the wisdom God gave him, and the Israelites feared him when they saw that God's wisdom was with King Solomon (v. 28). In this way, King Solomon asked God for wisdom in order to judge God's people well and rule well. In this way, searching out the matter is the glory of kings (Prov. 25:2). King Solomon says, "As the heavens are high and the earth is deep, so the hearts of kings are unsearchable" (v.3). What does it mean? Just as God, the King of kings, doesn't reveal (show) all his knowledge to the king, but hides some, the king hides some knowledge from his people to be unsearchable (Walvoord).

What, then, is King Solomon telling us to do before such a king? I want to learn two lessons. I hope and pray that we will receive these two lessons humbly and will be worthy of God's sight before God, the King of kings.

### **First, we must remove evil before God.**

Look at Proverbs 25:4-5: "Remove the dross from the silver, and out comes material for the silversmith; remove the wicked from the king's presence, and his throne will be established through righteousness." Do you roughly know how to get rid of the dross from silver? We can remove the dross, which are impurities, by putting silver in the furnace and applying high heat. However, it is said that impurities aren't easily removed. Therefore, in order to obtain pure silver, it must be smelted several times with high heat. However, it is said that blacksmiths don't hesitate to do this in order to obtain the pure silver they want (Internet). The Bible Proverbs 17:3 says, "The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart." What does it mean? Just as a blacksmith smelts silver with high heat many times to obtain pure silver, God lets us pass through the "furnace of affliction" (Isa. 48:10) to refine our hearts. In other words, God allows us to go through trials and hardships that are the

furnace of affliction in order to remove these things from us when there are impurities that remain in the flesh and earth like the dross (Internet). A good example is Job from the Old Testament Book of Job. Look at Job 23:10 – “But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.” So why does God let us go through the furnace of affliction to remove the dross from the silver? Look at Proverbs 25:4b – “... out comes material for the silversmith.” What does it mean? It means that the silver is subtracting the dross to make it a usable vessel. In this way, God wants us to pass through the furnace of affliction so that we may eventually come out like pure gold. What is the purpose? Why is God making us like pure gold? Look at 2 Timothy 2:21 – “If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.” The reason is because the Lord cleanses us and prepares us worthy of His use so that we may become vessels that the Lord uses preciously.

In Proverbs 25:5, King Solomon commanded, “remove the wicked from the king's presence ....” What’s the purpose? The purpose is to establish his throne through righteousness” (v. 5). Think about it. What if the evil ones among the king's servants were infested with? Can his throne stand firm? When I watch Korean historical dramas, I often see that the servants are divided into two under a king who seems weak and powerless. In other words, some of them are faithful servants, but there are evil servants who act cunningly to maximize power and control even to restrain the king from governing the country right away. It is said that Confucius has divided the types of disloyal subjects into five categories (Internet): ‘The insidious person who has the opposite mind, the person who is professed with a strong deceptiveness in words, the person whose behavior is one-sided and stubborn, the person who is fool in his will and only has a lot of knowledge, and the person who commits corruption and enjoys only benefits.’ What would happen to the dynasty if these different types of the disloyal people were infested? The king’s power will be cajoled by the old and cunning group of the disloyal people, and corruption will eventually prevail. That’s why King Solomon says “remove the wicked from the king’s presence” (v. 5). And Proverbs 16:12 says, “Kings detest wrongdoing, ....” In other words, a wise king hates evil because he fears God (8:13). Therefore, he listens to and obeys God's word without departing from His word in order to guard against his own doing evil. Not only that, but he doesn't just watch his servants do evil. He removes the evil servants. In particular, he removes the wicked and sneaky among his servants. The reason is because he knows that if he doesn't remove those wicked men, they will be harm to him. And because what is harmful to the king will harm the country, the wise king will firmly root out the wicked ones. Thus, he makes his throne stand firm through justice (16:12). Not only that, the wise king puts his loyal servants next to him to keep his throne strong. And he takes their advice very well. Look at Proverbs 16:13 – “Kings take pleasure in honest lips; they value a man who speaks the truth.” Here, “a man who speaks the truth” or “honest lips” refers to the loyalty. And the loyal servants speak honestly to the king. This means that the wise king puts these loyalists next to him. And he takes their advice. The reason is because the lips of these faithful are “honest lips,” and they speak the truth (v. 13).

When I thought about how this lesson could be applied to us, I thought, ‘We must get rid of evil before

God.’ What evil must we remove before God? One of the evils that we must remove before God is idols. As if in the time of Samuel the Israelites removed their Baals and Ashtaroth and served the Lord only (1 Sam 7:4), we must remove all things we love more than God, whether riches or other things, and serve only God. Also, the evil we must remove before God is the “heart of stone”. In Ezekiel 36:26, God promised, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” (Ref.: Eze 11:19). We must hold on to the word of this promise, pray, and guard against hardening our hearts. In order to do that, we must diligently cultivate our hearts (36:34). We must break our harden hearts with the word of God that is like a hammer and change them into soft hearts. Effort is not easy. Just as we have to water, cut, and pay attention to our lawn, we must strive to wrestle with the word of God in order to break our heart. We must do all this in prayer (32:37). In prayer, we must be ashamed of the sins of our hearts, rely on the blood of Jesus, and keep tender hearts by diligently breaking our hearts like a desolate land. Not only that, we must remove our all our sins before God (Hos. 14:2). With our Lord there is no injustice (2 Chron. 19:7). Therefore, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord must turn away from injustice (2 Tim. 2:19).

### **Second and last, we must not exalt ourselves in the presence of God.**

Look at Proverbs 25:6 – “Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men.” Have you ever seen someone exalting himself in front of you? If so, how would you feel when he does so? When I read an Internet article, it says: ‘I’m very tired when I’m next to someone who exalts himself. Listening to the endless self-praise brings fatigue and sometimes annoyance. ‘Please stop. The desire to tell him to go back to his own island, where he is proud of himself, comes up over my throat’ (Internet). Why do we exalt ourselves in front of other people? Maybe it’s because even though he seems to have a lot of confidence when he exalts himself before people, in reality, he is more timid than anyone, and has no confidence, and has inferiority complex. And maybe it is because he is uneasy and wants to get confirmation and recognition through the mouth of others (Internet). And maybe the reason he exalts himself is because he has lived under pressure without being recognized by people that much (Internet). So why do we exalt ourselves before others? If we look at Proverbs 12:9, this is what the Bible says: “Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant than pretend to be somebody and have no food.” Here, the word “Better to be a nobody” refers to the attitude of a life that is not conscious of others' attention, puts oneself in a humble position and never tries to exalt oneself (1 Sam. 18:23, Delitzsch). To say that he who is regarded as such a low spirit manages a servant means that he has the position and capacity to manage a servant who serves him (Delitzsch). This means that although this person exalts himself, he is better than those who are in need of food, that is, those who are in absolute poverty. Here, exalting himself refers to a person who asserts himself with a proud heart (Fleisher). By looking at these words, we can see the reason why we exalt ourselves in front of others. The reason is the pride of wanting to put oneself in front of others. Wouldn't it be a little funny to want to show other people something as if you own something while you are in absolute poverty without having anything? Although there is not much content, it isn't only impractical to decorate the appearance too much as if there is a lot

of something for people to see, and it isn't edifying to them. This is what Proverbs 30:32 says: "If you have played the fool and exalted yourself, or if you have planned evil, clap your hand over your mouth!" The Bible clearly says that those who exalt themselves are fools. Why are they fools? Look at Psalms 14:1a – "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" The reason why exalt themselves is fool is because they think that there is no God in their hearts. As a result, they don't humble themselves before God, but prefer to exalt themselves before people. Look at Psalms 10:4 – "In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God." After all, it is said that those who exalt themselves before others aren't only fools, but also proud.

In Proverbs 25:6, King Solomon says, "Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men." As I meditated on this word, I remembered two things that I experienced when I was learning ministry in Korea. One was when I followed the senior pastor and assistant pastors to visit a couple to the house. When the senior pastor sat on the sofa, I saw the top assistant pastor sitting next to him and then other assistant pastors in order. Fortunately, I sat on the kitchen table chair at that time. Another thing was while taking pictures of the church pastoral staffs at the main entrance of the church, the senior pastor suddenly told the educational pastor intern who was standing next to him to go over there. Probably, when we were taking pictures, I thought we were standing according to rank. Why is King Solomon saying in Proverbs 25:6, "Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men"? Look at verse 7: "it is better for him to say to you, 'Come up here,' than for him to humiliate you before a nobleman. What you have seen with your eyes." Can you imagine? How much would it be if we were sitting high beside high politicians, and one of those politicians told us, 'This is not your seat, go down there and sit down over there'. Wouldn't you be embarrassed? Rather, it is better to sit down in a lower place by humbling ourselves in front of those politicians, and one of those politicians comes down to us and says, 'Come up here and sit down over here.' A similar lesson in the New Testament is found in Luke 14:8-10: "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests." What do you think?

Among the Korean gospel songs, there is a song "Stand In Awe" and I read the lyrics: 'I stand before the Lord my God, I worship you, my holy Lord. When I kneel before the Lord and seek His face, the Lord who came before me touches me. When I kneel before You and ask for mercy, the Lord who came before me renews me. Your unchanging love, You wash away all my pain and tears. Your hand has held me, and now I rise and worship you' (Internet). On the day of the Lord's return, He will completely remove all our sins, put on us the glorious spiritual body, and lead us to the eternal kingdom of heaven. At that time, we will humbly fall down in front of the throne of the Lord's kingdom and praise God's salvation and victory.

“At the throne of our God we gather And join to praise His holy name Because  
of His great love, God gave His only son Jesus Christ has redeemed us from our  
sins. On the cross, God poured out His love so freely A stream that flows  
forevermore to every tribe and tongue All nations join the song Endless praise  
to salvation’s one true Lord To the Lord of all, who’s seated on the throne  
And to the Lamb of God This saving grace belongs To the Lord of all, who’s  
seated on the throne And to the Lamb of God We cry aloud forevermore”

## When we have a problem to quarrel with our neighbor

### [Proverbs 25:8-10]

How is your relationship with others? Is it okay or are you having a hard time? How should we have relationship with people?

Personally, I think there are blessings in human relationships that the Lord gives. If we love our neighbors as ourselves, according to Jesus' commandments, we will be able to enjoy the Lord's blessings. But if we don't obey His commandments and love our neighbors as ourselves, we will taste the bitter fruit of human relationships. One of those bitter fruits is quarrels.

Why do quarrels arise in relationships? I looked for 7 reasons in the Bible:

(1) It is foolishness.

Look at Proverbs 18:6 – “A fool's lips bring him strife, and his mouth invites a beating.” Look at Proverbs 20:3 – “It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.”

(2) It is greed.

Look at Proverbs 28:25 – “A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts in the LORD will prosper.”

(3) It is hatred.

Look at Proverbs 10:12 – “Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs.”

(4) It is anger.

Look at Proverbs 15:18 – “A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.”

Look at Proverbs 29:22 – “An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.”

Look at Proverbs 30:33 – “For as churning the milk produces butter, and as twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife.”

(5) It is pride.



Look at Proverbs 13:10 – “Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.”

Look at Proverbs 22:10 - “Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended.”

(6) It is perversity.

Look at Proverbs 6:14 – “Who with perversity in his heart continually devises evil, Who spreads strife.”

Look at Proverbs 16:28 – “A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.”

(7) It is pleasure that wage war.

Look at Proverbs 4:1 – “What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?”

How can you make good relationships? Pastor John Maxwell said: ‘If you want others to feel likable and easily accessible, you need to make them comfortable first.’ Then he said that in order to make the other person comfortable, we should have the following 7 characteristics:

(1) Warm heart

The person who makes the other person comfortable is warm and kind. To maintain a comfortable relationship, we need to keep a warm heart. In order to do this, we must feel the warm heart of God ourselves. We must experience the truth that His lovingkindness is better than our lives (Ps. 63:3). We can feel the warmth that subtly oozes from those who have warm heart that is becoming filled with God's lovingkindness.

(2) Respect for individual differences.

We cannot maintain the comfortable relationship with a person who doesn't see the other person's strengths properly and rely only on our own strengths and subtly underlines the other's weaknesses. We won't want to be with someone who wants to give us the impression that someone is wrong in his own selfish standard even though we are just different from each other. We feel comfortable with those who respect each other and try to broaden our understanding among the differences.

(3) Consistency of the mood.

John Maxwell says: ‘... People we have easy access to are always expressing a consistent mood. They are stable and have a predictable state. It's always the same every time we see it, so it's easy to predict what kind of treatment we'll get from them’ (Maxwell). We may feel good or bad several times a day. However, it can be difficult to maintain a truly comfortable relationship if we don't have a sense of security.

(4) Meticulous consideration for the other's feelings.

A comfortable person quickly notices that the other person's mood is different from that of himself and adjusts the reaction accordingly to the person's mood and emotions (Maxwell). One of the ways to get it right is that the comfortable person doesn't listen to our feelings. I think he listens to us with warm heart. I think he is a person who knows how to express his feelings sincerely and appropriately, not listening to us in an absent sort of way but sincerely. In doing so, the other person feels a feeling similar to himself in the person who is comfortable, so that he opens his heart more and more.

(5) A person who freely discloses his flaws.

'No one makes others more uncomfortable than those who always pretend to be perfect' (Maxwell). Somehow, people like this don't smell like a human. We don't feel warmth from a perfectionist who tries to look so perfect. People who aren't honest with themselves can't be honest in human relations. So I think they feel that it is something more formal and mechanical than a comfortable human relationship or a human relationship that feels humanity.

(6) Ability to forgive easily and to seek forgiveness quickly.

'The person we are comfortable with is always humble because he knows human weakness well and reveals his shortcomings without hesitation. Because he is humble, he asks for forgiveness quickly and forgives easily' (Maxwell). I don't think comfortable relationships are achieved because of each other's perfection. I think the comfortable relationships are not forgetting God's forgiving grace and enjoying forgiving each other in the midst of being able to hurt each other due to each other's "limits and weaknesses" and each other's weaknesses and inadequacies.

(7) Honesty.

If we want to maintain the comfortable relationship, we have to be honest. Be honest. We have to have the courage to show ourselves the way we are. What are we afraid of? If we are afraid of how people see us, and if we are worried about what people will say about us, I think it will be difficult to keep our relationships simple, pure, and truthful.

This is what the Bible Proverbs 25:9a says: "If you argue your case with a neighbor, ...." Focusing on this verse, I would like to consider two lessons from the Bible on what to do when we have problems with our neighbor.

**First, when we have problems with our neighbor, we should not go to court hastily.**

Look at Proverbs 25:8 – “do not bring hastily to court, for what will you do in the end if your neighbor puts you to shame?” What does it mean? This means don't sue too hastily when there is a conflict in our relationship with our neighbor. What is the reason? The reason is because we are too hastily to sue our conflicted neighbor, which can lead us to shame our neighbor. Think about it. What happens to the accused person if he fails to win the case after suing too hastily?

Perhaps the most ideal situation is that we have a good relationship with our neighbor, so no quarrels occur. I am sure that is our desirable relationship with our neighbor. Why is it desirable? Why should we have good relationship with our neighbor? The reason is because Jesus commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mt. 19:19, 22:39). But even if we love our neighbor as ourselves, what should we do if our neighbor rejects that love and quarrels with us? What should we do, especially if we didn't do anything wrong and our neighbor sues us? If there are no lawsuits in relation to our neighbors at all, nothing is more desirable than that. But even if we try to live righteously, it is inevitable that, in our social life, it is unavoidable that any matters of lawsuits, voluntary or unintentional, arise. I think we ask the question whether we have to go to the court of the world and always give up and lose money or not. What should we do?

On February 24, 1997, a pastor who led the seminar under the title of ‘Biblical Understanding of Christian Court Cases’ at the 1st ‘Legal Seminar for Reconciliation and Holiness’ held by the Christian Penalty Center at the 100th Anniversary Hall of the Korean Church. When I read the article by that pastor and the lawyer Myung-soo Joo, he mentioned about 13 questions that Christians should ask before they go to court (Internet):

- (1) What would be God's glory about me in this case? (1 Cor. 10:31)
- (2) If I could only live the next 6 months, how much time would I waste on this case? (Ps. 90:12)
- (3) What is my true motive for committing this lawsuit, is it not retaliation? (1 Cor. 13, Mt. 5:38-48)
- (4) Does my lawsuit dishonor God's glory before other believers, or can I tell the story of my lawsuit in front of other believers without hesitation? (Rom. 14:13, 1 Tim 4:12)
- (5) Does my lawsuit dishonor God in front of unbelievers, or is my lawsuit hindering them from accepting the gospel? (1 Corinthians 6:1-8, 10:32-33)
- (6) Does my lawsuit dishonor God's glory in front of the other person, in front of the other's lawyer, or in front of my lawyer? (Rom.15:1-3)

- (7) Can I testify to the gospel to unbelievers while in this case?
- (8) Can I pray to God to help me win this case?
- (9) Wouldn't my lawsuit result in harm to an innocent third party? (Mk. 9:42)
- (10) Can I do my best for my family, my housekeeping, and myself while in this case?
- (11) Were other solutions appropriate? (a) Was forgiveness appropriate? (b) Reconciliation and compromise were appropriate end? (c) Have you ever met the other person and heard his opinion? (d) Have you ever looked for an attorney or other mediator to help you with the reconciliation?
- (12) Have I ever been so zealous to reconcile or forgive as much as to assert my right? (Mt. 6:12-15)
- (13) Will I do my best to uncover the truth, and will I cleanly surrender to the result judged accordingly?

About three years ago (Nov. 2011), I meditated on the word of 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 under the heading 'Is it okay to sue?' According to Roman law at the time of the apostle Paul, the Jews allowed their disputes to be settled among themselves by arbitration (Hodge). So for a long time the Jews settled their disputes privately or in a synagogue court. And they refused to bring their problems to the pagan court. The reason for this is because the Jews considered taking their problems to a pagan court as an indication of the inability of God to solve the problems of His people by His biblical principles (MacArthur). Nevertheless, in solving their problems, the Christians of the Corinthian church didn't solve their problems before God and the saints with the biblical principles of God. Rather, it was a lawsuit in front of unbelievers and unrighteous people who didn't believe in Jesus (v. 1). So, in shock and grief, Paul said, "How can it be?" "How dare you sue each other?" (v. 1) What was Paul concerned about? It wasn't because the members of the Corinthian church will face an unfair trial in the courts of the world. Paul's concern was that the members of the Corinthian church didn't show much respect for the authority and power of the church (MacArthur). That is why Paul told the members of the Corinthian church: "I say this to your shame Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren" (v. 5). What does it mean? Paul said that it would be a shame to try to solve the problem not between brothers in the church, but by taking a lawsuit in the courts of the world outside the church.

You are, as the Apostle Paul's concern, that we Christians now have little respect for the authority and power of the church. If we respect the authority and power of the church, how do we bring the disputes of the

church to the courts of the world and fight each other by lawsuit? Now, aren't we taking the disputes in the church as well as the disputes within the presbytery to the courts of the world and fighting with each other in lawsuits? We should be ashamed. Now, we must be ashamed of family matters, church matters, and none of us who are wise among us, leaving the courts of the world with unbelievers and lawyers. We should no longer do things that are shameful. We should no longer be doing things that will be criticized by the world. We should no longer do things that are ashamed of the world. We should no longer sue our neighbor too hastily when we have a problem that would quarrel with our neighbor.

**Second and last, when we have problems with our neighbor, we should settle quietly between the two.**

I think the closest of our neighbors is our spouse. However, we may have enough problems to quarrel with our closest spouse. What should we do then? My personal opinion is that marriage quarrels should be resolved by the couple themselves. However, sometimes the couple quarrels and becomes emotional, and makes the problem bigger by involving a third party. The couple shouldn't do this. The third person I'm thinking of here could be a parent, but I think especially of our children. How would it affect our children if we quarrel and intervene with our children? It will never be able to make a good impact to them.

Look at Proverbs 25:9 – “If you argue your case with a neighbor, do not betray another man's confidence.” King Solomon is telling us to settle quietly between the two and not to divulge any other secrets if there is a problem that would quarrel with our neighbor. If we think about the word that tells us to settle quietly between the two, in connection with the words of verse 8, it means that when two people quarrel, we should not bring the problem to the courtroom, but the two should solve it quietly. When I thought of this lesson, the word “settlement” came to my mind. Before going to court because of a lawsuit, if we can settle the matter quietly, we will agree with the complainant and the accused person outside the courtroom. In particular, in verse 9, King Solomon tells us to quietly settle the problem between the two when there is the problem with our neighbor, and says, “do not betray another man's confidence.” When two people quarrel, who betray another man's confidence? Look at Proverbs 11:13 and 20:19 – “A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret” (11:13), “A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much” (20:19). The Bible says that it is “a man who talks too much” who betrays the confidence. The lesson that these words teach us is that if we have argue our case with our neighbor, then we must be careful with our words if that neighbor is the one who talks too much. I think we shouldn't show all the sincerity in our hearts.

So why did King Solomon tell us not to betray other person's confidence (secret matter) when we are with our neighbor? Why is the Bible telling us not to betray his confidence when we have a quarrelsome problem? The reason is written in Proverbs 25:10 – “or he who hears it may shame you and you will never lose your bad

reputation.” The reason is because if we betray someone else's confidence when we quarrel, the person who listens to that other's secret will embarrass us and as a result our reputation will be bad. This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘Why do we be ashamed when we betray someone’s confidence? The reason is because the principle is to speak only to solve the problem of the dispute. However, aside from that problem, it is a personal attack to talk about the other's secret shortcomings. Anytime a personal attack is not meant to defy the truth, it is a vulgar act. Even though the other's secret work belongs to his private matter, it is rude to invade it. Throughout his life, he has been embarrassed by his words, and it is difficult to escape the hatred of the other person. Therefore, when we inevitably quarrel, we must calmly testify to the problem only’ (Park). I think it makes sense. When we quarrel, we should not talk (leak) about other people's secrets. Rather we should only talk to solve the problem of the dispute. I think there are times when we can't do that. When we think about why, I think one of the reasons is because we cannot focus on solving the problem of our quarrels and focus only on that problem. So we think that the other person caused the problem. That's why I think it's a personal attack on that person. And the reason why we personally attack the other person is because we have “desires that battle within us” (Jam. 4:1).

We must fight the desires that battle within us. Look at 1 Peter 2:11 – “Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.” We must fight the desires of the flesh that fight against our souls. One of the desires of the body is the desires to to battle within us. Therefore, we must fight these fighting desires within us and overcome them. Then, when we fight or quarrel with our neighbors, we should try to quietly solve the problem as two people. We should never betray other people's confidence. Therefore, we must be people with good reputation for others.

While we live in this land, it would be nice to always be in harmony with everyone. But I think it's impossible. The reason is because all of us have a sinful instinct. That’s why there are times when we quarrel with other people in conflict. So what should we do when we have a problem with our neighbor? In Proverbs 25:8-10, we learned two lessons. First of all, we must not sue our neighbor too hastily. Also, when we have the problem that would quarrel with our neighbor, we must quietly settle between us. I hope and pray that all of us who humbly receive and obey these two lessons and are well able to do the work of reconciling our relationships with our neighbor.

## A word spoken in right circumstances

### [Proverbs 25:11-15]

At some point, a pastor in Korea asked me to find out if there are any books on “etiquette” in the United States. The reason he asked me this way was because he thought that we Christians seemed to lack basic etiquette. So he was interested in writing a book about Christian etiquette. It was interesting to me that he was going to write such a book at that time. The reason for this is because, not only myself, but probably most of us Christians don’t regard Christian etiquette very seriously. At the same time, I thought that we need it when he said that he was going to write such a book. On the contrary, I thought that we should be more etiquette than non-Christians, so it was necessary that such a book should be released to stimulate all of us.

Dr. Young-sook Lee, the head of the ‘Good Tree Character School,’ said in a column titled ‘Education for children in immigrant society’, ‘Etiquette is character’, and that teaching children etiquette early on is teaching respect for others (Internet). She said in that column that parents teach and help their children to have good thoughts when they are young and that their thoughts can be tamed into good habits, and grow up with good character is the most important ministry of all else. She said that it is to teach them good character to make sure that their behavior is expressed in good etiquette to others. First, she mentioned 5 etiquettes that should be held in general, regardless of time and place. Two of them are ‘Don’t deliberately say bad things or swear to others’ and ‘Don’t speak badly or gossip about others.’

I saw again that I posted something like this on my personal blog on February 12th, 2014 in ‘A few words to share;’ ‘Although I have to think about what to say to a loved one, when and how, I also have to think about what not to say anything for that person.’ But when I read this post again, the thought that hit me in my head was, ‘Ah ... I shouldn’t have said that to that person.’ In other words, I came to realize that I was unable to live by practicing what I wrote.

When we read the Bible, there are a lot of word about ‘words’, especially in Proverbs. To give some examples: “A fool’s lips bring him strife, and his mouth invites a beating” (18:6), “The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil” (15:28), “When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise” (10:19), “If you argue your case with a neighbor, do not betray another man’s confidence” (25:9). Among those words, I like Proverbs 15:23 – “A man finds joy in giving an apt reply-- and how good is a timely word!” The reason I like this word is because I have experienced many times in my life that the Holy Spirit

works on the other person's heart because the Holy Spirit makes my lips to say “a timely word”, that is, the words that are right at the right time. Especially, since the indwelling Holy Spirit reminds me of the word of God, there were times when I spoke the word of God to the other person and that word comforted the other person. Also, I have experienced many times the work of the Holy Spirit piercing the other person’s conscience so that he or she repents his or her sin. So I think that “a timely word” and the words that are right at the right time are very important as Proverbs 15:23 says.

Even in today's text Proverbs 25:11, King Solomon speaks of “a word aptly spoken” or “a word spoken in right circumstances”: “Like apples of gold in settings of silver Is a word spoken in right circumstances.” What does it mean? Here, the Hebrew word for “right circumstances” means “wheel”, which means ‘spinning in good control in the circumstances at that time’ (Park). In other words, at that time, the appropriate word that is well controlled in the circumstances has a great value like apples of gold in settings of silver. I would like to receive lessons from Proverbs 25:11-15 with three kinds of words that are spoken in right circumstances (timely words).

### **First, the word spoken in right circumstances is a wise man’s rebuke.**

Look at Proverbs 25:12 – “Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear.” Do you like to listen to praise or rebuke? Of course our nature wants to listen to praise. I am sure nobody likes to listen to rebuke. Our sinful old nature never wants to be rebuked; rather, it wants to be praised. Personally, I have a question about raising children in the Korean way in the days of my parents. That question is the Chinese word ‘Joo-ma-ga-pyun’ (走馬加鞭), which means “whipping an already galloping horse” or “urging (a person) to further efforts” (Naver dictionary). I still don't fully understand why a person needs to whip a horse more which runs well. This is my father’s generation’s method of raising us. But shouldn’t the person stroke the horse if the horse runs well? I think I am more used to how American parents are raising their children. The American parenting of children I'm talking about here specifically refers to the praising or encouraging their children by parents. But what if that praise was just a pretense or a mischievous thing without love? But if rebuke is done because the other person loves you, do you think listening to that rebuke is better than hearing such praise? If we look at Proverbs 27:6, the Bible says about ‘rebuke’: “Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.” While meditating on this verse before, I wrote two short writings like these on my blog: ‘I would like to yearn for a word of rebuke that speaks with love rather than million words of praise that are without love’ and ‘True friendship in the Lord is humbly receiving even the painful rebuke of a friend.’ In fact, it hurts more to be rebuked by the friend we love than to be rebuked by someone we don't know that well. However, the Bible says that the wounds from such a beloved friend can be trusted.

In Proverbs 25:12, the Bible says, “Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear.” If we think about this verse in connection with verse 11, the Bible says that timely



(appropriate) rebuke is of great value to those who obey it, such as “an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold”. When I think of these words, I think that not only the person who gives timely rebuke is a wise person, but also the person who obeys it is a wise person. First of all, I think that the wise person is the one who gives the right rebuke in the right time because I think that it is impossible to do so without God’s given wisdom. In other words, without wisdom we can not give the right rebuke in the right situation and at the right time. Dr. Yoon-sun Park gave four advices, saying that the adviser should consider various things when speaking to the other person and adjust it well: (1) The person giving advice must speak when he has love and peace. (2) He must not speak in a humiliating manner. (3) He must not speak hastily. (4) He must not speak without courtesy (Park). But in reality, when I think about whether I speak when I have love and peace when I rebuke someone I love, or whether I am speaking hastily, I think I sometimes speak emotionally and too quickly. However, I think the person who listens to the rebuke humbly and well is also a wise person. The reason I think so is that it is our nature that we don’t want to hear even the right words of rebuke without the wisdom that God gives us through His grace. If we look at Proverbs 9:7-8, the reason we don’t listen to God’s rebuke of wisdom is because we are arrogant. That arrogance leads to contempt and rejection of the teachings and rebukes of the truth. And that arrogance is making us hear the sound of foolishness and temptation of the world too quickly. In the end, without the wisdom God gives us, we refuse to listen, no matter how rightly rebuke people speak to us.

I think of David when I think of a man who humbly listened to rebuke. Look at Psalms 141:5 – “Let a righteous man strike me--it is a kindness; let him rebuke me--it is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it. Yet my prayer is ever against the deeds of evildoers.” In the midst of his hardships, David not only didn’t reject the rebuke of the righteous, but he considered it grace. How is this possible? Isn’t it true that our nature wants to be comforted when we face difficulties and are suffering? I think it’s because David had humility and wisdom. David humbled his heart before God in prayer with his eyes fixed on the Lord, and he didn’t reject the rebuke of the righteous, but regarded it as grace. In Ecclesiastes 7:5, King Solomon says that the whipping of the wise is better than the praise (encouragement) of the fool. Look at Ecclesiastes 7:5 – “It is better to heed a wise man’s rebuke than to listen to the song of fools.” Here, King Solomon’s “the song of fools” refers to ‘the false consolation of the wicked’ (Park). King Solomon is telling us to guard against the false comforts of the wicked. Why should we guard against the false comforts of the wicked? The reason is because the laughter of fools that is like the crackling of thorns under the pot is meaningless (v. 6). In a word, the reason we must guard against the song of fools, the false comfort of the wicked, is because it is meaningless. We should prefer to listen to rebuke such as the whip of wisdom than to the false and vain consolation of the wicked. The reason is because it will be painful at the time when we feel remorse for being right with the words of the whip, but later it will be a good medicine for our hearts and our lives.

Professor Seyoon Kim of Fuller Theological Seminary said this in his book, ‘Lecture on 1 Corinthians’: ‘In the end, neither human criticism nor praise is due to ‘prejudice’, which means that it is meaningless. What really matters is God’s judgment and God’s praise at the final judgment. ... Therefore, the preachers of the gospel must

not be shaken from side to side by the criticism or praise of the congregation, but must be absolutely faithful to Christ as servants of Christ. In addition, the members of the church must realize that the judge of all of us is God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and refrain from our human judgments, where we can only judge by looking at our appearances' (Kim). What do you think of this statement? I fully agree with Professor Seyoon Kim's statement that "neither human criticism nor praise is due to 'prejudice', which means that it is meaningless." I also agree with his statement "What really matters is God's judgment and God's praise at the final judgment." In particular, when it comes to rebuke, we humbly listen to the timely rebuke of the wise person more than anyone else. And it is necessary to think deeply at least once, 'Maybe the Lord rebukes me through that wise person.' Furthermore, we must listen to the words of God the Holy Spirit who rebuke our sins by His holy word (Eph. 5:11). This is because God's rebuke is profitable for our souls (2 Tim. 3:16). What is the profit? Because we are rebuked by God, we are repented and turned and corrected even while walking in the path of sin. I hope and pray that we will be rebuked and repent, so that we can walk the path of righteousness.

**Second, the word spoken in right circumstances is those of the faithful who refresh the heart of the Lord.**

In hot summer weather, one of the things I care about at my house is to take drinking water from an empty bottle and put it in the refrigerator. The reason I do it is because I want to drink cold water. So I get water from 4 or 5 bottles and put them in the refrigerator. However, many times when I go home and open the refrigerator to drink cold water, there are many times when there are no cold water bottles. The reason is because all three of my children drink. Haha. I am sure they also want to drink cold water in hot summer. So I used to hide a bottle of water in the refrigerator drawer. But now I gave up a little because it's ridiculous to see some of the children find and drink it. Haha. The problem is that children don't take water from an empty bottle after drinking water from a water purifier and put it in the refrigerator. Of course, the youngest Karis sometimes takes water from an empty bottle like me and puts it in the refrigerator. Even though the weather is a little cold, I put water in the bottle and put it in the refrigerator. The reason is because I still want to drink cold water.

Look at Proverbs 25:13 – "Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest Is a faithful messenger to those who send him, For he refreshes the soul of his masters." In Proverbs 25:5, King Solomon says, "remove the wicked from the king's presence." The wise king fears God and hates evil (8:13; 16:12). He doesn't depart from God's word to guard against his own evildoing, but listens to and obeys the word of God. Not only that, but he doesn't just watch his servants do evil. He removes the evil servants. In particular, he removes the wicked and cunning among his servants. The reason is because he knows that if he doesn't remove those wicked men, they will harm him. And because what is harmful to the king will harm the country, the wise king resolutely eliminates the wicked servants. Thus, he makes his throne stand firm through justice (16:12). Not only that, the wise king puts his faithful servants next to him to keep his throne strong. And he takes their advice very well. Look at Proverbs 16:13 – "Kings take

pleasure in honest lips; they value a man who speaks the truth.” Here, “a man who speaks the truth” or “honest lips” refers to the loyalty. And that loyalty means to speak the truth honestly to the king. This means that the wise king puts these loyalists next to him. And that means he listens to their advice.

In Proverbs 25:13, King Solomon speaks of “a trustworthy messenger”. The Bible says that this trustworthy messenger refreshes the spirit of his masters like the coolness of snow at harvest time. Here, the Hebrew word for “Like the coolness of snow” should be translated ‘It is like ice cold water at harvest time’. It is said that the harvest time is the hottest in Palestine (Park). At that time, the cold of snow can refresh a person, and the faithful messenger refreshes the heart of the master like this. How, then, will the trustworthy messenger refresh the heart of the master who sent him? Since he fulfills his mission for the master, the trustworthy messenger can greatly please and refresh the heart of the master (Park). Here, when we say that the mission is accomplished, the person who is sent will fulfill the will of the master who sent him. In the Bible, there are several trustworthy messengers who have fulfilled their mission, faithfully fulfilling the will of the master who sent them. I would like to give two examples. One is the chief servant in Abraham’s household, the one in charge of all Abraham had in Genesis chapter 24:2. As his master Abraham commanded, he went to Abraham's hometown, Abraham's clan, and chose Rebekah (Gen. 24:15), for Isaac, the son of Abraham (vv. 3-4), and brought her (v. 61) in order to become Isaac's wife. In this way, the old servant of Abraham obeyed his master's command and refreshed Abraham’s heart by fulfilling his master Abraham's will. Another example is Timothy, Paul's spiritual son in 1 Thessalonians 3:4-10. Timothy was sent to Thessalonica (church) by the apostle Paul, his spiritual father (v. 6). The reason was because Paul could stand it no longer and wanted to find out about the Thessalonian church saints’ faith and that he was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted them and his and his coworkers’ efforts might have been useless and “so that no one would be unsettled by these trials” (vv. 3, 5). Timothy, who was sent, faithfully fulfilled his mission, returned to Paul, and delivered the good news of the faith and love of the Thessalonian church saints (v. 6). And Timothy said that the Thessalonica church saints always thought well of Paul and his co-workers and wanted to see them earnestly (v. 6), and he comforted Paul by telling them their faith (v. 7). Look at 1 Thessalonians 3:8-9: “For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?” Timothy, who was sent in this way, comforted and pleased Paul, who sent Timothy to the church in Thessalonica. He was the trustworthy messenger who refreshed his spiritual father Paul’s heart (Prov. 25:13).

Like this, the trustworthy messenger who refreshes the heart of the Lord never boasts falsely. Look at Proverbs 25:14 – “Like clouds and wind without rain Is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely.” What does it mean? It means that the rainless clouds and wind seem to pour out of the rain right now, but in the end, as if it doesn't rain, they boast only the words, and don't give a gift, so they are discouraged. When we apply this meaning to the trustworthy messenger in verse 13, it means that the trustworthy messenger is never such an insincere and disloyalty that he doesn't act in false boasting. It also means that he never discourages his master. Rather, the trustworthy

messenger doesn't boast of lies, but sincerely puts into practice what has been promised to his master. A good example is Abraham's chief servant in Genesis 24. He put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham (v. 2), and swore that he would not get a wife for Isaac from the daughters of the Canaanites but would go to Abraham's country and Abraham's own relatives and get a wife for Isaac (vv.3-4). And he did as he swore and did as his master Abraham told him to do and brought Rebekah as Isaac's wife. In this way, the trustworthy messenger doesn't speak only with words, but puts the oath (or pledge) to the master into practice, and fulfills the mission entrusted to him, thereby refreshing the master's heart.

It is Jesus who was sent to this earth who refreshed the heart of the sender the most. Jesus is the one who refreshed the heart of our Heavenly Father, and pleased Him the most. So Heavenly Father said to Jesus, "... You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (Mk. 1:11). We too must be those who please our Lord. We must also be those who refresh the heart of the Lord who sent us to this world. In order to do that, we must be faithful to the Lord (2 Tim. 2:2). And the Bible 1 Corinthians 4:2 says, "In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy." I hope and pray that all of us can refresh the heart of the Lord by faithfully fulfilling the mission that the Lord gave each of us by His grace.

**Third and last, the word spoken in right circumstances is soft words that are persuasive.**

Do you have a "soft tongue"? Do you speak soft words? Or do you sometimes say harsh words? This is what Proverbs 15:1 says: "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Can you imagine that even though you have to calm the other person's anger with soft words, but you speak harsh words to the angry man as if you are pouring gasoline in the fire? How would that angry man react to you? This is what the Bible Proverbs 15:18 says: "A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel." If we are in a hurry and get angry easily, we are bound to quarrel. The reason is because we cannot restrain our mouths in anger, and speak the harsh words carelessly that hurt others (15:4). So we need to close our mouths a little when we are angry. In other words, when we are angry, we need to refrain from speaking. The reason is because if we fail to manage our feelings of anger, the words from our mouths can be harsh. Therefore, we should be slow to speak when we are angry because we can hurt the other person's heart (Jam. 1:19).

I have a lot of thoughts that I am doing wrong about the words that come out of my mouth these days. I think I shouldn't have said something rather than I didn't say something well. I remember the phrase 'You have to use your three inches tongue well'. It means that the tongue is that the words that come out of a short tongue are so important that life goes back and forth. Of course, even if what I say with my short tongue isn't enough to tell the other person's life to go back and forth, I think I shouldn't underestimate the result of what comes out of my short tongue. This is what the Bible James 3:5 says: "Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great

boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.” The words from our tongue can hurt, frustrate, and disappoint other people. Nowadays, even on the Internet, in some cases, a single word that people say inadvertently (because they leave a message on the Internet) causes the other person to take his or her own life. If so, how important is a word from us Christians who believe in Jesus? The Bible Proverbs 18:21 says: “The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”

Look at Proverbs 25:15 – “By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded, And a soft tongue breaks the bone.” Proverbs 25:15 urges us to speak soft words. What is the reason? The reason is because the soft tongue can break the bone. What does it mean? How can the soft tongue break the bone? This means that the soft tongue can do hard work (Walvoord). So what can the soft tongue do? It can persuade a ruler. Here, the word “a ruler” refers to a high-ranking official, such as a judge. So, the meaning of today's text is that a person who demands a correct judgment from an unrighteous judge is easy to resent because of the judge's negligence. But if he keeps a meek attitude until the end, the judge will be moved (Park). How is this possible? How can we turn the heart of an unrighteous judge with our soft tongue? It is possible with patient persuasion (v. 15).

Let us turn others' hearts with patient persuasion. Let us turn the other person's heart with our soft tongues and gentle words. May we all be able to change the other person's heart with persuasive and soft words, which are the word spoken in right circumstances.

## **We should control ourselves.**

### **[Proverbs 25:16-28]**

In 2 Timothy 3:3, the Bible says that “There will be terrible times in the last days” (v. 1) and “People” (v. 2) are “without self-control” (v. 3). And indeed, even now we Christians are unable to control ourselves and are doing the acts of the sinful nature according to the desires of the sinful nature that is contrary to the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:17, 19). Among the acts of the sinful nature there are “sexual immorality”, “dissensions”, “jealousy”, “fits of rage”, “selfish ambition”, “discord”, “envy”, “drunkenness” and “orgies” (vv. 19-21) seems to stand out among us. The reason is because we aren’t under the control of the Holy Spirit. In other words, we are now doing the acts of the sinful nature because we aren’t filled with the Holy Spirit. That is why the Bible Galatians 5:16 tells us, “... live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.” So what is the life of living by the Holy Spirit? It is to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit by being filled with the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (vv. 22-23). I would like to think about “self-control” in particular here. The reason is because in Proverbs 25:28, King Solomon says: “Like a city that is broken into and without walls Is a man who has no control over his spirit.” Today, I would like to receive nine lessons that the Bible teaches us to refrain from, under the heading “We should control ourselves” based on Proverbs 25:16-28.

### **First, we should control eating.**

Look at Proverbs 25:16 – “Have you found honey? Eat only what you need, That you not have it in excess and vomit it.” What is overeating? Isn't it consumption of food in excess of a certain amount? When we overeat, it can cause obesity or vomiting (Internet). Korean Internet Health Chosun suggests ‘Useful to know ... Here are 9 ways to change your overeating habits’ (Internet):

#### **(1) Let’s start with an appetizer 12 minutes before a meal.**

When we eat full food, leptin, an appetite suppressing hormone that makes us feel full in the body, is released. This hormone signals our appetite center, and when we feel full, we stop eating. It takes at least 12 minutes for leptin to be released to signal a feeling of satiety in the appetite center. Before a full-fledged meal, we should use a light appetizer to speed up the secretion of leptin. If we induce the secretion of leptin in advance, we can quickly feel full when we eat and reduce the amount of food we eat.

(2) Let's prevent leptin resistance.

When overeating becomes a habit, the human body becomes insensitive to leptin signals and becomes leptin-resistant. In this case, even if a large amount of leptin is secreted, the body cannot accept the satiety signal and eats a lot and becomes obese. In fact, people who are obese have higher levels of leptin than those who are not. There are also foods that increase leptin resistance. Sweet foods such as soda and sweets are typical. Stress also leads to leptin resistance. We should pay attention to our usual food control and should avoid building up stress.

(3) Let's increase 'fuel efficiency' with exercise.

Even if we eat the same amount of food, our ability to convert nutrients into energy varies from person to person. To increase the efficiency of converting nutrients into energy, we need to exercise consistently. Exercise improves the functioning of our mitochondria in our cells. Mitochondria are energy power plants that convert nutrients into energy.

(4) Let's boost the secretion of serotonin.

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter in the brain. When it is insufficient, negative changes occur in the body. They become violent, depressed, and increase their appetite, leading to binge eating disorders. Conversely, increased serotonin secretion leads to positive changes in the body. Our body functions smoothly, our mood improves, and our appetite is suppressed. So, let's prevent overeating by promoting the secretion of serotonin. To stimulate the production of serotonin, frequent sun exposure, deep breathing, walking, or listening to bright music is recommended. Deliberately imagine a pleasing picture and chew at least 30 times before swallowing. We should not forget our protein intake. Protein is the main ingredient for various hormones such as serotonin and endorphin.

(5) Let's focus only on our meals at mealtime.

When we do other things, such as watching TV or the newspaper while eating, our brain isn't clearly aware of the eating behavior and we feel hungry quickly. On the other hand, we can prevent overeating by focusing on food so that the brain can recognize it.

(6) Let's start with foods that have a low glycemic index.

The order in which food is eaten is also important. Vegetables rich in fiber, vitamins and minerals are eaten first, and foods containing carbohydrates or fats are eaten last. Vegetables feel full quickly and last a long time, which has the effect of reducing the amount of food we eat next. The next nutrient to eat after

vegetables is protein. Protein helps keep us full longer and increases muscle mass than carbohydrates or fats of the same size.

(7) Let's have small plates and large ingredients.

Let's use visual effects. When the ingredients are cut into a small plate, the food looks more than it actually is.

(8) Let's set the amount before eating.

If the food is delicious, we will eat more without our knowledge. To prevent overeating, let's decide how much to eat. If the goal is 2/3 of the rice, the other 1/3 is put in another bowl beforehand and eaten. If we want to eat less than others, we will chew for a long time to keep pace with our meal. But the chewing exercise promotes saliva secretion and helps digestion.

(9) Let's look at the psychological factors.

There are times when we overeat or binge when we're angry or depressed. It is important to check whether we are currently eating because we are hungry or to forget certain emotions. If we overeat for psychological reasons, we need to find an activity to replace food. If we have a habit of overeating when we're angry, we can make an appointment with ourselves in advance, saying, 'I should call a friend or go to the sauna next time I'm angry.' Exercise or our favorite hobbies are also good alternatives. When psychological problems are solved by overeating, the vicious cycle continues. We may become obese, lose confidence in our appearance, and feel defeated. If it is difficult to stop overeating caused by psychological problems, let's find an expert for consultation.

In Proverbs 25:16, King Solomon says, "Have you found honey? Eat only what you need, That you not have it in excess and vomit it." Here, King Solomon is telling us to eat enough honey if we see it, but not to overeat it. We have already meditated on "honey" in Proverbs 24:13 – "Eat honey, my son, for it is good; honey from the comb is sweet to your taste." King Solomon tells us to eat honey, especially honey from the comb, because it is sweet to our taste. And we also thought about why honey is good for the body. As an example, according to Hu-Joon's "Dong-uibogam" (Principles and Practice of Eastern Medicine) it is said that honey regulates blood sugar levels to eliminate body fatigue, and has calcium and magnesium. So it is very effective in insomnia, neuralgia, arthritis, and is good for various inflammations (Internet). In Proverbs 25:16, King Solomon told us to eat enough honey because it is good for us, but not to overeat it. That is, he is telling us not to overeat because "It is not good to eat much honey" (v. 27). In other words, he is telling us to refrain from eating. No matter how good it is for the body, excessive consumption doesn't make the body healthy, but rather harms the body. So the important thing is to



eat “only what you need” (v. 16). ‘Eating only healthy foods doesn’t mean we can live a long, healthy life. An obsession with well-being can cause stress. It is necessary to find a sense of balance for what we must eat while enjoying our favorite food in moderation. Professor Taeseon Park of the Department of Food and Nutrition at Yonsei University said, ‘There is no need to distinguish between good food and bad food. If we don't eat too much, it's also important to get mental satisfaction from eating foods that aren't good for our body sometimes. Defining cola and donuts as junk food and avoiding them unconditionally or obsessing with calories considering obesity can induce disaster. If we like food that is bad for our body, eat it in moderation. It's better to eat something we don't want to eat because it's good for our body. Food isn't just a filling, it is a pleasure’ (Internet).

Therefore, we must enjoy the food. We must practice the habit of refraining and moderation. No matter how healthy the body is, I hope and pray that we can enjoy moderate eating without overeating.

### **Second, we should control pursuing only our own honor.**

Look at Proverbs 25:27 – “It is not good to eat too much honey, nor is it honorable to seek one's own honor.” What is “honor”? In the Essence Korean Dictionary, honor is interpreted like this (Internet): (1) A name that is said to be wonderful in the world (Ex.) To restore honor. (2) Awareness of moral dignity or moral dignity being approved, respected, and praised. (3) A person's social evaluation or value. (4) A title that is written on words that indicate a position or title, and is given to pay homage to that person, and to praise his merit. (Ex.) Honorary President / Honorary Citizen. Pastor Man-Pung Kim defined honor like this (Internet): ‘Honor is 'a glorious name that gives glory to God and receives love, respect, and praise from people by pursuing good works for righteous purposes in the right way.’ The Bible Proverbs 22:1 says, “A good name is to be more desired than great wealth, Favor is better than silver and gold.” The Bible tells us to choose good name and favor more than silver or gold or a lot of wealth.

When I thought of “honor” and “favor,” I remembered the man named Noah in Genesis. The Bible Genesis 6:8 says, “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.” Also, the Bible says, “Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God” (v. 9). I hope and pray that my three children, Dillon, Sophie, and Karis, to become those who are favored by God like Noah. Therefore, I hope and pray that they have good names that God knows and recognizes.

We must live well in order to die well. So what does it mean to live well? How can I know how well I am living? It seems that whether or not we have lived well for a lifetime is evaluated only after we die. Can we tell how well we have lived? We can tell by thinking of our names. In other words, at the funeral after death, if people think about or not praise our names, we can see how we lived our lives. The old saying goes that everyone has three names: (1) A name given by our parents, (2) One others call us, and (3) One we acquires ourselves. What is the name we are acquiring? We have to think about whether we are truly people who believe in Jesus and is praised not

only by God but also by people because of living a righteous life. This is what the Bible Proverbs 10:7 says: “The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot.” The name of the righteous is said to be praised when commemorating after death. That name is a blessed name. To borrow the words of Ecclesiastes 7:1, it is a good name. King Solomon says that this beautiful name is better than “a good ointment”. A beautiful name is more precious than the wealth of the world.

By the way, in Proverbs 25:27, King Solomon says, “It is not good to eat too much honey, nor is it honorable to seek one's own honor.” There is one thing we need to point out here. That is, there are two kinds of honor. We need to distinguish between these two kinds of honor. One is “desire for honor”. This desire is a gift from God with appetite, desire to sleep, and sexual desire. If the result is to glorify God and to edify our neighbors, then our desire for honor is just and desirable (Ref. Deut. 26:19-19). However, “greed for honor,” which pursues self-honor by making honor itself a purpose, regardless of means or method, is that we should always be on the lookout. In Proverbs 25:27, King Solomon tells us that it isn't honorable to seek one's own honor. It is meaningless. Why do we fall into greed for honor? Among those who have fallen into greed of honor, they are unable to resolve their frustrations because they don't receive recognition from people who have had an important influence on them, such as parents, siblings, teachers, friends, etc. It is said that people who have been around are often found. If we look at the self-portraits of people in greed of honor, we find that the sense of inferiority and the sense of superiority are colored. Therefore, we compare our position with others and are very sensitive to the attitudes and actions others treat us. Envy and jealousy are hiding. It is shaded by anger and complaining.

What, then, should we do if we are free from greed for honor? To escape from greed of honor, we have to reflect our self-portrait in the mirror of God's word and rectify the wrong part. When we walk in the faith, hope, and love in Christ Jesus on the path of pursuing in a good way, not for honor itself, but for the glory of God and pursuing things that fit His will, then praise, honor, and glory will be our reward of God's grace (Internet).

### **Third, we should control going to the neighbor's house.**

Look at Proverbs 25:17 – “Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house-- too much of you, and he will hate you.” What do you think of your neighbors coming to your house often? How would you respond if you were happy the first few times, but you are also busy and difficult, and your neighbors keep coming to your house often? No matter how close you are, going house too often can be a nuisance to your friend. In Proverbs 25:17, King Solomon is telling us not to go to neighbors often. The Bible tells us to love our neighbors. In order to love our neighbors, shouldn't we meet often and often go house and spend time together? It is never a bad thing to visit a neighbor's house when it comes to loving neighbors. It is rather good. It is good for us to build friendships through close fellowship as we come and go to our neighbor's house. But in verse 17, the word we need to watch out for is “too much of you”. In other words, it is good to go to the neighbor's house, but don't do that because going

“frequently” is a nuisance to the neighbor. As honey is good, but eating too much can be bad for our health, it’s good to go to a neighbor’s house, but going too often can be bad.

Today's text Proverbs 25:17 literally means 'make your foot (step) valuable.' What can we do to make our steps valuable? We shouldn't overdo in setting our foot in our neighbor’s house. Also, we shouldn't go to the neighbor's house and overstay too long (Murphy). What is the reason? The reason is said in the second half of verse 17: “... and he will hate you.” In other words, the reason we shouldn't go to our neighbors often is because otherwise our neighbor will get bored with us and hate us. Therefore, it may be better for us to go to our neighbor's house infrequently rather than often. This is one of the ways to make our steps valuable. I would like to call this the 'principle of rarity'. The Bible Knowledge commentary says: “A person should refrain from frequently visiting his neighbor, to avoid being a nuisance, but he should visit enough so that his visits are valued” (Walvoord).

Visits to our neighbors' houses should be understated so that there should be consideration that doesn't bother them. Therefore, I hope and pray that a visit to our neighbor's house will be worthwhile and valuable.

#### **Fourth, we should control our mouths.**

In Proverbs 25:16-28, King Solomon is giving us four lessons about the mouth:

##### **(1) We should not give false testimony against our neighbor.**

Look at Proverbs 25:18 – “Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is the man who gives false testimony against his neighbor.” In Proverbs 24:28, King Solomon said: “Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, And do not deceive with your lips.” We must not be false witnesses to our neighbors without cause. We should not deceive our neighbors with our lips. This means that even if the other person lies to us and deceives us, we shouldn't do it to that person. Of course, the reason we should not do so is not only because the Bible forbids us to retaliate (revenge) ourselves, but also we should not lie and not deceive our neighbors. If we lie and deceive our neighbor, it pleases the devil, the liar and father of lies (Jn. 8:44). Rather, we must follow the Christian Golden Rule. What is the Golden Rule of Christianity? Look at Matthew 7:12 – “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” This is a key principle that clearly teaches how to love our neighbor in fulfilling the commandment of “love your neighbor as yourself” in Jesus' double commandment. The principle is, ‘As I want to be treated by the other person, I must first treat him like that.’ For example, if I want the other person to understand me a little, I have to try to understand that person first. We should change our position and get into the habit of thinking in other person’s perspective. Then we will be able to treat others as we wish to be treated by them. In particular, we must be true to the other person first, just as we want the other person to be true. We must never tell lies. And we should never give false evidence to

our neighbors. Only we must be true witnesses.

Even in Proverbs 25:18, King Solomon once again mentions “a man who gives false testimony against his neighbor.” The key point of this word is that the person who gives false testimony against his neighbor is like “a club or a sword or a sharp arrow.” What does it mean? Aren't club, sword, and sharp arrow weapons that can cause fatal injuries to our opponents? Anyone who falsely witnesses to a neighbor means someone who inflicts a fatal wound on that neighbor. Therefore, we must not falsely testify against our neighbor. We must not inflict fatal wounds on our neighbor.

(2) We must not sing songs to a heavy heart.

Look at Proverbs 25:20 – “Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on soda, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.” In Proverbs 10:32, the Bible says that “The lips of the righteous know what is fitting.” In other words, the lips of the righteous speak the right words to please the other person. In Proverbs 25:11-15, we have already meditated on “a word aptly spoken” or “a word spoken in right circumstances” (v. 11). Here, the Hebrew word for “right circumstances” means “wheel”, which means ‘spinning in good control in the circumstances at that time’ (Park). In other words, at that time, the appropriate word that is well controlled in the circumstances has a great value like apples of gold in settings of silver. Then I would like to ask you a question: ‘Is it appropriate to bless your neighbor out loud early in the morning?’ I am sure no one will answer “Yes”. What is the reason? The reason is because no one would like to listen the loud voice in the early morning, no matter how blessed it is. Indeed, the Bible Proverbs 27:14 says, “If a man loudly blesses his neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse.” What does this word teach us? The important lesson we need to learn here is that even when we do the truth of God, we must do it in right time. Whatever good thing is, we must meet the right time to do it (Park).

In Proverbs 25:20, King Solomon says, “Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on soda, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.” Here, “a heavy heart” in Hebrew means “a sad heart” (Gesenius). Now King Solomon makes two comparisons of singing to the sad heart: (a) Singing to the sad heart is like taking off clothes on a cold day (v. 20). In this winter which is exceptionally cold and there are many people suffering from the flu, who would take off clothes? Wouldn't we wear thicker clothes? However, King Solomon is saying that singing to the sad heart is like taking off his clothes on the cold day. What does it mean? In a word, it means that it isn't the word aptly spoken (v. 11). Can you imagine someone approaching you and singing happily when you are sad? Probably no one will like it. (b) Singing to the sad heart is like vinegar that is poured on soda (v. 20). The word translated “vinegar” here means the Hebrew word “natron” refers to a substance known in ancient times as “an alkali mineral”. It is said that this material was used for cleaning in the East at the time (Swanson). Look at Jeremiah 2:22 –

“Although you wash yourself with lye And use much soap, The stain of your iniquity is before Me,” declares the Lord GOD.” When vinegar is poured over this soda substance, it immediately breaks up and has a fermentation effect. Likewise, singing a song without sympathy to the sad heart makes more agitation of that person's sad heart (MacArthur). Therefore, we should not sing to those who are sad in heart. Rather, we must “weep with those who weep” with sympathy for the sad heart (Heb. 4:15; Rom. 15:17).

(3) We should not gossip.

Look at Proverbs 25:23 – “As a north wind brings rain, so a sly tongue brings angry looks.” Here, “a sly tongue” original literal meaning is “a tongue of secrecy”. In other words, the sly tongue is “a slanderous tongue” (Walvoord). Wouldn't that person be angry if we secretly see the other person's scars behind the scenes, criticize him for his faults, and put the words in his opponent's ears? In particular, if we use ridiculous words to criticize the other person or even trick the other person to harm him, and eventually even damage the other person's honor, why not try to sue us for defamation by being angry with the other person?

In the letter written to a person named Gaius by the apostle John, 3 John 1:9-10, there is a person named “Diotrephes, who loves to be first” among the church members. Not only did he not welcome the apostle John (v. 9), but he also gossiped maliciously about him with evil words (v. 10). He was a person who unjustly accused the apostle. In today's word, he was a person who reproached and slandered the pastor. This kind of soul is greatly wrong. It is a person with a wrong soul, like Diotrephes, that the saints in the church gossip and criticize the pastor. We must not slander not only pastors but also members of the church. If we slander each other, the relationship will inevitably be broken. So, who would like it if the church is in trouble and divides the church. To slander and gossiping maliciously the brothers of the Lord is foolish. We must be on the lookout for such a person. The Bible Proverbs 10:18 says, “He who conceals his hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.” And Leviticus 19:16 says, “Do not go about spreading slander among your people. " Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the LORD.” Therefore, we should not go around and reproach others. We should not gossip about others. It's the act of the fool. The wise person is careful about telling other people's stories. In particular, he doesn't gossip other people's secret (Prov. 11:13). Therefore, he doesn't gossip. I hope and pray that we can become wise Christians who don't gossip.

(4) We must preach the good news with our lips.

Look at Proverbs 25:25 – “Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.” The wise man not only doesn't gossip about others, but also he doesn't sing to those whose heart is sad. And he

never falsely testifies against his neighbor. Rather, he uses his lips to preach the good news to his neighbor. In Proverbs 25:25, King Solomon says, “Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.” What does it mean? It means that the good news quenches the thirst of our hearts like cold water to a thirsty person. I remember the words of Psalms 42:1 – “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.” As we live in this sinful world, most of what we hear every day through news or the like is only bad news. Therefore, our hearts, like Lot who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah, have no choice but to be tormented in our righteous souls (2 Pet. 2:8). Therefore, our broken hearts are bound to pant for the Lord more and more. What refreshes our broken hearts as we come before the throne of God's grace with panting hearts? That is the good news, the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must preach the good news of Jesus Christ with our lips.

### **Fifth, we should control trusting.**

We must be very vigilant about trusting people. We need to be careful with people who come to us and do us so well when we are tired of mind and body, especially because we are going through difficult things. The reason is because at such time we may be tempted to trust people more than the Lord. In particular, we should avoid those who speak two different words with one mouth. For example, we must avoid “the man who gives false testimony against his neighbor” (Prov. 25:18). Especially when we are struggling, we should not trust those who tell false lies.

In today's text Proverbs 25:19, King Solomon says: “Like a bad tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in times of trouble.” He is telling us not to trust the “unfaithful”. What is the reason? The reason is because it is like “a bad tooth or a lame foot” to trust the unfaithful man. Can you imagine eating food with “a bad tooth”? Will you be able to walk with “a lame foot”? The Bible says that it is like this in the day of tribulation, that is, when we are in crisis, that we trust in the unfaithful man (v. 19). Therefore, we must not rely on those who aren't truthful and faithful in the day of tribulation. Rather, we must trust in our truthful God.

This is what Psalms 125:1 says: “Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever.” The Bible says that those who trust in God will not be shaken like Mount Zion and will be forever. “Mountain” is a symbol of immovability and rest (Park). The Bible tells us that those who trust in God will stand firmly and unshakable in any trouble and adversity like a mountain, and will enjoy the peace and rest that God gives forever. How is this possible? How can we enjoy peace and rest without being shaken like the mountain in this sinful world of sorrow, hardship, and death? It is because God protects those who trust him (v. 2). It is said that Jerusalem is geographically surrounded by many mountains (Park). Like so many mountains surrounding Jerusalem, God surrounds those who trust in Him. In other words, those who trust in God are forever before God and will be protected from Him forever.

God is telling us to “call upon me in the day of trouble” (Ps. 50:15). What is the reason? The reason is

because when we cry out to the truthful God in the day of trouble, God will answer us (20:1) and comfort us (2 Cor. 1:4). Also, because God will deliver us from that trouble (Ps. 50:15), we must call on God in the day of trouble. Therefore, I hope and pray that all of us glorify God (v. 15).

### **Sixth, we should control hating.**

During the Lunar New Year, I saw the scenes of Koreans are going home with their children to see their beloved parents through the Korean news. I also heard an interview from an elderly man who said he was more pleased with his grandchildren than his children. How grateful it is to be able to have a great time with the whole family in one place. Our families who believe in Jesus must achieve the heavenly home because we love God and our neighbor, the twofold commandment of Jesus. But in many families, hate is growing more than love. There are many families who are hurting, receiving wounds and pains, and shedding tears. In particular, the marital discord is becoming more and more serious, and there are many families where the relationship between parents and children is growing more hate than love. If our families believe in Jesus, then we should love each other with the love of God.

Our old nature is to repay the other person with “life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot” (Deut. 19:21). Our sinful nature is to hate our enemies. Our sinful nature is to hate enemies to the point of wanting to kill them. Therefore, our nature isn’t to forgive our enemies, but rather to take revenge. But the Bible says, “Do not say, ‘I’ll do to him as he has done to me; I’ll pay that man back for what he did’” (Prov. 24:29). Also, Proverbs 20:22, which we have already meditated on, says: “Do not say, ‘I’ll pay you back for this wrong!’ Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.” Here, the Bible tells us no to pay back for this wrong, which means that the other person has caused me pain and I don’t try to inflict pain on that person. This is what the Bible Romans 12:19 says: “Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.” In other words, the reason why we should wait for God without repaying evil ourselves is because it is God’s to avenge and not ours so we must believe in God and wait for Him to repay our enemies for us.

In Proverbs 25:21, the Bible says, “If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.” As I meditate on this Bible verse, I remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5:43-44: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Our nature is to “love our neighbors” and to “hate our enemies”. Of course, the “neighbor” here is also our neighbor, not the neighbor Jesus is talking about. In other words, the “neighbors” we think of are those who love us (Mt. 5:46), but the “neighbors” Jesus is talking about includes even our enemies. That’s why Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (vv. 43-44). Jesus’ teaching is to love our enemies. The

concrete practice lesson of that love is found in Proverbs 25:21. The lesson is to give our enemies food to eat when they are hungry and to give them water to drink when they are thirsty. How is this possible? How can we give food and water to our enemies? I looked for the answer in Romans 5:10 – “For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!” The Bible says that when we were enemies with God, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, died on the cross for us, and we had been reconciled to God. That is, God demonstrated His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners and God’s enemies, Christ died for us (v. 8). When His love is full within us, we can love our enemies without hating them.

Why, then, does the Bible Proverbs 25:21 tell us to give our enemy food when he is hungry and to give him water when he is thirsty? Look at Proverbs 25:22 – “In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you.” According to Pastor John MacArthur, in ancient Egyptian culture, if a person wants to publicly show people that he has repented of his sins, he walks with burning coals on his head. Here, “burning coals” symbolizes the burning pain of a person's shame and guilt (MacArthur). Now, why is King Solomon saying, “If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink” (v. 21)? Why should we show love to our enemies? There are two reasons: (1) The first reason is because if we show love to our enemies, they will feel shame about hatred, resentment, and hostility within them (MacArthur). (2) But even greater reason than this is because if we show love to even our enemies who oppose us and persecute us, their cold and hard hearts will melt and become our new friends (Park). The apostle Paul quotes this in Romans 12:20. The apostle Paul quotes this word in Romans 12:20. To sum up this word, the apostle Paul exhorts the saints in Rome and to us to love their enemies. The reason is because by doing so, we can melt the hearts of our enemies and make friends in the Lord.

If we look at 1 John 3:15, the Bible says, “Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.” In other words, if we think the opposite of the saying that those who hate their brothers are murderers and murderers don’t have eternal life, those who have everlasting life because they believe in Jesus, the Son of God (1 Jn. 5:12-13), respond to Jesus' double commandment in obedience. It means to obey to love God and to love our neighbor. Therefore, I hope and pray that we can control hating our brothers or enemies and love our neighbors as well as our enemies.

### **Seventh, we should control quarreling.**

We Christians, like the commandment of Jesus, should love our neighbors as ourselves as Jesus has commanded us. However, even though we know this, we sometimes hate our neighbors and even quarrel with them. What is the cause? The Bible James 4:1 says the cause: “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?” The reason we quarrel is because of the quarreling desire within us.



We must fight this desire. The Bible 1 Peter 2:11 tells us: “Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.” We must fight the sinful desires that fight against our souls. One of the sinful desires is the desire to quarrel. Therefore, we must fight and overcome this quarreling desire.

In Proverbs 25:24, King Solomon speaks of “a quarrelsome wife”. He says that it is better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife. Why does the wife quarrel with her husband? If we look at Proverbs 15:1, the Bible says: “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” Can you imagine? You have to calm the other person's anger with gentle words. But how would the other person react when you say a harsh word to an angry person, as if you were pouring gasoline into the fire? This is what the Bible Proverbs 15:18 says: “A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.” If we are in a hurry and get angry easily, we are bound to quarrel. The reason is because we cannot restrain our mouths in anger, and speak the harsh word that hurts others (15:4). So we need to close our mouths when we are angry. In other words, when we are angry, we need to refrain from speaking. The reason is because the words from our mouths can be harsh if we fail to manage our anger. Therefore, we should be slow to speak when we are angry because we can hurt the other person's heart (Jam. 1:19).

In Proverbs 25:23, I looked for the cause of the wife's quarrel with her husband: “As a north wind brings rain, so a sly tongue brings angry looks.” The reason why the wife quarrels with her husband is because of “a sly tongue” (the tongue of gossip). Here, “a sly tongue” means “a secret tongue,” and it refers to the words of a person who flatters to harm others and to benefit himself (Park). And the husband who hears such word causes anger, and the couple quarrel. Today the Bible says that it is better to live alone on the corner of the roof than to live in a large house together, arguing with a woman with a tongue that accuses like this, with the woman who speaks words that are harmful to her husband. Such a woman speaks flattering words for her own benefit. The similar word is found in Proverbs 21:9, 19: “Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife. ... Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.” The Bible Proverbs 21:9 says “a quarrelsome wife”, but in verse 19 it says “a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.” The cause of the quarrel is because we aren't being patient and get angry easily. We can know this because in Proverbs 15:18, the Bible says, “A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension ....” However, the Bible also says, “... but a patient man calms a quarrel” (v.18).

In a marital relationship, if we are unable to manage our anger and are easily outraged, we will inevitably lead to quarrels. What is the reason? One of the reasons is because we speak the harsh word (v. 1). When we think about the quarrelsome wife and the quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife, the Bible Proverbs 19:13 says, “a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping” (Ref.: 27:15). What does it mean? A wife who has a habit of quarreling with her husband often quarrels with her husband so that there are few days of peace, and when quarrels begin, she doesn't stop talking like “a constant dripping” (Park). How would her husband react if such a

quarrelsome, angry wife pours out words in anger continually?

It is better to live in the corner of the roof or in the wilderness than in a large house with the quarrelsome and angry woman. It is more uncomfortable than having the couple living comfortably together in the large house and arguing. It is better to live in harmony with each other even in the hut. We must be committed to building up the peaceful couple in the Lord.

### **Eight, we should control giving way.**

Look at Proverbs 25:26 – “Like a muddied spring or a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked.” Here, the Hebrew word ‘to give way’ means ‘to fail’, ‘to fall’ or ‘to stagger’. The reason he falls and staggers is because he is in an inadequate state (Swanson).

When we are in a state of spiritual shortage, especially when we face the difficulties and adversities of our faith, are we not shaken and eventually fall? The psalmist had this fear. Look at Psalms 13:4 – “my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,” and my foes will rejoice when I fall.” The psalmist feared that his enemy had won and that his enemy would rejoice when he was shaken. When our faith is shaken, we are in danger of failing. Not only that, but in our lack and weakness, our faith is shaken. So we reluctantly agree with those who oppose us, and there is a high risk of accepting theirs. Therefore, we must not be shaken. In order to do that, we must cast our cares on the Lord (Ps. 55:22). Then God will sustain us and will never let us fall (v. 22).

We Christians who have been justified by believing in Jesus by the grace of God must clearly distinguish between what must we give way and what must we not give way. First of all, what must we give way? Look at Romans 8:7 – “the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.” Looking at this word, the Bible says that the sinful mind not only doesn't submit to God's law, but it cannot do so. Contrary to this word, we who have been reconciled to God through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross must submit to to God's law (the word). What, then, shouldn't we submit to? As Proverbs 25:26 says, we must not give way to the wicked. For example, when we are persecuted and suffered by wicked people who don't believe in Jesus by faith, we must not give way to them. The reason for this is because giving way to the wicked is like “a muddied spring or a polluted well” (v. 26). Can you imagine? Of course we want to draw water from a clean well and drink it. But what if the the well water gets dirty? I am sure no one will draw water from that dirty well again and drink it. I think that has happened in the history of our Korean church. That is why Korean Christians visited the shrine and did shrine worship during the Japanese colonial era. I think that it is to give way to the wicked. As a result, many Christians must have been disappointed. This give way or surrender to the wicked is by no means an good example for later generations of Christians. Therefore, we Christians must not give way to the wicked. We must control giving way to the wicked.

### **Ninth and last, we should control our hearts.**

Look at Proverbs 25:28 – “Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.” Imagine a city that has collapsed and a city without walls but the enemy is attacking. So, what will happen to all those who live in the collapsed city and the city without walls? They will lose the war while they are very vulnerable and unprotected (incapable of defending) the enemy's attack. The Bible tells us that it is like this to those who don't have the ability to control their hearts. Those who aren't self-controlled and out of control are bound to be vulnerable to trouble and temptation. For example, those who are unable to control their anger, that is, those who are quick to anger, may fall into troubles and temptations and sin against God. Look at Proverbs 14:17, 29 – “A quick-tempered man does foolish things, and a crafty man is hated. ... A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly.” The Bible says that those who don't have the ability to control their anger do foolish things. A person who is in a hurry only shows his foolishness. That's why the Bible Proverbs 29:11 says, “A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.”

We must be able to control our anger. Look at Proverbs 16:32 – “Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city.” We must be those who control our hearts. We must be slow to anger and to restrain anger.

We must control ourselves. We must control eating, seeking honor, going to neighbor's house, our lips, trusting, hating, quarreling, and our hearts. I hope and pray that God the Holy Spirit will bring forth self-control, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

# A fool

## [Proverbs 26:1-12]

For 50 elderly people who are over 95 years old, the first of the three answers to the question ‘If you are given life again, how would you like to live?’ the first answer is ‘I would reflect more’ (Internet). Today we want to take a moment to reflect ourselves on the word of God, which is the spiritual mirror. That reflection is whether we are wise or foolish in the light of the word of God.

First, let's think of five things about “the wise” in the Bible.

(1) The wise has ears to hear.

Look at Proverbs 15:31 – “He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise.” The wise not only hear God's commands (words) (10:8), but also listens to advice (12:15).

(2) The wise has knowledge.

Look at Proverbs 10:14 – “Wise men store up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool invites ruin.” Not only that, the wise spreads knowledge (15:7).

(3) The wise fears God and shuns evil.

Look at Proverbs 14:16 – “A wise man fears the LORD and shuns evil, but a fool is hotheaded and reckless.” The wise is on the upward way of life (15:24).

(4) The wise uses his lips wisely.

Look at Proverbs 16:23 – “A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction.”

(5) The wise controls his anger.

Look at Proverbs 29:11 – “A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.”

So, who is “A fool” in the Bible? He is the spiritual fool and we can summarize in four ways:

(1) The Bible says that he who doesn't know God is the fool.

Look at Psalms 14:1 – “The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.”

(2) The Bible says that he who mocks at sin is the fool.

Look at Proverbs 14:9 – “Fools mock at sin, But among the upright there is good will.”

(3) The Bible says that he who doesn't want to be rebuked is the fool.

Look at Proverbs 1:22-25: “How long, O naive ones, will you love being simple-minded? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing And fools hate knowledge? Turn to my reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. Because I called and you refused, I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention; And you neglected all my counsel And did not want my reproof.”

(4) The Bible says that he who doesn't prepare for the soul (afterlife) is the fool.

Look at Luke 12:16-21: “And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'"

In Proverbs 26:1-12, King Solomon speaks of “the fool”. Let us receive the lessons God gives us while meditating on nine things about the fool.

**First, honor is not fitting for the fool.**

Do you know who hit the most in American baseball history? As a person named Pete Rose (74 years old), he played 3,562 games in the Big League for 23 years from 1963 to 1986, hitting a record high of 4,256 hits. Excluding this guy, Ty Cobb (4,191 hits) is the only hitting record that even stepped on the 4,000 hits. With this record, he could stand in the Hall of Fame in the American Professional Baseball (MLB), but he was ousted from the baseball world for nearly 30 years because of gambling (Internet). Here, the American Professional Baseball Hall of Fame is ‘a space created to commemorate those who have contributed to the development of baseball. To be listed there, major league players are among the players who have played for at least 10 years and who have played for at least five years after retirement. It is said that contributors are selected by the votes of their reporters, and if

more than 75% of the votes are received, the contribution will be confirmed in the Hall of Fame (Internet). In 1989, when he served as the Cincinnati Reds manager, Rose, who denied the agreement while investing money on the results of Cincinnati's game, was suspicious of gambling in the major leagues. By doing this, I agreed with the Secretariat of the Major Leagues and left the baseball world. Then, 15 years later, in 2004, he published an autobiography and admitted to gambling. However, it seems that this time, as the commissioner of the U.S. pro baseball has changed, a new commissioner, Rob Manfred, has opened up the possibility of joining Rose's Hall of Fame (Internet). Do you think this person should or shouldn't be listed on the American Professional Baseball Hall of Fame?

If we look back at Proverbs 25:27, which we have already meditated on, the Bible says: "It is not good to eat too much honey, nor is it honorable to seek one's own honor." Here, we learned that there are two kinds of honor: Desire for honor and greed for honor. And when the Bible Proverbs 25:27 says that it isn't honorable (it is vain) to seek one's own honor, the "honor" here is greed for honor. What is greed for honor? It pursues self-honor by making honor itself a purpose, regardless of means or method. We should always be on the lookout of this greed. For example, I think of "Nabal" in 1 Samuel 25 in the Old Testament. He was very wealthy and had 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats (v. 2). And he was the wicked man "was harsh and evil in his dealing" (v. 3). Since he had returned David's good for evil (v. 21), David decided not to leave all the men belonging to Nabal behind (v. 22) and to harm his whole house (v. 17). Hear the words of his wise wife, Abigail, who fell at David's feet: "On me alone, my lord, be the blame. And please let your maidservant speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant. Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him; but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent" (vv.24-25). Is honor fitting for such a fool?

If we look at Proverbs 26:1, the Bible says, "Like snow in summer and like rain in harvest, So honor is not fitting for a fool." Have you ever seen snow in the summer in your life? Have you ever seen rain in the harvest? You probably haven't seen snow in the summer. Maybe you've seen it rain at harvest time, but it's rare. And if it rains during harvest, it will damage the crops. The Bible says that "So honor is not fitting for a fool" (v. 1). It is said that honoring the fool isn't fitting as it snows in the summer (Walvoord). Also, the Bible says that honoring the fool isn't as fitting like one who binds a stone in a sling (v. 8). Imagine. What if you were about to throw a stone and tied it to the sling? The stone cannot be thrown (Park). It is not only irrelevant but also nonsense to honor the fool, stubborn, and wicked man like Nabal. If someone else, like Nabal, honors those who repay good for evil, it will damage many people, as if it rains at harvest and damages crops. In that sense, I don't think it's appropriate for a baseball player named Pete Rose to enter the American Professional Baseball Hall of Fame. Although he is the legendary baseball player with the most hits in the history of American professional baseball, what would be the "honor" of that Hall of Fame if the man who gambled on his team's baseball game while he was a coach? And if his name was on the Hall of Fame, what would other baseball players and baseball enthusiasts think? We must not

honor the fool. The reason is because it is not fitting in God's perspective.

Last time, as a guest speaker pastor said during the "Sola Scriptura" (Only the Word)" history background seminar, he mentioned a pastor's desire for honor in a large Korean church. But we should not be so greedy for that kind of honor. We must be on the lookout for and guard against greed for honor. We must be on guard against greed for honor, but we must seek the right honor. What is the right honor? The desire for honor within us is a gift from God with appetite, sleep, and libido, and etc. Therefore, if our purpose is to acknowledge God as God, and what we do is to be good in God's sight, and if the method we use is the right method, and the result is to glorify God and to edify our neighbors, our desire for honor is just and desirable (Ref: Deut. 26:19-19). We must "honor" the man of God who humbly lives for the Lord with this just and desirable desire for honor.

I saw an article posted on the internet Facebook last week. It seemed like I had seen a similar article on some internet news before. But since I couldn't think of it I read it all. After reading it all, the thought that came to my mind was 'These are very valuable people. They are very respectable people. I thought I should imitate them too.' They are Marian (71) and Margaret (70), foreign nuns who have been caring for leprosy patients for 43 years in Sorokdo, Doyang-eup, Goheung-gun, Jeollanam-do, Korea. Sister Marian applied medicine to the wounds of patients without gloves for about 43 years after first stepping on Sorok Island in 1959, and Sister Margaret in 1962. It is said that they were devoted to childcare and self-sufficiency, such as running a nursery school for children. After 43 years of dedication, these two people, who became 70 people, left a letter titled 'To my beloved friends and benefactors' in the early morning without any knowledge, leaving Sorok Island and leaving their homeland for Austria. In the letter, they said, 'We have been telling our colleagues that we have to leave before putting pressure on our place because we are unable to work properly, and now we thought it was time to put it into practice.' They also said, 'As foreigners who lack many things, we are grateful for our great love and respect and forgive us for hurting your hearts with our shortcomings.' It is said that on the way home of the two nuns, only one of the tattered bags they brought when they came to Sorok Island. They left quietly in case it will be known to someone or that it will be a loud farewell ceremony. They said that the day they left Sorok Island by boat moving away from a distance, they cried with tears endlessly looking at the islands and thinking about the people of Sorok Island. In front of their visits, it is said that the words that they had kept in their hearts all their lives are written in Korean: 'Be a good and humble person' (Internet). Isn't the honor suitable for these people? Shouldn't we honor these people?

### **Second, the fool's curse without cause does not alight.**

Have you ever just hated someone for no particular reason? Have you ever hated that person for no reason, knowing that he had done nothing wrong to you? If not, have you ever been hated by someone for no reason? Reading the Book of Psalms we can see that the psalmist was hated for no reason. Look at Psalms 69:4 – "Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; Those who would destroy me are powerful, being

wrongfully my enemies; What I did not steal, I then have to restore.” Also, look at Psalms 38:19 – “But my enemies are vigorous and strong, And many are those who hate me wrongfully.” The prophet Jeremiah was also hated by his enemies for no reason (Lam. 3:52).

If we look at Proverbs 26:2, the Bible speaks of “a curse without cause”. Look at Proverbs 26:2 – “Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying, So a curse without cause does not alight.” Of course, in verse 2, the word “a fool” doesn’t appear. But the verses 1 and 3 say “a fool”. So he who curses without cause in verse 2 refers to the fool and not the wise. Think about it. When the fool curses someone without cause, is that curse objectively fair? It can never be. That curse must be an unjust curse. The Bible tells us that the unjust curse of the fool is like “a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying” (v. 2). What does it mean? The sparrow's “flitting” here is because it is “aimless”. That is why the sparrow that is flitting in the sky without purpose is just hovering in the air, not knowing where to land. The curse with cause is like that. In other words, having no purpose symbolizes the failure of the curse. So, in verse 2, the Bible says that the curse without cause will not happen. In other words, the unjust curse will not be fulfilled. For example, Goliath cursed David in the name of the Philistine gods (1 Sam. 17:43-44), but David triumphed (vv. 48-50). What should we do if the fool hate us without cause and curse and persecute us? We must pray to God. And we must meditate on God’s instruction (word). Look at Psalms 119:78 – “May the arrogant be ashamed, for they subvert me with a lie; But I shall meditate on Your precepts.” The psalmist prayed to God to shame the arrogant ones who subverted him with a lie. But he determined to meditate on God’s word. What’s the reason? Why did the psalmist determine to pray and to meditate on God’s precepts when the arrogants subverted him without cause? Look at Psalms 119:86, 161: “All Your commandments are faithful; They have persecuted me with a lie; help me! ... Princes persecute me without cause, But my heart stands in awe of Your words.” The reason is because he trusted the commandments of the Lord, and feared His words, not those who were in power. We, like the psalmist, must determine to meditate on the word of the Lord and to pray to God, even if someone makes us hard, condemns us, and even curses us for no reason. And I hope and pray that we can actually put it into action what we have determined to do.

When I meditate on “a curse without cause” in Proverbs 26:2, I came to think of Jesus crucified, the tree of curse (Deut. 21:23). From the Jewish point of view at the time, Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be the Son of God and was cursed by God for blasphemy (Mt. 26:65) and was crucified. However, the reason Jesus, the Son of the true God, died on the cross, the tree of curse, was to forgive all our sins and save us, who supposed to be cursed forever and had to be destroyed forever. We have full reason to be cursed, but Jesus took all our sins for us and died on the cross, even though He had no sin to die on the tree of curse. The reason was because the Lord restored the curse upon us and gave us the blessing of eternal life (Deut. 23:5, Neh. 13:2, Eph. 1:3ff). How are we to live with this blessing of eternal life and all spiritual blessings? As disciples of Jesus, we must be silently obedient to the word of the Lord and fulfill the mission we have been given, even if we are accused, cursed, and cursed without cause. In order for us to do that, we must pray to the God we trust and meditate on the word of God we trust. However, if we



are accused, reproached, and even committed a sin that deserves a curse, we must hear the curse as David did (2 Sam. 16:5ff.). When David was running away from his son Absalom, who had been rebellious as a result of his sin, even when Shimei, a member of the tribe of Benjamin, cursed him, he heard all of the curse by saying, “Leave him alone; let him curse, for the LORD has told him to” (16:5ff). And when he heard all the sound of the curse, he believed that God would see his distress and would repay him with good for the cursing (v. 12). With this belief, I hope and pray that we can hear all the curses with cause or without cause. God will surely repay us for good.

### **Third, there is a rod for the back of the fool.**

Not long ago, when I watched Korean news, there was a scene in France where a mother beats her child in a public service ad against corporal punishment. Perhaps the child was hit because he poured a drink on the table, or was noisy. At that time, the focus of the news was that there was a heated debate from country to country over whether corporal punishment was banned by law in Europe these days. It is said that the European Council, Europe's top human rights watchdog, sent a warning to France when France already signed the European Social Charter, which promised to protect children, but didn't prohibit corporal punishment by law. Among the 47 member states of the European Council, 27 countries such as Sweden and Germany have banned corporal punishment, but France and the United Kingdom are said to tolerate corporal punishment. It is said that Pope Francesco also added to the controversy over corporal punishment. He said that proper corporal punishment is necessary, citing the case of a father who hits a child, but never hits his face (Internet).

What do you think? Do you think proper corporal punishment is necessary in raising children? In Korea, corporal punishment of parents is so severe that more than 8 out of 10 cases of child abuse occur in the home. So it seems that the law banning corporal punishment against children by law has recently passed the National Assembly (Internet). I don't understand how seriously corporal punishment of parents in the home is. So it is a little bit unclear how more than 8 out of 10 cases of child abuse occur in the home. Maybe that's how the relationship between parents and children is a serious problem. I don't think child abuse should ever happen in the home. But I have a little doubt what is the definition of the word “child abuse” in the news these days. So, searching the Internet, I read that Article 3, No. 7 of the Child Welfare Act defined this: ‘Child abuse means that an adult, including a guardian, commits physical, mental, sexual violence or harsh behavior that may harm the health or welfare of a child under the age of 18, or impede the normal development, and the guardian of the child abandon or neglect the child’ (Internet). Not long ago, a famous American football player in the US CNN news appeared to be corporal punishment for his child, which became a big issue. At that time, while watching the news, it seems that the father disciplined his child at home and I was wondering why the news made it big deal out of it. However, I thought that we are now in an era of legal restraint even from loving and disciplining children because of real child abuse parents.

In disciplining a child, I relate to what Pastor Tedd Tripp said in his book “Shepherding a Child's Heart” in

two ways: (1) Rich, full communication and (2) The rod. Of course, when we say that we raise our children with the Lord's "discipline", we mean putting conversations ahead of the rod. I think these two things should go hand in hand in raising children. In particular, I think that as parent, we should they prioritize conversation with our children. But when they continue to disobey without repenting, then we should discipline them with the rod (when they are young). The reason is because of the words of Hebrews 12:6 – "because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Also, look at Proverbs 13:24 – "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him." These verses tell us that we must faithfully discipline our beloved children.

If we look at Proverbs 26:3, the Bible says, "... And a rod for the back of fools." In Proverbs 10:13, the Bible says, "... but a rod is for the back of him who lacks judgment." What do these words mean? It mean that God rules the arrogant and stubborn ones (the fool) with punishment and disaster (Park). Why, then, does the Bible say that it is the rod on the back of the fool? One of the reasons is because the fool is proud. Look at Proverbs 14:3 – "In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them" (KJV). Another reason is because in order to correct the fool's foolishness, he must be disciplined with the rod. Look at Proverbs 22:15 – "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." The Bible says that in order to save the soul of the fool from death (Sheol, hell), he must be disciplined with the rod. Look at Proverbs 23:13-14: "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." Looking at these verses, we can see that fool needs discipline with the rod. This is a principle that applies not only to the relationship between parents and children, but also between us, God's children, and our Heavenly Father. Look at Psalms 89:32 – "I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging." When I meditate on this word, I remembered the word of Isaiah 10:5 that says that God used the kingdom of Assyria as God's rod of anger and as "the club of my wrath" in God's hand in chasing the sinful northern Israelites. Also, I remembered Jeremiah chapters 50-52 that God used Babylon as a rod of God's wrath and disciplined Judah. Eventually, Assyrian or Babylon became foolish and proud before God (Isa. 10:12-16, 14:24-25; Jer. 50:29), so God broke the rod and judged them.

When we don't confess, repent, and turn back even after we have committed foolish sins, God disciplines us with the rod of love. Therefore, God casts out our foolishness far away (Prov. 22:15), makes us humble (14:3), and gives us wisdom (29:15). Look at Proverbs 29:15 – "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." Therefore, when we are disciplined by God, first we must not be discouraged (Hebrews 12:5). Rather, we should thank God. The reason is because God disciplines us because he loves us (v. 6) and treats us as His children (v. 7). And God is discipling us for our good (v. 10). Although no discipline seems pleasant at that time, later on it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for us who have been trained by it (v. 11).

#### **Fourth, we should not answer the fool according to his folly.**

Have you ever spoken to a proud and hard-hearted person? If you have never spoken, please think about it. Do you think that if you talk to someone who is proud and hard-hearted, you will be able to talk? I don't think so. In particular, even if we teach right lessons to the proud and hard-hearted person and even rebuke with love, that person will not listen to us and will be angry at us. What is the reason? Why do you think we can't talk to someone who is proud and hard-hearted? The reason is because the way of the fool is right in his own eyes (Prov. 12:15). That is, he doesn't "receive commandments" (10:8) because he is wise in his own eyes (26:12). Rather, the fool despises wisdom and discipline (1:7). Actually, when I see myself, I see myself being foolish and don't listen to anyone's words when my heart is proud and hardened. Even at such times, I see myself not listening to the words of my seniors of faith whom I admire. Likewise, there are times when I think that I should say what is right and what the Bible says to someone who thinks he is right and that his actions are correct, I don't say it because I think that person will not listen to me. What does the Bible say we should do in this case?

We should not answer the fool according to his folly. Look at Proverbs 26:4-5: "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Or you will also be like him. Answer a fool as his folly deserves, That he not be wise in his own eyes." From these two verses, King Solomon seems to be speaking contradictory words. In other words, it seems to contradict each other because verse 4 says, "Do not answer" the fool according to his folly, and verse 5 says, "Answer" the fool as his folly deserves. But this teaches us two wise attitudes about how to deal with the fool.

##### (1) It is silence.

When a fool speaks to us, it can be wise for us to remain silent without answering. Look at Proverbs 26:4 – "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Or you will also be like him." How should we react if the other person speaks words that distort the truth? Imagine that person believes the distorted words as truth and is even convinced, and tells us those words. How should we react? If we say 'Yes, you're right', then we are answering that person according to his folly. And we are joining his folly. What if we say something like 'No, you are wrong' to him? How would the foolish person react? Won't he get angry? Will he be able to understand? That is why the Bible says, "Do not answer a fool according to his folly" (v. 4). At that time, it is wiser for us to be silent.

##### (2) When a fool speaks ignorant as a cause of ignorance, we must teach by answering him for his salvation.

Look at Proverbs 26:5 – "Answer a fool as his folly deserves, That he not be wise in his own eyes." What if, when the fool speaks foolish things, we don't remain silent and answer according to his folly? The Bible

says that the fool considers himself wise. This is the serious problem of the fool. That serious problem is that he is wise in his own eyes (v. 5). This is truly ignorant and evidence that his soul is very dark. To such a person, we must teach the words of the light of the Lord to save his darkened soul with compassion. In John 18:19-24, Jesus also spoke “the truth” to the spiritually ignorant and darkened high priest (v. 23). At that time, one of the officials nearby struck Him in the face (v. 22). In this way, because Jesus spoke the truth to the spiritually ignorant and darkened high priest, he was struck by that official who was nearby (v. 23). Therefore, we, disciples of Jesus, should also speak “the truth” to fools who are ignorant and spiritually darkened. We should do so with a compassionate heart for his soul, whether he will listen or not, for his salvation.

When I thought about being silent and speaking the truth to the fool, I remembered Jesus' reaction when the high priests and the whole council looked for false evidence against him to kill him. First, many people came and gave false evidence against Jesus, but they didn't find any. Finally, two people came forward and declared this (Mt.26:59-60): “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days’” (v. 61). Then the high priest stood up and said this to Jesus: “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” (v. 62) At that time, Jesus' response was that he remained silent (v. 63). Not only at this time, but also in the presence of the governor of Pilate, when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, Jesus “gave no answer” (27:12). At that time, Pilate asked Jesus, “Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?” (v. 13) Even at that time, Jesus “made no reply, not even to a single charge” (v. 14). In this way, Jesus responded in silence before the foolish chief priests and the elders who falsely testified against Jesus. This response of Jesus has already been prophesied by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 53:7 – “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.” Then, when the high priest asked Jesus, “Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God” (Mt.26:63), Jesus said to them: “Yes, it is as you say ... But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven” (v. 64). Jesus told the foolish high priest that he was the Christ, the Son of God, and taught that Jesus would sit at the right hand of Almighty God and that He would come again on the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest tore his clothes and said that Jesus had “spoken blasphemy” (v. 65). At that time, people cried out to the public assembly that Jesus “is worthy of death” (v. 66). The high priests and elders who accused Jesus before the governor Pilate cried out that Jesus should be crucified (27:22, 23). Then Pilate had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified (v. 26). And after suffering Jesus was crucified to death (v. 35). May we, like Jesus, be silent when we should be silent and be able to speak when we should speak. In particular, we should be silent in front of the fool in order not to join in his folly. And we must preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to save the fool's soul with compassion. May we all be able to do that.

**Fifth, we should not send a message by the hand of the fool.**

We've often seen on TV the soldiers who were amputated by bombs in the war in Iraq or in Afghanistan. For me, an unforgettable TV scene saw one man training each one of them, one man to help those soldiers, eventually conquering a high mountain. At that time, I was surprised to see six or seven soldiers who participated in the training program with amputations and prosthetic legs, both legs and one leg, being interviewed on TV, and I thought it was precious. The reason I was surprised is that even a person like me who has both legs intact would not be able to conquer such a high mountain in such a cold weather but they were doing it with their prosthetic legs. And as I watched the soldiers interviewing and so on, I thought that the one man who was doing this training program to help them was doing a really valuable work. It was really good to see that one man, was strengthening physically and mentally several soldiers with a leg amputated and prosthetic feet who could be in despair. As we know that these soldiers were sent by the US military to Iraq or Afghanistan and were forced to amputate because they undesirably lost their legs or injured while fighting. I am sure no one will ever have cut himself off because he doesn't want his leg. Rather, as American soldiers, they were loyal to fight and had to be amputated their legs because they were injured in a battle.

The Bible Proverbs 26:6 says, "He cuts off his own feet and drinks violence Who sends a message by the hand of a fool." Who would try to cut off his own feet? If there is someone who does that, would we really think of that person as an intact person? Who would cut off his own foot only if he wasn't out of his mind? However, in Proverbs 26:6, the Bible says that sending a message by the hand of a fool is like cutting off his own feet. What does it mean? Why does the Bible say so? What if we cut our feet off ourselves? Can we really walk properly? No, isn't it? Think about it like this. If a postman who delivered mail on foot said he had no choice but to deliver the mail with one leg, would he be able to deliver the mail properly with one leg (without a prosthetic leg)? Now, the Bible says that it is so to bring the message by the hand of the fool. Not only that, it is said that it is like drinking violence (v. 6). The Korean Bible translated it "drinks poison" (v. 6). What if we drink poison ourselves? Won't we die? Doesn't it mean self-destruction? The Bible says that it's the same thing to send the message by the hand of the fool.

Who do you think of the fool who caused self-harm and self-destruction in the Bible? I remembered the man who told David that King Saul and his son Jonathan were dead. In 2 Samuel 1, we can see an Amalekite (v. 8) from the camp of Saul (Israel) who came to David and bowed down to the ground (v. 2), saying, "Saul and his son Jonathan are dead" (v. 4). At that time, David asked the young man who brought that message, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead"? (v. 5) At that time, the young man said that Saul said to him on Mount Gilboa (v. 6), 'Kill me' (v. 9), and he knew that King Saul could not survive, so he killed him and took the crown and the band on his arm and brought them to David (v. 10). When David heard the answer, he tore his clothes, and mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, for the army of the Lord and the house of Israel because they had fallen by the sword (vv. 11-12). Then he said to the young Amalekites, "Why were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" (v. 14) Then he called one of his men to go and strike him

(v. 14). “So he struck him down, and he died” (v. 15). What do you think of this murdered Amalek young man? What do you think about him who weren’t afraid to kill King Saul, who was anointed by God, and who took off the crown on King Saul’s head and the band on his arm and brought them to David and told him that King Saul and his son Jonathan were dead? Don’t you think he is really fool? Perhaps the Amalekites thought that David would be happy if he killed King Saul and bring his crown and band to David. And seeing that he brought King Saul’s crown and rings of arms to David, perhaps the Amalekites thought David was the next king of Israel. And maybe he expected a reward from David. One thing is for sure is that the Amalek young man brought the news that harmed himself and eventually killed him.

Another fools are found in 2 Samuel 4, who told the news of self-harm and self-destruction. They were Recab and Baanan, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, who struck down Saul’s fourth son, Ishbosheth, and cut off his neck, and brought it to David (v. 5). Rechab and his brother Baanan pretended to get some wheat went into the inner part of the Ishbosheth’s house, killed Ishbosheth, who was taking his noonday rest, and cut off his head (vv. 5-7). And they fled all night on the road to the Arabah (v. 6), arrived at Hebron, and gave King David the head of Ishbosheth and said, ““Here is the head of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, your enemy, who tried to take your life. This day the LORD has avenged my lord the king against Saul and his offspring” (v. 8). What was David’s response at that time? Look at verses 9-11: “... As surely as the LORD lives, who has delivered me out of all trouble, when a man told me, 'Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and put him to death in Ziklag. That was the reward I gave him for his news! How much more--when wicked men have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed--should I not now demand his blood from your hand and rid the earth of you!” “So David gave an order to his men, and they killed them. They cut off their hands and feet and hung the bodies by the pool in Hebron” (v. 12). This was the ending of Recab and his brother Baanan, the foolish men who was mistaken for speaking the good news to King David. They digged their own graves. They didn’t know that it was self-harming and self-destructing themselves by misunderstanding that it was good news to deliver to King David.

When I was meditating on these words, I thought, 'What would happen if the church asked the fool to go and preach the good news of Jesus Christ to the world?' What do you think? Will it really help the church of Christ, or will it be self-harming? Wouldn't it be self-harming? In a way, I think that the church of Christ is doing this foolish thing to itself, that is harming itself. In other words, we Christians now go out into the world and don't play the role of light and salt. Rather, under the influence of the dark world, we sinned against God, lost the taste of the salt and unable to show the power and influence of the gospel to the world. It is inevitable to harm the church by ourselves when we go out and preach the good news of Jesus Christ, the gospel, to this world. What is the cause? It is because we have become simple. How can we know this? Look at Psalms 19:7 – “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.” The proof that we have become simple is that we don't love God's trustworthy word, the perfect word, and don't listen to it, learn from

it and meditate on it day and night and thus become wise. In other words, the evidence that we have become simple (or fool) is that we don't love God's word and don't meditate on it day and night. We must love and yearn for His word and meditate on it day and night. In the midst of that, we must pray in faith for wisdom to God. Therefore, we must go to this world with the wisdom that God gives us and preach the good news of Jesus Christ, the gospel. The Bible Romans 10:15 says about the feet of those who wisely go to this world and preach the gospel: "... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

### **Sixth, a proverb that comes out of the mouths of the fool is powerless and dangerous.**

Who is the person in the Bible with both feet crippled? It is Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan and grandson of Saul in 2 Samuel 9. It was David who showed kindness to Mephibosheth (vv. 1, 7). How did David show kindness to him? David gave Mephibosheth all the fields of his grandfather Saul back to him, and made him always to eat at King David's table regularly (vv. 7, 11, 13). In other words, David made Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, whose both feet were crippled, to always eat on his table like one of the king's sons (vv. 11, 13). Until now, reading this Bible passage, I wasn't sure how much David showed kindness to Mephibosheth by allowing him to eat on his table, like one of the princes. However, when I meditated on 2 Samuel 5:8, I understood a little: "... Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him reach the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul, through the water tunnel. Therefore they say, 'The blind or the lame shall not come into the house.'" Obviously, looking at this word, David's heart hated the lame and the blind. But King David made Mephibosheth to eat on his table regularly like one of the princes (9:11, 13). This was David's great kindness to Mephibosheth, the two-legged crippled man. Then, why did David show great kindness to Mephibosheth? He did so because he made the covenant with Jonathan who loved David as his own life (1 Sam. 18:3, 20:16-17). And because Jonathan's love to David "was more wonderful Than the love of women" (2 Sam 1:26), David wanted to be faithful in fulfilling the responsibility of the covenant made with Jonathan. That was why David showed kindness to Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan. However, while meditating on the word of God's covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7, the ultimate reason that David showed kindness to Mephibosheth seems to be because David already received God's great (v. 21) lovingkindness (v. 15) that He promised to him. d

In Proverbs 26:7, the Bible says, "Like the legs which are useless to the lame. When we meditate on this word, doesn't it remind us verse 6 that we have already meditated on? Looking back at verse 6, the Bible says that the sending of the message by the hand of the fool is like cutting off one's feet or drinking violence. It wouldn't be the case if it was in the right spirit that a person cut off his own feet. Also, if he did such a terrible thing while he was out of his mind, that person could no longer walk properly. As such, it is out of mind to deliver the message by the hand of the fool. It is a terrible thing to do, and the message will not be delivered properly. After saying this, the Bible says, "Like a lame man's legs that hang limp is a proverb in the mouth of a fool" (v. 7).

If we are lame, are our limp legs useful? Can we use those powerless legs to walk and run? The point that the Bible is trying to make is that the proverb of the fool is useless, just as the lame's legs are useless. Why is the proverb of the fool is useless? It is because the fool's proverb is fool. Think about it. Isn't it funny that the fool tells the proverb? What do you think is the word that the fool opens his mouth to teach and instruct? Will it be wise teaching and instruction? I think it doesn't make sense that the fool considers himself wise and teaches and instructs others since he doesn't know that he is a fool. When the fool doesn't know when, where, or how to apply the instruction himself, is his proverb powerful when he teaches that to others? Would it be useful? The proverb that comes out of the mouth of the fool who can't apply it to himself is bound to be powerless and useless. Isn't it? If a wise person applies a proverb in his own life and then tells it to us, isn't that proverb useful to us?

In Proverbs 26:9, the Bible again speaks of "a proverb in the mouth of a fool." The Bible says, "Like a thorn bush in a drunkard's hand is a proverb in the mouth of a fool." Imagine a drunkard holding a thorn in his hand. What do you think? A little different question, what do you think if the drunkard had a knife in his hand? Don't you think it is dangerous? Not only that, but if the drunkard has a thorn in his hand, he may stumble and stab himself in the thorn. Wouldn't it hurt if he is stabbed by a thorn? In this way, the proverb in the mouth of the fool can cause pain and can be dangerous not only to the fool himself, but also to those who hear the proverb coming out of his mouth. The reason is because the fool can misapply and distort the proverb (MacDonald).

There seem to be so many Christians who distort God's word and receive it wrongly and apply it. In particular, it seems that among those who are deeply interested in spiritual interests and yearn for His word, many people who misunderstand, apply, and distort the word of God and cause fatal harm to their own spiritual life. However, what is taken seriously is that these people open their mouths to teach distorted teachings to many people, so they also do the fatal harm to their spiritual life. That is why we must be spiritually awake. We must have spiritual sensitivity, and must sharpen our spiritual sensitivity more and more with His word and prayer. Therefore, with spiritual discernment, we must be able to discern the proverb of the fool and the proverb of the wise. And we must walk with the wise as Proverbs 13:20 says. In doing so, we grow wise. "Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning" (9:9).

### **Seventh, we should not hire the fool.**

As you may know, Korean archery is good enough to recognize it all over the world. In particular, women's archery is said to have won gold medals in individual and group competitions from the 1984 Olympics to the 2004 Olympics. To what extent Korean archery players are good at, it is said that the arrows shot by Korean archery players in some Olympics smashed the camera installed in the center of the target (Internet). What would happen if a archery player with that skill level shoot at random people passing by?

In Proverbs 26:10, the Bible says that if a person hires a fool or a passerby is like an archer who shoots a



bow at random and hurts people. It is said that hiring such a fool or a passerby is fatal. Who wants to be shoot by an archer who shoots a bow randomly? I am sure no one. Everybody will try to avoid getting hit by the arrow. Here we can understand a little that hiring the fool is fatal. As we learned in verse 6, sending the message by the hand of the fool is as deadly as cutting off one's legs and drinking violence or poison on one's own. Sending the message by the hand of the fool or hiring the fool is a fatal thing that hurts oneself. So when people are trying to hire someone from any organization, don't they ask people to write an application and a resume? Then, wouldn't the person in charge of hiring a person at that organization decide whether or not to hire this person by looking at the application and resume of the person who applied for the organization? The same goes for the church. When a person writes his resume, the session of the church or the call committee will see it. And if they are interested, he will be interviewed. Why do they do that? The reason for doing so is because when one wrong person comes to church, he can cause great harm to the church. I still remember that several years ago, few elders came to our church from east coast. The reason they came to see me was because they wanted to find out about my friend pastor who lived here in Southern California, and who applied for a senior pastor position of their church. So they flew from the east coast all the way to California to meet me to find out more about him. To that extent, some churches are careful when they try to invite new pastors to their churches. But can you imagine the church invitation committee wants to invite anybody who just passes by the road if he is a pastor? If so, what will happen to that church? Wouldn't it become the broken church?

I read it again because I remembered that I meditated on the words of Judges 17:1-2 and 18:19 in March 2011 under the heading of "The broken family, the broken church." Here, "The broken family" refers to the house of a man named Micah. And "The broken church" refers to the Dan tribe. The reason I said that Micah's family was a broken family was because Micah's mother wanted Micah to be blessed even though her son stole 1,100 of her silver and returned it to her for fear of being cursed by her mother (17:2). How could the mother bless her son who stole her money? Shouldn't she rebuke him? I can't understand Micah's mother. What is more difficult to understand is that the Micah's mother, who dedicated the silver that she received her son to the Lord for Micah, took 200 pieces of silver, gave them to the silversmith who made them into a graven image and a molten image, and then gave them to her son Micah (vv. 3-4). Does it make sense to you? How could the Micah's mother do that? How could she, who blessed her son Micah, make an idol and give that to him? What she did was very absurd. How about your son Micah? He put the image and the idol in his house (v. 4). What is surprising is that Micah, who was blessed by her mother saying, "The Lord bless you, my son!"(v. 2) even had a shrine or house of gods (v. 5). Like this, both the mother and the son did whatever they saw fit. Isn't this broken family? And there is a reason why I considered the tribe of Dan to be the broken tribe. Micah not only made the ephod worn by the high priest at his own will, but he also had some idols (v. 5). He also consecrated one of his sons, that he might become his priest (v. 5). He did what was right in his own eyes (v. 6). When a young man from Bethlehem in Judah, who was a Levite, came to Micah's house (vv. 7-8), Micah said to him, "Dwell with me and be a father and a priest to me, and I will

give you ten pieces of silver a year, a suit of clothes, and your maintenance” (v. 10). Then since the Levite became his priest he said, “Now I know that the LORD will prosper me” (v.13). Then when the Danites sent five men who came to Laish, saw how people were living in the land (18:7) and returned to Zorah and Eshtaol (v. 8), went back and came to Micha’s house (vv. 13, 15) with 600 Danites who were armed for battle (v. 16). The five men who had spied out the land went inside and took the carved image, the ephod, the other household gods and the cast idols (v. 17) and asked the young Levite priest, “Come with us, and be our father and priest. Isn't it better that you serve a tribe and clan in Israel as priest rather than just one man's household?” (v. 19) “Then the priest was glad. He took the ephod, the other household gods and the carved image and went along with the people” (v. 20). As a result, the tribe of Dan worshipped idols. It was the broken tribe.

I think this is what many churches look like today. First, I think the problem is us, the pastors. In particular, I think one of the big problems is the people who are not qualified to become a pastor. When I think about why this is happening, I think the problem is that the seminaries are accepting people who are not properly verified. Even worse, I think they are ghost seminaries. I think these seminaries allow people with too little qualifications to enter the seminary under financial pressure for the purpose of gaining money from them in order to run the seminaries. That was what Jeroboam, king of northern Israel, did. He “appointed priests for the high places from all sorts of people. Anyone who wanted to become a priest he consecrated for the high places” (1 Kgs.13:33). Likewise, I am concerned that many seminaries are asking anyone to apply for the schools by taking some kinds of easy exams and are admitting them to the seminaries.

The Bible Proverbs 26:10 says, “Like an archer who wounds at random is he who hires a fool or any passer-by.” What does it mean? This means that anyone who hires the fool or a passerby will surely harm others. It’s like an archer who shoots a bow at random and hurts people. That's why it is fatal to hire anyone without knowing the qualifications of foolish people and workers (Park). What would happen to the company if those sitting high in the company hired fools or passers-by? What will happen to the church and the members if the invitation or calling committee calls the foolish pastor as the senior pastor in the church? Dr. Yoon-sun Park said four things about the foolish pastor based on Proverbs 26:6-10: (1) The foolish pastor doesn’t know God (Ps. 14:1). Such foolish pastor who doesn’t know God doesn’t receive inspiration and only thinks of human and mechanical knowledge. (2) The foolish pastor takes sin lightly (Prov. 14:9). He who takes sin lightly in this way doesn’t resist sin until he sheds blood (Heb. 12:4). (3) The foolish pastor doesn’t like to be reproof (1:20-33). The Bible values reproof, but the foolish pastor doesn’t value it (Ref. 27:5-6). (4) The foolish pastor doesn’t prepare for the soul (afterlife) (Lk. 12:16-21). The only thing the foolish pastor wants in Christ is this earthly life (1 Cor. 15:19) (Park). The book of Proverbs repeatedly says that this fool is subject to discipline: “Penalties are prepared for mockers, and beatings for the backs of fools” (Prov. 19:29); “A whip for the horse, a halter for the donkey, and a rod for the backs of fools!” (26:3)

Internet Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has revealed only one principle when hiring employees. He says “I will only hire someone to work directly for me”. ‘The most important thing is to make the team as small as possible,’ he said. He explains, ‘Facebook serves billions of people around the world, but our team is under 10,000.’ He said, ‘This is possible thanks to modern technology,’ and that ‘big companies are bubbling’ (Internet). If you are an employer for a company, how would you apply Proverbs 26:10 in hiring people? I thought about two things: (1) When we hire a person, we need to do it as thoroughly as possible. Even if we have been introduced through someone we know, even if we know the person we recommend, we should carefully examine and check the applicant. (2) We should not hire the fool. Rather, we must hire the wise. He who fears God, obeys His word, is true and faithful in character, etc. should be hired.

### **Eighth, the fool repeats his folly.**

Have you seen a dog eat back its vomit? Isn't it a little disgusting just to imagine? I never remember seeing the dog eat back that vomit, but I've seen a dog eat poop. When you think of such dog, don't you think such dog is a foolish dog? Likewise, how foolish in the sight of God is it that we repeatedly do foolish things? An example is the Israelites from the Old Testament Exodus and Judges. What they repeated over and over again was their blasphemy against Moses, a leader established by God, or even God and also disobedience to His word. How foolish does it look not only in God's eyes but also in our view of the Israelites who commit sins again and again? But don't you think this is who we are?

In Proverbs 26:11, the Bible says, ‘As a dog RETURNS from its vomit, so a fool REPEATS his folly.’ Here, Dr. Yoon-sun Park explained two reasons why the Bible refers to a fool as a dog-like person (Park):

- (1) The fool refers not to the foolish one (the childish one) as we usually think of, but to the one who makes sin a job.

The fool we are talking about in today's text refers to a person who doesn't feel any remorse in his conscience when he commits a sin. When we refer to such a person, we often say, ‘the person whose conscience is paralyzed.’ Look at 1 Timothy 4:2 – “Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.” So who does the Bible say that the conscience has been seared as with a hot iron or is paralyzed? The Bible says that “hypocritical liars” (v. 2). This foolish man is like a dog in that respect, because he doesn't question impure things. Jesus said, "Do not give what is holy to dogs" (Mt.7:6), which also means that dogs don't know what is holy.

- (2) The fool refers to a stubborn person who continues to commit sin and not turn away from it.

The fool is a person who doesn't repent. One example is Pharaoh, king of Egypt in the book of Exodus in

the Old Testament. He seems to repent from time to time despite encountering the ten plagues, but he didn't truly repent and hardened his heart. The Bible says that the fool, who hardens his heart so that he doesn't leave his sins, doesn't feel remorse in his conscience while continuing to commit the same sin, repeating his folly (Prov. 26:11). In addition to this, these words are written in the book of Proverbs: "the heart of fools blurts out folly" (12:23), "a fool displays folly" (13:16), "the folly of fools yields folly" (14:24), "the mouth of the fool gushes folly" (15:2), "the mouth of a fool feeds on folly" (v. 14) and "folly brings punishment to fools" (16:22).

What is the "folly" that the fool does over and over again? The Bible Proverbs 17:9 may be an example: "He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends." While the wise man seeks for love and will cover the offense of his friend, the fool separates his friend by saying it over and over again. Another example is Psalms 78:41 – "Again and again they put God to the test; they vexed the Holy One of Israel." How did the Israelites test God again and again at the time of the Exodus? They sinned against God by distrusting Him, complaining (resentful) in dissatisfaction, and disobeying His word. This is the folly that the fool does over and over again. We must not test God again and again like the Israelites. We must not offend the holy God again and again (Ps.78:41). If we are foolish like the Israelites and try and anger God over and over again, do you know what God will do to us? Look at Jeremiah 25:4 – "And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets again and again, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear." God sends us His servants "again and again". God says to us again and again, "Turn now everyone from his evil way and from the evil of your deeds" (v. 5).

Our God is speaking to us again today (REPEATEDLY). We must listen to and obey God's words that are spoken repeatedly. We must RETURN to God. And we must confess and abandon and REPENT our foolishness to God. We must not go back to our sinful habits. We must not do foolish things again. We must turn around and become wise, no longer repeating foolish things, but rather repeatedly doing the word of God.

### **Ninth and last, the fool is wise in his own eyes.**

I still remember that a pastor came to my college campus once a week to lead a small group Bible and we had a Bible study with him in a apartment where one of the seniors used to live. At that time, while doing discipleship training and studying the Bible about the five convictions, I can't forget that I was taught Fact, Faith, and Feeling about the conviction of salvation. The reason is because at that time I was not sure of salvation based on the truthful word of God. Rather, at that time, I was led by my feelings in my Christian life, so there were many more times when I had no assurance of salvation. Another of the five convictions I learned at that time was the conviction of guidance. The Bible verse for the conviction of that guidance is Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make

your paths straight.” I have experienced a lot of time when I have learned this word and have been reminded of this word by the indwelling Holy Spirit as I have walked the journey of faith until now. At that time, I often enjoyed the grace of meditating on this word. But when I meditated on it, the part that pierced my conscience was the word, “lean not on your own understanding.” The same is true now.

On February 17, 2011, I gave a sermon at a Wednesday night prayer meeting under the title of ‘The wise man (1)’ centering on Proverbs 3:1-10. I searched on my blog what I wrote after I preached that word of God especially focused on Proverbs 3:5-6 and this is what I found: ‘The wise man who engraves and obeys God's command on the plate of his heart trusts God whom he loves with all his heart (Prov. 3:5-6). Here, to trust in God with all your heart means exclusive trust. This kind of trust is called “childish confidence” (Park). Believing in God like a child, and completely relying on God with a simple trust is to trust in God with all our hearts (Park). In order to trust God with this kind of trust, we must not rely on our understanding. The more we rely on our own understanding, the more we cannot trust God with the simple heart like the child.’ Then I preached about the words of Proverbs 3:7, which are written in the Bible like this: “Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.” And this is what I wrote: ‘When we rely on our own understanding, eventually we will consider ourselves wise. In particular, when we manage our work by relying on our own understanding and when that work goes well, then we often think that the work went well because we are wise. He who relies on his own understanding in this way considers himself wise. Therefore, King Solomon is telling us not to consider ourselves wise. How is this possible? This is possible when we fear God. When we fear God, we can turn away from evil that we consider ourselves wise (v. 7). If we don't trust in God and don't acknowledge Him in all things, it is evidence that we trust ourselves and acknowledge ourselves. This is also evidence that we are wise with ourselves. This is the vain belief of the fool who doesn't fear God (14:16). And the cause of this vain belief that he believes himself to be wise is haughty in mind or is proud (Rom.12:16). What are proud? The reason is because we don't know the Most High God intimately. When we don't have the knowledge of our God, we consider ourselves wise (Prov.3:7) and pretend ourselves to be wise (Rom.12:16). When we fall into this arrogance, even though we know God, we neither glorify Him as God nor give thanks to him. But our thinking becomes futile and our foolish hearts are darkened. Although we claim to be wise, we become fools (1:21- 22). Therefore, we should not consider ourselves wise. Rather, we must turn away from evil because we fear God. As we fear God, we should not put our hearts in high places, but rather in low places. In a word, the wise man who fears God is humble. Because we fear God, we must turn away from evil and be humble. God will lift us up and use us according to His will.

If we look at Proverbs 26:12, the Bible tells us this: “Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.” If this word is translated into the original Hebrew, it is as follows: ‘Do you see a man who considers himself wise with his own eyes? Have hope for he who is more foolish than him’ (Park). Why do we think ‘I am wise’ when we see ourselves with our own eyes? Why do we consider ourselves wise? Of course, the cause is pride. But I wondered where pride comes from. In other words, when we are proud, we look at

ourselves with our proud eyes and consider ourselves wise. I thought about why do we come to that point. At that time, the word that came to mind is Romans 2:19-23: “if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth – you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?” Just like the Pharisees, we don’t teach ourselves with the word of God. Rather we disobey His word and like to teach others. That’s why we are proud and consider ourselves wise. It is very dangerous to believe in ourselves that we are wise. The reason is because not only will we never be taught the word of God, but we cannot.

There is no hope for those who believe in themselves as wise. That is why the Bible Proverbs 26:12 says, “Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.” How can there be hope for the fool? However, the Bible says that there is hope for the fool rather than he who considers himself wise. This means that those who consider themselves wise have no future or hope. However, those who have the wisdom that God gives will have a future hope and their hope will not be cut off (24:14). Therefore, let us not consider ourselves wise. Instead let us ask God for wisdom since God has promised, “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him” (Jam. 1:5). And let us live with that God’s given wisdom. Then we will certainly have a future hope.

## **A rod for the backs of fools!**

**“A whip for the horse, a halter for the donkey, and a rod for the backs of fools!  
... As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.” (Proverbs 26:3,  
11)**

Who are fools? What do they do? Why do they need? The fools are those who continually commit sins against God. And the fools are those who harden their heart in order not to repent their sins. In fact, they are arrogant and stiff-neck people. That's why the fools mock at sin(14:9) and don't want God's rebuke(1:25). If we do not want rebuke from the wise, then we are fools. If we consider the sins that we have committed against God lightly, then we are fools. If we do not have conscience-stricken after receiving rebuke and still harden our hearts, then we are fools. And if we are fools, then a rotten root is already growing in our heart and bearing the fruit of arrogant. If we are fools, we are stiff-neck people whose hearts are hardened.

The fools repeat their folly as a dog returns to its vomit (26:11). This reminds me the Israelites in the Old Testament. When we look at the Israelites during the time of the Exodus, they repeatedly grumbled against their leaders Moses and Aaron and even God. Why did they do that? I think it was because of their unsatisfactory heart. And why were they unsatisfied? I think the reason is their unbelief. They didn't believe God with all their hearts. They didn't trust Him completely. That's why they grumbled against Moses and Aaron and even God repeatedly. Beside those Israelites in Exodus time, the Israelites during Judges' time were same. They repeatedly commit sins against God. And when they did so, God used the Gentile nations as His rod to discipline the Israelites. And when God was disciplining them, the Israelites cried out to God for help because they were suffering out of their enemies' persecution. Then, God raised the judges to deliver them from their enemies. After, they enjoyed peace that God had given them. But what happened when everything was going fine, the Israelites forgot God's grace and commit the same sins of worshipping idols against God. You see, it was a crazy cycle: Sin à Discipline à Prayer à Deliverance -à Oblivion or Forgetting. What made the Israelites to repeatedly commit the same sins against God? I think it had to do with being “overfed (abundant food) and unconcerned (careless ease)” (Ezek. 16:49). When the Israelites were overfed because they was abundant food, they were unconcerned and lived carelessly. They had forgotten God's gracious deliverance and blessings. As a result, their rotten root of arrogant grew up and bore to fruit of sins. The fools repeat their folly as a dog returns to its vomit (Prov. 26:11) reminds me the Israelites in the New Testament as well, especially the Jews in Roman church. They were arrogant. They had spiritual superiority complex. That's why they judged the gentile brothers within their church. When we look at the Old and the New

Testament, the Israelites' repeatedly commit the sin of worshipping idols against God. How about us? Are we different from them? Although we say with our mouth "Lord, Lord" (Mt.7:21), aren't our hearts hardened and arrogant that we serve both God and Money (6:24).

The fools need a rod (Prov. 26:3). In other words, what the fools need is holy and just God's discipline. As the arrogant and stiff neck Israelites who were disciplined by God through the rod of their enemies, we needed to be disciplined by our Father God when we repeatedly commit the same sins against God. And we must remember that God is not just manifesting His holiness and justice. He is also manifesting His love for us (Heb. 12:6). In fact, God's rod for the backs of the fools is the rod of His justice and the rod of His love. And the fools need that rod of God.



## Characteristics of the lazy man

### [Proverbs 26:13-16]

Personally, I think there are many things that we Christians lack. If I were asked to say three of them, I would say commitment, earnestness or desperateness, and sense of urgency. Mostly, when first generation adults talk about their children, second-generation, they say the second generation lacks "commitment." Not only the first generation adults say this, but also the second generation pastors who shepherds the second generation say the same thing. However, I don't think that the lack of commitment is the only problem of second generation brothers and sisters in Christ. I think this is a problem for all of us, whether we are 1<sup>st</sup> generation or 1.5 generation. Generally speaking, we think that our commitment is poor. In addition to commitment, we Christians lack a lot of "earnestness". Now we are not looking for God earnestly. Not long ago, while reading Zephaniah chapters 1 to 3 at the Morning Prayer meeting, my gaze stopped a little at 1:6 – "those who turn back from following the LORD and neither seek the LORD nor inquire of him." I was a little surprised when God said that He would judge the people of Judah in the day of God and that He would annihilate those who didn't seek God and inquire of Him. When we think about why the people of Judah didn't seek God or inquire of Him, the reason is because they were worshiping idols rather than worshiping God (vv. 4-5). So God told them in Zephaniah 2:3, "Seek the LORD, All you humble of the earth Who have carried out His ordinances; Seek righteousness, seek humility Perhaps you will be hidden In the day of the LORD'S anger." God wants not only the people of Judah, but all of us Christians to humbly seek Him. What we lack, as well as commitment and earnestness, is "sense of urgency." We seem to be very easygoing until we are in a dire situation. Realizing the seriousness of the problem a little, we have to seek God earnestly to solve the problem with sense of urgency. But now we don't have such a sense of urgency. We are just relaxed. Now we are stuck in a rut.

When I think about what is the cause of our lack of commitment, earnestness, and sense of urgency, I think the causes are selfishness, comfortism, and laziness. What is selfishness? Isn't it self-boasting? Will we, who love ourselves, dedicate ourselves to love the Lord? I think that as time goes by, there will be fewer people who are dedicated to the Lord. This is because, as the Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:2, people will love themselves in the last days. Therefore, we Christians also love ourselves more than we love the Lord and love the church that is the body of the Lord. That is why we are increasingly not serving the church. Because it is difficult for everyone to live and eat, eventually fewer and fewer people are volunteering for the church. Increasingly, we aren't committed to the church. I think not only commitment but also earnestness. We who love ourselves seek our own comfort. We don't try to suffer for the Lord. I think not only hedonism is dangerous, but also comfortism is very dangerous. The

reason is because not only we don't earnestly seek God, but also it makes us impossible to do so. Not long ago, while reading Jonah 4, I came to meditate on the words that God made a shade above Jonah so that Jonah could escape from the heat and comfort him ("to ease his discomfort") (v. 6). At that time, the Bible says that Jonah was "very happy about the vine" (v. 6). While meditating around this word, I learned two lessons: (1) "It seems that I can't complain because I am uncomfortable [discomfort (v.6)]. In particular, we must not be angry with God (v. 9). Our discomfort may be an opportunity to learn lesson from God-His concern (vv. 6, 11). "Laziness", along with egoism and comfortism, negatively affects our commitment, earnestness, and sense of urgency. The reason for this is because "laziness" is also related to "selfishness". The connection is 'self-love, which is the root of laziness' (Nam-jun Kim). The selfish person who loves himself never devotes himself to the Lord. He doesn't have a desire to seek the Lord earnestly, nor does he live a life of faith with sense of urgency.

What is laziness? When I read an Internet article, this is what it says about laziness: It is because laziness is not whether we are moving or not but a question of 'Aren't we doing what is important first or not. The psychiatrist named Yohan Moon says there are three types of laziness (Internet):

(1) The perfectionism type (the indecision type) laziness.

Most of the time, they waste all their time making very detailed plans or focusing on detailed preparations because of their disposition. They always seem busy on the outside, but they can't tell what's more important and what's more urgent or not. You have to start studying for the exam right away. But in the meantime, you are wasting time meticulously arranging your desk and writing a nice time schedule with various colored pencils.

(2) The self-doubt type laziness.

They are always good at hesitating and procrastinating because they always question their abilities and blame themselves. It is a vicious cycle of self-doubt → anxiety → procrastinate → incomplete rationalization (next time, I will prepare more and will do it!) → self-criticism.

(3) The passive-aggressive type laziness.

They are unable to actively express or sublimate their antipathy towards the object they depend on (e.g., parents) and always passively express it. They seem polite on the outside, but they always procrastinate and act inefficiently about what is required, expressing their unconscious aggression. Unfortunately, they are people who try to upset the other person and destroy the other person's life by slowly turning their lives into failures. Compared to the above type, it looks rather casual.

Looking at the Naver Dictionary, it is said that people who are slow in behavior and have a temper or habit

that hates to move or work are lazy people (Internet). In the original Hebrew, a lazy man refers to a person who is habitually lazy and inactive, suggesting he has no discipline or initiative, as a moral failure (Swanson). But when we look at the book of Proverbs, the lazy man doesn't seem to have just this meaning. For example, Proverbs 15:19 says, "The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway." Here, the Bible is making contrast between the sluggard and the upright. And in Proverbs 21:25-26, the Bible contrasts "the sluggard" who refuses to work with the "the righteous". Also, in Proverbs 19:15, the Bible describes the lazy man as an "an idle man" or a person playing in idleness (Walvoord). Looking at this, it seems that the lazy man means a person who is habitually lazy and inactive, has no discipline, has no plan, and has moral failure, but also includes a man who is not honest before God or is an unrighteous person. That's why the Bible Jeremiah 48:10 says, "A curse on him who is lax in doing the LORD's work! ..." (Jere. 48:10)

Laziness is a sin. The reason laziness is a sin is because we disobey God's commands. In particular, not using God-given talents but to go and dig the ground and hide the money of the owner (Mt.25:18) is a sin of receiving reproof from the Lord as a wicked and lazy slave (v. 26).

If we look at Proverbs 26:13-16, the Bible speaks of the lazy man. I would like to receive a lesson given to each of us by thinking about the characteristics of the lazy man based on Proverbs 26:13-16.

### **First, the characteristic of the lazy man is that he is good at making excuses.**

Look at Proverbs 26:13 – "The sluggard says, 'There is a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!'" The road and the streets are places where people work. But if there are lions there, people wouldn't be able to go there. This is an excuse for people to be scared when trying to do something and to make excuses when they are not confident (Internet). As I meditated on this word, I looked at myself. And I confessed that when I felt scared, I made excuses for not doing the Lord's work. One of the excuses is that I didn't do the Lord's work because I thought, 'Even if I did it, it would be useless' as an excuse for fear of failure. I wondered why I did that, and the the reason was because I didn't trust God completely and relied on my own understanding (3:5). Because I didn't have faith, I relied on my own understanding. And because I didn't have faith, I was afraid of failure. Nevertheless, the excuse I made habitually to the people around me was 'I don't have an adventurous spirit' even though I didn't have courage and faith.

It is said that in a Chinese classic book, there is saying that people who cannot study because they don't have time can't even have time (Internet). In fact, we often give an excuse 'I don't have time to do it' not only regarding study, but also other things as well. However, we should think at least once if this excuse is not because we are lazy. Here's an anecdote about the famous British essayist Charles Lamb: When he worked for a long time at a company in India, he wanted to be able to read the books that he wanted and want to spend his time on his own. On the day of retirement after years of work, he was delighted to be able to write and read freely without being

bound by the company anymore. However, what he realized after retirement was that a person who is busy and has no time to write can't write even if he has time. It was only then that he realized that even good ideas came to mind while he was busy with work. He had developed a mind to abuse himself without knowing he had nothing to do (Internet).

If we look at Ecclesiastes 4:5, the Bible says: "The fool folds his hands and ruins himself." What does it mean? It means that the fool folds his hands and 'folding hands' here means that the fool doesn't work. This is consistent with Proverbs 21:25 – "The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work." In other words, the lazy man hates working with his own hands. The Bible says that lazy man who doesn't like to work with his own hands is a fool. This fool refuses to work which is his responsibility by making excuses. But the Bible John 15:22 says, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin." The fool has no excuse for his sin of making excuses and refusing to work. Now we have no excuses either. Since we have received the word of Proverbs 26:13 from the Lord, we can no longer make excuse for our sin of laziness. In other words, we learned that if we were no longer afraid and didn't postpone the work of the Lord by making excuses like this or that, it would be an inexcusable sin in the sight of the Lord. What should we do?

When we look at Luke 9:57, there are people who made excuses. One of those who made excuses said to Jesus as follow: "I will follow You wherever You go." So Jesus clearly said, "Follow Me" (v. 59). But one said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father" (v. 59) and another said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home" (v. 61). Then Jesus said these words: "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God" (v. 60) and "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (v. 62). We too should not hesitate to follow the Lord while looking back and making excuses like this or that.

We must now look back to ourselves to see if we are guilty of not doing the Lord's work, making excuses like this or that to Him. If we are committing such a sin now, we must confess our sins to God and repent. After that, we should no longer be afraid and make excuses. Rather we must boldly do the Lord's work in faith.

### **Second, the characteristic of the lazy man is that he likes to sleep.**

Look at Proverbs 26:14 – "As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed." This means that the lazy man circles on his bed. In other words, the lazy man likes to sleep while lying on the bed. Considering this in connection with verse 13, the reason that the lazy man doesn't go to work with this or that excuse is because he wants to sleep a little more. So King Solomon says in Proverbs 6:9-11: "How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest- and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man."

How many hours a day do you think it's good to sleep? According to one Internet site, it is recommended that children sleep 12 hours, teenagers 9 hours, and adults 7 hours 30 minutes or more. Not only insufficient sleep time is a problem, but also too long sleeping time is a problem. For example, there are times when we try to do something productive even by reducing our sleeping time. But such lack of sleep often decreases our work efficiency due to poor physical and mental functions. There are reports of research showing that if we don't sleep for 4 hours than usual, the reaction speed is about 45% slower, and if we don't sleep at all overnight, the reaction time becomes almost twice as long as usual. In addition, sleep deprivation, among other things, blurs our mental activity. In a state of lack of sleep, we will have difficulty solving new and complex problems that require creativity, wit, quickness, etc. In addition, it becomes dull and lifeless, and even a person who was cheerful because his mood subsides can easily become depressed and irritable or angry if he can't sleep for few days. Sleeping too much makes a person lethargic and saggy. So, hypersomnia, along with insomnia, is a major sign of depression. Therefore, it is more important to find our own proper sleep time and have regular sleeping habits rather than unconditionally reducing our sleep time to study or work, or extending our sleep time unconditionally to relieve fatigue. It is said that sleeping hours and habits that suit us well are essential remedies for the body (Internet).

In the Bible Isaiah 56:10, there are people who like to sleep. Those are the "Israel's watchmen." Look at Isaiah 56:10 – "Israel's watchmen are blind, they all lack knowledge; they are all mute dogs, they cannot bark; they lie around and dream, they love to sleep." What would happen if the watchmen who guarded the castle in the war against the enemy were the ones who lie down and those who like to sleep? In today's speaking, what if the soldiers in the military guard, who supposes to stand awake, lie down without standing guard, and like to sleep? The watchmen's role is to stay awake (Ps. 127:1) and stand on guard day and night (Neh. 4:9). And when they see the enemy coming, they must blow the trumpet of warning (Ezek. 33:6). But if the watchmen with such an important responsibility like to sleep, what will happen to the castle and the people in the castle by their enemy? Therefore, no one will make those who love to sleep as watchmen. Who will entrust his life to the watchmen who love to sleep?

When we look at Proverbs 23:21, this is what King Solomon says: "for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags." In the context of this verse, the Bible is telling us not to associate with the drunkards. The reason is because the drunkards will become poor. Why do the drunkards become poor? The reason for this is because the drunkards will not only waste their possessions while living in debauchery (Eph. 5:18; Ref.: Luke 15), but also will be lazy and like to sleep (Prov. 23:21). That is why the Bible repeatedly says, 'Do not get drunk' (Eph. 5:18, Rom. 13:13, 1 Cor. 5:11, 6:10).

We should not like to sleep like the lazy man. Also, we must not be like the lazy man who doesn't wake up at the time to wake up, doesn't work at the time to work, and postpones it later. We should not live with the attitude of sleeping more and working later. We should not be people who don't blame ourselves for laziness and blame other things (situations, people, etc.). We should not like to sleep but should wake up and work diligently. The

reason is because the night will come when we cannot work. Therefore, we must not play while working. And we should work diligently and should not like to sleep. Whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, we must diligently do God's work for His glory.

### **Third, the characteristic of the lazy man is that he hates to work.**

Look at Proverbs 26:15 – “The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth.” The same word is found in Proverbs 19:24 – “The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he will not even bring it back to his mouth!” Do you know the Aesop’s fable “The ant and grasshopper”? According to that famous story, the grasshopper sang and mocked the ant which worked hard in the summer: ‘Hey ant, is something wrong with your head? Why are you preparing food in summer for winter?’ Despite such ridicule, the ant worked very hard for cold winters, even in hot summer days. However, the grasshopper didn’t work every day and only sang. As a result, he had no food to eat in the winter so he begged for food. When I read this fable story as a child, I was taught that I should be like the ant, not the grasshopper. I learned that I must live diligently like the ant, not lazy like the grasshopper. However, as I grew older when I thought about this story, not only that I learned the lesson of being diligent like the ant, but also being wise in preparing for the future.

When we see a very young child, we see his mother puts food in a spoon and put it in his mouth. However, even though the young child grew up to some extent and he can eat food with a spoon on his own, what would you think if his mother keeps on feeding him with the spoon and he just opens his mouth? This is what the Bible Proverbs 21:25 says: “The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work.” What does it mean? It means that the lazy man hates to work with his hands. So, in Proverbs 13:4, the Bible says, “The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.” That means he cannot get what he desire because he is lazy and his hands are not working.

The lazy man not only doesn’t hunt for its catch (12:27), but also suffers from putting his hand in a bowl and raising it with his mouth (19:24, 26:15). Isn't it funny that if we want to eat meat, we have to hunt and catch an animal but we aren't but just desiring it? Also, who is hungry and struggles to put his hand in a bowl and raise it with his mouth? So, like a baby, should someone feed you with a spoon? I think this is the culmination of laziness. I think that this is the laziness of the laziness. Regarding such lazy man, the Bible Proverbs 19:15 says that he is an “an idle man”, that is, a person who is idle and playing. In short, the lazy man hates working with his hands (21:25). As a result, poverty is inevitable for the lazy man. Poverty will come as if the victim was overwhelmed by a robber (24:33) (MacArthur).

Rather, the lazy man often makes problems. Look at 1 Timothy 5:11-13: “But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married, thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge. At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they

go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.” The lazy young widow goes from house to house, gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. There were such foolish and lazy people in Thessalonica church. Look at 2 Thessalonians 3:10 – “... If a man will not work, he shall not eat.” During that time in the Thessalonians church, there were some who refused or even hated to work. The problem was that they didn’t work at all. They were idle. And they were busybodies (3:11). The reason why they didn’t work at all, but rather made work in the church, that is, the reason they didn’t work with their hands because they were foolishly lazy was because they had a wrong eschatology. In other words, because they had wrong eschatological hope, they were idle, didn’t work with their hands and were busybodies, making problem in the church. It is very dangerous to have such a false eschatology. It's not just a false eschatology. When we have a distorted view of belief, there are plenty of cases where we evade our responsibilities. One of the responsibilities we avoid is extremely common sense and is what we must do. In other words, if we have the wrong view of faith, we avoid the basic responsibility we ought to do. If we don't want to work, the Bible tells us not to eat. If we have the distorted view of faith, we can be loyal to the church and live busy life while playing and eating without working.

We must do the Lord's work diligently with the right view of faith. Of course, believing in Jesus is very important in the work of the Lord. But it is also important to serve the church that is the body of the Lord. We must humbly serve with God's grace. And we must serve with the wisdom that God gives us. In particular, we must serve the Lord's church with Immanuel faith, believing that God is with us (Hag 1:13, 2:4, 5). Also, we must strengthen ourselves (2:4), must not to be afraid (v. 5) and must serve the Lord's church.

#### **Fourth and last, the characteristic of the lazy man is that he is wiser in his own eyes.**

Look at Proverbs 26:16 – “The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who answer discreetly.” We have already meditated on ‘being wiser in our own eyes’ based two verses in Proverbs:

- (1) The first verse is Proverbs 3:7 – “Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.”

When we rely on our own understanding, eventually we will be wise in our own eyes. In particular, when we manage our work by relying on our understanding and the work we were managing goes well, we often think that the work went well because we are wise. Those who rely on their understanding in this way consider themselves wise. Therefore, King Solomon is telling us not to consider ourselves wise. How is this possible? This is possible when we fear God. When we fear God, we can turn away from evil that we consider ourselves wise (v. 7). So we must fear God in order to turn away from evil. Because we fear God, we should not put our hearts in high places, but rather have our hearts in low places. In a word, the wise man who fears God is humble. Because we fear God, we must hate evil and be humble. God will raise the

humble ones up and use them highly.

(2) The second verse is Proverbs 26:12 – “Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”

If this word is translated into the original Hebrew, it is as follows: ‘Do you see a man who considers himself wise with his own eyes? Have hope for he who is more foolish than him’ (Park). The reason why we think we are wise when we see ourselves with our eyes is because of pride. And the reason why we are proud is not only because we don’t teach ourselves by the word of God, but also we disobey His word, and love to teach others.

In Proverbs 26:16, the Bible again speaks about he who considers himself wise. And the Bible says he is the lazy person. When I meditate on this word, I think laziness and pride have something to do with it. Not only foolishness seems to be related to pride, but also laziness is related to pride (v. 12). In a word, the lazy man is proud. Not only that the lazy man doesn’t have discernment. When we look at Proverbs 26:16, we can see that the Proverbs writer contrasts the lazy man with the seven people who answer discreetly. When we see that contrast, the lazy man considers himself wiser than the seven men who answer discreetly, not only because he is proud, but also because he is a fool and has no discernment. Regarding this proud, foolish, indiscreet lazy man, Pastor John MacArthur said: “The ignorant are ignorant of their ignorance” (MacArthur). In Hebrews 5:2, the Bible says that such an ignorant lazy man “are going astray” (NIV) or “misguided” (NASB). In other words, the ignorant lazy man is deceived and falls into error.

We should not be this ignorant lazy people. We should never be foolish and lazy and live without discernment. Rather, we must become wise and diligent. We must become wise Christians with spiritual discernment. As we become wise Christians with spiritual discernment, we will take a thorough look at ourselves (Prov. 28:11). And we will continue to learn good lessons from God’s word (1:5). Then our discernment will keep us and protect us (2:11).

We all must one day stand before the Lord and settle account (Mt. 25:19). The Lord has given us talents “each according to his ability” (v. 15). As we who each received talents from the Lord, we must faithfully bear our responsibilities and bear fruit (vv. 16-17). Therefore, we must be praised by the Lord, “Well done, good and faithful servant!” (vv. 21, 23) We must not be rebuked by the Lord as “You wicked, lazy servant!” (v. 26) Today we meditated on four characteristics of the lazy man, based on Proverbs 26:13-16. We have learned that the lazy man is good at making excuses (v. 13), loves to sleep (v. 14), refuses to work (v. 15) and is wiser in his own eyes. I hope and pray that we don’t have these characteristics of the lazy man.



## Five kinds of people to stay away from

### [Proverbs 26:17-22]

Last week I was reading the Gospel of John in the Bible before going to bed at night. And I thought about it and wrote something down. The focus of the writing supposed to be people whom we should stay away from, but I wrote about people whom we should be close to. First of all, I wrote down two people whom we should be close to, and those people are those who are truthful (Prov. 12:22) and the people who don't stumble in what they say (Jam. 3:2). And then I wrote about the people whom we should stay away from. Look at John 8:44 – “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” As I was reading this word, I thought that we Christians should stay away from a liar. What do you think? Besides the liar, whom should we stay away from?

Today based on Proverbs 26:17-22, I would like to think about the five kinds of people we should stay away from. As we meditate on these five kinds of people, I hope and pray that we can receive the lessons God gives us and obey His lessons.

The first kind of people to stay away from is a fool like one who who seizes a dog by the ears.

Look at Proverbs 26:17 – “Like one who seizes a dog by the ears is a passer-by who meddles in a quarrel not his own.” How would a dog react if you grabbed the dog's ear? I read an internet article saying, ‘Do you like a dog if you hold the dog's ear?’ Several people have given these answers to this question (Internet):

- (a) ‘The ears are the weakness of all animals. That's why the dogs move to protect itself.’
- (b) ‘The dog really hates it and it hurts.’
- (c) ‘We should never hold the dog's ear because the dogs have sensitive ears. ... The tail as well ....’
- (d) ‘If you hold the dog by its ear, some dogs will bite you. Don't do it carelessly.’
- (e) ‘Then it will get really bad. The dog doesn't like someone to hold its ears. So it can bite you. I've also been bitten by my dog. It really hurts.’

If we look at Proverbs 26:17, the Bible says, “Like one who seizes a dog by the ears is a passer-by who meddles in a

quarrel not his own.” According to Pastor John MacArthur, at the time of the Proverbs writer, the dogs in Palestine were not as domesticated as they are today. Therefore, it is said that holding a dog's ears was dangerous (MacArthur). That is why the Proverbs writer is saying that it is foolish to seize the dog by the ear. And he's telling us that the foolish thing, like seizing the dog by the ears, is the passer-by who meddles in a quarrel not his own. The word “meddles” here literally means “excites himself over” (Walvoord). In view of this literal meaning, I think the fool likes the one who seizes dog by the ears that the Proverbs writer is talking about in Proverbs 26:17 is a person who likes to get into a quarrel that has nothing to do with him. To put it more seriously, when he sees other people quarrel, I think he is the person who gets excited about himself and goes to those who quarrel with interest to find out and intervene to fuel the quarrel. Today we need to learn 3 lessons from this verse (Park):

(1) We must not interfere in other people's affairs.

Have you ever heard of a Korean proverb saying, ‘A dog runs away suddenly from a barn house’? This is the first time I've ever heard, and it is ‘a sarcastic word for someone who jumps in and meddles whenever something happens’ (Internet). What do you think? Is there anyone who jumps into other people's affairs and intervenes whenever there is something going on around you? In particular, are there any people who can't do their job properly and are eager to intervene in other people's affairs? People say to such a person, ‘Do not meddle with others, but turn off the light on your feet’ (Internet). In fact, if we look at 1 Peter 4:15, the Bible says, ‘Do not suffer by being a meddler.’ We don't have to face unnecessary hardships by intervening in fights that have nothing to do with us on our way. Intervening in such a fight is not only not wise, but also it isn't loving our neighbor.

(2) We must not participate in the quarrels of others.

Excessive interest can not only interfere with others' affairs, but also make us to join in, which can make other people's quarrels bigger. For example, if two people are arguing in a church and paying too much attention to them, you may be wondering why they are fighting and want to know. Then, while listening to their words, we cannot keep our neutrality and join in, lean to one side and become on the side of one person, making the quarrel even bigger. Our responsibility is not to make the quarrels bigger, but to reconcile those who quarrel. We are those who are reconciled to God through the ransom death of Jesus Christ on the cross (Rom. 5:10). And the Lord has given us “the office of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18). And God has committed to us “the message of reconciliation” (v. 19). The Bible tells us, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Rom. 12:18). We must become peacemakers who reconcile with everyone.

(3) We must know that interfering in others' affairs or participating in other people's quarrels will make us to suffer a loss.

Have you ever heard the saying, 'You will get bitten back if you tickle an angry dhole's nose'? This is the North Korean saying. It means that you will suffer a loss if you meddle with an angry person (Internet). Have you ever suffered any damages for being prematurely meddle with the angry person? I personally have two thoughts about being suffer a loss. The two things are (a) that we must recover our spiritual wealth even through we may loss our wealth, and (b) even though it seems that we suffer a loss, God restores that loss and gives us blessings (Ruth 4). However, based on the word of Proverbs 26:17, one more thought about suffering a loss has been added to those two things. It is nothing more than the fact that there is no need to incur unnecessary loss by interfering and participation in other people's affairs. This is not just our loss, but also to those who are quarreling. Furthermore, if something is happening in the church, then the church community will suffer a loss. There is no need to deliberately take advantage of this kind ineffective loss. So we have to discern and separate the loss as well. There are suffering the loss that is beneficial to ourselves. It is to regain our spiritual wealth, even through the loss of wealth. In addition, God is giving us blessings by turning over our losses (Ruth 4). But there are also useless loss to us. It is an unnecessary or useless loss that we see as we interfere and participate in others' affairs (Prov. 26:17). We must be able to see the loss separately with spiritual discernment.

We should not interfere with quarrels that have nothing to do with us. Who will seize the dog by the ears even though he knows that the dog will bite him. That is foolish thing to do. The Bible Proverbs 26:17 urges us not to do such foolish thing. We shouldn't do this foolish thing as we go along the road and get involved in quarrels that have nothing to do with us.

The second kind of people to stay away from is a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows.

When you watch a Korean historical drama, have you ever seen people holding torches and throwing them at home? Or have you ever seen some of the soldiers who shoot arrows with fire during a war? Why do soldiers shoot fiery arrows on the battlefield at the soldiers in the enemy's camp? Isn't that the purpose of killing the enemy?

Look at Proverbs 26:18-19: "Like a madman shooting firebrands or deadly arrows is a man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I was only joking!" Here, the phrase "a mad man shooting firebrands or deadly arrows" literally means 'a mad man who throws fireballs, arrows, and death' in Hebrew. This person is a man who shoots arrows with fire. He's the mad man who lightly views life and plans murder (Internet). We must stay away from this kind of man.

Every time I hear the news of the shootings in the US news, I sometimes feel like crazy people who take other people's lives lightly and plan for murder. How could they take people's lives lightly by going to school with

guns, shooting firearms, and taking away the precious lives of many young students. One day I heard the news anchor said that gun control laws need to be tightened, and one of those laws was investigating a person who buys a gun. And she said that if the person has a mental problem (or had any experience of treatment for the mental problem), they government should create a regulatory law that prevents guns from being sold. When I heard that, I thought that of course it should be like that. Imagine. What if people sell a gun to a psychopath? According to an online article, the number of pediatric bipolar disorder (manic depression) has increased by 40 times and the diagnosis of autism has increased by 20 times in the past 15 years. It is said that there are now more than 200 mental disorders that were only 6 types a century ago (Internet). In this situation, what would happen if gun control laws were not tightened and guns were sold to people with mental disorders? What if there was a madman who is now looking lightly at life and trying to kill us, standing in front of us with a gun? Won't we be afraid and fear of death? The Bible says that this "is a man who deceives his neighbor and says, 'I was only joking!'" (v. 19) Such a man deceives others with his ruthless heart. And even though he deceives others, he doesn't regret or lament it, but rather enjoys it (Park). Can you imagine a man who deceives others and doesn't regret or lament, but rather enjoys it? How cruel and crazy is this? The Bible says that someone who likes to inflict fatal wounds on others by deceiving them, and who says that he was just joking, is like the mad man who shoots firebrands of deadly arrows.

We have to be careful with our tongue. If we look at James chapter 3, the Bible says that "The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body ..." (v. 6). And the Bible says that the tongue "is a restless evil, full of deadly poison" (v.8). Although the tongue is only a small part of the body, it can cause great damage, as if "a great forest is sent on fire by a small spark" (v. 5). We must not misuse our tongue and cause great damage to the other people. In particular, we must not deceive people with our tongue. In Leviticus 25:14, the Bible says, "... don't cheat each other (EXB). The Bible Proverbs 24:28, "Do not testify against your neighbor without cause, or use your lips to deceive." Also, in Proverbs 25:18, the Bible says, "Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is the man who gives false testimony against his neighbor." We should not deceive our neighbors with our lips. Even if the other person lies to us and deceives us, we shouldn't do the same to the other person. Of course, the reason we should not do so is because not only the Bible forbids us to revenge ourselves, but also as Christians we should not lie and deceive the neighbors. If we lie and deceive our neighbor, we must not forget that it pleases the devil, the liar and father of lies (Jn. 8:44). We Christians must not lie. We must be truthful. May we all be raised up as true Christians.

The third kind of people to stay away from is talkers or gossipers.

I read an Internet article titled 'How to Eliminate a Gossiper Colleague' (Internet). According to that article, 'There is one source of conflict in many workplaces.' It is said to be 'the constant gossip of coworkers who share too much privacy.' According to one survey, a survey of 514 professional and corporate workers found that three out of five office workers said they had at least one coworker who shares too much privacy at least once a

week. These gossipers often interfere with the work of their co-workers, and they risk putting their own careers as well as those of other co-workers at risk.

When we looking at Proverbs 26:20, the Bible says, “Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down.” Who is a talker or gossip? Mostly we think of “gabbler” when we talk about the talker or gossip. Also, we think of “gossiper” (internet). At the same time, the word also means “blabbermouth” (Internet). What would you be like if there were such talkers/gossipers around you? Will you feel tired?

This is what the Bible says in Proverbs 11:13 and 20:19 – “A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret” (11:13) and “A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much” (20:19). Looking at these words, it is said that a gossip is a person who goes around and divulges the secrets of others. The lesson that these words teach us is that if we have problems with our neighbors, we must be careful with our words if that neighbor is a gossip. The reason is because the gossip will go around and reveal our secrets. So we must be careful with gossipers. We shouldn't give the gossip all the sincerity in our hearts. Why is the Proverbs writer saying in Proverbs 26:20 that quarrel dies down without gossip? The reason is because the gossip goes around and reveals other people's secrets (11:13, 20:19). Also, the reason is because the gossip wanders around and talks to others, playing both sides against the middle and bring separation between people (1 Tim. 5:13) and causing disputes (Park). Actually, the Proverbs writer says in Proverbs 16:28, “A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.” That's why he says that without gossip the quarrel dies down (26:20). That's why the Bible tells us not to divulge other people's secrets when there is a problem that two people can argue with. The reason is recorded in the Bible Proverbs 25:10 – “or he who hears it may shame you and you will never lose your bad reputation.” The reason is because if we divulge someone else's secret when we quarrel, the person who listens to that other's secret will embarrass us. Our reputation will be bad as a result. Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘Why is he embarrassed when he quarrels and reveals secrets? The reason is because the principle is to speak only to solve the problem of the dispute. But aside from that problem, it is a personal attack to talk about the other's secret shortcomings. Anytime a personal attack is not intended to defy the truth, it is a vulgar act. Even though the other's secret work belongs to his private matter, it is rude to invade it. He's been embarrassed for his words all his life and it's hard to escape the other's hatred. Therefore, when people inevitably quarrel, they must calmly testify about the problem’ (Park). I think it makes sense. When we quarrel, we should not talk (leak) other people's secrets. But we should only speak to solve the problem of the dispute. But there are times when we cannot. When I think about why, one of the reasons is because we cannot focus on solving the problem of our quarrels and focus only on that problem and we think that the other person caused the problem. That's why I think it's even a personal attack on that person. And the reason why we personally attack the other person is because our our desires that battle within us (Jam. 4:1).

We need to stay away from talkers/gossipers who are talkative. Especially, we must be on the lookout for

those who easily divulge the secrets of others. The reason is because the quarrels will never cease if we get close to such talkers or gossipers. Therefore, we must stay away from gossipers, even to stay away from quarrels.

The fourth kind of people to stay away from is a quarrelsome man.

Our church used to go out to the park twice a year and use to grill meat. At that time, we have seen the brothers in Christ who put charcoal and sprinkle lighter fluid on it to light it in order to cook meat. If the charcoal fire seems to be running out while grilling the meat, they put more charcoal to grill the meat. The same goes for wooden fire. They light the wood and burn it. And if the wood seems to be burning, they add more wood.

Look at Proverbs 26:21 – “As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.” The Proverbs writer says that those who love quarrels fuel the fight as if they add charcoal over a charcoal fire and add wood to a burning fire. What would you do if your clothes were on fire now? I am sure you will sprinkle water on the lit clothes to put out the fire. But what if you pour gasoline on it? Likewise, what would happen if we pour gasoline on two people who are quarreling, instead of pouring water as peacemakers? Wouldn't they quarrel greatly as if they were on fire? For example, there may be enough cases in a house where two of the family members are arguing and we foolishly intervene, making the quarrel between the two even bigger. When our spouse and children are quarreling, we need to reconcile with each other, but we may make the quarrels bigger without intention to do so. In most cases, we cannot control our emotions and get involved in the two who are quarreling. That's why the Bible says in Proverbs 15:18, “A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.” Those who get easily angry (those who are in a hurry) cause a quarrel. However, those who are slow to anger (those who are seldom angry) will calm the quarrel.

In Proverbs 25:24, the Proverbs writer is talking of "a quarrelsome wife." He says that it is better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with the quarrelsome wife. Why does the wife quarrel with her husband? If we look at Proverbs 15:1, the Bible says: “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” Can we imagine how would other person react when we say the harsh words to an angry person, as if we are pouring gasoline into the fire instead of calming the other person's anger with the gentle words? The reason why a wife quarrels with her husband is because of “a sly tongue”. Look at Proverbs 25:23 – “As a north wind brings rain, so a sly tongue brings angry looks.” Here, “a sly tongue” means ‘the tongue of secret,’ which refers to the words of a person who is flattering to harm others and to benefit himself. And the husband who hears such words causes anger, and the couple quarrel. That is why the Bible Proverbs 21:9, 19 say this: “Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife. ... Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.” While the Bible Proverbs 21:9 says "a quarrelsome wife" (a woman who likes to quarrel), 21:19 says "a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife". What we can tell here is that the cause of the couple's quarrels is because they can't stand anger and get angry. In Proverbs 15:18, the Bible says that "A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension."

We shouldn't be angry. We must be slow to anger. The reason for this is because "a patient man calms a quarrel" (v. 18). We should be slow to anger people who calm the quarrel. What is the reason? The reason is because the Bible Philippians 2:14 says "Do everything without complaining or arguing." The reason the apostle Paul said that to the members of the Philippian church was because there was complaining or arguing in the church (v. 3). The cause of complaining or arguing (quarrels) in the Philippian church was vain glory (v. 3). If there are people in the church who are pursuing vain glory that get above himself and is hollow, then complaints and quarrels will inevitably arise in the church. The same is true of the modern church. The reason why there is complaining and strife in the church is because of the vain glory within us. Because of that vain glory, there is complaining and strife in the church because we act according to the old habit of fighting desire (Jam. 4:1). Why should we Christians, as the apostle Paul said, do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain glory? The reason is "so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe" (Phil. 2:15). The world we live in is a perverse world. People aren't going on the straight and right path that the Lord commanded, but on the crooked path. Their mind is also crooked. Because the mind is crooked, both of their words and actions are crooked. In this broken and rebellious world, we must show the light of Jesus as God's blameless and pure children (v. 15). In order to do that, we must do everything without complaining and arguing.

The fifth and the last kind of people to stay away from is a man who likes to talk about others.

Have you ever learned later that someone was spreading bad rumors about you? If so, how did you react when you learned that it was by no means true, but that the person had made up words about you, lied, and spread bad rumors about you? I have had this experience. There was a time when a person made up something that wasn't based on the fact at all, but she made up the false story and spread the bad rumor about me in her apartment. And two people came to me and told me about that rumor because they were also involved in this bad and false rumor. At that time, I had lunch with them at a restaurant near the church, and one of them told me about that rumor. When I first heard that rumor, it was so absurd that I just laughed. At that time, I remember feeling sorry for those two who were involved in the false rumor. In particular, I remember that I apologized to them instead of the one who spread that rumor because I was very sorry especially one of them wasn't a believer and who came to my church with the father, who attended my church.

Look at Proverbs 26:22 – "The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts." Among the meditations on the word of God that I cannot forget, there is a meditation on the word 'The Satan's strategy (4)'. It was the meditation based on the words of Acts 21:27-36. As I meditated on those words, I realized that one of Satan's strategies was "rumor" (v. 31). The point of the words is that the apostle Paul accepted the counsel of James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem, and the four men who made the vows of the Nazirites,

entered the temple, paid various sacrifices for them, and participated in their sacrifices. This was because Paul wanted to show decisively how thorough and godly Jew he was. When that very day was right before his eyes, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple and stirred up the whole crowd and seized him (Sang-seop Yoo). They stirred up the crowd by unhesitatingly spreading a false claim against the apostle Paul. Although the Jews should have first checked whether it was true or not, and then should have spoken, they stirred up the whole crowd who were in the courtyard of the Israeli men in the temple in speculation and seized Paul. The apostle Paul had already experienced this experience in Iconium (Acts 14). When he went to Iconium with Barnabas and went to the Jewish synagogue and preached the gospel as he had always done, he also experienced that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed (v. 1). At that time, the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers (v. 2). So they mistreated Paul and Barnabas and tried to stone them (v. 5).

How pathetic and frustrating is this? However, this is also happening in the church in this era in which we are living. Even now, there are people who make false claims in the church and impulse the members. It isn't an argument based on facts, but in the midst of speculation, they make arguments against people they hate and dislike. And in the end, it is happening in the church to stir up the people around them and form a group by making their own side. This is what the Bible Proverbs 16:28 says: "A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends." Considering the Bible's saying that "When they are many words, transgression is unavoidable" (10:19), there may be talkers who like to talk about other people in the church that are not based on facts, which can stir up other believers to cause quarrels. The reason the church falls into quarrels is because we listen to the lies of the devil. This is because the devil keeps emphasizing that there are different ideas and impulses to quarrel.

We should not like to talk about other people. We should be careful and careful. The reason is because if we like to talk, we can harm the other people. For example, when we like to talk about other people, we can cause quarrels (18:6; 26:20), or we can separate close friends (16:28). That's why Psalms 101:5 tells us not to slander our neighbor in secret, and Proverbs 17:9 tells us not to repeat the matter. We must not speak careless word (Mt. 12:36). Also, we must not go from house to house and say useless words or gossips (1 Tim. 5:13) (Nelson).



## A hypocrite ...

### [Proverbs 26:23-28]

Have you ever been troubled by the hypocrisy seen when you look at yourself in front of God and reflect yourself before the word of God? Especially, a pastor like me who preach His word is compelled to worry about my own hypocrisy that is revealed while preaching and teaching His word. Sometimes, after proclaiming His word, when the indwelling Spirit reveals that I am not living according to the word that I proclaimed and when I am conscience-stricken, I am saddened and discouraged by my own hypocrisy. I reread the late Pastor Han-eum Ok's book, 'Pastor Han-eum Ok to the Pastor': 'In fact, no job is as easy to become a hypocrite than a pastor. No one is more likely to be a hypocrite than a pastor. And if that hypocrisy becomes a bad habit to the body, the conscience will disappear. So you need to know how terrifying you are on the edge of a cliff. Keep this in mind.' I think this is something to keep in mind and keep in mind. The word comes to my heart that hypocrisy becomes the bad habit to the body, and conscience will disappear. How dangerous is it to become a pastor with a paralyzed conscience or a pastor without a conscience? This is what John Calvin said about hypocrites: 'The hypocrites plausibly conceal their pride with a mask of zeal.' We must be vigilant and alert about the hypocrisy that hides one's pride with a mask of zeal.

In Proverbs 26:24, the Bible says, "A hypocrite hides hate behind flattering words" (Good News Translation). Today, focusing on this word, I would like to receive a lesson given by meditating on only one thing, focusing on today's text Proverbs 26:23-28 under the heading "A hypocrite".

One thing about the hypocrite that I want to meditate on is that the hypocrite's lips is different from his heart. What does the word "hypocrite" mean? The Old Testament Hebrew meaning is 'the one who conceals himself'. In other words, the hypocrite is the one who hides himself. In the New Testament, it was originally referred to an actor who wore a mask on the stage, and later used the word 'Hypokrites', which means hypocrite. This word refers to a false attitude that has the form of godliness, especially used by religious people, but lacks the power of godliness. Hypocrisy is a suitable expression when he is a very godly Christian on the outside, but full of lies and hypocrisy on the inside. The representative hypocrites in Jesus' day were the Pharisees. As they had high social status in the Jewish society at the time, their desire to show off their faith was great, and they were seen as typical of hypocrisy, showing off, and pretending. They were hypocrites who disguised themselves as lies and showed off their self-righteousness. Augustine said that just as actors pretend to be someone other than themselves, and that they are hypocrites or actors who want to pretend not to be who they are in the Church and in all human life

(Internet). Thomas Watson, a 17th-century British Puritan preacher, theologian, and writer, said this in his book "Repentance": 'Repentance is necessary for a hypocrite. Hypocrisy is to disguise holiness, and the hypocrite or the stage performer is worse than a moralist by dressing up in religious costumes. He asserts himself in the form of godliness, but denies its power (2 Tim. 3:5). The hypocrite looks like a house with a beautiful exterior, but every room is dark. He is a beautifully gilded, rotten pillar, and hides the wounds of his plague under the mask of his profession of faith. The hypocrite opposes makeup on his face, but wears makeup to decorate holiness. He can be really evil because he is outwardly good. The hypocrite seems to have nailed his eyes to the kingdom of heaven, but his heart is filled with impure flesh. He lives in secret sin against his conscience. He listens, but only through ears. He is zealous for church devotion and in that respect others look at him and praise him, but neglects home and closet prayer. The hypocrite pretends to be humble, but this is in order to succeed in the world. He claims to have faith, but rather than using it as a shield, he uses it as a mask. He carries the bible under his armpit, but doesn't carry it in his heart. Take the candlestick of the word and examine your heart and see if you can find any repentance there' (Internet).

Then, I would like to think about how the hypocrite's lips and hearts are different in six ways:

### **First, the hypocrite's lips are meek, but his heart is evil.**

Look at Proverbs 26:23 – “Like a coating of glaze over earthenware are fervent lips with an evil heart.” Do you know crispy cream donuts? When I first heard a rumor about that donuts, I remember hearing that eating that donuts will melt my mouth. So, after hearing that rumor, I went to a crispy cream donuts shop and tried the original glazed donuts that were just made, and it tasted really good. I still remember that after my wife edited my Master of Theology (Th. M.) thesis, I asked her what she wanted and she said she wanted 12 crispy cream donuts (dozen). So I bought the dozen crispy cream donuts for her. Of course, there are many types of donuts in that donuts shop. But what I'm going to mention for a moment here is glazed donuts. The term “glaze” is a thin layer of donuts made with sugar. By the way, "glaze" doesn't necessarily exist in donuts only. Fish are also “glazed”, and glaze refers to ‘a film of ice that is covered with fish to prevent drying or deterioration when the fish is frozen and stored’ (Naver Dictionary). Glaze is usually used to color the wood as well as fish. But if you glaze the wood, it looks shiny and looks good. Not only that, but glaze is also applied to earthenware. Glazed earthenware looks shiny and looks better. Glazing the earthenware like this is called “coating”.

In Proverbs 26:23, the Bible says, “Like a coating of glaze over earthenware are fervent lips with an evil heart”. Here, the phrase “a coating of glaze over earthenware” means ‘the earthenware was glazed.’ That is what it means to be like “an evil heart with fervent lips”. Just imagine it. Although the heart is evil, how would you feel if you painted “fervent lips” on that evil heart? Isn't this hypocrisy? You have an evil heart, and you wrap it up with kind words. One thing we need to mention here is “fervent lips”. Fervent lips mean “smooth talk”, “flattering

speech” or “burning” lips (Swanson). This means that the hypocrite, while having an evil heart toward the other person, speaks smoothly with his lips, ingratiate himself with other person, but disguises his evil heart with words of very warm (passionate) love (Gesenius). Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘This indicates that the hypocrite (the flatterer) speaks unpleasant words, yet expresses it with a passionate kindness’ (Park). Can you imagine the words of the hypocrite who speaks unpleasant words and expresses them with a kindness?

When I thought a person in the Bible who had an evil heart but had wrapped it up with words of passionate and kind love, I first remember a person who poorly wrapped it up. He is none other than Laban, Jacob's maternal uncle. In Genesis 31:1-2, Jacob hears that Laban's sons say, “Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what belonged to our father he has made all this wealth.” When Jacob saw the attitude of Laban, it wasn't friendly toward him as formerly. Looking at this story, I think that Laban wasn't well wrapped up his heart. The reason I think so is because, even to Jacob, Laban's attitude wasn't the same as before. I think the same goes for Laban's sons. I think they also couldn't hide their feelings toward Jacob well. The reason I think so is because they met with each other to the extent that Jacob heard them. And when they talk about Jacob, they say, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's," and by means of that possession, ‘He has gained all this wealth from what belonged to our father’ (v. 1). Of course, they didn't know that Jacob would listen to them. But I think those who really hide their bad heart will be more careful not letting other person to listen to them. In this way, Laban and his sons could not hide their feelings and hearts well. Laban wasn't able to wrap up (hide) his changed attitude, and his sons could not hide their words about Jacob. So I thought about it a little more. When I wondered who in the Bible could have wrapped up his evil heart with warm, kind words, I remembered the serpent who deceived the first woman of mankind in Genesis 3. Listen to the words of the serpent that deceived her. Listen to their conversation once again:

Serpent: “Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?” (Gen. 3:1)

Woman: “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die’” (vv. 2-3).

Serpent: “You will not surely die, ... For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (vv. 4-5).

How sweet are these words of the serpent. After hearing those sweet words, the woman who shouldn't see the tree of the good and evil, “saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom” (v. 6). So “she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it” (v. 6). In this way, Satan paints and wraps his evil heart with kind (meek) words. The best example is the story of the devil testing Jesus in Matthew 4. After fasting 40 days and nights, the devil came to Jesus, who was hungry, and said:

Devil the tempter: “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread” (v. 3).

Jesus: “It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of

God” (v. 4).

“Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple” (v. 5) and said: “If you are the Son of God, ... throw yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone’” (v. 6).

Jesus: “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test’” (v. 7).

“Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor” and said: “All this I will give you, ... if you will bow down and worship me” (v. 9).

Jesus: “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only’”(v. 10).

The heart of the hypocrite is evil. But the hypocrite hides his evil heart and wraps it up well. How does he wrap it up well? Just as earthenware is polished with silver, the hypocrite wraps his evil heart with burning lips to make it shiny. In particular, he expresses kindly the other person with warm words of love, so he wraps up his evil heart in a shiny way. What should we do?

(1) We must look at ourselves before God.

In self-examination, if the holy God reveals our hypocritical appearances with his holy Word, we must confess and repent of our hypocrisy.

(2) If there is such hypocrite around us, we should not trust what he says.

No matter how gentle and kindly he speaks, we must not listen to his words. Even if we don't feel love through his earnest words, we shouldn't believe that person's words.

(3) Like Jesus, we must overcome the word of the hypocrite with the word of God.

To do this, we must be filled with the Word and the Holy Spirit. Then the Holy Spirit will enable us to discern the words of the hypocrite. In addition, the Holy Spirit will remind us of the Word of God and make us triumph with how to answer the hypocrite's words and overcome those sweet words of temptation.

As I meditated on this word, I wrote this: ‘Satan's bright red lie, which sounds really sweet, seems to be biblical, but in reality it is 99% the word of the Bible and added 1% to it or minus 1% to it and it is unbiblical. Without the biblical mindset at 100%, everyone will be deceived ....’ Let's yearn for the word of God even more so that we can all have a 100% biblical mindset. May we all be filled with His word so that we can discern his evil heart even through the burning lips of the hypocrite. Therefore, let's not be fooled by that hypocrite's burning, warm, and kind words.

## **Second, the hypocrite hides his feelings of hate with flattery.**

When you feel that someone hates you, do you well hide those feelings of hate? Can you still have a comfortable conversation with that hated person? I don't think it's easy. A good example is Joseph's brothers. Look at Genesis 37:4 – “When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.” Joseph's brothers hated Joseph when they saw that their father, Jacob, loved Joseph more than them. Thus, they could not speak a kind word to Joseph. In the end, Joseph's brothers couldn't hide their hatred toward Joseph. Then Joseph had a dream and talked to his brothers, and the brothers hated him all the more (vv. 5, 8). Eventually, Joseph's brothers didn't hide their hatred toward Joseph and even tried to kill him (v. 18). Another example is that Amnon, the son of King David, loved Absalom's sister Tamar (2 Sam. 13:4) and raped her (v. 14), and then he hated her with intense hatred “more than he had loved her” (v. 15). This feeling of hate for hating someone is so strong that it is easy to be expressed in any way. This feeling of hate is scary.

Look at Proverbs 26:24 – “A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart he harbors deceit.” The Bible says that the hypocrite hides this murderous feeling of hate with flattering words. How scary is this? How amazing is it that the hypocrite can hide his feelings of hatred while speaking flattery to the person he hates? Here, the meaning of the original Hebrew word for hypocrite “feeling” means open hostility and conflict (problem) with another person, which means to become enemies with that person (Swanson). In other words, the hypocrite has a feeling of hating the enemy inside, but hides that feeling of hate with flattering words. The hypocrite always cheats in his heart, thinking repeatedly about betraying the enemy (Spence-Jones). Yet, with his lips, he speaks flattery to the enemy. As I meditated on this word, I remembered Judas Iscariot, who sold Jesus. In Matthew 26:49, a large crowd sent from the chief priests and elders of the people came to Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed, with Judas Iscariot and with swords and clubs (v. 47). At that time, Judas Iscariot told the crowd that “Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him” (v. 48) and then immediately came to Jesus and said, “Hail, Rabbi,” and kissed Jesus (v. 49). What a cunning hypocrite look and behavior of Judas Iscariot, who came to Jesus with the large crowd sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people to sell Jesus in his heart, and said, “Hail, Rabbi,” and kissed Jesus. At that time, Jesus said to Judas Iscariot: “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” (Lk. 22:48) The author Matthew wrote in Matthew 26:50 - “Friend, do what you have come for.” Jesus knew his desire to sell Jesus hidden behind the hypocritical word and hypocritical kiss of Judas Iscariot. Nevertheless, Jesus said to Judas Iscariot, “Friend, do what you have come to do.” If we look at the LXX, Proverbs 26:24 is written like this: “An enemy weeping promises all things with his lips, but in his heart he contriveth deceits” (Spence-Jones). In other words, the hypocrite hides his feelings of hatred toward a person he hates like an enemy, and he sheds tears to trick him and speaks a word of promise. So, wouldn't anyone be fooled by the hypocrite's tears? How can we know the hypocrite who deceives his hatred feelings with his tears?

We should not be flatterers like this hypocrite, trying to hide our feelings of hatred. What is the reason?

The reason is that the Bible Psalms 12:3 says, “May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, The tongue that speaks great things.” We should rebuke rather than flatter. The reason is because “He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor Than he who flatters with the tongue (Prov. 28:23). We must be wary of the flattering words of the hypocrite. In particular, we must carefully discern the flattering words on his lips to hide his feelings of hatred. I wrote this while meditating on the words of Proverbs 26:24 – ‘I think a person who hides his feelings with flattering words is a very scary person even though he must be able to express his feelings of hate toward the other person in any way. Furthermore, I think that it is a very dangerous person who can hide his feelings of hate with tears. We should not be fooled by such hypocrite’s flattering words and tears. In particular, we must stop deceiving ourselves in our own hypocritical flattery prayers and tears before God.’

**Third, even though the hypocrite’s speech is charming, his heart is filled with abominations.**

When someone speaks to you something good for you to hear, do you feel that person's sincerity in the words? For some reason, I don't really feel that person's sincerity when someone speaks to me something good for us to hear. There are many times when I feel like he says that just for the sake of politeness. In particular, if I know that the other person has bad feelings toward me, no matter how good it sounds to my ears, I will not be able to take it sincerely. How about you?

Look at Proverbs 26:25 – “Though his speech is charming, do not believe him, for seven abominations fill his heart.” Proverbs 26:25 says that no matter how good the hypocrite sounds, it is because his heart is full of abominations. In fact, as we have already meditated on in verse 24, the reason why the hypocrite flatters us to hear us is to hide their feelings of hatred towards us, so no matter how good the person speaks in our ears, how can we trust his words? Especially if we know that the hypocrite's heart is full of abominations, how can we trust that person's good words? We can never believe his words. If we believe the hypocrite's good words, we are fools.

As I meditated on this word, I remembered such a foolish people. The first fool is Ahab, king of Israel in 2 Chronicles 18. The reason I think King Ahab is a fool is because he hated the true prophet Micaiah “because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad” (v. 7). Instead, he liked to hear the false prophecy of the 400 false prophets favorably saying, “Attack Ramoth Gilead and be victorious ... for the LORD will give it into the king's hand” (v. 11). The background of the story is before King Ahab went with Jehoshaphat king of Judah against Ramoth Gilead (v. 3), King Jehoshaphat said to King Ahab, “First seek the counsel of the Lord” (v. 4). After they heard the good-spoken prophecies of 400 prophets (v. 5), Jehoshaphat asked, “Is there not a prophet of the LORD here whom we can inquire of?” (v. 6) Then Ahab said, “There is still one man through whom we can inquire of the LORD, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad” (v. 7). Jehoshaphat replied, “The king should not say that” (v. 7). Another foolish people are the Israelites in the days of

the prophet Jeremiah. They didn't listen to the words of the true prophets (Jere. 26:5) whom God sent again and again, but rather the words of false prophets who foretold a lie (27:10, 14-16). In other words, they didn't hear the word of the God's calamity (26:3, 13, 19) spoken by the true prophet, but rather the word of peace (28:9) spoken by the false prophets. Despite the fact that there was never a situation where there would be peace, the people of Judah heard and believed (28:15) the false prophets crying, "Peace, peace" (6:14, 8:11). The false prophets not only prophesied to them, "Peace, peace", but also falsely prophesied that "You will not serve the king of Babylon" (27:9, 14). Obviously, the people of Judah heard that God didn't send those false prophets, but they prophesied a lie in God's name (vv. 10, 14, 15, 16). What a foolish people they are.

I don't think there's anything different now. Even now, as the apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:3, we, who are not wise and foolish, don't listen to the sound doctrine, but rather want to have our ears tickled, accumulating for ourselves teachers in accordance to our own desires. Even though we know that the teachers are hypocrites, we say "amen" and believe their words that please our ears. How foolish is this. The Bible Proverbs 26:25 tells us not to believe the words of those hypocrites, no matter how good they sound. The reason is because their hearts are full of abominations (v. 25).

We must listen to the sound doctrine. Although the sound doctrine doesn't please our ears and doesn't sound good, we must be quick to listen to the sound doctrine. Even we must listen to the words of truth, like the sword of the Holy Spirit that rebuke us. Regardless of whether the word of truth sounds good to our ears or not, we must listen to the word of truth that makes our souls rich since it is the word of God. We can believe in His word because the countless thoughts of God toward us are truly precious (Ps. 139:17-18).

**Fourth, even though the hypocrite may conceal his hatred by deception, his wickedness will surely be exposed in the congregation.**

Look at Proverbs 26:26 – "His malice may be concealed by deception, but his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly." We have already meditated on the words in Proverbs 26:24 that the hypocrite hides his emotion with flattering words. Here, emotion refers to feelings of hate. In other words, the hypocrite hides his feelings of hate as flattery. But when we look at Proverbs 26:26, the hypocrite hides his feeling of hate not with flattering words (v. 24), but by deception (v. 26). d

My personal opinion is that people who don't express their hate feelings in any form are scarier and more dangerous than those who don't hide their feelings of hate well and deceive the other person. When I looked for such people in the Bible, I remembered King Saul and David's son Absalom, who were trying to kill David. King Saul, who tried to kill David, was jealous of David with a murderous jealousy, so he made a great effort to kill David. In this way, King Saul was unable to hide his hatred feeling that really wanted to kill David and expressed it to the extent that others knew it. Esau also expressed his feeling of hate without hiding it when considering that he

hated his brother Jacob and even tried to kill him (Gen. 27:41). However, compared to King Saul, Absalom hid his feeling of hatred for two years without expressing it. He hated Amnon in his heart when his sister, Tamar, was raped by him. But he didn't show his feeling of hate and never say a word to Amnon, either good or bad for two years. He hid his feeling of hatred (2 Sam. 13:22-23). Then two years later, Absalom opened a feast and invited Amnon and all the princes and eventually killed Amnon (vv. 23-29). The feeling of hate hidden in our hearts is scary and very dangerous. If we hate someone, as time goes by, that feeling of hate builds up and we don't know what greater sin we will commit to that person we hate.

This is what the Bible 1 John 3:12 says: "not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous." The Bible Genesis 4:4-5 says: "But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast." I remember when Joseph's brothers saw that their father Jacob loved Joseph more than themselves, they hated Joseph and could not speak a kind word to him (Gen. 37:4). Eventually Cain struck his brother Abel and killed him (4:8). At that time, one of the words that God said to Cain was "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it" (v. 7). Cain was not doing what was right in the eyes of God, so sin was crouching at the door of his heart. Like a tiger holding sharp claws and aiming for prey, the devil was lurking in front of the door of Cain's heart to deceive him and make him do evil. And Cain couldn't overcome sin and made sin to control him, and eventually committed murder, killing his own younger brother Abel.

Now the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Therefore, the Bible tells us, "Be self-controlled and alert" (1 Pet. 5:8). Particularly, it is the hatred that Satan instills in our hearts that we must be alert. And Satan makes us refuse to forgive those whom we hate. In other words, Satan makes us sin against God by making us disobey His word to forgive others and by making us to disobey His word to love them. And Satan keeps on making us to hate people. What is the result? This is what the Bible 1 John 2:11 says: "But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes." After all, Satan is constantly trying to blind us by making us continue to live in darkness. As a result, we don't even know where we are going, and in confusion we are guilty of violating God's word. But we must keep in mind. Our holy God, who sees our hearts, is the God who reveals even our hate feelings that are hidden by deception in our hearts. Look at Proverbs 26:26 – "His malice may be concealed by deception, but his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly." Our sinful instinct is to conceal and hide our sins and wrap and cover them up. But our God is the God who reveals and exposes our hidden sins. Look at Ephesians 5:11-13: "Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible." Doesn't the light reveal everything? Likewise, when God's holy light shines on us, not only the things we secretly do, but all the sins that



are hidden in us are bound to be exposed and revealed. Do you remember David secretly slept with Uriah's wife, Bath-sheba and killed Uriah in order to cover up her pregnancy? But God sent the prophet Nathan to David and said: "You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel" (2 Sam. 12:12).

Why does God reveal our secret sins? Why does God expose to the public even the hatred of the other person hidden in our hearts? No matter how much we hide our feelings of hatred deep in our hearts by deception, why does God make our wickedness visible before the congregation? (Prov. 26:26) I looked for the reason in 1 John: (1) The first reason is to help us realize that if we say we love God and hate our brothers, we are liars. Look at 1 John 4:20 – "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen." (2) The second reason is to help us realize that if we hate our brothers, we are murderers, and those who murder don't have eternal life in them. Look at 1 John 3:15 – "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." In the end, God reveals even the hateful feelings we have hidden in our hearts before the congregation in order first to reveals His holiness and also gives us an opportunity to confess and repent of our lies and our murderous sins. When given such an opportunity, we must confess and repent our sins before our holy God and before the congregation. Of course, our nature is to hide and cover up our sins even when they are revealed. But we must immediately confess and repent our sins like David, who was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22).

### **Fifth, the hypocrite digs a pit, but he will fall into it.**

I remember singing the Korean gospel song called 'Oh, our souls are escaped' long time ago. The lyric goes like this: 'Oh our souls have escaped like a bird from the snare of the hunters/ Oh our souls have escaped like a bird in the snare of the hunters/ Oh the snare is broken, we are freed, Our help is the Lord's name (2x).' When I was a child, I remember often singing this song at the Church's Children Sunday School. Perhaps, in my memory, there was also dance to this song. I didn't know that the lyric of this song is based on the words of the Bible until later. That word of God is Psalms 124:7-8: "We have escaped like a bird out of the fowler's snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth." This word is about the psalmist speaking to the Israelites as he went up to the temple: "If the Lord had not been on our side" (v. 1), then the enemies of Israel would have swallowed the Israelites alive (v. 3), the flood would have engulfed them (v. 4) and would have swept them away (vv. 4, 5) when they attacked the Israelites (v. 2). That is, when the Israelites were in the midst of incompetence to do nothing in extreme tribulation, they cried out to God. Then God, who made the heavens and the earth, delivered the Israelites and freed them, like a bird freed from the snare of a hunter. The God who helps us is the God who delivers us and sets us free. Even though Satan puts a snare on us like a hunter and makes us trapped in a cage, the God who made the heavens and earth to help us is the God who breaks the snare and frees us. Therefore, God allows us to enjoy freedom in the Lord.

This God's salvation was not only experienced by the Israelites as spoken in Psalms 124. Looking at Acts 23, the apostle Paul also experienced God's salvation. According to the words of the book of Acts 23, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul and there were more than 40 men who were involved in this plot (Acts 23:12-13). They were all hiding and preparing to kill Paul (v. 21). However, God informed Paul of the conspiracy through Paul's nephew, and Paul asked one of the centurions to lead his son to the commander (vv. 16-17). As a result, the commander called two of his centurions and ordered them to get ready a detachment of 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen and 200 spearmen to go to Caesarea (v. 23). As a result, Paul was able to safely arrive in Caesarea (v. 33). Although the people who were against the Lord and against the servant of the Lord even tried to kill the servant of the Lord Paul, God who helped the servant of the Lord delivered Paul from their hands.

Satan and his people don't know how determined they are to take us out of the faith. As if the 40 people who were allied to kill Paul didn't eat or drink until Paul was killed, Satan and his people don't know how determined to kill our faith. They are planning a strategy and even ambush, and their only purpose is to disengage us from our faith in Jesus, betray the Lord and try to make us leave Him. One of their operations is a trap. They dig traps and, outwardly, wrap them up to cover them up and place them on our journey of faith. At that time, if we aren't self-controlled and alert and pray, we will fall into the Satan's trap and sin against God since our spirit is willing but our body is weak. But even in the midst of that, our God works for the good, making us to hope for the God of salvation and pray for it with faith. In the end, He rescues us from the trap and makes the Satan's people who set the trap to fall into it.

Look at Proverbs 26:27 – “If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it; if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.” Here the word “pit” means the original Hebrew word for a pit that was dug to catch a lion (Brown). When I thought of the meaning of this word, I thought of Daniel's lion's den. When Darius the Medite was king, he had three administrators, one of whom was Daniel. However, because Daniel was so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom (Dan 6:1-3). At that time, the other two administrators and officials who were jealous of Daniel throw Daniel into the lions' den. However, the result is that Daniel is delivered without any injury to his body from the lion's den by believing in his God (v. 23). But do you know what has happened since then? “The king then gave orders, and they brought those men who had maliciously accused Daniel, and they cast them, their children and their wives into the lions' den” (v. 24). As a result, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones even before they had reached the bottom of the den (v. 24). Eventually, they fell into the lion's den, a pit they had dug, according to Proverbs 26:27.

There is a Korean proverb saying ‘You dig your own grave.’ What it means is a metaphor for doing foolish things that ruin yourself (Internet). When I think of this word, I think of Jeremiah 2:13 – “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken

cisterns that cannot hold water.” The people of Judah in this word dug their own graves. The people of Judah have committed a foolish sin of ruining themselves. God is saying two things about the foolish sin of digging their own graves: (1) They forsook God, the spring of living water and (2) They dug their own cisterns. The people of Judah, who were digging their own cisterns, forsook God and pursued “worthless idols” (vv. 5, 8, 11). That worthless thing was to serve a god other than God that was idolatry. The people of Judah turned their backs to God, and their faces turned to the gods they made (vv. 27-28). To the apostate and rebellious people of Judah, God said through the prophet Jeremiah: “Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe of me,” declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty” (v. 19). God said to the people of Judah who forsook God and chose idols, it is evil and bitterness that there is no awe of God in them (v. 19). The people of Judah, who dug their own cisterns, chose the path of suffering for themselves.

In Psalms 35:7, the Bible says that those who plot to ruin David (v. 4) hid their net for David and dug a pit to capture David without cause (v.7). When I think about the David's adversaries, who for no reason hid their net and dug the pit to capture David, the hypocrite hides his feeling of hatred and even digs a trap to harm those he hate. However, the Bible says that they will fall into the trap they have made. The Bible says that even if a man rolls a stone and tries to hit the other person, he will be hit by the stone (Prov. 26:27; Ref.: Ps. 35:7). Think about it. To roll a stone down, you must first roll it up the hill and climb it. But what if an accident happens while rolling the stone up the hill? Wouldn't the stone be rolled down on him rather than hit someone he hates? What does it mean? The hypocrite acts to destroy others, but because of that behavior, he finally ruin himself (Park).

What should we do? We must look to God. Like the prophet Jonah, who was in the deep sea in a great fish, yet loosed again toward God's holy temple (Jonah 2:4), we must look to God again in the pit like the deep cisterns. The reason is because “Salvation comes from the Lord” (v. 9). Even though our eyes may see that the situation we are facing has no hope of being saved (Acts 27:20), so even if we want to give up our lives, we must look to the God who made the heavens and the earth. And we must cry out to God. We must ask God to keep us from the snares they have laid for us, from the traps set by evildoers (Ps. 141:9). In the midst of that, we must hear God's voice and have hope and assurance of salvation (Acts 27:23-25). We must pray with the faith that God will deliver us from the hypocrite who hates us and laid the trap. Then God will deliver us from the trap and put the hypocrite who wants to harm us into that trap.

### **Sixth and last, the hypocrite lies.**

Don't you think that hating the other person in your heart but being kind to that person outwardly is a lie? According to Proverbs 26:23, this is to hide (conceal) one's feelings of hatred by deception. Isn't this a lie? We must first be honest with ourselves before a holy God. If we hate someone in our hearts but smile and talk kindly to

hide our feelings of hate on the outside, we are not only fooling the other person, but also ourselves as well. This is far from being honest. We Christians must be honest. We should have no lies or embellishments in our hearts. We must be truthful. First we must be truthful to God, and also be truthful to ourselves before God. In the meantime, we must be truthful to our neighbors as well. To do that, we must obey God's word of truth. Therefore, our hearts must be made true. In doing so, we can prevent lies from penetrating our hearts.

Look at Proverbs 26:28 – “A lying tongue hates those it crushes, And a flattering mouth works ruin.” The Bible says, “A lying tongue hates those it crushes ....” What does it mean? The liar has someone whom he hates, and he hurts (harms) the person whom he hates. Usually the liar hates someone and hurts that person. How does he hurt that person? The liar usually hurts his reputation by slandering the person he hates (Walvoord). Have you ever actually experienced this? Has anyone who hated you ever hurt you by blaming you for absurd lies or spreading bad rumors? If the liar hates someone like this, he will do anything to harm the one whom he hates. Would he just lie? Even if the liar flatters, he will try to deceive and harm someone he hates (v. 28).

The more we are hypocrites, the more our conscience becomes paralyzed. And the more our conscience becomes paralyzed, the more we are bound to become liars by hypocrisy (1 Tim. 4:2). But the Bible tells us not to lie to one another (Col. 3:9). It is an act of the old self (v. 9). Therefore, we must hate lies (Prov. 13:5). We must not lie against truth (Jam. 3:14). In particular, we must not commit lies by not keeping the commandments of God while saying that we know God (1 Jn. 2:4). One of God's commandments is to love your neighbor. But when we say that we love God and hate our brothers and sisters in Christ, then we are lying (4:20). We must not be false witnesses who tell lies not only with our lips, but also with our actions and lives (Prov. 14:5). Rather, we must be true and faithful witnesses of God. We must testify that Jesus is the Christ. Not only we must preach the gospel of Jesus Christ with our lips, but also with our lives that are worthy of the gospel. Therefore, I hope and pray that all of us live the life of God's sincere and faithful witnesses who give glory to God.

Under the heading “The hypocrite...,” we meditated on six ways how the lips and hearts of the hypocrite are different: (1) The hypocrite's lips are meek, but his heart is evil, (2) The hypocrite hides his feelings of hate with flattery, (3) Even though the hypocrite's speech is charming, his heart is filled with abominations, (4) Even though the hypocrite may conceal his hatred by deception, his wickedness will surely be exposed in the congregation, (5) The hypocrite digs a pit, but he will fall into it, and (6) The hypocrite lies. This is what Jesus said in Matthew 23:25 – “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence.” Also, the hypocrite honors God with his lips, but his heart is far from God (Mk. 7:6). We should no longer practice this hypocrisy. We must confess and repent our sins. We should no longer be living in discord with different hearts and lips. Rather, we must be truthful. Our hearts must be truthful, of course, but our lips must also be truthful as well. Then, he who walks blamelessly will be delivered (Prov. 28:18).

## **Boast, praise, anger, jealousy, rebuke**

### **[Proverbs 27:1-6]**

What do you think is our attractiveness as Christians? If we look at Titus 2:10, the Bible says, “and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.” We are no longer attractive. We have lost our attractiveness. The church no longer has the power to capture the hearts of the world. What is the reason? The reason is because we aren’t obeying God’s word. We obey His word with our lips, but disobey the word with our actions (Ref.: Tit. 1:16). We have a form of godliness, but deny its power (2 Tim. 3:5). In order for us to be attractive Christians, we must obey God’s word. Therefore, we must make God’s instruction shine in this dark world.

Today, I am going to think about five themes, focusing on Proverbs 27:1-6. The five themes are “boast”, “praise”, “anger”, “jealousy” and “rebuke”. While meditating on these five themes based on Proverbs 27:1-6, I hope and pray that we can obey the lessons that God gives us.

#### **First, we should not boast about tomorrow.**

Look at Proverbs 27:1 – “Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.” When I meditate on this word, I remember the lyrics of verse 1 of the Korean gospel song written by the pastor’s wife named Hee-sook Ahn, “I Know Who Holds Tomorrow”: “I don’t know about tomorrow, I just live from day to day. I don’t borrow from it’s sunshine, For it’s skies may turn to gray. I don’t worry o’er the future, For I know what Jesus said, And today I’ll walk beside Him, For He knows what is ahead.” I also remember reading her book “If I perish, I perish.” As I meditated on the Bible Proverbs 27:1-6, I searched the Internet for a book titled “If I perish, I perish”, I came to think a little about the faith of Mrs. Hee-sook Ahn (Internet). At the end of Japanese colonial rule, when she was 31 years old, in 1939, when all school students went to the shrine jointly and visited the shrine, she refused to visit the shrine by showing an incision in faith that didn’t bow to any gods other than God. In addition, she delivered the ambassador of Jehovah God, ‘Japan is perishing by sulfur fire,’ at the parliamentary house during the 74th Japanese Imperial Assembly, and was arrested and imprisoned for six years in a Pyongyang prison. Not only did she personally practice the true love of the Lord in prison, but she also preached the gospel to prisoners and prison guards, and the amazing events that restored their love with God are described in “If I perish, I perish.” Interestingly, Mrs. Ahn Hee-suk, who not only wrote a book titled “If I perish, I perish,” but also wrote the gospel song “I Know Who Holds Tomorrow,” was released on August 17 along with 8.15 liberation, a few hours

before the death penalty rally in 1945. So, she wrote “I don’t know about tomorrow, I just live from day to day ....” And we can know that she wrote this lyric of the gospel song from her experiences in life.

Do you know what will happen tomorrow? Are there any people who know what's going on in the future? The Bible Ecclesiastes 8:7 says, “Since no man knows the future, who can tell him what is to come?” The Bible says no one knows what will happen in the future. No one can tell us what will happen in the future. But when I think about the people who don't believe this word of God and go and see a fortune-tellers, who claims to know what will happen in the future, it's a foolish act. Personally, I don't think it is wise to believe that Christians who believe in Jesus go to other Christians who claim to receive the gift of prophecy and receive the prayer of prophecy. This is what Ecclesiastes 7:14 says: “When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, a man cannot discover anything about his future.” Obviously, the Bible says that God didn’t allow us to discover anything about our future. That is why God has made us to have both the day of prosperity and the day of adversity. For example, I think of a man named Joseph in the Book of Genesis. In Genesis 39, the Bible says that Joseph prospered because God was with him (Gen. 39:2, 3, 23). In Joseph's prosperous life, there was a temptation (vv. 7-12). And Joseph, who had fled from the temptation, was imprisoned with an unjust accusation (vv. 13-20). In other words, Joseph had not only the days of prosperity, but also the day of adversity (Eccl. 8:14). To be more precise, there were many adversities in Joseph's prosperous life even God was with him. When he was 17 years old, he was hated by his 10 older brothers and was about to be killed (Gen. 37), but was sold to the Egyptian house of Potiphar (39:1). And when he was 30, he suffered 13 years of hard work before becoming Prime Minister of Egypt. Joseph, who suffered prosperity and distress in this way, why did God allow Joseph to prosper and suffer in His sovereign will? The reason is because God wanted Joseph, who couldn't figure out the future, to believe in only Him. Then, in the end, when Joseph was 39 years old (about 22 years later), he knew God's will about why God sent him to Egypt. His will was “to save lives” (45:5), ‘to preserve the lives of Joseph’s brothers as a remnant on earth with a great deliverance (v. 7). Only God knows not only Joseph's future, but our future. Therefore, we must live by faith day by day while relying on only God.

Look at Proverbs 27:1 again: “Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.” The Bible tells us not to boast about tomorrow. The reason is because we don’t know what a day may bring forth. Nevertheless, we seem very foolish. An example is the parable of a rich man in Luke 12:16-21. The content of the parable is that a certain rich man with abundant crops in the field had no place to stock up on grain. So when he was contemplating what to do, he thought that he should break up his grain and make it larger, so that all his grain and goods should be stocked up. It's as if the world's rich, corrupt people, in addition to their legitimate bank accounts, set up a tax haven paper company to raise more and more money to satisfy their greed without paying taxes to the country. After doing so, the rich man tried to rest comfortably, eat, drink, and be happy (vv. 16-19). At that time, God said to the rich man, “You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?” (v. 20) And God said that this foolish rich man is a man who stores

wealth for himself and is not rich toward God (v. 21). Another example is James 4:13-16: “Now listen, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.’ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.’ As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil.” The lesson we must learn from these verses is that we should not boast in our arrogance (v. 16). In particular, I think this word applies a lot to Christian businessmen. The lesson the Bible teaches us isn't to boast of our riches (Ps. 49:6, Jer. 9:23) and not to rely on our own wealth (Ps. 49:6). Rather, the Bible tells us to rely on God.

The Bible says about “boast”: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord” (2 Cor. 10:17), “If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness” (11:30). We should not boast of our strong things, we should boast of our weaknesses. And we must boast in the Lord. Look at Jeremiah 9:23-24: “This is what the LORD says: “Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the LORD.” We must boast of knowing God. God is pleased with this. In the midst of this, Christian entrepreneurs must make plans for doing business and making profits. But what they must not forget is that their life is always a fog that appears for a while and then disappears (Jam. 4:14). That is why the apostle James instructs us that we must have a heart attitude and habit of saying, “If the Lord's will, we will live and also do this or that” (v. 15). With this attitude of mind, we should not boast of tomorrow. The reason is because we don't know what will happen during today (Prov. 27:1).

## **Second, we should not praise ourselves with our mouths.**

Look at Proverbs 27:2 – “Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips.” When I meditate on this word, I think of the phrase “self-praise”. It is said to be ‘a word that means to praise one's own paintings, to show that he is proud of what he has done’ (Naver dictionary). What if you and the other person you talk to keep praising himself? Do you feel that he is self-praising? Aren't you tired of seeing and listening him praising himself? When I looked at a website, someone said, ‘I really want to say to him, Please stop. Go back to your own island, where you praise yourself’ (Internet). Then why do we praise ourselves? What is the psychology of a self-praising man? It may be because of his inferiority complex. In other words, it means that he praise himself because he feels that he is inadequate for what he has done. Outwardly, he who praises himself seems very confident, but in reality, he has more fear that other people and has more inferiority complex than anyone else. Also, if we know the psychology of the man who praises himself, it may be a reaction to hide anxiety and tenderness (Internet).

I personally think of two things when I think of the word “praise”. (1) Proverbs 27:21 says: “The crucible

for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives.” Another translation of the second half of this verse is translated as ‘We can know a man when we praise him.’ I think this verse is important. The reason is because I think we are very weak in people’s praise. We especially feel good and happy when we are praised by other brothers and sisters in Christ for serving the Lord's church. But there may be plenty of danger (temptation) that we will attribute to ourselves rather than to glorify God. In addition, we are in danger of serving to receive praise from people rather than serving the Lord's church to receive praise from the Lord if we are conditioned to compliment without our knowledge because of the praise of the congregation. That is why when I think of the word “praise”, I think of the words of Proverbs 27:21b, “... but man is tested by the praise he receives.”

(2) I think I shouldn't be stingy in praising others. About 15 years ago, when I and my wife were living in Korea and serving the newly wedded couple group in Seohyun Church, I gave the a homework to the couples of the group to write down five things the husband wants from his wife and the wife wants from her husband. At that time, my wife and I also did that homework. So we went home and talked about five things we wanted from each other. Even though I have forgotten everything, there is one thing I still cannot forget. It was the first thing my wife wanted from me. It was “appreciation”. That much I didn't appreciate my wife. Perhaps because of the lack of appreciation, I am sure the expression of appreciation was also stingy. When I look at myself, not only that I don't have enough expressions of gratitude, but also I don't know how to praise my wife. That much, I am stingy with praise. The excuse I made to my wife was that as I grew up, I didn't get much praise from my father. I think the reason for that was because the elders of my father's generation had a method of nurturing their children by ‘whipping on a good running horse instead of stroking it.’ It means that instead of praising the child who does well, they pressure him to do better. So I still feel awkward when my father praises me. Perhaps the reason is because I am not used to my father’s praise. However, maybe because I grew up here in the United States, I believe that we, the Korean parents, need to praise our children like American dads. For example, when our children have done something well, it is necessary to compliment them by saying, ‘Good job!’ Then, even when they didn't do something well, then we can say to them, ‘It's okay. You can do better next time.’ I think it's important to encourage our children. So, I want to be a husband and father who praise my wife and my children. Particularly, in my relationship with my wife, I want to be like a husband in Proverbs 31:28 who praises his wife. Also, I want to see my three children arise in the morning and call their mother blessed. I want my family to be like this.

I still remember. When I was attending a seminary in Korea, I had a time to present a book that each person read in a practical theology class. At that time, I remember reading Pastor Dong-won Lee's book ‘The Family Act’ and presenting it in front of the classmates. And after that, other students listened and critiqued my presentation. At that time, a classmate who was older than me said a word about my presentation, and I can't forget what he said. He said that my presentation sounded arrogant. Then he didn't say anything about my presentation. Maybe he didn't want to. At that time, I was a little surprised. I read Pastor Dong-won Lee's book in my own way, and I wanted to share that with my classmates. So I worked hard and presented it with passion. But the first criticism was that my



presentation sounded arrogant. So I lost my words. Then I can't remember what happened after that. Through that experience, I think that there was a cultural difference between I and that older classmate. From the standpoint of myself, who studied in the United States, it may not sound arrogant to present with confidence, the presentation that I prepared hard. But in his perspective who had been living in Korea, my presentation could be sounded arrogant. When I see my self still saying like this, I don't seem to think that I announced to show off myself at the time. In other words, I didn't self-praise at that time. Maybe I was too confident to those who heard my presentation. But I would say that I was more passionate and had conviction about the book I read than my confidence. The reason is because I have a lot of interest in the family and there are many parts that relate to the contents of Pastor Dong-won Lee's book 'The Family Act.' But at that time, I was a little disappointed when my classmate said like that. I think the reason was because I felt that he didn't understand my and I was misunderstood.

Look at Proverbs 27:2 – “Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.” The Bible tells us not to praise ourselves with our own mouths, but let others to praise us. The first thing to think about here is that the word "praise" in Proverbs 27:2 and the word "boast" in verse 1 are the same Hebrew words. What this tells us is a lesson that not only should we boast of tomorrow (verse 1), but we should not boast (praise) ourselves with our mouths. Why can't we praise ourselves with our mouths? I looked for the reason in 2 Corinthians 10:12 – “We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.” The reason we shouldn't praise ourselves with our mouths is because it is an unwise act as evaluating ourselves according to the standards we set. Yet another lesson that this word gives us is the lesson to make others boast (praise) us. That means we should be Christians who are praised by others. The reason I think so is because when I look at Proverbs 27:2, it says repeatedly twice “Let another praise you ... someone else (praise you).

We must be praised by the church (2 Cor. 8:18). Also, we must be those who are praised by the Lord's servants (1 Cor. 11:2). In particular, the church officers should be godly people (Acts 22:12) and should be praised by the congregation. Also, they should be like the seven deacons in Acts 6 full of the Spirit and wisdom, praised by the church members (Acts 6:3). We must have (pure) faith (or disciplined faith) that can be praised not only by the people of the church but also by Jesus Christ who will appear in the future (1 Pet. 1:7). This is what 2 Corinthians 10:18 says: “Those who praise themselves are not accepted. Those the Lord praises are accepted” (NIRV). May we all be those who praise ourselves, not those whom the Lord approves, those whom the Lord praises.

### **Third, we should not be foolishly angry.**

Look at Proverbs 27:3 – “Stones are heavy, and sand weighs a lot. But letting a foolish person make you angry is a heavier load than both of them” (NIRV). Personally, when I meditate on this word, I think about the words in the Book of Proverbs about “anger” that we have already meditated on. See, for example, Proverbs 12:16

– “A fool's anger is known at once, But a prudent man conceals dishonor.” Also, look at Proverbs 15:1 – “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” In addition to these words, when I think about “anger” Proverbs 17:12 comes to my mind: “Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly.” Can you imagine that you meet a female bear whose cubs have been stolen?

In the movie “The Revenant” (the one who returned from death) starring DiCaprio, who received the Best Actor Award at the 2016 Oscars, there was a scene of a bear attacking DiCaprio to protect his cub. How frightening and fiercely the bear attacks DiCaprio, he was almost killed. Look at Hosea 13:8 – “I will encounter them like a bear robbed of her cubs, And I will tear open their chests; There I will also devour them like a lioness, As a wild beast would tear them.” What a terrifying word of God? How terrifying is this saying that God will meet the Israelites like a lost bear, tear their heartaches and swallow them? Nevertheless, Proverbs 17:12 says that it is better to meet the bear robbed of her cubs than to meet the fool in his folly. What is the reason? The reason is because the fool is more dangerous than the bear whose cubs are being robbed. How is the fool more dangerous than the bear whose cubs have been robbed? This is because, according to Pastor John MacArthur, the fool is less rational in anger than wild bears (MacArthur). Can you imagine? Can you imagine a foolish person irrationally showing anger immediately (Prov. 12:16)? The foolish man not only irrationally expresses anger right away, but he also kills the other person after holding it in anger with perverse thoughts for a long time. For example, we take Absalom the son of David in 2 Samuel 13. He continued his anger for two years to kill Amnon, who raped his sister. In this way, if a man holds anger for a long time, he will surely commit a sin (Park).

Look at Proverbs 27:3 again – “Stones are heavy, and sand weighs a lot. But letting a foolish person make you angry is a heavier load than both of them” (NIRV). What does it mean? It means that a person with anger makes the other person unpleasant and intolerable for a long time. This is especially the anger of the fool (Park). The Bible says that it is better to carry a heavy stone or a heavy sand bag than to suffer unbearable suffering from such an angry foolish person. It means that the suffering that the angry fool gives us is heavier than stone or sand. So, who wants to meet such an angry fool. Therefore, we must not meet the fool who is angry. At all, we should not get close to such fool. The reason is because the fool pleasures in evil conduct (10:23). And the fool who pleasures in evil conduct strives for rebellion against the word of God. Such a fool only harms others. So we should not only be close to him, nor should we meet him.

#### **Fourth, we should not be jealous.**

Look at Proverbs 27:4 – “Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?” Personally, when I meditate on this word, I think of King Saul. First of all, when I think of King Saul's anger, I think of 1 Samuel 20:30-31: “Saul's anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of

the mother who bore you? As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send and bring him to me, for he must die!” The background of these words is that when King Saul tried to kill David (v. 1), Jonathan, the son of King Saul, said to David “Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you” (v. 4) since he loved David as he loved himself (v. 17). So David said, “Look, tomorrow is the New Moon festival, and I am supposed to dine with the king; but let me go and hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow. If your father misses me at all, tell him, 'David earnestly asked my permission to hurry to Bethlehem, his hometown, because an annual sacrifice is being made there for his whole clan.' If he says, 'Very well,' then your servant is safe. But if he loses his temper, you can be sure that he is determined to harm me” (vv. 5-7). And when it was the first day, when King Saul sat down and ate, David's seat was empty (v. 25), but King Saul didn't say anything (v. 26). But the next day, David's seat was still empty, so Saul asked his son Jonathan, “Why hasn't the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?” (v. 27) Then he answered Jonathan's father, King Saul: “David earnestly asked me for permission to go to Bethlehem. He said, 'Let me go, because our family is observing a sacrifice in the town and my brother has ordered me to be there. If I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away to see my brothers.' That is why he has not come to the king's table” (vv. 28-29). When King Saul heard that, he was very angry. Then he said to his son Jonathan, “You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you?” (v. 30)

Look at Proverbs 27:4 again: “Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?” In this way, anger is cruel and destructive as it is said in Proverbs 27:4. However, the Bible says that such cruel and destructive anger is nothing compared to jealousy. I think the Bible speaks of two kinds of jealousy:

(1) The first kind of jealousy is a good jealousy that we Christians should have. That jealousy is God's jealousy.

A good example is God's jealousy of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, the grandson of Aaron the priest. In Numbers 25:11, there is a scene where God repeatedly tells Moses that Phinehas was jealous with “My jealousy.” When the Israelites stayed at Shittim, they not only played the harlot with the Moabite women (v. 1), but they also ate and bowed down to their gods when they were invited to the sacrifices of their gods (v. 2). When “Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor” the Lord was angry against Israel (v. 3). As a result, the heads of the leaders of the Israelites were hung in broad daylight before God (v. 4), and 24,000 of the Israelites were killed by the plague (v. 9). Therefore, the whole congregation of the sons of Israel was weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting (v. 6). At that time, one of the sons of Israel (v. 6), Zimri the son of Salu, a leader of a father's household among the Simeonites (v. 14), came and brought to his relatives a Midianite woman (v. 6), Cozbi the daughter of Zur, who was head of the people of a father's household in Midian (v. 15), in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the sons of Israel (v. 6). Seeing this, with God's jealousy, Phinehas rose from the midst of the congregation and took a

spear in his hand and went after Zimri into the tent and pierced both Zimri and Cozbi through the body and killed both of them (vv. 7-8). As a result, God did not destroy the sons of Israel because He turned away His wrath (v. 11). This jealousy of Phinehas was came from heaven (Jam. 3:17) and it is biblical and worthy of God.

We must also have the jealousy of God that Phinehas had. And we must be jealous with God's jealousy. For example, the husband should be jealous in protecting his wife. In the book "Reformed Marriage," the author Douglas Wilson said six things about the husband's duties. Regarding the third duty, he says: 'Husbands must be jealous and also protect their wives' (Ex. 34:14). The husband's jealousy here refers to godly jealousy that should not be mixed with sin.

(2) The second kind of jealousy is a bad (sinful) jealousy that we Christians should not have and should avoid. That jealousy is murderous jealousy.

A good example is the murderous jealousy of King Saul. In 1 Samuel 18:9, King Saul says that he saw David, who was after God's own heart, with jealous eye. The Korean Bible says, 'He paid attention,' but in the New International Version (NIV) of the English Bible, it says, "Saul kept a jealous eye on David." The word's verb in the original Hebrew language means 'to watch with jealousy eye' according to The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words. Why did Saul see David with jealous eye? The reason was that when the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine Goliath, the women came out of from all the towns of Israel (v. 6) and sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands" (v. 7) and then Saul was very angry (v. 8). So King Saul said: "They have credited David with tens of thousands, ... but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?" (v. 8) "And from that time on Saul kept a jealous ey on David" (v. 9). Think about it. Imagine that King Saul, who was the main character of the drama, but David, the shepherd, who was not even a supporting actor became the main character because he killed Goliath, and received attention and loved by everyone. That is how David became noticed and loved by everyone. Saul's son Jonathan also loved David as himself (vv. 1, 3), and Saul's daughter Michal (vv. 20, 28) and all the people of Israel and Judah also loved David (v. 16). So what was Saul's heart like? In particular, Saul, who saw that God left him and was with David (vv. 12, 14, 28), saw David continually with jealous eyes because "an evil spirit from God came mightily upon him (v. 10). What is scary was that Saul, who looked at David with jealous eyes, eventually tried to kill David. He threw a spear in his hand at David when David was playing the harp with his hand in order to pin David to the wall (vv. 10-11). Although he failed, Saul continued to try to kill David from then on. In this way, jealousy can lead to even the sin of murder. In the end, Saul saw and knew that God was with David, so he "was even more afraid of David" and Saul was David's enemy continually (v. 29). He tried to kill David all his life. However, as we know, David became king of Israel because God was with him, and King Saul

died in war. Saul, who was jealous and tried to kill David, was rather killed. This is the end of sinful jealousy.

Therefore, we must listen to the words of Proverbs 27:4 – “Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?” Of course, when comparing anger and jealousy, this is saying that jealousy is crueler and more destructive than anger. But I thought about anger in relation to jealousy. The thought of doing so is that an angry person may not be jealous, but a jealous person can be angry. Therefore, I think jealousy is more dangerous than anger. Look at Proverbs 6:34 – “For jealousy enrages a man, And he will not spare in the day of vengeance.” From this word, we can see that a jealous husband is angry. And such husband avenges. And in fact, we sometimes hear in the news that a jealous and angry husband revenges. So Song of Songs 8:6 says, “... Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The very flame of the LORD.”

How can we overcome a sinful jealousy that Saul had? I looked for the answer in Psalms 73. When Asaph the psalmist saw the prosperity of the wicked, he was jealous of the arrogant (v. 3) and his steps had almost slipped (v. 2). But he overcame jealousy by realizing the end of the arrogant when he went into the sanctuary of God (v. 17). That is, when Asaph realized how holy and just God would judge the wicked when he put his eyes on God (vv. 17-20), and when he realized that there was no one on earth that he desired beside the Lord (v. 25) he overcame the sinful jealousy. This is it. We should not look at people with the eyes of sinful and murderous jealousy. But we should see only the Lord with the eyes of God's jealousy. Then we can overcome the worldly, lustful, demonic jealousy that permeates our hearts. We will win because God is watching us with His jealous eyes, neither slumber nor sleep.

### **Fifth and last, we should rebuke in love.**

Look at Proverbs 27:5-6: “Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.” Personally, whenever I meditate on the words of Proverbs 27:5-6, I feel a little worried and even feel guilty. The reason is because even though the Bible says that “Better is open rebuke than hidden love,” I haven’t been able to obey His word, and I am still not able to keep this word right now. Since I can't even do hidden love properly, I also cannot rebuke in love. So every time I encounter this word, I worry and feel remorse. Especially in the pastoral ministry, I still see myself disobeying this word when I think about the time when I should have obeyed God's word and rebuke in love if I truly love the flock that God has entrusted to me. Even after seeing it, I still think that they would not have listened even when I had rebuked them in love. However, I also think that God wanted me to rebuke them in love whether they listen or not. Like this, every time I deal with Proverbs 27:5-6, I worry. In the midst of this worry, I desire to seek one word of rebuke in love than ten thousands words of praise without heart. I don't want to listen to the word that is like a kiss on the lips by people around me

when I'm committing a sin outside the bounds of the written word of God. Also, I would like to be a person who prefers a friend who rebukes me in love for my sins in order to make me walk the right path than a friend who expresses love by just covering up my sins. Isn't this a friend sharpens me like iron sharpens iron (v. 17)?

Look at Proverbs 27:5-6 again: "Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses." In another Korean Bible translation, it is translated as better to rebuke face to face than hidden love. Who do you think of a person who rebuke face to face in the Bible? I remember the prophet Nathan who rebuked King David face to face. This biblical story we are familiar with is the words of the prophet Nathan rebuking King David for his sins. King David slept with Bath-sheba, Uriah's wife. And knowing that she was conceived, he tried to cover up his sin, and eventually committed the murder of his loyal soldier Uriah. Because David had done what was evil in the sight of the Lord (1 Sam. 11:27), God sent the prophet Nathan to David to rebuke him for taking the wife of Uriah by the parable of the rich and the poor in a city (12:1- 4). "Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, 'As the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die'" (v. 5). David didn't know that he was "the one who ought to die maybe because he even covered up his conscience when he tried to cover up his sins. At that time, the Prophet Nathan rebuked David directly: "You are the man! ... " (v. 7). What a shocking rebuke this was? David himself apparently didn't think that he was the man who deserved to die. How surprised it would have been when the prophet Nathan rebuked him, saying, "You are the man!"" Wouldn't our conscience be shocked when the holy God reveals that the things we have done are sin when we don't consider sin as a sin?

There is a similar word in Ecclesiastes 7:5 – "It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man Than for one to listen to the song of fools." Here, King Solomon's "song of fools" refers to 'the false consolation of the wicked' (Park). Now King Solomon is telling us to guard against the false comforts of the wicked. Why should we guard against the false comforts of the wicked? King Solomon tells the reason why in Ecclesiastes 7:6 – "For as the crackling of thorn bushes under a pot, So is the laughter of the fool; And this too is futility." In a word, the reason why we must guard against the song of fools, the false comfort of the wicked, is because it is futility. That futility is what King Solomon said, it is like the crackling of thorn bushes under a pot. What does it mean? What do you think of "the crackling of thorn bushes"? When a thorn bushes burns, doesn't it make a loud noise? But, can't it get the heat to boil water in the pot? In this word, "the thorn bushes" often refers to the wicked (2 Sam. 23:6; Na. 1:10) (Jamieson). King Solomon is saying that the false comforting sound of the wicked while enjoying the physical pleasures seems to be comforting for a moment, but it will soon disappear. There is no comfort. In a word, it means that the comfort of the wicked is meaningless. Therefore, King Solomon teaches us that what we need to hear is not the song of the fool, but the rebuke of the wise. The lesson that King Solomon wants to give us through this word is that the whipping of the wise is better than the praise (encouragement) of the fool.

Have you ever rebuked a person face to face? What we're used to, I think, is to have a hidden love rather

than to rebuke the person face to face. However, the Bible says that it is better to rebuke face to face than hidden love. What is the reason? Look at Proverbs 27:6 – “Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.” The reason why it is better to rebuke face-to-face than hidden love is because even though it hurts our hearts when our friend rebukes us face to face, that wound is trustworthy (v. 6). The Bible says that this is better than the false kiss of the enemy. What is the reason? The reason is because our enemy hates us and tries to break us down, even through false kisses, while our friends whom we love tries to build us up with sincere rebuke. We need to know that our friend rebukes us because he loves us. And we must know that the wound of the heart that come from our friend’s rebuke in love is good for us. Even this beneficial wound we should be able to give to our friend through loving rebuke. Then we will be able to sharpen our friend. A wise person humbly listens to the rebuke of his beloved friend and uses it as an opportunity to further develop himself and become more and more like the Lord. May we all become such wise people of the Lord.

We have thought of five things based on Proverbs 27:1-6: (1) We should not boast about tomorrow (v. 1), (2) We should not praise ourselves with our mouths (v. 2). (3) We should not be foolishly angry (v. 3). (4) We should not be jealous (v. 4). (5) We should rebuke in love (vv. 5-6). Like these instructions, let us not boast about tomorrow, let us not praise ourselves with our mouths, let us not be foolishly angry, let us not be jealous and let us rebuke in love.

## Things that bring joy to the heart

### [Proverbs 27:7-10]

What brings joy to your heart? If you look at Ecclesiastes 6:6, the Bible says, “Even if the other man lives a thousand years twice and does not enjoy good things--do not all go to one place?” What do you think of this word? What good would it be if we lived in this land for a hundred and ten thousand years and we could not enjoy joy in our hearts. That is why the Bible Ecclesiastes tells us that what brings joy to our hearts is to eat and drink and to find satisfaction in his work (Eccl. 2:24, 3:13, 8:15). The Bible says that this is a gift from God (3:13) and that it is good and proper (5:18). When we can accept and enjoy this, we should enjoy it humbly. In doing so, we must enjoy satisfaction (v. 18). The reason is because there may be days when we will not necessarily enjoy it. Also, from Proverbs 14:1, we have already learned 7 things about when there is joy in our hearts: (1) There is joy in our hearts when our tent will flourish (14:11). (2) There is joy in our hearts when we live truthfully (v. 14). (3) There is joy in our hearts when we believe in only the Lord and do His will (v. 15). (4) There is joy in our hearts when we fear God and shun evil (v. 16). (5) There is joy in our hearts when we overcome evil with good (v. 19). (6) There is joy in our heart when we love our neighbors (v. 21). (7) There is joy in our hearts when we work hard (v. 23).

If we look at Proverbs 27:9, the Bible says “Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.” Looking at this word, it is said that “Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart.” Here, I set the title “Things that bring joy to the heart” and would like to receive a lesson from meditating on four things that bring joy to the heart based on Proverbs 27:7-10.

### **First, it is wisdom that brings joy to the heart.**

Look at Proverbs 27:7 – “He who is full loathes honey, but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet.” What we cannot miss out of the pleasure is the pleasure of eating. Especially when we are hungry, eating our favorite delicious food makes us feel good and enjoyable. When I read an article on the Internet, it says, ‘If you enjoy your mouth, you feel good and your brain is good.’ But, as we already know, no matter how good it is if we eat too much, it’s not good for our health. Overeating causes obesity, harms health and causes various diseases. So it is said that more and more people are eating less for their own health. If we look at Proverbs 27:7, there are “He who is full” and “the hungry”. The Proverbs writer contrasts these two types of people. He says that “He who is full” hates even honey, but the hungry man tastes even what is bitter sweet. In fact, when our stomachs are full as we are experiencing in life, don't we hate to eat even the most delicious food we like? But if we are very hungry, don't we even eat any tasteless food we don't like? Here I thought about what is the joy of the full and the joy of the



hungry. I couldn't think of the joy of the full man, but I thought that the joy of the hungry man was to fill the stomach with food. Don't you think so? Have you ever experienced the joy of being filled with food when you are hungry?

Dr. Yoon-sun Park says in Proverbs 27:7 that “He who is full” is compared to the proud, and the “the hungry” is compared to the humble. In the meantime, he says that the proud hate the word of God (“honey”) and that the humble man receives suffering sweetly (“bitter”) (Park). I think it's an interesting interpretation. If this interpretation is correct, it can be said that what pleases a person's heart is to love the word of God with a humble heart and to receive suffering sweetly. Unlike Dr. Park, I interpreted Proverbs 27:7 a little differently. What is the key point the Proverbs writer is trying to say in this passage? I think the key is not “He who is full”, but “the hungry”. In other words, I think the Proverbs writer is focusing on the hungry man who treats even bitter things sweeter than he who is full who hates even honey. And I thought that if the hungry man considers bitterness sweet, how much will the hungry man rejoice if we give the hungry man real sweet honey. At the same time, I wondered how joyful the hungry man would be when his hunger was filled because he ate honey. The lesson to be learned is that we, like the hungry man, yearn for honey, and are filled with it, so that we must enjoy the joy of our hearts.

So what is the honey that we yearn for and need to be filled here? To answer this question, I looked back at the first half of Proverbs 24:13-14, which we have already meditated on: “Eat honey, my son, for it is good; honey from the comb is sweet to your taste. Know also that wisdom is sweet to your soul; ....” Looking at these words, the Proverbs writer tells us to eat honey because it is good, and he says specially “honey from the comb”. And the point he wants to tell us when he says, “honey from the comb is sweet” is wisdom. In other words, the Proverbs writer says that wisdom is as sweet as honey, so get wisdom. That’s why the Proverbs writer said in Proverbs 4:5-7: “Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them. 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.” The lesson we need to learn here is that we, like the hungry, yearn for the wisdom of God, such as honey from the comb, and obtain that wisdom. We must gain wisdom at the expense of anything. Wisdom is as important as that. To do that, first we must love wisdom. And we must eat the word of God as if we were eating honey with a heart that loves wisdom. In other words, we yearn for the pure word of God (Prov. 30:5), and we need to keep it by our side, read it, and meditate on it day and night. In doing so, I hope and pray that all of us gain wisdom that bring joy to our hearts.

## **Second, what bring joy to the heart is that he has a home to return to.**

It was the last time I went to the English Ministry Union Retreat in the cabin in Big Bear. Before breakfast on the last day, I went out and sat in a chair and sat quietly by myself looking at the mountains and trees. Then I saw two birds flying around and sitting on a tree, and then I remembered the word of the Bible: “Are not two

sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows" (Mt. 10:29-31). In the meantime, I thought about 'God even feeds all those birds too. Then I am sure He will feed me.' I thought I had to trust and rely on God more and more.

Look at Proverbs 27:8 – "Like a bird that strays from its nest is a man who strays from his home." What do you think of "a bird that strays from its nest"? I thought of "migratory birds". And when I thought of migratory birds that migrate their habitats through the seasons, I remembered the term 'migratory bird congregation' that I saw in newspapers or online. When I see people moving from church to church without their home church, I am both sad and worry. At the same time, I think it is important and blessing to have a church like my home. Especially, when a church like that house is a spiritual home in the Lord, we love each other with the love of the Lord, and are reconciled and peaceful, I think that it is the grace and blessing of God that we belong to such a church. Why did the Proverbs writer speak of "a bird that strays from its nest" in Proverbs 27:8? The reason is because he meant to refer to "a man who strays from his home." In other words, "a man who strays from his home" is "Like a bird that strays from its nest."

Who do you think of in the Bible when we say "a man who strays from his home"? I remember Joseph in the Book of Genesis. When Joseph was 17 years old, he was almost killed by his brothers who hated him and was forced to leave his home of Canaan and went to Egypt. And only when he was 39 years old, he reunited with his beloved father Jacob and his younger brother Benjamin, and lived together in Egypt. Then, Joseph eventually died in Egypt, unable to return to his home of Canaan. Humanly, we might think that Joseph was a poor man. It was because he couldn't go back to his home and died in a foreign country. When I think of Joseph, I think of Korean seniors living in South Korea, the United States, and other countries, although North Korea is their home. I think these people are called "displaced people". Its dictionary meaning is this: 'Displaced people are people who have had a hard time returning to their home freely after leaving their home. This includes refugees' (Internet). Looking at the Internet Korean JoongAng Ilbo, on September 14, 2016, there is an article under the title 'Completing the mural of the Odusan Observation Deck in where we can see the North Korea ... The Nostalgic Home drawn by 5000 displaced people.' When I read it, 5,000 displaced people, separated families and defectors in Korea made a mural by collecting 5,000 paintings of their northern home painted on a canvas at the Unification Observation Deck of Mt. Odu, Paju, Gyeonggi-do. I think about how much they have missed their hometown.

Where is the home of us who believe in Jesus? Look at Hebrews 11:15-16, "If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them." We are the ones leaving our old home and heading for the new home in heaven. This world is no longer our home. Our home is the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, with joy and joy, we can praise God the hymn "O, Think of the Home

Over There”:

1. O, think of the home over there By the side of the river of light,  
Where the saints, all immortal and fair, Are robed in their garments of white.
2. O, think of the friends over there Who before us the journey have trod,  
Of the songs that they breathe on the air In their home in the palace of God.
3. My Savior is now over there, There my kindred and friends are at rest,  
Then away from my sorrow and care Let me fly to the land of the blest.
4. I'll soon be at home over there, For the end of my journey I see;  
Many dear to my heart, over there Are watching and waiting for me;

[Chorus]

Over there, over there, I'll soon be at home over there,  
Over there, over there, over there, I'll soon be at home over there.

In this way, we have an eternal home to return to in the Lord. We will live there in joy forever in glory. This eternal and sure hope is sure joy to our hearts. Although we are now living in this sorrowful sinful world, we can rejoice today because we have Heaven, our home to return to. May our hearts be joyful for the everlasting hope given to us in the Lord in our hearts that yearn for our better home, heaven.

### **Third, it is a friend’s counsel that brings joy to the heart.**

Are there any friends around you who bring joy to your heart? Do you have a friend who laughs and rejoices together and gives you not only joy in your heart, but a smile and laughter on your face? Or do you have a friend around you who makes your heart harder and even makes you miserable?

Not long ago, as I was reading the book "How to Read Job" by John H. Walton & Tremper Longman III, I thought about Job's friends again. And I wrote this: 'Job's friends insisted that the reason why their friend Job was suffering was because he sinned against God. From Job's point of view, they were miserable comforters (Job 16:2). The fact that these comforters are near us can make our hearts even more painful.' What do you think? Are there friends around you, like Job's friends, who made you more miserable? Have you ever experienced a friend who tried to comfort you when you were in pain and suffering, and the things he said made you heart heavier?

Look at Proverbs 27:9 – “Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.” A friend's earnest counsel is like perfume and incense that bring joy to the heart. Here, ‘a friend's earnest counsel’ means “a soul's counsel” in Hebrew. This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘The counsel of a true friend is not only words, but love that is admonished (earnestly) with the soul’ (Park).

Do you have a friend who loves you enough to urge you so earnestly with his soul? There is a Christian

website that I often go to. I often go to the website and read articles of interest to me. And if the articles are good, I post them on our Church's English Ministry Facebook website and share with our church English speaking congregation. Among the articles I shared, the one I shared a while ago was an article titled "TRUE FRIENDSHIP". The key Bible passage in the article is Proverbs 27:6 – "Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses." Based on this word, the person who wrote it urged us to pray to God for sending us a friend like Jesus, who is a true friend, saying five things about a friend like Jesus:

First, pray for friends who can wound you with love.

Second, pray for friends who can edify you.

Third, be grateful for your friends who love you enough to wound you.

Fourth, invite other people's wounds as well.

Finally, be a friend of someone who is wounded with love.

What a great blessing if we have such a friend? We should pray for these friends. But first, let's pray that we can be that kind of friend to our friends. And let us first train ourselves to humbly accept the loving advice of Jesus, our Friend, in our hearts. Even if we have wounds in our hearts in receiving that advice, let us humbly receive the hurting advice of the Lord. And I hope and pray that all of us may be able enjoy receiving the Lord's advice humbly in our hearts.

#### **Fourth and last, it is a faithful and close neighbor who brings joy in the heart.**

Do you have any neighbors close to you? We should be grateful that some of our neighbor whom we see often and get along well than our siblings. I think we should be grateful especially if our neighbor is a neighbor who treats us faithfully. Such faithful neighbor is better than our siblings who is unfaithful and who don't even care whether you are in trouble or not.

Look at Proverbs 27:10 – "Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you-- better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away." Here, "your friend and the friend of your father" means "your friend, a friend who has been faithful to your father" (Park). In other words, a man should value a person who has been recognized as a faithful person from the time of his father and must not forsake the person as his father's son (Park). Are there any friends of your parents who, in your eyes, have been recognized as faithful since your parents' days? If there is, we should be grateful for just getting to know this faithful father's friends. In particular, if our parents are dead and their faithful friends are still alive, it would be nice to stay close to them and treat them as we treat our parents. In this way, we must not forsake them who have been faithful friends from our father's days. And as sons, we should respect them. In the midst of that, the lesson the Proverbs writer gives us in Proverbs 27:10 is that we should not enter our brother's house when disaster strikes us. What is the reason? Based of verses 9 and 10, I think the reason is because our brother not only don't love us (v. 9),

but also he doesn't treat us faithfully (v. 10). Can't you imagine? If you are in trouble and have a reason not to ask your brother for help, what might be? If you are convinced in your heart that 'my brother loves me and has been faithful to me so far, he will surely help me even if I ask for help', then you will ask your brother for help. But if you think in your heart, 'My brother doesn't love me and is unfaithful to me, so even if I ask for help he won't help me', you wouldn't ask your brother for help. Isn't it true? A more accurate answer is given in verse 10: "... better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away." In other words, the reason the Bible tells us not to visit our brother's house when it is difficult is because our brother is a 'far brother'. In fact, if our relationship with our brother is not very close, but rather far, will our brother come to mind when we are difficult and go to his house to ask for help? Of course, if it is very difficult and there is no one to go and ask for help, then we will reluctantly go to our brother for help. But will he really help us? Rather, the brother's relationship is more likely to go further. I think the reason our relationship with our brother has fallen apart is that our brothers, as verses 9 and 10 say, don't love us and are not faithful to us. In other words, in order for a brother's relationship to be close, that relationship must have love and faithfulness. However, the relationship between brother without such love and faithfulness is inevitably distant, and the Bible tells us not to visit the distant brother when disaster strikes us (v. 10). Rather, the Bible says, "... better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away" (v. 10). In other words, it is better to have a close neighbor with love and faithfulness than a distant brother without love and faithfulness. What do you think? Do you have this close neighbor? If there is, your heart will be happy.

In this sad world, I hope and pray that all of us can enjoy the joy that God gives to our hearts. May we all enjoy the joy of our hearts because of the wisdom God gives us, the counsel of our faithful friend, and our close neighbor.

## **A wise Christian who makes the Lord's heart glad**

### **[Proverbs 27:11-14]**

What makes your hearts glad these days?

In 2 Corinthians 5:9, the apostle Paul said: "So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it." The apostle Paul tried to be a person who pleases the Lord. In other words, Paul made it his goal to please the Lord. Like Paul, we should make it our goal to please the Lord. Also, like Paul, we must look at what will please the Lord (Eph 5:10). Let me give you an example of what I did. This is Psalms 69. By looking at this word, we can see what pleases God. I have had two short meditations about this verse. First of all, I wrote this under the heading 'Let's please God more and more': What can we, the church, do to please the Lord? (1) In order for us to please God more and more, we must ask God (Ps. 69:13). The reason is because God will show favor to us and will come close to us. Also, since God will answer our prayers, we must come to Him humbly and pray. God will surely deliver us. (2) In order for us to please God more and more, we must confess our sins (v. 5). When we pray, we will realize that it is "my folly" that we have relied on man and not God. Not only that, but when we pray to God, we realize that our sins cannot be hidden from Him. Therefore, we must confess our folly and sin to God in prayer. (3) In order for us to please God more and more, we must be zealous for the Lord's church (v. 9). When we ask God, we love God more and more because we confess and repent of our sins due to the love of God who shows favor to us. Therefore, we must be zealous for the church with God's zeal. (4) In order for us to please God more and more, we must praise God with thanksgiving in our hearts (v. 30). If God shows favor to us, we want to please God rather than please ourselves in the midst of suffering. God makes us praise God with thanksgiving even in our suffering. Secondly, when I meditate on the words of Psalms 69, I wrote these words under the heading 'This is what pleases God': Amid pain and distress (v. 29), our hearts can be broken and feel helpless (v. 20). At that time, no matter how much we look for sympathy, they may be none (v. 20). Even in such a time, we must praise God with courage (v. 32) and thanksgiving, looking to the God of salvation with faith (vv. 29-30). This is what pleases God (v. 31).

If we look at Proverbs 27:11, the Proverbs writer says: "Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad, That I may reply to him who reproaches me." This Scripture is the word of the Proverbs writer to his son, who wanted his son to gain wisdom and to please his father's heart. I think that when we apply this word to our 21st century Christians, we must become wise Christians who please the heart of the Lord. So, I would like to receive three lessons as I meditate on the words of Proverbs 27:11-14 under the title of "A wise Christian who makes the Lord's

heart glad”.

**First, the wise Christian who makes the Lord’s heart glad sees danger and hides himself.**

Look at Proverbs 27:12 – “A prudent man sees evil and hides himself, The naive proceed and pay the penalty.” What would you do if you saw danger in front of you? For example, what would you do if you are camping in a mountain now and you found a bear in the distance? Obviously, none of you are deliberately walking towards the bear because you want to see it a little closer. The reason is obvious. Isn’t it because it is dangerous? But what would you do as a parent if your child next to you was curious and trying to get close to the bear? Of course, aren’t you going to stop your child? What is the reason? Isn’t the reason, of course, because you know your child is dangerous to get close to the bear?

The Bible Proverbs 27:12 says, “A prudent man sees evil and hides himself, The naive proceed and pay the penalty.” This is what the Proverbs writer already said in 22:3 – “A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.” The lesson we learned from this word was that the wise Christian should behave wisely in order not to sacrifice life or suffer meaningless suffering without a purpose for the Lord during the tribulation. We must not suffer a dangerous thing without wisdom until God’s guidance that is before the right time. In addition, we must not cause persecution by recklessly causing opposition for the sake of the gospel of the Lord” (Park). But sometimes, when we come across bad news about missionaries in communist or Islamic countries through the news, this has caused the reckless opposition of the missionaries for the gospel of the Lord, resulting in meaningless suffering and persecution. This was the sad news. In addition to the question of whether the Lord led the missionaries so much, I think it would have been nice if they had waited for a more appropriate time. Of course, I think this is not limited to a few missionaries. I think it can be applied to all of us. Of course, we should participate in Christ’s suffering like the apostle Paul and the Philippian church members. But I don’t think we need to induce meaningless suffering on our own. Of course, it is God’s grace to participate in Christ’s sufferings (Phil 1:29). But I think that receiving meaningless sufferings by inviting ourselves is not God’s grace, but rather the result of inviting ourselves out of our own foolishness. That is why the Proverbs writer says in Proverbs 27:12, “... The naive proceed and pay the penalty.” This is our own self-initiated, not God’s cause for us to suffer. Therefore, in such a time, we must realize our folly, repent of God, and seek God’s salvation (delivery) with mercy, and not foolishly blame God with our lips. But what we worry and worry about while praying is God’s guidance. In other words, there are many times when it is very difficult for us to discern what is God’s guidance is. If we can only be sure of God’s guidance through the work of the Holy Spirit through the grace of God, so if we obey God’s guidance through faith, we will be able to experience God’s salvation even in our dangerous situation. But too many times we don’t know what to do because we don’t have the confidence of God’s guidance. So while we pray and yearn for God’s guidance, sometimes we don’t know God’s guidance. So we can’t wait any longer, and have to make up our own

decisions and act and be in a difficult situation. What should we do?

When we see danger, we must hide ourselves (v. 12). I hope and pray that God will open our spiritual eyes to see danger (calamity), and at the same time, will give us wisdom so that we can see and avoid danger. For example, when God tried to bring disaster on Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham's nephew Lot escaped with his wife (Gen. 19:12-18) (Park). Why did God bring disaster to Sodom and Gomorrah and destroy them? The reason was because of the illegal and lewd conduct of the lawless men (2 Pet. 2:7, 8). And God made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly (v. 6). In the midst of that, God rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed and tormented in his righteous soul by the filthy live of lawless men (vv. 7-8). What Lot did at that time listened to the angel's words and obeyed the angel, and fled from Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:16-17). David also escaped from King Saul, who tried to kill him, and ran away (1 Sam. 20:19, 23:19, 26:1) (Park). This place we live in is a city like Sodom and Gomorrah. This is a city full of the illegal and obscene conduct of the lawless people. Holy God will surely judge this city and bring disaster. Therefore, we who are living in this wicked city must avoid all such sins, not imitating the illegal and lewd conduct of the lawless here. Rather, we must pursue God's holiness while living by His law. In the midst of such circumstance, God will give us wisdom so that we must not see the coming plagues or dangers, escape wisely, and not perish with the illegitimate.

**Second, the wise Christian who makes the Lord's heart glad makes no guarantees for others.**

Look at Proverbs 27:13 – “Take his garment when he becomes surety for a stranger; And for an adulterous woman hold him in pledge.” As we have been meditating on the Book of Proverbs, we have learned lessons by meditating on what the Proverbs writer has already said about guarantees. For example, we have already learned from Proverbs 6:1-5 that we must deliver ourselves if we have put up security for our neighbor, if we have struck hands in pledge for him. In other words, the Bible tells us to deliver ourselves when we take on the responsibility of paying our neighbor's debts. The lesson that this word give us is to warn our foolishness. That foolishness refers to promising, i.e., making a guarantee, for the person who defaults, knowing that the other person owes it beyond repayment (MacArthur). Of course, according to the commandment of Jesus, it is not forbidden to stand a guarantee for our neighbors in loving our neighbors (Park). But the lesson the Proverbs writer wants to give us is we must have the economic ability to fulfill responsibility when we become a guarantor and a problem arises, or we are being deceived by our neighbor and have to fulfill our financial responsibility. Of course, if we have the financial ability and capacity to pay off the debts of our beloved neighbor, and are willing to make a guarantee for that person, it will not be a problem. By the way, it would be foolish to make a guarantee for that person if we practically don't have the financial ability and capacity to pay the debts of our loved one. Another example is Proverbs 22:26 – “Do not be a man who strikes hands in pledge or puts up security for debts.” What a clear word of God. The Bible tells us not to hold a debt guarantee for others. Dr. Yoon-sun Park said, ‘... Being a guarantee for someone else's debt without



financial ability is only giving vain comfort to the debtor's heart, and it is also easy to bring bankruptcy to one's own.' What a reckless act. To give a neighbor's guarantee recklessly enough to bring bankruptcy to oneself, it is only vain comfort.

In Proverbs 27:13, the Proverbs writer says, "Take his garment when he becomes surety for a stranger; And for an adulterous woman hold him in pledge." Here, the words "Take his garment" or "hold him" means 'the one who has been guaranteed for others must finally receive a bitter cup' (Park). At the very least, we should refrain from taking a guarantee for others by taking lessons from the person who has already tasted the bitter cup that has already been guaranteed for others. In particular, unless we have the financial ability to make a guarantee for someone, we should never make a guarantee for others. Proverbs 27:13 is what the Proverbs writer said in Proverbs 20:16. If we look at the two verses, they are the same. Here, the Proverbs writer warns of a possible mistake in the act of guarantee (Park). But that mistake means that the guarantee is made for another person whom he doesn't know well, so nothing can be returned from the other person. We must not make guarantee for people we don't know very well. My personal opinion is that we should refrain from making guarantee, even those we know well, even family members and relatives. But why do some people make guarantees for people they don't know very well? When referring to such an act, Dr. Park calls it 'economic adventure' (Park). What a great economic adventure this is? Whether it is an act of lending money to someone who is unable to pay the debt financially or making a guarantee, it is an economic risk as it can result in great economic losses to the person who lent money or who gave the guarantee. Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: 'When people (especially believers) take on economic adventures, most of them fail, because excessive economic adventures are a kind of disbelief. Such an adventure is the ignorance of God and thinking of tomorrow as if it are human power (Jam. 4:13-17).'

What should we do? What should we do when our neighbor asks us to give us a guarantee? Proverbs 11:15 tells us: "He who puts up security for another will surely suffer, but whoever refuses to strike hands in pledge is safe." According to this word, we must become the ones who hate to be a guarantee. We must be the ones who reject the guarantees of others. Then we can be at peace. If we stand a guarantee and cannot refuse to suffer the bitterness of being damaged, who will say what? However, in my opinion, that loss or suffering is meaningless and unwise. Of course, a beloved neighbor may beg for a guarantee and it will not be easy for us to refuse. However, we must refuse to be his guarantor (11:15).

**Third and last, the wise Christian who makes the Lord's heart glad compliments his neighbor right at the right time.**

How do you feel when the phone rings a little louder or the KakaoTalk sound rings loudly in the early morning of Monday? One day I heard that pastors shouldn't call their church members early on Monday morning, but that they should call them Thursday or Friday. The reason I heard this and remembered it so far is because I

agree with it. I don't think that many people like to answer phone calls early on Monday mornings. If you're tired, I am sure you want to get a little more sleep before you go to work. But if the phone rings and you wake up, then I am sure no one will like it. I think you probably don't like to answer your mother's calls early in the morning on Monday. But you got a call and you couldn't help but answer the phone and it is your mother, or a company manager, or a friend. And if he or she says loudly, I am sure you will not like it. I am sure there aren't many people who like to hear loud voice on early Monday morning, even he or she compliments them. After all, I think the timing is also important in complimenting others. It is of great value when you praise the other person at the right time with the wisdom that God gives you. Look at Proverbs 25:11 – “A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.” The meaning of this word is that the appropriate word spoken at the right time is of great value, like apples of gold in setting of silver. For example, in Proverbs 25:12, the Bible says, “Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear.” If we think of this in connection with verse 11, the lesson it teaches us is that appropriate (right) rebuke is of great value to those who heed it “Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold.” However, if we aren't wise, improper rebuke will not only benefit each other, but may offend each other and not help our relationship. It is so important to say the right word at the right time, and to do so, we need God's wisdom.

Look at Proverbs 27:14 – “He who blesses his friend with a loud voice early in the morning, It will be reckoned a curse to him.” Whenever I read this passage, the word “early in the morning” comes to my eyes. Maybe it's because I personally don't like to answer calls early in the morning. The reason I don't like receiving calls in the morning is because I want to spend more quiet time alone after the early morning prayer meeting rather than because I want to sleep more. The next word that catches my eye is “a loud voice”. No matter how much you bless the other person, who would like to hear it in a loud voice, if it is in too early in the morning? According to Dr. Park, blessing, or adulation in a loud voice in the early morning is ‘an act of flattering with excessive sincerity’ (Park). Just imagine it. Would you consider it a blessing if someone you know calls in the early morning and praises you loudly? In particular, if the other person praises you too much for you to hear, wouldn't it sound like a flattering word? If you hear such a word early in the morning, would you be grateful for it as a blessing? Rather, the Bible says that it will be regarded as a curse (v. 14).

What should we do? We should properly compliment our neighbor. In other words, we must compliment our neighbor with the right words at the right time (timing). In particular, we should avoid complimenting our neighbor early in the morning or late at night when our neighbor is tired and sleeping. We only have to obey the indwelling Holy Spirit who makes us to compliment our neighbor with the right words at the right time. In particular, we think we need to compliment our neighbor for three things based on Proverbs 27:11-13:

- (1) We must compliment our neighbor's wisdom (v. 11).

In particular, when our neighbor becomes a wise person and pleases not only his physical parents, but also our Heavenly Father's heart, we should compliment him at the right time.

(2) We must compliment our neighbor for wisely avoiding danger (calamity) (v. 12).

If we see our neighbor who foolishly goes ahead if he sees the danger, we must rebuke him with love knowing that he will be harmed. But if he wisely avoids the danger, we must compliment our neighbor.

(3) We must compliment our neighbor for not becoming surety for a stranger (v. 13).

After all, it is our wisdom that we should compliment our neighbor at the right time. In other words, we must compliment our neighbor when he acts wisely with the wisdom that God gives him.

I would like to share one thing here, a short meditation about Luke 6:32-35 while I was reading the Bible a while ago. The title of that meditation is 'It seems that our standard of complimenting is very low.'

'It seems that our standard of complimenting is very low.

We are complimenting he who loves only whom he loves.

We are complimenting he who does good only to those who do good us.

We are complimenting he who wants to receive and lends to people.

Even sinners are doing this.

The Lord loves and is good to His enemies

And He compliments those who lend to them without expecting to get anything back.

Also, He compliments those who are kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

(Lk. 6:32-35)

We must be wise Christians who make our Lord's heart glad. To do this, we must wisely avoid danger when we see it (Prov. 27:12). And in order to make our Lord's heart glad, we must not make guarantees for others (v. 13). We should compliment our neighbor right at the right time (v. 14). Therefore, I hope and pray that all of us be able to make our Lord's heart glad.

## What kind of person should we be?

### [Proverbs 27:15-19]

How is your spiritual life these days? Where are you prioritizing in your life of faith? Is it a deed or a being? I personally believe that we should focus on being rather than deed in our life of faith. In other words, I think that we should focus on the question of who I am in front of the Lord rather than the question of what I am doing for Him and His church and live a life of faith. The reason is because I think who I am is far more important than what I do. In other words, “being” is much more important than “doing”. I think deed should flow naturally from being. In order to do that, we must become true Christians. Then we can live a Christian life.

I would like to receive a lesson by thinking about the three things what kind of person we should be, based on the words of Proverbs 27:15-19. I hope and pray that all of us may humbly receive the lesson from the Lord and obey.

#### **First, we should be reconcilers.**

Look at Proverbs 27:15 – “A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day.” Have you ever seen rain leaking from the roof? If you have seen it, how was your heart? What I still vividly remember is that on a rainy day, water keeps dripping from the roof of our church main sanctuary. So later, one of our church pastors went up to the roof and did waterproofing work. Later, during the remodeling of the church, I learned that water leaked from the roof for a long time, and the woods on the ceiling were rotted. If we left untreated, the ceiling could have collapsed. I was thankful to hear from the construction worker.

If we look at Proverbs 27:15, the Bible says, “A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day.” A similar statement is found in the second half of Proverbs 19:13, “... and a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping.” What does it mean? It means that a wife who has a habit of constantly quarreling with her husband doesn’t stop talking when a quarrel with her husband begins like raindrops falling continuously (Park). Will there be days of peace in such a family? There must be not much. Not only that, the children in the family are bound to feel anxious. The reason is because mom and dad keep on arguing and fighting. As if when we see raindrops leaking from the roof, drop by drop, and we have anxious thoughts that if we keep leaving it like that, the ceiling may collapse, our children may feel anxious enough to think about what it is like if my mom and dad divorce since they are keep on arguing and fighting.

In Proverbs 27:15, the Bible speaks of “A quarrelsome wife”. Another Korean Bible translated it as ‘A wife who likes to quarrel.’ In other words, the quarreling wife mentioned in today's text refers to a woman who likes quarrels and has become a habit of quarreling with her husband at home. What a woman with a bad habit. Of course, there are many husbands who have a quarreling habit, who like to quarrel with men as well as women when couples quarrel at home. What could be the reason? Why do couples quarrel with each other? And why can it be a habit? Look at James 4:1 – “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?” The reason why couples quarrel with each other is because of the desire that battles within each other. And the reason that they fight habitually is because they cannot control the desire of fighting. That's why married couples are keep on arguing and fighting because they aren't filled with the Holy Spirit and they aren't bearing the one of the fruits of the Spirit, that is self-control. Particularly, because they cannot control their anger, they don't calm a quarrel (Prov. 15:18) and speak a harsh word that stirs up (more) anger (v. 1). So if we look at Proverbs 21:9, the Bible says “a quarrelsome wife,” while in verse 19 it says “a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife”. The reason is because the cause of the quarrel is anger without being patient. We know it because “A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension” (15:18). But “a patient man calms a quarrel” (v. 18). That's why the Bible Proverbs 21:9 and 19 say, “Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife” and “Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.” It is better to live in a cottage or in the desert than in a large house with a quarrelsome and angry woman. It is better to live in harmony with each other even in the uncomfortable hut than to live comfortably in a large house and keep on fighting. We must be committed in building a peaceful couple in the Lord.

We must be reconcilers. Look at 2 Corinthians 5:18 – “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” We must faithfully fulfill this ministry of reconciliation. We must first take on the ministry of reconciliation in our homes. We must first try to get the couple to get along with each other. To do that, we have to work on at least three things.

(1) We must cover each other's offenses without repeating them.

Look at Proverbs 17:9 – “He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.” Satan makes us to see each other's transgressions more and more and makes them not only talk to each other with our lips over and over again, but even to others. In addition, Satan makes us write down what the other has done wrong to us in our thoughts so that we can tell each other about what we have done wrong, and make them say it over and over again. We must resist this temptation of Satan and win the spiritual battle and cover each other's transgressions with the grace of God who covered our transgressions.

(2) We must drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.

Look at Proverbs 17:14 – “Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.” When married couples or children quarrel with each other in the home, what do they usually quarrel with? Do they quarrel over a big thing or a very small thing? Couples often quarrel over even the most trivial things. However, mainly when we quarrel and fight, we have to stop arguing. But because we can't stop arguing, the fights that started with the small thing expand and become a bigger fight. That's why we must drop the matter before the dispute breaks out.

(3) We must sacrifice ourselves (Mk. 9:5), deny ourselves (8:34), be humble (9:34-37), and serve each other (v. 41).

We must be reconcilers. Our mission is to reconcile. We must fulfill the duty of reconciliation, bringing peace between our neighbors. In addition, we must reconcile with God through the gospel of Christ while looking at one soul from God's perspective. This is the purpose of our life. And we must be reconciling people not only at home, but also at church, and everywhere. Therefore, I hope and pray that all of us may be called sons and daughters of God (Mt. 5:9).

## **Second, we should be people who help each other.**

Pastor Paul David Tripp said in his book “What did you Expect?”: “No, what we are getting is something we desperately need, the uncomfortable grace of personal growth and change.” Without the grace of God, a man and a woman who have different personalities, different backgrounds, and thoughts, etc., cannot live together in harmony in a family. However, this grace of God is “uncomfortable grace” for us. The reason that grace is uncomfortable for us is because two different man and woman are married to form one family, so they have to be broken a lot and be sharpened a lot together. And I think that in order for a couple to sharpen each other a lot, they need to sharpen each other “As iron sharpens iron” (Prov. 27:17). In order for iron to sharpen iron, the two irons must collide well. Likewise, in order for a couple to sharpen each other, they must fight well in the Lord. The couple who fights well in the Lord acknowledges God's sovereignty. So rather than saying that they are right or wrong, they take the difference as an opportunity for each other's change and growth, with an attitude of ‘We are just different.’ They use each other's differences as an opportunity to complement each other, so the couple becomes more and more perfect together in the Lord. They grow together in the Lord through their differences. Therefore, they appreciate and respect each other's differences. This is the uncomfortable grace of change and the personality of the individual that the couple desperately needs.

Look at Proverbs 27:17 – “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” Here, “Iron sharpens iron” is a metaphor for we Christians helping each other. This is a lesson that we should help each other so that our brothers and sisters in Christ can develop and shine (Park). Then, how can we help our brothers and sisters in Christ to develop and shine? Just as iron sharpens iron, what do we do to sharpen our friends? I thought about it in four

ways:

(1) In order for us to sharpen our friends, we must shine our hearts on our friends.

Look at Proverbs 27:19 – “As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.” Just as our faces shine when we put our faces on the water of a stream, so we must shine our hearts in meetings with our friends. We must open the door to our hearts and treat our friends with genuine heart and transparency. Especially in our conversations with our friends, we must open our hearts to our friends transparently, honestly and sincerely. Then we will connect our hearts with our friends’ hearts. We can sharpen each other when the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, allows us to connect hearts and minds with our friends.

(2) In order for us to sharpen our friends, we must counsel them with the word of God’s truth.

Look at Proverbs 27:9 – “Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.” Not only does the Holy Spirit open our hearts and make us to be transparent to our friends, but also the Holy Spirit reminds us of His word of truth so that we can counsel our friends with the word of God. The Holy Spirit counsels our friends with His word at His appropriate time. The reason the right time is so important here is because no matter how much we counsel our friends with the word of God, we can never sharpen our friends unless the timing is right. That's why the Bible Proverbs 27:14 says, “If a man loudly blesses his neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse.” No matter how blessing it is, who would like it if someone says it to you loudly in the morning. The indwelling Holy Spirit, who gives us the grace to help us in our time of need, counsels our friends with the word of God's truth at His proper time, so that we can sharpen our friends.

(3) In order for us to sharpen our friends, we must praise them.

Look at Proverbs 27:2 – “Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.” Not only do we open our hearts and exhort our friends with the word of God's truth, but we should also praise our friends. How is this possible? It is made possible by God the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. The indwelling Spirit opens our spiritual eyes and allows us to see strengths in our friends. And the Holy Spirit makes us praise our friend's strengths. In commendation, God the Holy Spirit encourages, comforts, and empowers our friends through us. Therefore, we must praise our friends. We should never be stingy with praise. We must sharpen our friends by praising them with God's love.

(4) In order for us to sharpen our friends, we must rebuke them.

Look at Proverbs 27:5-6: “Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.” Although we are used to doing hidden love rather than rebuking, the

Bible says that open rebuke is better than hidden love. And the Bible says that it is better to have a friend's trustworthy rebuke than an enemy's false kisses. And that trustworthy rebuke from the friend hurts. It wounds our hearts. How is a friend's wound to us better than an enemy's false frequent kisses? The reason is because our enemy hates us and he tries to break us down, even through false kisses, while our friends want to build us up with true rebuke in love. Therefore, we should know that our friend rebukes us because he loves us. And we must know that the wound of the heart that comes from our friends' rebuke in love is good for us. Even this beneficial wound must be given to our friend as a loving rebuke. Then we will be able to sharpen our friends.

Just as iron sharpens iron, we must sharpen our friends. We must sharpen our friends with words of truth that the indwelling Holy Spirit reminds us as we open our hearts widely. And we must sincerely praise our friends for their strengths that the Holy Spirit allows us to see. And we must rebuke our friends with the love of God. May we glorify God by sharpening our brothers and sisters and friends in Christ.

### **Third and last, we must be keepers.**

What do you want to keep most? Perhaps what we all want to keep is the people we love, the family members we love. Especially as parents, the desire to protect their children will be our parents' instinct. In particular, as parents of faith, we sincerely wish to keep the faith of our children. Living in a world where there are so many temptations and delusions that are prone to secularization, we have no choice but to desperately want to protect the faith of our children as parents. Look at James 1:27 – “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” Isn't it our parents' earnest hope and prayer topic to pass on this pure faith not only to ourselves but also to our children?

Look at Proverbs 27:18 – “He who tends a fig tree will eat its fruit, and he who looks after his master will be honored.” Here, “he who looks after” means “to keep”, and it refers to the duty of the watchmen to keep their masters from harm (Park). So, in the first half of verse 18, the Bible says, “He who tends a fig tree.” According to Dr. Yoon-sun Park's commentary, the fig tree is a very noble fruit and in order for the fig tree to bear fruit well, we must carefully care for the tree. In particular, it is said that a young fig tree must be well plowed to produce fruit, and an old fig tree must be well maintained so that it does not rot (Park). Just as those who keep the fig tree well plow, nourish, and take good care of the ground so that the fig tree can produce very noble fruits, we are those who protect our loved ones. And as those who protect our loved ones, we will bring precious and beautiful fruits in their lives. We need to help, take good care of, and protect them. In particular, we must be watchmen so that the glory of God is not damaged (Park). Recently my heart was uncomfortable because I was going through some difficult things in the church. The reason was because, in my ignorance, I realized that I had violated the word of God that I



meditated and proclaimed and acted inconsistent with it. So I asked God for forgiveness of my sins and prayed that I would not hide the glory of God. Thankfully, God listened to our prayers, so we no longer hide the glory of God.

Our God is a God who has concern for His holy name more than anyone else. Look at Ezekiel 36:21-23: "I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone. Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.'" When we have sinned against God in the presence of many people in this world and desecrated the holy name of God, our God has concern for His holy name and will show the holiness of His great name. Therefore, we too must live the life of the saints who keep the holy name so that we don't disgrace the name with respect for God's holy name.

I remember the words of Psalms 121:3-8: "He will not let your foot slip-- he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD watches over you-- the LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all harm-- he will watch over your life; the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore." Our God is the one who keeps and watches over us (v. 3). The God who keeps us and watches over us does neither slumber nor sleep (v. 5). God protects us from all dangers and keeps our lives safe (v. 7). That is why we must pray for God to protect our hearts, which are the source of life that we must keep above all else (Prov. 4:23). And we must always pray to God for protecting the faith and life of our family members and church members that we love and care about.

We must focus on our being rather than our deeds and lead a life of faith. We must keep in mind that who we are before the Lord is more important than what we do for Him. Therefore, our earnest prayer is to become like Jesus. We must be real Christians who imitate Jesus Christ. We have received three lessons about what kind of Christian we should be, focusing on the words of Proverbs 27:15-19: (1) We should be reconcilers (v. 15). (2) We should be people who help each other (v. 17). (3) We must be keepers (v. 18). May we all become these kinds of Christians so that wherever we are or whatever we do, I hope and pray that we can glorify God.

## **How to sharpen each other**

**“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27:17).**

Just as iron sharpens iron, we must sharpen our friends. How can we sharpen our friends? I thought about four ways during the early Morning Prayer meeting:

**First, in order for us to sharpen our friends, we must shine our hearts on them.**

Look at Proverbs 27:19 – “As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.” Just as our faces shine when we put our faces on the water of a stream, so we must shine our hearts in meetings with our friends. We must open our hearts and treat our friends with genuine heart and transparency. Especially in our conversations with our friends, we must open our hearts to our friends in a transparent, honest and sincere way. Then we will connect our hearts with our friends’ hearts. We can sharpen each other when the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, allows us to connect hearts and minds with our friends.

**Second, in order for us to sharpen our friends, we must counsel them with the word of God's truth.**

Look at Proverbs 27:9 – “Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.” God the Holy Spirit not only opens our hearts to our friends to be transparent, but also reminds us of the word of God’s truth so that we can counsel our friends with His word. God the Holy Spirit counsels our friends by the word of God at His appropriate time. The reason the right time is so important here is because no matter how much we counsel our friends with His word, we can never sharpen our friends unless the timing is right. That is why the Proverbs writer says in Proverbs 27:14, “If a man loudly blesses his neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse.” Who would like it if we say the word of blessing loudly in the early morning. God, the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us, gives us the grace of helping us in time of need, to counsel our friends with His word at His proper timing, so that we can sharpen our friends.

**Third, in order for us to sharpen our friends, we must praise them.**

Look at Proverbs 27:2 – “Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.” Not only do we open our hearts and counsel with the word of God's truth when we speak with our friends, but

we should also praise our friends. How is this possible? It is made possible by God the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. The indwelling Holy Spirit opens our spiritual eyes to see strengths in our friends. And God the Holy Spirit makes us praise our friend's strengths. God the Holy Spirit encourages, comforts, and empowers our friends through us. Therefore, we must praise our friends. We should never be stingy with praise. We must sharpen our friends as we praise them with God's love.

**Fourth and last, in order for us to sharpen our friend, we must be rebuke them.**

Look at Proverbs 27:5-6: "Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. Even though we are used to making hidden love rather than rebuke, the Proverbs reporter says that rebuke is better than hidden love. And he says that it is better for us to be wounded through our trustworthy friend's rebuke rather than an enemy multiple kisses. How is the friend's wound better than the enemy's multiple kisses? The reason is because our enemy, who hates us, tries to destroy us even through multiple kisses, while our friends, who love us, try to build us up even through rebuke. We need to know that our friends rebuke us because they love us. And we must know that our hearts' wound that comes from our friends' rebuke in love is good for us. We should be able to give even this beneficial wound to our friends even through rebuke in love. Then we will be able to sharpen our friends.

Just as iron sharpens iron, we must sharpen our friends. We must sharpen our friends with words of truth that the indwelling Holy Spirit reminds us as we open our hearts widely. And we must sincerely praise our friends as the Holy Spirit enables us to see their strengths. And we should rebuke our friends with the love of God. Therefore, we must glorify God by sharpening our friends.

## **My folly that won't be removed**

### **[Proverbs 27:20-27]**

I have been suffering from athlete's foot from few months ago. Although I met a doctor and got a prescription for medicine, and applied the medicine on my foot, it didn't go away and spread to the left toes this time. Then, few weeks ago, the skin on the outer heel of the same foot was cracked. I thought it was athlete's foot and used the same athlete's foot medicine. But my wife saw and told me that it wasn't athlete's foot. She said that the skin was cracked due to lot of dead skin cells, and that I had to soak my feet in hot water in order to remove them. So the next day after work out, I soaked my feet in hot water after exercise as my wife told me. And after a while, I tried to remove the dead skin off my left heel while doing shower. But it didn't go that well. I think that's because I didn't scrub off dirt and dead skin cell on my heels for a long time and thus it's hardened a lot.

Likewise, I try to self-reflect if my heart and conscience are hardened a lot. I certainly believe that God didn't leave my stubborn and hardened heart alone, but gave me a new heart in Jesus Christ (Ezek. 36:26). God removed from me my heart of stone and gave me a heart of flesh (v. 26; 11:19). However, the problem is that I have neglected to manage my heart, so there is a lot of folly in my heart. That is why I am sinning against God by violating His word. Instead of redeeming time by being wise (Col. 4:5), I am acting very foolishly and wasting time (1 Chron. 21:8). Personally, even though I want to get rid of my folly that God reveals and live wisely in this world with God's wisdom, it doesn't work that well. As if the dirt and dead skin cell doesn't come off my heels, I'm not getting rid of my folly.

If we look at Proverbs 27:22, the Bible says, "Though you grind a fool in a mortar, grinding him like grain with a pestle, you will not remove his folly from him." What does it mean? The memory I have when I was a child was a woman putting grains in a large mortar and smashed it with the wooden pestles that look like a little bat. When I saw it first time, I didn't know why she was doing that. The think I learned later was that it was to separate the husks from the grains or crush the grains to make them into fine powder (Internet). After all, the purpose of the putting grains in the large mortar and smashing them with the wooden pestles is to separate the grains from the shell. When the grains are put in the large mortar and pounded, the grains in it are separated from the grain and the shell. People then sift the grains and husks to blow away the husks and sift the grains (Internet). By the way, in Proverbs 27:22, the Proverbs writer says, "Though you grind a fool in a mortar, grinding him like grain with a pestle, you will not remove his folly from him." This means that it is very difficult to get rid of the folly of a fool. So, I would like to meditate on Proverbs 27:20-24, under the heading "My folly that won't be removed". At the same time, I would

like to share my 4 follies as I reflect myself on the word of God and receive the 4 lessons of God's wisdom. I hope and pray that you, like me, reflect on yourself to the word of God, realize your own folly, understand and obey the instruction of God's wisdom in repentance, so that you will be raised up as wise Christians.

### **First, my folly is my eyes without contentment.**

Look at Proverbs 27:20 – “Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of man.” What about you if your eyes were no longer visible? What if we become blind? I've actually thought about this again and again. One of the reason I came to think ‘If I become a blind person ... ‘ is because when I go to the restaurant to buy lunch, I often see blind people walk with canes in their hands, maybe because there is a blind institution near our church. Whenever I look at them, I think how frustrating it will be because they can't see. So when I think about what would happen if I couldn't see with my eyes like them, I'm honestly afraid. Another reason is because of “the lust of his eyes”. Look at 1 John 2:16 – “For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world.” Looking at this word, one of the things that came from the world is the lust of the eyes. Because of the lust of the eyes, I used to think that if I became a blind person, I would no longer be able to have lust of the eyes.

When you think about the lust of the eyes, who comes to your mind among the characters in the Bible? I first think of Eve, the first woman of mankind in Genesis 3. When she saw the fruit of a tree that is in the middle of the garden of Eden, being deceived by a serpent, it was “good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and also desirable for gaining wisdom” (v. 6). She shouldn't have seen the tree, but she was tempted by the serpent to see the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and that tree was pleasing to her eyes. Eventually, driven by the lust of the eye, she ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and gave the fruit to Adam, her husband, who was with her (v. 6). When it comes to the lust of the eyes, the second person that comes to mind is David. One evening, when David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace, he “saw” a woman Bath-sheba bathing and the Bible says “The woman was very beautiful” (2 Sam. 11:2). Eventually, David, driven by the lust of the eye, brought Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite (v. 3), to him and slept with her (v. 4). And when she said that she was pregnant (v. 5), David made her husband Uriah come from the battlefield and made him go down to his house to sleep with Bathsheba in order to make it look like the baby was the couple's baby (vv. 6-13). However, since this attempt wasn't working, David eventually wrote a letter to Joab and sent Uriah to the battlefield and killed Uriah (vv. 14-17). The Bible says that what David did was “was evil in the sight of the Lord” (v. 27).

In the New Testament Matthew 5:27-28, Jesus said: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Jesus said that anyone who has lust and sees a woman (whoever looks at a woman with the lust of the eyes) has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Can't you imagine? If you look at a woman with the lust of

your eyes since she looks so beautiful, then you have already committed adultery with her in your heart. I think this doesn't necessarily apply only to man. If a woman also looked at a handsome man with the lust of her eyes, then she has already committed adultery with him in her heart. One day, I thought about the reason why people have an affair based on the words of Ecclesiastes 7:7. The reason is "greed". In Exodus 20:17, the tenth commandment of Moses is written: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." God has commanded us not to covet our "neighbor's wife". Why do we covet? The reason is the greed within us. If there is greed within us, we don't always feel satisfied with our wife (Prov. 5:19). Not only that, we begin to covet another woman. So, driven by the lust of the eye, we look at a woman other than our wife. And our ears start to hear about her. But our eyes cannot be satisfied no matter how many women we see. Look at Ecclesiastes 1:8 – "All things are wearisome; Man is not able to tell it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor is the ear filled with hearing." That is why Satan entices us by fleshly desires, by sensuality, causing us to sin (2 Pet. 2:18). Satan makes us covet another woman and sin against God.

Greed is the cause of our infidelity. Greed doesn't know how to be satisfied (Isa. 56:11). Hence, greed makes us not to be satisfied with our wife (Prov. 5:19) and makes us covet our neighbor's wife (Ex. 29:17). Therefore, our hearts should not be directed toward greed (Ps. 119:36). The Bible says that greed is idolatry (Col. 3:5). Therefore, we must be guard against all kinds of greed (Lk. 12:15). Pastor Lloyd Jones said in his book "Darkness and Light," about the 'eye problem': 'Your eyes are the problem. When you see something, the mind follows it. ... If there is anything that makes you tempted, don't look at it! ... Don't let your eyes covet anything. Don't let go of looking straight ahead. ... Make a covenant with your eyes and look straight ahead. Pay attention only to the direction God directs, holiness and heaven' (Jones). The Bible Job 31:1 says: "'I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?" We must make a covenant with our eyes. We must make a pledge that we will no longer see other woman/man with the lust of our eyes. And while seeking God's grace and help, we must commit ourselves to not looking at other opposite sex with the lust of our eyes and put them into practice, according to the promise we have made. Otherwise, we will never stop sinning adultery (2 Pet. 2:14) with unsatisfied eyes (Prov. 27:20) and the lust of our eyes (1 Jn. 2:16) (2 Peter 2:14).

If our folly is our unsatisfied eye, we must confess this folly to God and repent. And we must fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2). Then we will be able to overcome the unsatisfied lust of the eyes. The reason is because we will be satisfied just looking at Jesus.

### **Second, my folly is to like people's praise.**

Do you know the meaning 'praise makes a whale dance too'? Through one of Ken Blanchard's book that has once become a bestseller has attracted many people's attention to praises. The reason is because they learned the

power of praise and its need (Internet). This book was written by a sales executive named Wes Kingsley, who was struggling with relationships at home and at work, went on a business trip to Florida to watch a great show of killer whales at the Sea World Marine Center. And he went to a trainer to learn how he trained a killer whale weighing more than 3 tons. It is a story that by listening to the training secret and applying it to one's own family and company, he was able to achieve family harmony and target sales performance wonderfully. Here, Wes Kingsley learned through the killer whale trainer, Dave, that a relationship with a killer whale is no different from a human relationship, and that the secret to making a great show is positive attention, praise, and encouragement for the other person. It is that positive attention, praise, and encouragement are important to everyone in a relationship (Internet).

No one would hate to be praised. To that extent, our human beings' basic disposition is, as William James, who is called the founder of modern psychology, has a desire to be recognized by others (Internet). In one survey, when asked 'when is the most happy time at work?', 45% of them answered 'when they are praised' (Internet), unless, of course, the praise is excessive and it doesn't sound like flattery. But the funny thing is that our instinct is that even though the praise sounds like flattery to our ears, we don't feel bad, but rather seem to like it subtly. That kind of compliment seems to make us feel good.

I personally think of two things when I think of the word "praise". First, I think I shouldn't be stingy with praising others. Second, it is Proverbs 27:21 – "The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives." What does it mean? It means that like crucibles for silver and the furnace for gold, a tool for testing people is praise. Here, the Hebrew meaning of the word "praise" can be interpreted in two ways (Internet): (1) One can be interpreted as a criterion for evaluating a person's qualities. For example, in 1 Samuel 18:6-7, Israeli women praise David, saying, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands" when they saw King Saul and his companions were returning after David killed the Philistine. This was the women's compliment that David was more capable of war than Saul. In this way, praise is acknowledging that the person being praised is of superior ability or quality. (2) Another possible interpretation of the word "praise" is that praise is a test tool to find out what a person is. When a person is praised, looking at the person's attitude can help you understand that person is who he is. A person who likes to show off, for example, will try to hear praise. I think it might not be good for people to continue to praise such a person. The reason is because when the person is hungry for praise and striving to be praised, even a word of loving rebuke can be greatly hurt and disappointed and put to the test. The Bible Proverbs 27:2 says, "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips." The lesson we learned from this passage is to avoid praising ourselves that is self-praise.

I think Proverbs 27:21, the second half of the word "but man is tested by the praise he receives" is important. The reason is because I think we are very weak in praise. Especially when we are praised by other people for serving the Lord's church, we feel good and happy. But there may be plenty of danger (temptation) for us to attribute it to ourselves rather than to glorify God. Also, because of the praise of the congregation, if we are

conditioned to praise without our knowledge, there is a danger of serving the Lord's church to receive praise from people rather than to receive praise from the Lord. We should prefer to be praised by the Lord rather than to be praised by others. One day, the time will come for all of us to stand before the Lord to settle account. At that time, should we not be praised by the Lord as "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Mt. 18:23, 24; 25:14-30)? In order to do so, what should we do? We must be the faithful and wise servants (24:45). Who, then, is the faithful and wise servant? I thought about it three ways:

(1) We must be truthful.

We must live the life of a truthful steward (Lk. 12:42) with a truthful heart (2 Pet. 3:1) and truthful lips (Prov. 12:19). In addition, we must be faithful servants of the Lord and faithfully keep the responsibilities that the Lord has commanded us to. When we do so, the Lord will praise us (Josh. 22:3).

(2) We must go immediately and use the talents we have received from the Lord and bear fruit.

Look at Matthew 25:16-17: "Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more." When I think of "fruit", I think of the "good fruit" Jesus said in Matthew 7:17-19. I thought of this good fruit in three ways: (1) The good fruit is eternal life (v. 14). In other words, the good fruit we bear is entering the kingdom of heaven (v. 21). (b) The good fruit we bear as disciples of Jesus is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Look at Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." Of these fruits of the Holy Spirit, especially Jesus' disciples bear abundantly fruits of love by obeying Jesus' twofold commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbor as yourself" (Lk. 10:27) and live a heavenly life. (c) The good fruit we bear is good deeds. Look at Ephesians 2:8-10: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

(3) We must be like the five wise virgins (Mt. 25:4, 8, 9, 13) preparing for the Second Coming of the Lord.

We must become those who say, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" to the word of Jesus "Yes, I am coming soon" (Rev. 22:20).

**Third, my folly is being lazy and is not work diligently.**



What, in your opinion, was a very important property for the nomads like the Israelites? Perhaps it was the livestock they owned (for example, herds of sheep and cattle). So, above all else, they would have been diligent in caring for their own sheep or herds. That was their responsibility. So the nomads always took their livestock in mind and took care of them diligently. A good example is Jacob in Genesis 30. He escaped from his brother Esau, stayed at his uncle Laban's house, and took care of Laban's livestock (Gen. 30:29). As a result, Laban's possessions, which were little before Jacob's arrival, had increased greatly after Jacob came (v. 30).

Look at Proverbs 27:23 – “Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds.” What does it mean? According to Dr. Yoon-sun Park, it is a recommendation that people should not live by relying on wealth and power, but to earn a living by diligently engaging in their own business (Park). What was the reason when the Proverb writer said this to the Israelites, who were in the livestock farming, which was common at his time? Why did the Proverbs writer tell them not to live on wealth and power, but to earn a living by diligently engaging in their own business? The reason is because in verse 24, the Proverbs reporter said “for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations.” In other words, the reason is because the wealth and honor doesn't exist forever, but disappears after a while. Therefore, the Bible tells us not to live by relying on wealth and honor, but to work diligently in our own work.

As I meditated on this word, I remembered 2 Thessalonians 3:10 – “For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.” Do you know why the apostle Paul taught the members of the Thessalonica church this way? The reason is because some of the church members were lazy and hated to work. The problem was because they didn't work at all, but rather they were idle, weren't busy but busybodies (v. 11). The reason they didn't work with their hands and were idle and busybodies was because they had a wrong eschatology. In other words, those of the Thessalonica church members who didn't work with their hands were because they had a perverse eschatology of the Second Coming of Jesus. So Paul exhorted them: “We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.”

There are many lessons about laziness in the Book of Proverbs we have already meditated on. One of them is Proverbs 26:15 – “The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth.” Another Bible verse is Proverbs 21:25 – “The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work.” What does it mean? It means that the lazy people hate to work with their hands. So, in Proverbs 13:4, the Bible says, “The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.” That means he wants in his heart, but he doesn't get what he wants because he is lazy and doesn't use his hands. The lazy person not only doesn't roast his game (12:27), but also buries his hand in the dish and will not even bring it back to his mouth (19:24; 26:15). Isn't it funny? If we want to eat meat, we have to hunt and catch an animal. Isn't it funny that we want meat only with our hearts but don't actually hunt the animal? Also, who is hungry and struggles to put his

hand in the dish and raise it with his mouth? Then, like a baby, should someone feed us with a spoon? I think this is the culmination of laziness. I really think this is the extreme laziness that we put our hands in the dish but struggle to raise the spoon to our mouths even though we want to eat the food. Regarding these lazy people, the Bible Proverbs 19:15 says that they are “an idle man,” that is, a person who is idle and playing. In short, the lazy person hates working with his hand (21:25). As a result, poverty is inevitable for the lazy, but it comes on him like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man (24:34) (MacArthur).

If we have this kind of laziness, the lesson of Proverbs 27:23 is that we must remove this folly and work diligently and faithfully. What do farmers think and sow when they sow seeds in spring? Obviously, the farmer will think about the harvest season in the fall and diligently sow the seeds in spring. The reason why farmers sow seeds in spring, work diligently, and labor is because they eagerly expect to bear the fruit of grain (Ref.: 2 Tim. 2:6; Jam. 5:7). With this farmer's mind and attitude, we must diligently do the work that will be entrusted to each of us. Also, we have to work hard like laborers. We must sweat and work hard. Do you know what kind of consequences are the result of this according to Proverbs 27:25-27? We can think in 3 ways: (1) Look at verse 25: “When the hay is removed and new growth appears and the grass from the hills is gathered in.” When we work diligently and hard, there will be new growth for us, as if after weed, there would be new growth (v. 25). Not only that, we will also reap the fruits of our hard work, just as “new growth appears and the grass from the hills is gathered in” (v. 25). (2) Look at verse 26: “the lambs will provide you with clothing, and the goats with the price of a field.” As if the lambs will provide us with clothing, if we labor diligently, there will be things that are provided to us for our work, and as “the goats with the price of a field”, we will be able to buy a building or land or to invest with our earned money as the fruit of our labor (v. 26). (3) Look at verse 27: “You will have plenty of goats' milk to feed you and your family and to nourish your servant girls.” As if there is plenty of goats' milk to feed all family members, there will be abundance in our house when we diligently do our work hard. In this way, the reason God makes us to have all that we need in all things at all times is because so that we will abound in every good work (2 Cor. 9:8). Then, because God has made us rich in every way we can be generous on every occasion (v. 11).

#### **Fourth and last, my folly is to love riches that are not eternal.**

There are three things I value when it comes to “riches”:

- (1) I cannot forget Deuteronomy 8:17-18: “You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me. But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.”

Moses was concerned that when the Israelites entered into Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey,

and lived in abundance, they would forget their God of salvation who led them in the wilderness and they would think that their own power and the strength of their hands had produced their wealth. That was why Moses told the Israelites, “remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth” (v.18). We must believe that God gives us the power to obtain riches. We must keep in mind that we do not acquire riches by our own power and the strength of our hands. Only when God gives us the power to obtain riches, we can earn riches and enjoy abundant life. And when we enjoy the abundance through God's grace, we must look forward to and yearn for Heaven, a more and more truly abundant country. When we enjoy abundance, we should never mistake this world for our home. We must enjoy the blessings of God in this world while looking to a better home (v. 16).

(2) I think when it comes to “riches,” we should not rely on the abundance of riches.

Rather, we must rely on God's love. The reason is because wealth will be gone, but God's love will last forever (Ps. 52:1, 7, 8).

(3) I think it is better to lose riches than to lose health (Eccl. 5:13, 14), and it is much better to regain spiritual riches (faith) by losing riches.

If we lose our faith because of riches, wouldn't it be better to repent and return to practice our spiritual life right after we lost our riches?

Look at Proverbs 27:24 – “for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations.” The Bible says that riches don't last forever. What does it mean? It means that riches and honor will disappear after a while. It seems that we are living in an era of values confusion. Now people don't know what's worth and what's important. Even we Christians are in a confusion of values. Now we are living a life of faith without discerning what is more valuable. “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward” (Heb. 11:24-26). However, we value the world's riches and glories more than the suffering we receive for Christ. And we think that it is better to enjoy the pleasures of the sins of the world than to suffer with the saints. So, our lips cry out for suffering for Jesus and His gospel, but our hearts want the success and riches of the world. And we prefer the path of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the broad path of Egypt than the path of Golgotha, where the Lord went. This is confusion of values. Our confusing of values is giving our children a confusing message. From their point of view, it is clear that their parents go to church and live a spiritual life. But the words their parents shout out to them from their parents' mouths are the world's success, happiness, and riches. We shouldn't be like this anymore. We must first have the right biblical values and live the right spiritual life. And we must have eternal values and be able to reject the momentary things.

If we look at the Bible, I think King Solomon is the one who enjoyed riches and honor more than anyone else in this world. But the Bible Psalms 127:1 says, “Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.” It is a meaningful confession that King Solomon, who built the temple in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 2:1-5:1), said that as a person with experience in building the temple, the labor of the builder is in vain unless the Lord builds the house. King Solomon said, “Unless the Lord build the house...”, and “the house” here refers to “the temple.” In other words, unless the Lord builds the temple, the labor of those who build it is in vain. King Solomon not only built the temple in Jerusalem, but also ruled the nation of Israel wisely and well. The reason he didn’t ask God for riches and honor but for wisdom was to rule God’s people well. Therefore, God gave him not only wisdom, but riches and honor. Would you ask God for “riches” or “wisdom”? From Proverbs 8:10-11, we learned that God’s wisdom is far better than gold, silver, or pearls. In other words, when we hear the voice of God’s wisdom and gain God’s admonition and knowledge, we also gain the ability to earn riches. That’s why the wisdom of God is more valuable than the riches. Look at Proverbs 8:18-19: “With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity. My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver.” What does it mean? King Solomon says that those who have wisdom have riches and honor.

We must love wisdom. And we must earnestly seek wisdom. Look at Proverbs 8:17 – “I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me.” King Solomon exhorts us to be “those who love me” (v. 21), that is the ones who love wisdom. The reason is because when we love wisdom, we will be clothed with the love of wisdom. What does it mean that we will be clothed with the love of wisdom? It means that wisdom gives us all these blessings when we love wisdom, just as God gave us riches that King Solomon didn’t even ask for when he asked for wisdom that was pleasing to God. Therefore, King Solomon urges us to earnestly seek wisdom. We should no longer foolishly love riches that aren’t eternal. Riches will be gone. We must not put our hope in wealth which is so uncertain but to put our hope in God. The reason is because God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment (1 Tim. 6:17).

## What the seekers of God understand

### [Proverbs 28:1-7]

What do you understand about yourself? Is there something that the indwelling Holy Spirit is giving you an understanding of yourself through the word of God? In my case, the Holy Spirit often makes me understand my own folly through the word of God. So I personally hold on to James 1:5, “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him,” and ask God for wisdom. In the midst of that, I meditate on the books of wisdom in the Bible at weekly Wednesday night prayer meetings for several years. However, the more I meditate on the books of wisdom, the more I understand my folly. Therefore, I have no choice but to ask God for wisdom more and more. How about you?

As I was meditating Proverbs 28:1-7, I checked my own personal blog and wrote down the word ‘understand’ in the search and found the short writing that I wrote on April 2nd, 2006. The content of the short writing was about the understanding God gave me while proclaiming the word of God during a sermon in the Korean worship service on Sunday. At that time, I preached under the title of ‘God of Joseph,’ centering on the words of Acts 7:9-16. But when I proclaimed that the God of Joseph is the ‘God who is with us,’ I understood something precious. That understanding based on ‘God made Joseph prosperous by being with him’ (Gen. 39:2, 3, 23) was the fact that the prosperity stated in the Bible isn’t a change in Joseph’s circumstances, but is the fact that God was with him. Joseph’s circumstance was that he was a servant of the Egyptian military commander Potiphar (vv. 2-3), and later was unjustly accused and in prison (v. 23). We would not consider Joseph prosperous who was in this circumstance. We may think that the prosperity we think is that God blessed us when it becomes a problem-solving and circumstantial change in the direction we want. However, the Bible says that because God was with Joseph, He made him prosperous. In other words, the prosperity that the Bible says is that God is with us.

What do you understand in the past or these days? What is the understanding God gives you? If we look at Proverbs 28:5, the Bible says, “Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it fully.” I would like to receive a lesson given by meditating on the four things about what the seekers of God understand, under the heading “What the seekers of God understand”.

### **First, what the seekers of God understand is that the righteous are bold.**

Look at Proverbs 28:1 – “The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.” I still remember the time when I was teaching the Gospel of John to local Christians servants in the mission

field where my father was residing. I remember when the police men dropped in without warning after I taught them the word of John 16:33 – “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” I remember that I made up my mind, saying ‘I have to be bold and not be afraid’ since I taught them the word of John 16:33. So I acted boldly and pretended to be sleeping in the room where I was staying. When one of the police men came in, I got up from bed and showed my passport, thinking that if I show my U.S. passport and speak in English, he would leave. Then I remember being told to come to the police station because it became a problem. Haha.

In Proverbs 28:1, the Proverbs writer says, “The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.” What does it mean? Here, the Proverbs writer is contrasting the wicked with the righteous. In particular, he contrasts the fleeing of the wicked with the boldness of the righteous. Why would the wicked flee even though no one pursues? Is it not because he has sinned? If we sin, our human instinct is to hide the sin. And because of the penalty for the sin we commit, we will not be able to sleep comfortably because we dwell in fear. That’s why there is a Korean proverb saying, ‘The one who hits can’t stretch his legs, and the one who gets hit sleeps with his legs stretched out.’ If we look at Leviticus 26:17, we can see a good example of the wicked man who flees though no one pursues (Prov. 28:1). A good example is that at the time of the Exodus, the Israelites didn’t obey all God’s commands and violated God’s covenant (vv. 14-15). What was God’s punishment on the Israelites at that time? Look at Leviticus 26:17 – “I will set my face against you so that you will be defeated by your enemies; those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee even when no one is pursuing you.” One of God’s punishments was that the Israelites who sinned against God would run away even if no one was chasing them. This is what the Bible verse 36 says: “As for those of you who are left, I will make their hearts so fearful in the lands of their enemies that the sound of a windblown leaf will put them to flight. They will run as though fleeing from the sword, and they will fall, even though no one is pursuing them.” Eventually, the reason why the sinful Israelites run as though fleeing from the sword was because God made their hearts so fearful. Therefore, the wicked flee even if there is no one pursuing them.

But the righteous are bold like a lion (Prov. 28:1). What could be the reason? Why can the righteous be bold like the lion? The reason is because the righteous live by obeying the word of God. Therefore, since the righteous have no sins and their conscience is clean, they don’t need to flee in fear like the wicked. In other words, the righteous man with clean conscience is as bold as the lion. In order for us to be bold like the lion, we must have clean conscience. And in order to have clean conscience, we must obey God’s word. If we commit a sin by disobeying God’s command like the Israelites at the time of the Exodus, God will make our hearts fearful, and we would be easily surprised and flee without anyone pursuing us. Therefore, we must obey God’s word. And like the apostle Paul, we must strive always to keep our conscience clear before God and man (Acts 24:16). Also, we must fulfill our duties to God in all good conscience (23:1). Then, through God’s grace, we who have been justified by believing in Jesus will be able to be bold like the lion.

Dr. Yoon-sun Park says that there are two reasons why we Christians become bold: (1) It isn't that we are bold because we feel our own strength, but rather it is because we feel our own weakness. In other words, when we feel our weakness and believe in God alone, we gain righteousness and God empowers us. That is why the apostle Paul confessed in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, "my power is made perfect in weakness" and "For when I am weak, then I am strong." Because we know that we are weak, we become strong and courageous by fully trusting in the Lord. (2) It is that we become strong and courageous because we love God. Look at 1 John 4:16-17: "And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him." God is with us who love the Lord (Jn. 14:21, 23) and He makes us bold. We must be Christians who seek God. And Christians who seek God understand that the righteous are as bold as a lion, but the wicked flee even if there is no one who pursues them. I hope and pray that we all love God, who strengthens us when we are weak, so that we may obey His word and always strive to be free from our conscience.

**Second, what the seekers of God understand is that with an understanding and knowledgeable leader, the nation will maintain order for a long time.**

We are praying for our beloved homeland, the Republic of Korea, even though we live in this land of America and the United States that we love. In particular, we cannot but pray for the leaders of both countries. The reason is because the role of a country's president is very important. Personally, it is the character that I think is important to myself as the pastor of a church, as well as to the president, the leader of a country. That's why I am praying to God for a change of my own character, especially praying to God to imitate Jesus' humility. Perhaps that's why it is the character of the person that I value when I elect the president of the United States or Korea. And in that character, I see how the person's truthfulness is. If the presidential candidate makes this and that pledges to citizens during the election season and doesn't go forward as president afterward, the citizens will have no choice but to doubt the truthfulness of that person. But my personal opinion is, I think I can tell if the presidential candidate is truly a truthful person or a person who keeps lying without hesitation. In particular, when we hear about the candidate through the news, I think that we can judge each of us in our own way, at least a little bit. Besides truthfulness, we often pray for the God-fearing leaders when we pray for our country's president and his leadership community people. The reason is because we believe that when they are wise leaders who fear God, they can govern this country wisely and well according to God's will. However, the reality we see is that when we look at the presidents of United States and South Korea, we don't see the wisdom of fearing God (in our view?), and there are times when we question whether they are truthful in character. Then we can surely be disappointed. But on top of that, the more disappointing reality is that politicians quarrel, fight, criticize each other, and so on. We seem to lose hope when we see that they cannot become one, the factions are divided and criticized and quarreled with each other, and don't take care of people's lives and serve the citizens.

Look at Proverbs 28:2 – “When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers, but a man of understanding and knowledge maintains order.” I thought about this word in two ways:

(1) If the country is rebellious, the regime is often replaced (v. 2).

What sins can be in the country? There may be not only corruption, but all lies and evil. The more leaders of the country who commit these sins, what will happen to that country? Among them, there are officials who oppress the poor (v. 3). These officials themselves were also the poor men in the past. Nevertheless, they don't understand and compassionately helps the poor, but rather oppress them. Such people are by no means people without understanding and knowledge (v. 2). They are foolish leaders. They are “like a driving rain with leaves no food” (v. 3). Sometimes when I look at Korean news, I see farmers are interviewed by a report after all the crops are destroyed due to heavy rain. I can't help but agree that officials who oppress the poor are like heavy rains that ruin agricultural products. If there are many such country leaders, how hard would the citizens suffer?

The Bible Proverbs 28:2 was translated in the Korean Revised Version: ‘If there is sin in a country, there is the increase of rulers ....’ I compared this translation with the Korean Modern Bible translation: ‘If there is sin in a country, even if the regime is changed often ....’ I think the both translations have the similar meaning. Whether there is increase of rulers or the regime is changed often, both mean that the country isn't stable because of sin. Not only that, but if there is sin, how divided will the leadership of a country be and will fight in partisans? Dr. Park said, ‘The fact that there are many factions in a country is God's punishment for the sins that have already existed in that country’ (Park). As an example, the Israel was divided into North and South Israel after the death of King Solomon, who committed idolatry in 1 Kings 11 and 12. In fact, the Bible twice said that the division of the nation of Israel was caused by God's punishment (1 Kgs. 12:15, 24). According to Dr. Park, he said ‘Therefore, when there is a civil war or partisanship in any country and there is no peace, all the people, including the ruler, should deeply reflect on the sins of that country and repent’ (Park). What do you think about what Dr. Park say? When I think about the divided country of Korea and America now, don't we all think that we should deeply reflect on our sins and repent to God? I remember what Jesus said in Matthew 12:25 – “Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, ‘Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.’” How can a family, a church or a county stand firm if people fight each other and divide. The family, the church, or the country divided by conflict can never stand firm. Therefore, if there is sin in the country, the regime is inevitably changed often. And if the regime changes often, the country cannot stand firm. The reason is because the country is divided by sin. And the divided country can never be stable. As a result, the citizens are bound to be anxious. In addition, the citizens are bound to feel exhausted, discouraged, and frustrated by the constant partisan fight in the politics amidst anxiety and



worry.

(2) If there is an understanding and knowledgeable leader, the country will remain stable for a long time (Prov. 28:2).

Considering this word that if a country's leader is understanding and knowledgeable, then that country will remain stable for a long time. As citizens of a country, do we want this leader to become the president of our country so that the country can regain stability as soon as possible? It would be great if not only the president but all those who assist the president who lead our country with the understanding and knowledge that God gives them. But on the contrary, what would happen to this country if the president and the people who support him lack understanding and knowledge and try to satisfy their own self-interest in their folly? So, when we pray to God for our country's leaders, we must pray that God will give them understanding and knowledge. Applying in a word, we must pray that God will give them wisdom when we pray for our nation's leaders.

Before, I have received five lessons under the title of "A wise king" centered on Proverbs 20:26-30. Here's a quick review:

(a) **The wise king discerns and separates the good from the wicked and punishes the wicked (v. 26).**

If the president of a country cannot discern between the good and the evil, what will happen to that country? So what would happen if we put the wicked people in important positions in government? What King Solomon asked of God was "discernment in administering justice" in order to judge the Lord's people (1 Kgs. 3:11). When we pray for the president of our country, like Solomon, we must seek discernment in administering justice. Then the president will rule the country well and establish order and justice.

(b) **The wise king conscientiously rules the kingdom before God (Prov. 20:27).**

The wise king, as a righteous man, rules the country with a good conscience, revealing the darkness of the wicked since he looks into the deep inside of the wicked. And because the wise king punishes the wicked with justice, he turns off the lamps of the wicked. In other words, the wise king will strive to be free from his conscience before God. And he will conscientiously rule the kingdom before God. Therefore, the light of the righteous will shine brightly, and the lamp of the wicked will go out.

(c) **The wise king protects himself with love and faithfulness (v. 28).**

The wise king defends his throne with love and faithfulness and strengthens him. Also, the wise king loves the people and faithfully does what he promises them. The wise king with this love and faithfulness

protects himself, and strengthens his throne.

**(d) The wise king has strength and wisdom (v. 29).**

In other words, the wise king has strength and wisdom through many experiences.

**(e) The wise king disciplines (v. 30).**

The wise king disciplines his people in order to drive away the foolishness in their hearts. The reason he does so is because “beating purge the inmost being” (v. 30). He discerns and separates the good from the wicked and disciplines the wicked with justice. Therefore, he protects the citizens of his country and establishes the order of his country.

Don't you want the president of our country to be such a wise president? Christians who seek God understand that a wise leader with this understanding and knowledge, when established as president of a country, maintains recognition for a long time as that country. Not only that, but Christians who seek God know that if there is sin in the country, especially among the president or his aides and leaders, the regime is short-lived and has no choice but to be replaced. Therefore, we must seek God. In the midst of that, we must pray for the understanding and knowledge of God to our nation's leaders.

**Third, what the seekers of God understand is that it is better to act faithfully, even in poverty, than to be a rich man whose ways are perverse.**

Is it important in your eyes to be rich or is it important to act with integrity? What would you do if you couldn't get rich no matter how hard you are to work? Will you abandon integrity and try to become rich by speaking and doing falsely? The Bible teaches us that rich and poor aren't the most important things, but whether we are faithful or wise is more important. Look at Proverbs 19:1 – “Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a fool whose lips are perverse.” Look at Ecclesiastes 4:13 – “Better a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no longer knows how to take warning.” Looking at these words, the Bible instructs us that a wise man who lives truthfully even though he is poor is better than a foolish man who is lying and dull and doesn't know how to be warned. That is why truth and wisdom are so important.

Look at Proverbs 28:6 – “Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a rich man whose ways are perverse.” When this word is translated into Hebrew, it is ‘Better a poor man who acts truthfully than a rich man who deceives in two ways. Here, ‘to walk in two ways’ means ‘in fact, he only pretends to walk on a good way while walking in an evil way’ (Park). Then, what is the evil way for the rich who walks in these two ways? As Proverbs 28:3 says, one of the evil ways of the rich who walks in two ways is to oppress the poor. For a more

specific example, James 2:6 says: “But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?” The rich man who walks in two ways not only despises them in oppressing the poor, but also torments them, and causes harm by even taking them to court. Can’t you imagine? On the outside, the rich man seems to do good deeds in front of people. But on the inside when nobody sees him, he oppresses the poor (skillfully). This is “a rich man whose ways are perverse” (Prov. 28:6), that is the rich man who walks in two ways.

What do you think of the rich man walking in two ways? How would you react when you realize that he is doing a lot of good deeds in front of people on the outside, but in reality he is accumulating wealth by doing evil behind them without their knowledge? The Bible says that the poor man who acts truthfully is better than this rich man. The lesson that this word teaches us is that it is more important to act truthfully than to be rich and poor, or to act falsely while hypocritically deceiving people's eyes. Those who seek God understand and know this fact. Not only that, Christians who seek God are striving to understand this truth and act truthfully and faithfully, even if they are poor.

We should strive to be truthful and faithful people rather than trying to get rich. We shouldn't be rich who walk in two ways. On the outside, we should not become rich people who pretend to walk the good way in front of people, but actually walk the evil way. Since we seek God, we must understand the word of God that with the wisdom that God gives us, the poor man who walks faithfully is better than the rich man who walks in an evil way. This is what Proverbs 19:22 says: “What a man desires is unfailing love; better to be poor than a liar.” I hope and pray that we will act faithfully and truthfully which God requires of us.

**Fourth and last, what the seekers of God understand is that he who keeps the law is a wise man.**

Who is the “legalist” you think of? Perhaps when we say “legalists,” we Christians will think of the Pharisees in the New Testament Gospels. And we may think the Pharisees were “legalists” because they kept the law thoroughly. However, as we already know, the law that they kept thoroughly was not God's law, but human tradition. How do we know it? Because Jesus said to the Pharisees, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?” (Mt. 15:3) In other words, Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees that they had broken God's commandments in order to keep the traditions of the elders. From this fact, we can say that the Pharisees, who were legalists, didn't strictly obey God's law, but that they strictly obeyed man-made laws. Another thing we can know about the Pharisees who were legalists through the words of Jesus is that Jesus referred to them as “hypocrites” (7:5, 15:7, Luke 6:42, 12:56, etc). For example, in Matthew 23:27, the Bible says, “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.” The Pharisees, who were legalists in

the eyes of Jesus, were hypocrites. They looked beautiful on the outside like whitewashed tombs, but inside were full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. The apostle Paul said in Acts 23:3 – "... God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!" Indeed, the Pharisees boasted of the law (Rom. 2:23), and while teaching others, they didn't teach themselves (v. 21). For example, they were stealing even though they preached against stealing (v. 21). So we are bound to have negative thoughts about the "legalists" Pharisees. Maybe that's why we don't even have very positive thoughts about the law. In particular, when it comes to "law," we may think that we don't have to obey the law since the law is from the age of the Old Covenant and we are now living in the New Covenant. For example, since we think that in the New Testament, Jesus replaced the Moses' ten commandments with His twofold command, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Lk. 10:27), we tend to not value Moses' ten commandments any longer and only try to keep Jesus' twofold command. However, this is an out of balance misconception. We must obey both Moses' 10 commandments and Jesus' twofold command. Of course, I am not saying that all the laws in the Old Testament must be obeyed even now. While there are laws to be observed now (continuity), there are laws that no longer need to be observed (discontinuity). For example, even though we should still thoroughly obey the law such as the Ten Commandments, but there are such laws like a food law in the Old Testament that we no longer need to observe. One thing we must point out is the 'function of the law'. Calvin said there are three functions of the law: (1) The function of the law is to serve as a reminder of sin. (2) The law, together with our conscience, serves to prevent people from becoming terribly corrupt. (3) It is to tell God's will how those saved by faith can please God (Internet).

Look at Proverbs 28:7 – "He who keeps the law is a discerning son, but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father." What does it mean? First, "a discerning son" mentioned here refers to the one who fears God. How to know it is because in the first half of Proverbs 1:7 the Bible says that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (here "knowledge" refers to "wisdom"). And the wise man who fears God in this way isn't companion with gluttons who is disgraces to his father (28:7). Here, "gluttons" refers to a person who is prodigal man who squanders his wealth in wild living like the prodigal son of the second son in the third parable that Jesus spoke of in Luke 15 (Prov. 23:20-21) (Park). The reason why the wise man who fears God doesn't associate with a man who squanders his wealth in wild living is because he hates evil. In a word, because the wise man knows that fearing God is hating evil (8:13), he doesn't associate with a prodigal man who squanders his wealth. This is what the Bible Proverbs 3:7 says: "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil." And this is what Job 28:28 says: "And he said to man, 'The fear of the Lord--that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.'" Therefore, the wise son, which is spoken of in Proverbs 28:7, not only isn't companion of gluttons who squanders his wealth but also leave him.

So how can we attain this heavenly wisdom? Of course, we must first hold onto the promise of James 1:5

and ask God for wisdom. Look at James 1:5 – “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.” When we feel more thoroughly that we lack wisdom in ourselves, we should continue to seek wisdom from God, who gives generously to us without finding fault. But we shouldn't stop here. What should we do? We must obey the law [“He who keeps the law” (Prov. 28:7a)]. In other words, we don't end by asking God for wisdom, but we must keep and obey God's law. The reason is so that we will become wise. So Moses told the Israelites at the time of the Exodus, “Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people’” (Deut. 4:6) According to this word, we must observe the law carefully. Then the people of the world will say ‘Surely these Christians is wise and understanding people.’ Then Moses went to the next verse, Deuteronomy 4:7 and said, “What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him?” When I think of these two verses (Deut. 4:6, 7), I again confirm that what is important to God's people is obedience and prayer. And when it comes to wisdom, I learn once again that I must not only ask God for wisdom, but also keep the His word. Those who become wise by obeying the law in this way fear God and resist the wicked. Look at Proverbs 28:4 – “Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but those who keep the law resist them.” How can those who keep the law praise the wicked? How can those who keep the law praise those who do evil by violating the law of God? The Bible says clearly that those who keep the law are against the wicked. What could be the reason? This is because the wise man who keeps the law understands “justice” (Prov. 28:5). In other words, the wise man who seeks God (v. 5) and keeps the law (v. 7) opposes the wicked because he understands justice that the wicked don't understand (v. 5). That is, the wise man who fears God do justice. He who seeks God understands and knows that he who keeps the law is wise. And because the wise man fears God he hates evil and opposes the wicked. Hence, the wise Christian who keeps the law isn't companion of those who squander their wealth in wild life (v. 7). The reason is because the wise man knows that it is disgrace to Heavenly Father (v. 7).

I personally have the joy that God gives me by grace. The joy is reading the Bible, meditating on the word of God, and the Holy Spirit gives me valuable understandings. However, the problem is that the joy I enjoy by obeying the word I have come to understand is far less than the joy I enjoy by understanding the word. We meditated on the four things that those who seek God understand under the heading “What the seekers of God understand” based on the words of Proverbs 28:1-7: (1) They understand that the righteous are bold. (2) They understand that with an understanding and knowledgeable leader, the nation will maintain order for a long time. (3) They understand that it is better to act faithfully, even in poverty, than to be a rich man whose ways are perverse. (4) They understand is that he who keeps the law is a wise man.

## The man who always fear the Lord

### [Proverbs 28:8-14]

The Bible says “Blessed are all who fear the Lord” (Ps. 128:1). As we continue to meditate on the words of Proverbs, we have meditated on the fear of God many times. To that extent, the Book of the Proverbs consistently and repeatedly says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (1:7). As we reexam those repetitive words that we have already meditated on, I would like to review two things here:

First, I want to review some of what it means to fear God. “The fear of the Lord is a state of mind in which one’s own attitudes, will, feelings, deeds, and goals are exchanged for God’s (MacArthur). Therefore, those who fear God are Lord-centered and not self-centered at all. Those who fear God never seek their will, only the will of the Lord. He embraces the heart of the Lord, imitates the Lord's thoughts, the Lord's feelings, the Lord's attitude and will, and the Lord's actions, and lives a life that only fulfills the Lord's will. Therefore, Dr. Yoon-sun Park said five things about how a person who fears God lives a life of faith: (1) He fears God in order not to commit sins while doing ordinary things. (2) He lives reverently in secret, being awoken and praying. (3) He doesn’t commit a sin in his heart. (4) He is afraid and careful that he would not leave the Lord in time of peace. (5) In times of difficult, he doesn’t rush to avoid it and keep his loyalty.

Then, I would like to review some of the life of a God-fearing man as spoken in the Bible: (1) We have already learned three lessons about God-fearing young people, based on Proverbs 1:8-19: (a) The young people who fear God obey their parents’ words (v. 8). (b) The young people who fear God don’t consent if sinners entice them (v. 10). (c) The young people who fear God don’t walk in the way with the wicked (v. 15). (2) We have already learned two lessons about the citizen of a country who fears God, based on the words of Proverbs 24:21-26: (a) The citizen who fears God fears his president (v. 21a). (b) The citizen who fears God doesn’t join with the rebellious (v. 21b). (3) I have been taught three things about what those who fear God should do, based on the words of Ecclesiastes 5:1-7: (a) Those who fear God obey God's Word (v. 1). (b) Those who fear God pray to God immediately (v. 2). (c) Those who fear God fulfill their vows that they made to God (v. 4). (4) I have been taught four things about what God-fearing people do, based on Psalms 34:8-14: (a) Those who fear God take refuge in the Lord (v. 8). (b) Those who fear God lack nothing (vv. 9-10). (c) Those who fear God will see good (v. 12). (d) Those who fear God depart from evil and do good (v. 14). (5) I have been taught three things about the blessings of those who fear God, based on the words of Psalms 128: (a) God blesses the industry of those who fear Him (v. 2). (b) God blesses the families of those who fear Him (v. 3). (c) God blesses the church, a group of those who fear

Him (v. 5).

If we look at Proverbs 28:14, the Bible says “Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.” Looking at this word, the Bible says that “Blessed is the man who always fears the Lord”. Who is the one who fears the Lord the Bible speaks of here? In order to answer this question, we should look at verse 13: “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” Looking at this word, the Bible says that those who fear the Lord are those who confess their sins and renounce them. Those who fear Him do this because they hate evil (8:13). Therefore, those who fear God confess their sins immediately when the Holy Spirit convicts them of their sins against the holy God. And they renounce their sins they acknowledged. Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘The word ‘to confess’ means ‘to acknowledge’. And renouncing their sins is the fruit of repentance. Repentance without fruit is useless. But renouncing sins doesn’t take place until the point of hating sin’ (Park). Those who fear God hate sin. Therefore, they not only acknowledge and confess their sins, but also renounce them by repentance. They do this because they know that “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy” (28:13).

But our nature is to hide our sins. That's why we deny when our sin is caught, rather than admit it immediately. The reason why we are denying our sins is because we hardened our hearts that much (v. 14). When we harden our hearts in this way, we don’t listen to God's word (Exod. 7:13). And unless we stubbornly listen to the Word of God, then our conscience cannot be pierced by the sword of the Holy Spirit, His word. As a result, we cannot confess (acknowledge) our sins. Therefore, we neither repent nor can we repent of our sins. After all, the harden heart is a heart that doesn’t repent (Rom. 2:5). Then, when someone comes up with evidence of our sins, only then we acknowledge and confess our sins. The reason is because we can no longer conceal our sins and deny them any more. Yet, our hearts may be hardened, and we may not know our shame and have no sign of repentance for our sins with a brazen face. And we can even accept the consequences of our sins by not caring at all. That is why in the second half of Proverbs 28:14 the Bible says, “... but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.”

Then, what kind of sin will a blessed man who fears the Lord confesses, repents, and forsakes? What kind of sin should we confess, repent and forsake? I would like to receive a lesson by meditating five things, focusing on the words of Proverbs 28:8-14.

**First, those who always fear the Lord confess, repent and forsake the sin of not being merciful to the poor. That means that those who fear the Lord have mercy on the poor.**

What do you think of when you think of “interest”? When I say “interest”, there are two things that come to mind. The first thing that comes to my mind is that when I was in college, the country gave me a loan, and the

interest on that loan was cheaper compared to the interest on the money loaned by the bank. I remember that at that time, the interest of the bank loan was about 8% or 10% while the interest of the loan by the country was 4%. And it seems that the loaned money was paid off once every three months instead of every month six months after I graduated. So, the money that the country loaned to me was of great help. Another thing that reminds me of “interest” is that I and my wife has been using a bank for a long time, and I remember how much I deposited into a savings account before. But it didn't really help us because the interest was very small. The interest was so low that no matter how long we keep the money in the savings account, there is not much profit.

Look at Proverbs 28:8 – “He who increases his wealth by exorbitant interest amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor.” This word speaks about a man who increases his wealth by exorbitant interest or expensive interest. If we look at this from a modern man's point of view, we might ask what is wrong with increasing one's wealth by receiving a high interest rate. In fact, these days, when we borrow money from a bank to buy a house, the interest rate is 4.0% for a 30-year loan and 3.625% for a 15-year loan (Internet). Mostly people want to get a 15-year mortgage loan with a low mortgage interest rate. But the amount paid each month is a burden on the size. So it seems they change to a 30-year loan. Internet news tells us that after the US presidential election, the US mortgage interest rate has skyrocketed. It is said to have increased by about 0.5 percentage points, which means that if you buy a \$400,000 home on a mortgage loan, your interest burden will increase by about \$700 per year (Internet). After all, the banks give their customers mortgage loans, so don't they increase their income by receiving interest? No one will ever say that it is wrong. However, in Proverbs 28:8, the Bible has a negative meaning for acquiring high interest to increase one's wealth. It seems that in that Old Testament time, something was wrong with receiving high interest in the Jewish people's point of view. In fact, at that time, Israeli society wasn't allowed to receive interest after lending money to fellow poor Jews (Park). Look at Exodus 22:25 – “If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not be like a moneylender; charge him no interest.” Look at Deuteronomy 22:19-20: “They shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver and give them to the girl's father, because this man has given an Israelite virgin a bad name. She shall continue to be his wife; he must not divorce her as long as he lives. If, however, the charge is true and no proof of the girl's virginity can be found.” Looking at these words, the Bible says that even though the Israelites at the time of the Exodus can receive interest from foreigners, if they lend money to the poor among their own people, they must not receive interest. Then God promised that if they entered the land of Canaan and occupied it, He would bless all things. Interestingly, according to the Hammurabi's Code, an ancient Babylonian code promulgated by King Hammurabi, who ruled Babylon between 1792 and 1750 B.C., there is ample evidence that if the Israelites lent money to foreigners, they earned interest as high as 20% ( IVP Background Commentary). And at that time, it was said that for the Israelites, one method of building up other people's wealth through the money loan business was inappropriate. The reason for this is because lending money at that time was aimed at helping a difficult person economically among the same people, but not using that person's financial strength (note IVP Background).



So why did God give the Israelites this command? Why did God tell them not to accept interest after lending money to the poor of their own people? The reason is because God loves the poor and has mercy on them (Prov. 28:8). Look at Psalms 72:13 – “He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death.” God, who has mercy on the poor and the needy, made a promise to the Israelites in Proverbs 19:17 – “He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done.” In addition, the Bible says that those who is kind to the needy honor God, but those who oppress the poor shows contempt for their Maker (14:31). What the Bible teaches us in Proverbs 28:8 is that he who increases his wealth amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor. In other words, the Israelites who violate God's command and increase their wealth by receiving high interest from their own people are punished by God and eventually will return their increased wealth to the Canaanites whom God loves and has mercy. A similar word of this is found in the second half of Proverbs 13:22 - “... but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.” Also, look at Job 27:16-17: “Though he heaps up silver like dust and clothes like piles of clay, what he lays up the righteous will wear, and the innocent will divide his silver.” Look at Ecclesiastes 2:26 – “To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.” In the end, even though the wicked get their wealth in an unrighteous way, God gives the wicked's wealth to the righteous.

What are the lessons we need to learn here? There are many lessons. For example, we Christians should not increase our wealth in an unrighteous way, even as we violate God's word. Even if we increase our wealth in that way, what we must keep in mind is that in the end, God makes the wealth we collect in an unrighteous way return to the poor. Along with these lessons, the lesson we must learn is that Christians who always fear God should confess and repent of their sins if they didn't show mercy to the poor. As God-fearing ones, we should also have mercy of the poor people on whom God has mercy.

**Second, those who always fear the Lord don't listen to God's word and confess and repent of their abominable prayer to God. That means that those who fear God pray to God while listening to God.**

Are you receiving answers to your prayers from God? Have you ever thought that God's answered of your prayer was slow? Pastor Iain M. Duguid is telling us that the slower our prayers are answered, the more Satan will come to us from time to time and continue to offer a suggestion. And the suggestion is a 'deceptive shortcut. At that time, we must choose one of the two: (1) Whether we receive answers to prayer in God's time by continually to pray and expect and wait for God with faith, or (2) Rather than praying and waiting for what you want from God, you can choose the shortcut Satan shows and get it quickly. But if we choose the second path, it is said that the consequences of that choice could be painful not only for us, but also for our descendants, beyond our imagination. Pastor Duguid's counsel is that the more the answer to our prayer is slow, the stronger God will build our faith. And

when we receive answer to our prayer, we will see God's hand (presence) more and more clearly (Duguid). Pastor Martin Lloyd-Jones in his book "From Fear to Faith" said: 'If God had heard our prayers all at once and the way we wanted to, we would have become very poor Christians. Fortunately, however, God sometimes delays answers to deal with egoism and so on, which should not be in our lives' (Lloyd-Jones). Don't you think this makes sense? Wouldn't we have become very poor Christians if God would answer our prayers as we want at once? If the slowness in answering prayers is to deal with our selfishness, shouldn't we be grateful to God for delaying answering our prayers?

Look at Proverbs 28:9 – "If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable." Looking at this word, the Bible says that in God's sight, a detestable prayer is a prayer we offer to God without turning our ears and listening to His law (His word). Here, Dr. Park said that the meaning of turning a deaf ear when God speaks is disobedience with the psychology of treason, and it isn't a temporary mistake, but a deliberate sin (Park). If a rebellious adolescent child turns his back on his father and deliberately refuses to listen to his father despite his father speaking, but ask his father for help when he needs it, what would you do if you are that father? At that time, if we accept the request of a child who is rebellious and turns his deaf ears to us, is it really for him or is it for us to help him? I don't think it's for our children, but for ourselves. Of course, we may think and say that we are doing it for our children. But in reality it does not help to raise our children to be obedient children, but rather to help him to become more and more disobedient child who turns his deaf ears to his father. In the Bible, Zechariah 7:11-12, it is said that the Israelites turned their backs because they didn't like to hear the word of God: "But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and stopped up their ears. They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD Almighty was very angry." The Israelites didn't like to hear the word of God. So they turned their backs, closed their ears, and made their hearts as flint. Therefore, God was angry with them and told the Israelites: "When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen, ..." (v. 13). And God scattered the Israelites who turned their backs against God's word all over the world to live in foreign lands. Since then, the land where they used to live had been desolate so that no one could come and go. God made their pleasant land desolate (v. 14).

The Israelites turned their backs to God and not their faces. Even though God taught them again and again, they didn't listen to God and didn't respond to discipline (Jere. 32:33). And when they are in need or in need they cried out to God. How can God hear their abominable prayers and answer them? That is why God show them His back and not His face to the Israelites who didn't listen to His words and turned their faces (18:17), and didn't listen to them (Zec. 7:13). Furthermore, God commanded the prophet Jeremiah not to pray for the Israelites who offer such abominable prayers. Look at Jeremiah 7:16 – "So do not pray for this people nor offer any plea or petition for them; do not plead with me, for I will not listen to you." Also, look at Jeremiah 11:14 – "Do not pray for this people nor offer any plea or petition for them, because I will not listen when they call to me in the time of their distress."

Based on James 2:26 "... faith without deeds is dead", we learned that faith without works is dead faith. If we say this in opposite way, 'faith with works is living faith.' When I think of this living faith, I think that even our prayer without deeds is dead. In other words, our prayers must also have works. Only then I think that prayer is a living prayer. To put this thought more specifically, it means that living prayer also includes our responsibility. I think the idea that if we pray unconditionally, God must answer our prayer is a twisted thought that is out of balance. When it comes to prayer, our responsibility is to say the right prayer to God. For example, if we pray to God and say, "Lord, Lord," but don't obey His word, then the Lord will say: "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Lk. 6:26) Jesus' teaching is that we should not say "Lord, Lord" in words, but do the will of His Father who is in heaven (Mt. 7:21).

The prayer that God hears is a prayer that we offer while listening to His word and obeying it. But if we disobey His word and cherish sin in our hearts, the the Lord will not listen to our prayers (Ps. 66:18). Therefore, we who always fear God hate evil and confess and repent our sin. We repent before God by acknowledging our sin of detestable prayer offered to God without listening to and obeying His word. And we turn from sin, listen to God's word, and obey it. May we all become those who fear God.

**Third, those who always fear the Lord confess, repent and throw away their unfaithfulness. That means that those who fear God are upright and blameless.**

There is a book title that I cannot forget when I think about "integrity". The title of the book is "The Integrity Crisis" written by Pastor Warren W. Wiersbe. What is "integrity"? According to the Oxford English Dictionary, this word comes from the Latin word "integritas", meaning 'complete', 'whole' and 'perfect'. The root is "integr", meaning 'complete', 'undamaged', and 'as it is' (Internet). In that book, the author says that the people with integrity have nothing to hide and nothing to fear. He says that their lives are like an open book (Internet). It is that they live a transparent life. But hypocritical people hide, wrap and decorate the things that are inside them. In other words, they deceive others and tell lies. In particular, the hypocritical people, even when they come to church to cover up their sins, pretend to be holy, worship and pray, praise, serve, and love and so on. People who are hypocritical aren't transparent. In his book "Victory in the Wilderness," John Bevere said: 'You will become more transparent after you have been tested and refined. The transparent vessel doesn't represent its own glory, but what is contained within' (Bevere). I think it makes sense. We need to be transparent even through trials, tests and refinement. The reason is because our hypocritical appearances must be purified and restored to our honest appearance even through the refinement. I personally think that our beliefs or the churches aren't pure. That means that we are contaminated with impure things in the world. Hypocrisy is the symptom of our faith and church losing our purity. Our outside and inside are different. Life in and outside the church is inconsistent. We are so conscious of people that we are pretending to look like people who believe in Jesus. The church tries to look like a real church by putting too thick cover even though it isn't real church. So the smell of rotten still vibrates. The church tries to

spray the perfume to cover up the rotten smell, but it only smells rarer. It seems that we cannot hide this rotten smell. So our neighbors hate us. They hate our smell. They hate our hypocrisy. And they even criticize and loathe us. Nevertheless, we, the church, try to appear holy before them. These are sins that can no longer be hidden.

We aren't honest with God and the people of the world. The church faced the integrity crisis. The church must be transparent. In order to do so, we must first put down all of our shells and packaging in front of God. We should no longer be in a hurry in trying to hide with cover up and packaging. By relying on the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross, we must repent our sins. We must turn around and be honest and truthful before God and people. In the midst of that, the church must be transparent and reveal the glory of Jesus who dwells within us in this dark world. The church must show the world how sinners are living by the grace of God. We must show the world how sinners are being saved by believing in Jesus by God's grace and resembling the character of Jesus. Even in the smell of rotting, we must reveal the aroma of Jesus stronger into this world so that the world will see the glory of Jesus and glorify God. In order for the church to become transparent, we must be trained through suffering that God allows. God allows us to suffer in order to make us to come out like pure gold. These afflictions we face are the fierce fire that separates the valuable things from the worthless things. The church must throw away the worthless things through suffering and choose the things that are valuable. And for those valuable things, the church must exist. By no means should the church be glorified for the worthless things. The reason is because the church must reveal the glory of the Lord. The purpose of the church is to show the glory of the Lord as the head of the church. In order to do so, we must be purified while passing through the wilderness, just like the Israelites. The church must restore its purity and transparency. Therefore, Jesus, who dwells among us, shines light on this dark world.

Look at Proverbs 28:10 – “He who leads the upright along an evil path will fall into his own trap, but the blameless will receive a good inheritance.” Here, we can see that the Proverbs writer is contrasting the two: “He who leads the upright along an evil path” and “the blameless”.

First of all, what kind of person is the one who leads the upright along an evil path that the Proverbs writer is referring to? Many times as I watched Korean news, I saw the news that kidnappers lured young children into kidnapping. How would they lure young children? Obviously, they would have aroused the interest of young children and made them fall for it. To give an easy example, it's easy for me to lure my dog, Luna. All I have to do is to feed her with her food. Then, no matter how much Luna is with her favorite person in my house, she follows me.

In Genesis 3, there is a scene where the craftiest of wild animals (v. 1) lures a woman. How did the serpent lure her to make her to violate the command of God and commit sin by eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil? I thought about three things:

- (1) The serpent tried to make the woman question God's word.

The serpent asked the woman: "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" (v. 1) Didn't the serpent know that God said to Adam, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden" (2:16)? I think Satan already knew that word of God. What the serpent intended here was not "any tree in the garden" of Eden, but rather "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (v. 17).

(2) The serpent lied to the woman.

When asked by the serpent, the woman said to the serpent: "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die'" (3:2-3). Although God said to Adam, "you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (2:17), he didn't say "you must not touch it" as the woman answered the serpent (3:3). Then what did the serpent say to the woman? Look at Genesis 3:4-5: "'You will not surely die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" This was a lie. Obviously, God told Adam "for when you eat of it you will surely die" (2:17). But the serpent lied to the woman, saying, "You will not surely die" (3:4).

(3) The serpent not only stimulated the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the boasting pride of life, and eventually made her to disobey the command of God and commit the sin of eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but also made her husband Adam to commit the same sin through her.

Look at Genesis 3:6 – "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it." Whenever I think of this word, I think of 1 John 2:16 – "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world." Satan enticed the woman with these three things – "the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life" – and made her look at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and made her to commit sin of eating the fruit from that tree by making her that the fruit was good for food, pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom. And Satan also made her sin against God because she gave her husband Adam the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and he ate it too. If we look at Judges 14 and 16, we see the story of Samson. When I read the story, I see Samson being enticed by women twice.

(a) First, as Samson's first wife, Samson went down to Timnah, saw there a young Philistine woman (v. 1), and liked her (v. 3). So he asked his parents to "get her for me as my wife" (vv. 2, 3). So Samson's

father went down to Timnah to see the woman, where Samson a feast there and told his 30 companions a riddle (vv. 10-12). But the 30 friends couldn't solve Samson's riddle, so on the fourth day he told Samson's wife: "Coax your husband into explaining the riddle for us, or we will burn you and your father's household to death. Did you invite us here to rob us?" (v. 15) Therefore, the Samson's wife cried the whole seven days of the feast and continued to press Samson. Samson couldn't stand it, and on the seventh day, he finally told her the answer to the riddle (v. 17).

- (b) Second, Samson's third woman, a woman named Delilah (16:4), received 1,100 silver coins each from the rulers of the five Philistines to find out how they could overpower Samson so that they could tie him up and subdue him (v. 5). So Delilah told Samson, "Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued" (v. 6) and Samson lied to her three times: (1) "If anyone ties me with seven fresh things that have not been dried, I'll become as weak as any other man" (v. 7), (2) "If anyone ties me securely with new ropes that have never been used, I'll become as weak as any other man" (v. 11), (3) "Until now, you have been making a fool of me and lying to me. Tell me how you can be tied" (v. 13). After Samson lied three times, Delilah said to Samson, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength" (v. 15). "With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was tired to death" (v. 16). "So he told her everything. 'No razor has ever been used on my head,' he said, 'because I have been a Nazirite set apart to God since birth. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man'" (v. 17).

When I meditated on these words, I thought a little bit more about how Samson fell into Delilah's temptation: (1) First of all, Samson didn't know who was behind Delilah. He didn't know that the five rulers of the Philistines bribed Delilah to find out the secret of Samson's great strength and how they could overpower him so that they might tie him up and subdue him. (2) And as Samson lied to Delilah three times and went to the third lie and talked about his hair, more and more we could see that Samson was getting closer to his hair which was the source of his great strength. (3) Then when I see that Samson was tired to death due to Delilah's nagging day after day, I remember Potiphar's wife seduced Joseph day after day. Although Joseph didn't listen to her and refused to go to bed with her or even be with her (Gen. 39:10), Samson not only told Delilah everything, but also slept on her lap (Judg. 16:17, 19). Isn't this 'Please eat me' when he slept on her lap after telling her that if his head were shaved then her strength would leave him? Satan enticed the first woman of mankind and her husband, Adam, to sin against God. Also, Satan used the woman to seduce the Nazirite, Judge Samson, to sin against God. Even now, Satan lures us, the Christians, who have been justified by believing in Jesus and makes us to sin against God. In particular, Satan lures us to sin against God by stimulating the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life.

Then, what kind of person is "the blameless" that the Proverbs writer is talking about in the second half of

Proverbs 28:10? The blameless person is the upright person. Such a person has “the honest lips”, speaks “the truth” (16:13) and his ways are upright (Mic. 2:7). The reason why the upright man speaks honesty with his honest lips and act honestly is because he loves righteous just as “the Lord is righteous” and He loves justice (Ps. 11:7). A good example is the man named Job in the book of Job. He was “blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil (Job 1:1, 8). Therefore, even though he lost 10 children and lost his wealth, he not only “fell to the ground in worship” (v. 20), but also didn’t “sin by charging God with wrongdoing” (v. 22). This upright man, the man of integrity, the blameless “will receive a good inheritance” (Prov. 28:10). What are the blessings of the man of integrity? The upright Job's blessings can be thought of in two ways: (1) First, in Job's later years, God blessed Job more than he had in the beginning, giving him 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 donkeys (Job 42:12). In addition, God gave Job the blessing of children and gave him 7 sons and 3 daughters as gifts (v. 13). The Bible says, “Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters” (v. 15). (2) But I think this is the word that Job received more blessing from God than this blessing: “My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you” (v. 5). Job experienced God's presence in his life, whom he heard only with his ears. I think that this spiritual blessing that Job received from God is a greater blessing than the blessing of his children and the wealth that he received. However, in Proverbs 28:10, I think the blessing that the upright (the blameless) man receives from God is ‘the blessing of being deliverance.’ The reason I think so is because the Bible Proverbs 28:10a says, “He who leads the upright along an evil path will fall into his own trap ....” What does it mean? The wicked man creates a trap to lure the righteous to the evil path. But in the end, the wicked man himself falls into the trap he has made. Look at these verses: (26:27) “If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it ...,” “Whoever digs a pit may fall into it ...” (Eccle. 10:8). How is this possible? How can the wicked fall into the trap created by the wicked to entice the upright? The reason is because God blesses the upright and rescues him from the traps created by the wicked. This is the blessing of deliverance.

Those who always fear God are upright and blameless. On his lips he speaks of righteousness, and all his actions are also upright. We who believe in Jesus must be upright and blameless. But Satan continues to entice us to the wicked path. And Satan puts traps in our path. The reason is because Satan makes us sin against God. Satan wants us to be unfaithful to God, to make us disobey to His word, and eventually to act unrighteousness. If we fall into this satanic inducement operation and is unfaithful to God, we must confess and repent the sin of our unfaithfulness. And we must act with integrity and honesty. The reason is because he who always fear God are upright and blameless.

**Fourth, those who always fear the Lord confess, repent, and throw away the sin of being wise in their own eyes. That means that those who fear God will thoroughly examine themselves.**

Why do some rich people consider themselves wise? I looked for the answer in the first half of

Deuteronomy 8:17-18a: “You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me. But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth ....’” That is, because the rich who consider themselves wise think that they have acquired wealth through their own strength and abilities. If we say this in opposite way, they are wise in their own eyes because they have forgotten that God has given them the ability to produce wealth. The Bible Proverbs 26:12 says about the rich who consider themselves wise in this way: “Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.” The Bible says that there is hope for a fool rather than a man wise in his own eyes. It means that he who considers himself wise has no more hope than the fool. That’s why Proverbs 3:7 says, “Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.” If we rely on our own understanding, eventually we will be wise in our own eyes. Particularly, if the rich manage their work by relying on their own understanding and the work they were managing goes well, they may be mistaken that the work is well done because they are wise. The rich, who rely on their understanding in this way, consider themselves wise. And the reason why they consider themselves wise in this way is evil in the sight of God, and the reason why they cannot leave that evil is because they don’t fear God. In other words, the rich who consider themselves wise don’t fear God.

If we all don’t fear God, we have no choice but to commit the sin of regarding ourselves as wise. Therefore, we must learn to fear God. How is this possible? Look at Deuteronomy 17:19 – “It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees.” In order for us to learn to fear God, we must put the Bible near us and read it all the days of our lives. Not only that, we must obey the words we read and keep them. Then God will teach us to fear Him. And we will not consider ourselves wise. Also, we will not consider ourselves better than our brothers and sisters in Christ. Because we fear God, we will not put our heart on high, but rather low, so we will humbly serve the Lord and our neighbors.

Look at Proverbs 28:11 – “A rich man may be wise in his own eyes, but a poor man who has discernment sees through him.” The lesson this word teaches us is that rather than being rich who consider themselves wise, we must become discreet poor who take a close look at ourselves. What this word teaches us is that a discerning man takes a thorough examination of himself. One of the great graces of God in my life is to allow God’s word to reflect on myself, that is, self-reflecting and self-examination. In particular, I seem to have been influenced by the words of James 2:23-24: “Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.” The grace I received through this word was that I should cultivate the habit of using God’s word as my spiritual mirror and reflecting my inner person on His word. Also, the influence I received was from a survey by pastor and sociologist Tony Campolo to elderly people over 90 years old. When I look at the content of the survey, Pastor Tony Campolo asked the elders, ‘What would you do harder if you were born again?’ I was challenged by the fact that one of the top 3 answers was “self-reflection”.



We must thoroughly examine ourselves in the light of God's word. And the point we must strive for is to diligently teach ourselves by His word. Look at Romans 2:21a – “you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? ...” The reason the apostle Paul gave this word to the saints of the Roman church is that he didn't want the Jews saints to be like the Pharisees who didn't teach themselves by the word of God, but rather they lived in disobedience to His word and liked to teach others. Had they not listened to Paul's counsel and, like the Pharisees, liked to teach others, but not themselves, the Jewish saints in the Roman church would have regarded themselves wisely before the Gentile saints, and were proud before them.

We must not be proud. We shouldn't even consider ourselves wise. It's very dangerous to believe in ourselves that we are wise. The reason is because we will not be taught by the word of God nor can we do so. Anyone who always fears God will realize his sin, confess, and repent his sin of being wise in his own eyes. And he humbles himself and examines himself thoroughly. May we all become the wise Christians.

**Fifth and last, those who always fear the Lord confess and repent and forsake the sin of rejoicing when the wicked rise to power. That means that those who fear God rejoice when the righteous triumph.**

Pastor Lloyd Jones said in his book “Life in the Spirit” about parents who abuse power: ‘Parents who abuse power force young children to have their own personality and ignore the character of young children. Parents of that kind demand and expect everything from their children. It is mainly called possessive’ (Jones). I think a child who grows up under the parent who abuses the power to control their child with this possessive desire is also psychologically conditioned. In a way, I think that the child grows up with a mental disability. After all, the child who grows up with an unhealthy mind is more likely to not be able to play an adult role well even later in adulthood. So, my personal opinion is that the parents should be very wary of abuse of that authority in raising their children with the divine authority given by God. They must respect their child's personality and be careful about forcing the child. They should not demand their child with too much expectation. I think this is the same for the church as well as the home. Even in the church, if the pastor abuses his power, he will surely sin against God. Not only that, but the pastor who abuses power will inevitably cause the members of the church to suffer. Then the congregation will have no choice but to avoid the pastor and go further to leave the pastor. In particular, the associate pastors will do more. How can they work with the senior pastor who ignores their personality and is forcing them to work by asking for everything from them? They will not last long. So what about a country? What will happen to the country when the wicked take power? What do we need to see far, look at North Korea. The dictator abuses power and does whatever he wants to. How much suffering must the citizens of that country suffer? What joy and pleasure can the citizens of that country live with?

Look at Proverbs 28:12 – “When the righteous triumph, there is great elation; but when the wicked rise to

power, men go into hiding.” Here the Proverbs writer contrasts the righteous with the wicked. First, the meaning of the word about the righteous is that the righteous are happy because God uses the righteous. And the reason is because God gives great grace and blessing to the righteous (Park). In particular, when God makes the leaders of a nation the righteous and allows them to rule the nation, the citizens are bound to rejoice because there is order and justice in that nation (Walvoord).

What is the joy of being justified by believing in Jesus by God's grace? Isn't it the fact that God is using us? God is not only giving us great grace to help us at time of need, but also giving us great blessings to us who are used by God. Isn't this our joy? I remember the lyric verse 1 of the Korean hymn “My Life Flows Rich in Love and Grace”: “My life flows rich in love and grace By Christ in mercy offer'd, Who anguish bore, and took my place, When on the cross He suffer'd. His precious blood He Shed to free, From sin and all its stinging, Death destin'd sinners such as we! How can I keep from sing-ing?” Our joy is the Lord. When we are used by the Lord, we cannot but rejoice. How can we not be happy when the Lord uses us and gives us the grace we needed at the time of our need? Look at Proverbs 11:10a – “When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices; ...” However, when the wicked arise, that is, when the wicked rise to power, people will go into hiding (28:12, 28). The reason is because the wicked who hold power are arrogant and oppress the people (Park). So Proverbs 29:2 says, “When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan.” In fact, how much the people of countries like North Korea and Syria are lamenting where the wicked take power now?

Therefore, we must pray for the leaders of our country. We must pray that God will raise up the righteous as leaders in our country. Then the citizens will be able to rejoice. I think the same goes for home and church. When the Lord raises the family heads and church leaders as righteous people, the family and church members will be able to rejoice because there is order and justice in that family and that church. Look at Proverbs 14:34 – “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.” I hope and pray that the Lord will raise up the righteous as leaders of our country so that our country will be glorified. I hope and pray that the citizens will never be ashamed because they become leaders who sin.

The Bible says that “Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD ...” (Prov. 28:14). The Christians who always fear God are those who confess and forsake their sins (v. 13). We have meditated on 5 sins that those who always fear God confess, repent and forsake, based on Proverbs 28:8-14: (1) Those who always fear the Lord confess, repent and forsake the sin of not being merciful to the poor (v. 8). That means that those who fear the Lord have mercy on the poor. (2) Those who always fear the Lord don't listen to God's word and confess and repent of their abominable prayer to God (v. 9). That means that those who fear God pray to God while listening to God. (3) Those who always fear the Lord confess, repent and throw away their unfaithfulness (v. 10). That means that those who fear God are upright and blameless. (4) Those who always fear the Lord confess, repent, and throw away the sin of being wise in their own eyes (v. 11). That means that those who fear God will thoroughly examine

themselves. (5) Those who always fear the Lord confess and repent and forsake the sin of rejoicing when the wicked rise to power (v. 12). That means that those who fear God rejoice when the righteous triumph. May we all be raised up as Christians who always fear God.

## **We shouldn't be this kind of person.**

### **[Proverbs 28:15-20]**

The news I saw last week was that the president of this country affirmed that football players didn't pay respect to the American flag and made an undesirable comment about them, so not only many football athletes, but also their team owners protested in public. In the midst of seeing it, I sympathized a bit with what one famous football player interviewed. What the player said was that the president's remarks were "divisive", that is, to cause division. I agree with him. I don't really understand how the president of the country made the speech with a cuss word in public gatherings with so many people and media reporters with the divisive remark, rather than uniting the citizens.

Personally, I think leaders are very important. I think the husband/father who is the leader of a family is very important. The pastor who is the leader of a church is very important. And the president who is the leader of a country is very important. Especially, I think it is very important that the leader is a wise leader. I think it would be a great blessing if the wise leader who fears God leads that family, church, and country. In the past, we have meditated in five ways under the title of "A wise king" based on Proverbs 20:26-30. As a review, I would like to meditate again briefly and pray for the wise president, the wise pastor, and the wise family head: (1) The wise king discerns and separates the good from the wicked and punishes the wicked (v. 26). (2) The wise king conscientiously rules the kingdom before God (v. 27). (3) The wise king protects himself with love and faithfulness (v. 28). (4) The wise king has strength and wisdom (v. 29). (5) The wise king disciplines (v. 30).

I would like to receive a lesson from Proverbs 28:15-20 as we meditate on five things we should not become under the heading "We shouldn't be this kind of person."

### **First, we shouldn't be fools who love greed.**

Look at Proverbs 28:15-16: "Like a roaring lion and a rushing bear Is a wicked ruler over a poor people. A leader who is a great oppressor lacks understanding, But he who hates unjust gain will prolong his days." Looking at this word, the Bible speaks of "a wicked man ruling over" (v. 15) and "an ignorance ruler" (a foolish ruler). The Bible tells us that this leader is "Like a roaring lion or a charging bear" by violating and oppressing the poor and helpless people (v. 15). Imagine "a roaring lion and a charging bear." Why does the lion roar? The reason is because the lion is hungry and look for something to eat (Park). What if we meet the hungry bear or the lion when

we go camping in the mountains? How terrifying is this situation? In Proverbs 17:12, the Bible says, “Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly.” What will happen to us when we meet a female bear whose cub was taken away? The Bible Hosea 13:8 says, “Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and rip them open. Like a lion I will devour them; a wild animal will tear them apart.” What a terrifying word of God? How terrifying is this saying that God will meet the Israelites like a bear robbed of her cubs, attacking them and rip them open and devour them? However, the Bible tells us not that it is better to meet the bear robbed of her cubs than the fool in his folly. How is that? How is the fool more dangerous than the female bear whose cubs have been robbed? The reason is because when the fool is angry, he is more irrational than the bear robbed of her cubs (MacArthur). If the foolish leader who is irrational is the president of our country, what will happen to our country? If the pastor of our church is such a foolish leader, what about the church and the family if the husband/father who is the head of our house is the foolish leader of the house? Can you imagine?

In Proverbs 28:16, the Bible contrasts with “A leader who is a great oppressor”, that is, “a foolish leader” and “he who hates unjust gain.” The Korea Modern man's Bible translates “he who hates unjust gain” as ‘an upright ruler’. This contrast between the two kinds of leaders implies that the ignorant and foolish ruler who loves greed, unlike the upright ruler who hates greed. In other words, the upright ruler hates greed, but an ignorant and foolish ruler loves greed. What if our country's leaders were foolish people who love greed? Wouldn't the greedy leaders love money? Then what will happen? Look at 1 Timothy 6:10 – “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” Leaders who love money and greed are bound to wander from the faith and eventually suffer a lot and hurt their hearts. However, the problem doesn't end there. But the citizens of the country they rule, the members of the church, and the family members suffer a lot and hurt because of such leaders. How much will such leaders tyranny and oppress the citizens and exploit them (Ezek. 45:9)? How many citizens will suffer if the leaders of our country love greed, love money, love power, and do great violence (28:16) and oppress the poor people (v. 15)? For example, King Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard and killed the innocent citizen (1 Kgs. 21:1-16), and King Saul tried to kill David several times for long-term rule (1 Sam. 18:6-19:1) (Park). How much are the citizens of that country still suffering from the greed-loving world leaders? They oppress and rule their citizens violently amid their long-term domination and material greed, how much suffering are the citizens of that country? Will they have any hope?

If the leaders of our church were shepherds who filled their stomach with greed like the Israeli shepherds in the days of the prophet Isaiah, what about the members of the church? Look at Isaiah 56:11 – “They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, each seeks his own gain.” Why were the Israeli shepherds unable to bark like dumb dogs? The reason is because “They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough” (v. 11). “They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, each seeks his own gain. ‘Come,’ each one cries, ‘let me get wine! Let us drink our fill of beer! And tomorrow will be like today, or even far better’” (vv.11b-12). In other words, the

Israeli shepherds were shepherds who filled their stomachs with greed. They were pursuing pleasure by drinking wine and beer, living today and tomorrow. They were blind and lack knowledge. They didn't warn the Israelites with right words like the mute dogs. And they didn't obey God's word and worshiped vain things like dreams (v. 10). They love to sleep (v. 10) and were greedy (v. 11). Still, there was no awakening and they lived selfish life (v. 11). Looking back on their own circumstances, they were drunk and enjoyed pleasure (vv. 11-12). They ignored God and assured themselves of the future (v. 12) (Park). The Israeli shepherds lacked understanding. If the pastors and elders of the church are greedy people who only fill their stomachs, like the Israeli shepherds who lack understanding, what will happen to the members of the church? These greedy leaders don't last long. Rather, if we look at the second half of Proverbs 28:16, the reign of upright leaders who hate greed will last long (Park).

Who are the leaders we yearn for and pray for? We never want our country's leaders to be covetous people. The leaders of our country whom we long for and pray for are leaders who hate greed and are honest and upright people (Prov. 28:16). I remember the commanders of thousands, commanders of centuries, commanders of fifties, and commanders of tens because God could not carry heavy burdens alone on Moses, who was leading the Israelites at the time of the Exodus. In Exodus 18:21, God told Moses to "select capable men from all the people--men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain--and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens." Here, we see what is important to a leader is "men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain." I hope and pray that the leaders of our country to become this kind of people. May they become wise leaders who fear God, truth people who hate lies, and upright people who hate unrighteous gain. Therefore, I hope and pray that our country, our church, and our homes will be established firmly (Prov. 29:4) and that we can all rejoice (v. 2).

### **Second, we are not to be spillers of human blood (murderers).**

Sometimes, when I look at the news, I see the news that the killer who killed someone a long time ago is caught years later. When I see such news, I think that a killer is caught in the end. I'm not sure, but maybe it's often caught as a result of a DNA test. If we look at the news, there are times when murderers who are caught living as fugitives for many years now go to jail and pay for their sins. On one side, we may think, why not quickly surrender to pay the price for sins and start anew again. But if we think on the other side, we think that our instinct is not to surrender after committing a sin and to run away rather than paying the price for our sins. However, no matter how much they run away, I think that the murderers will have their own pain until the moment they are caught. And I think that pain is the feeling of guilt in the heart because of the murder he committed. Of course, I don't think all murderers will suffer from the guilt of the heart. Some of them may have a hardened heart and a paralyzed conscience, so that even after committing a murder crime, they will not suffer from guilt.

Look at Proverbs 28:17 – "A man who is laden with the guilt of human blood Will be a fugitive until death; let no one support him." The meaning of this word means that even if the killer who killed a person is struck by the

blood of another person and runs away from that conscience, he must eventually fall into a trap. In other words, the killer is eventually caught. The lesson the Bible gives us here is that we will finally receive God's retribution for all sins as well as murder (Park). A good example is King Ahab. If we look at 2 Kings 10:10, the Bible says, "Know then, that not a word the LORD has spoken against the house of Ahab will fail. The LORD has done what he promised through his servant Elijah." This is the word of curse that God made on the house of Ahab through the prophet Elijah. The reason why God cursed the house of Ahab king of Israel was because Ahab's house did evil in God's sight (8:27). The evil that Ahab's house did was to abandon the Lord's command and had follow the Baals (1 Kgs. 18:18). In particular, King Ahab, who was urged on by his wife Queen Jezebel, sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord. "He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols, like the Amorites the LORD drove out before Israel" (21:25-26). Therefore, the children of Israel also abandoned the Lord's covenant, destroyed the Lord's altar, and killed the Lord's prophets with the sword (19:10, 14). After all, Ahab caused Israel to sin (21:22). And he provoked God to anger (v. 22). So God said to Ahab through Elijah, "This is what the LORD says: In the place where dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood--yes, yours!" (v. 19) Also, through Elijah, God prophesied about Jezebel and those who belonged to Ahab: "... Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel." "Dogs will eat those belonging to Ahab who die in the city, and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country" (vv. 23-24; Ref. 2 Kgs. 9:10). What was the result? As God prophesied against Ahab, Ahab was wounded by a random bow in the war against Aram, and was propped up in his chariot facing the Arameans and the blood from his wound ran onto the floor of the chariot. And that evening he died (1 Kgs. 22:34-35). Then, the chariot was washed in a Samaritan pool where the prostitutes bathed, and the dogs licked up Ahab's blood, as the word of the Lord had declared (v. 38). God's retribution for Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab, was also fulfilled as God promised through the prophet Elijah. God raised up Jehu and judged King Ahab and all his family. After Jehu killed Jezebel, King Ahab's wife (2 Kgs. 9:33), he commanded, "Take care of that cursed woman," he said, "and bury her" (v. 34). "But when they went out to bury her, they found nothing except her skull, her feet and her hands" (v. 35). This was the fulfillment of the prophetic word spoke through His servant Elijah the Tishbite that "On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs will devour Jezebel's flesh" (v. 36). In the end, God avenged the blood of His servants the prophets to Jezebel (v. 7).

The Bible clearly says that "God will give to each person according to what he has done" (Rom. 2:6). The Bible says that God will repay those who persevere in doing good and seeking glory, honor, and immortality, with eternal life (v. 7). "But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger" (v. 8). Briefly summarized, God says that those who do evil will have tribulation and suffering (v. 9), and those who do good will have glory, honor, and peace (v. 10). In this way, God is a God who pays back. But I don't understand that there is a difference between God paying back the arrogant and the slave to greed Babylon in the days of the prophet Jeremiah (Jere. 56:7, 13) and the Israelites who rebelled against God, and the earth was filled with sin. The difference is that when God paid back Babylon, as the prophet Jeremiah prophesized, Babylon

disappeared in history, and God didn't forsake the Israelites who deserved to be destroyed. What was the reason? Why was Israel not forsaken by God and wasn't destroyed? The reason is because God loved the Israelites and chose them. In other words, they were not forsaken by God because they were God's chosen covenant people. In other words, they were not forsaken by God because they were God's chosen covenant people. Although the Israelites were unfaithful as covenant people, God didn't forsake them, even though they deserved to be forsaken because God had been faithful to them and He couldn't deny Himself. In the days of the prophet Ezekiel, the peculiarity of God in retributing the Israelites (Ezek. 14:3, 4, 7) who had set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces was that God promised to recapture the hearts of the Israelites (v. 5) by repaying them (v. 4). In other words, God promised to recapture the hearts of the betrayed Israelites (v. 5), and in fulfilling that promise, He said that He would pay back for their sins. Isn't it amazing that as God repays His chosen covenant people for their sins, the purpose is not to destroy them, but on the contrary, to recapture their hearts and rebuild them? How can we not be grateful to covenant God, who not only repays back the sinful covenant people and reveals His righteousness, but recaptures them and established them again to show God's mercy, love, and grace. Of course, this doesn't mean that we aren't without responsibility. Just as the Israelites whose responsibility was to repent their sins to God in the midst of God's work of recapturing and rebuilding their hearts by receiving God's pay back, our responsibility is to repent our sins.

How many sinful things do we see and hear in the world we live in now. In particular, how much the citizens of the country are suffering because of the wicked leader and of the foolish rulers in government? (Prov. 28:15-16) We even watched videos of publicly murdering their own citizens of their country. How can the president use chemical weapons on his own citizens, even killing children? The murderers who shed blood like this are now running into their traps (v. 17). God will surely punish them. What about Christians who believe in Jesus? Of course, there are probably not so many killers who actually shed human blood. That means there are people who actually believe in Jesus and some commit the murder of killing others. But I think the word that applies to all of us is 1 John 3:15 – “Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, ....” Are there times when we commit murder by hating our brothers and sisters in Christ? We must keep in mind that there is God's retribution for these murders. God made us confess and repent of our sins, eventually turning us from sin and rebuilding us into God's children who obey God's word by not pouring out His wrath on us fully and making us to go through the pain of retribution for a while. Therefore, God builds us up as those who love others with His love instead of murderer who hates brothers and sisters in Christ. I hope and pray that all of us who love our neighbors.

### **Third, we are not to be the ones who are crooked (people who live falsely).**

Have you ever thought of yourself as “a double-faced” person? Looking at the Naver Dictionary, “a double-faced” is defined as a metaphorical word for a case where the outside and the inside are different. What if the outside and inside are different? When we look at ourselves, haven't we ever seen the outside and inside are



different? People who were different on the outside and inside appear in the Bible. They are the Pharisees. They fasted outwardly (Mt. 9:14, Mk. 2:18) and offered “God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs” (Lk. 11:42; Mt. 23:23). And they didn’t eat with the “sinners” and tax collectors (Mk. 2:16). They “stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector’” (Lk. 18:11). Inside they loved money (16:14), and within them were full of greed, wickedness, self-indulgence, and all uncleanness (11:39; Mt. 23:25, 27). Like this, the Pharisees were double-faced people. In addition to these, if we look at John chapter 12, there is Judas Iscariot among Jesus’ disciples who was double-faced man. “Six days before the Passover,” a woman named Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair (Jn. 12:1-3). At that time, Judas Iscariot saw this and said, “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages” (v. 5). If we had been there at the time, we would hear this and may think that Judas Iscariot really cared for the poor. However, the Bible says Judas Iscariot “did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it” (v. 6). He was a thief on the inside, even though he may seem like a man thinking of the poor outside. In short, Judas Iscariot was the double-faced man. I remember the book ‘77 Reasons Why I Don’t Want to Go to Church’ written by Manjae Lee. In that book, there are 77 reasons for not wanting to go to church. Two of them are ‘I haven’t seen real believers in church’ and ‘I hate to see a lot of double-faced people in the church’ (Internet). Why did the church come to this point? One day, I searched and read this writing that I wrote on April 11, 2015 again: ‘Now the church seems to be producing double-faced people rather than producing disciples of Jesus.’ Of course, this is my personal opinion. The reason I think this is because I think that we Christians, starting with myself, are becoming more and more prominent the difference between the outside and the inside to the extent that the people around us know. In other words, the reason is because people are increasingly unable to find truthfulness in us. That’s because the church focuses on deeds rather than on human character. For example, the church seems to be emphasizing not to devote to nurturing true Christians, but to become a serving Christian even though they are little different on the outside and the inside. As a result, even though we may be good at serving, actually we are hindering God’s glory because the nature of becoming like Jesus doesn’t support us.

Look at Proverbs 28:18 – “He who walks blamelessly will be delivered, But he who is crooked will fall all at once.” The modern Korean Bible translates: ‘He who lives blamelessly will be saved, but he who lives falsely will suddenly perish.’ Now the Proverbs writer is contrasting “He who walks blamelessly” (the one who lives truthfully) and “he who is crooked” (the one who lives falsely). If we translated this in the original Hebrew, it goes like this: ‘He who works purely will be saved, but he who deceives twice will fall at once’ (Park). Who is the one who deceive twice? A good example is “he who is crooked though he be rich,” which we already meditated on in the second half of Proverbs 28:6. In Hebrew, it is translated “a rich man who deceives in two ways” (Park). Who is the rich man who deceives in two ways? He only pretends to walk on a good way while walking in an evil way

(Park). One of the evil ways of the rich who walks in two ways is to oppress the poor (v. 3). For a more specific example, James 2:6 says: “But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?” The rich man who walks in two ways not only despises them in oppressing the poor, but also torments them, and causes harm by even taking them to court. Can’t you imagine? On the outside, the rich man seems to do good deeds in front of people. But on the inside when nobody sees him, he oppresses the poor (skillfully). The rich, who deceive in two ways, accumulate wealth through their inconsistent actions in front of people and behind people. And they seem to be collecting wealth very well. So the poor righteous, who are suffering, can think that “Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence” (Ps. 73:13) since the double-faced wicked rich people are “always carefree, they increase in wealth” (v. 12). However, we must not forget that the rich people, who deceive in two ways, are also accumulating their own wickedness while accumulating so much wealth. And, as Proverbs 28:18 says such wicked rich people will “suddenly” fall. There will be a time when they will surely fall (Park).

The Bible Proverbs 28:6 says, “Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a rich man whose ways are perverse.” The lesson that this word teaches us is that it is more important to act truthfully or to act falsely while hypocritically deceiving the people’s eyes than to be rich or poor. The Bible says that those who walk falsely the perverse ways will suddenly fall, but those who walk is blameless, truthful and faithful, will be kept safe (v. 18). Therefore, we must be truthful and faithful. Therefore, I hope and pray that we will be delivered (saved) by God.

**Fourth, we are not to be the ones who chase fantasies (people who spend time in vain).**

What would our hearts be when we, almost at the end of our lives, look back on our lives and think, ‘Ah, I’ve lived in vain’? In particular, when we look back on our lives and realize that we have lived a very extreme individualistic life as we work hard for ourselves with greed, what would our hearts be when the result is ‘I have done vain and useless labor’ and ‘I lived in vain’? Look at Ecclesiastes 4:8 – “There was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. ‘For whom am I toiling,’ he asked, ‘and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?’ This too is meaningless-- a miserable business!” Why do we live in this earth and pursue vain things and live in vain? I looked for the cause in Romans 1:21 – “For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.” Even if we know God, we will neither glorify God nor give thanks to Him (1:21) unless we renew our minds and be transformed (12:2). Also, our thinking will become futile (1:21). In other words, our thoughts are bound to become worthless and useless. In these vain thoughts, we have no choice but to do things that are worthless and in vain.

Look at Proverbs 28:19 – “He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases

fantasies will have his fill of poverty.” Here, we can see that the Proverbs writer contrasts “He who works his land” with “the one who chases fantasies”. Here, the Hebrew meaning of the word “the one who chases fantasies” is ‘the one who follow vain things’ (Park). That is, he who follows vain things spends time in vain and eventually becomes poor (v. 19). A good biblical example is the prodigal son in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15. The prodigal son received his share of the estate from his father, got together all he had, set off for a distant country. And there squandered his wealth in wild living (vv. 12-13). After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine occurs in that whole country, and the prodigal son was finally in need (v. 14). In a word, the prodigal son spent his time in vain following the vain things, and he eventually became poor.

The world we live in is a vain world. I have already meditated on four reasons why this world is in vain based on Ecclesiastes 1:1-11:

(1) The reason why this world is vain is because it is useless. In other words, this world is vain because there is no gain.

Look at Ecclesiastes 1:3 - “What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun?” This means that all the labor we do away from God under the sun is of no benefit or remnant. The Bible Ecclesiastes 5:15-16 says that all the hard work you do in this world apart from God is like trying to catch the wind. How can we catch the wind? This is a futile labor of no benefit to us. So King Solomon said, "The work of life that has left God is nothing after his death" (1: 3) (Park). Therefore, the Bible says that the world is vanity and vanity.

(2) The reason why this world is vain is because life ultimately returns to dust.

Look at Ecclesiastes 1:5-6 - “The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.” This means that the people in this world are energetic when they are young but eventually they return to the dust without much activity (Park). No matter how young we were when we were hot-blooded and strong (Ps. 39: 5) we must realize that eventually we came from dust and we go back to dust. We must remember that “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field” (1 Pet. 1:24). We must realize that eventually the grass will wither and the flowers will fall (v. 24). We must remember that “Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it” (Ps. 39:6). Our life is like a wind. As the wind blows to the south and turns to the north, round and round it goes, ever returning on its course (v. 6), our life was made with dust so it will eventually return to dust. Therefore, the Teacher is saying that the world is vanity and vanity.

(3) The reason why this world is vain is because there is no satisfaction with human greed.

Look at Ecclesiastes 1:8 - "All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing." "The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing" means that the desire of man cannot be satisfied even as "All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full" (v. 7) (Park). Indeed, the "the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does" of people seem to have no end (1 Jn. 2:16). I think our greed is endless. That's why King Solomon said "his eyes were not content with his wealth" (Eccl. 4:8). And yet, we seek this thing in this futile world to satisfy its endless greed. But in the end, we are not satisfied. What King Solomon did was he denied himself nothing his eyes desired and he refused his heart no pleasure (2:10). Although King Solomon enjoyed whatever he saw and wanted and that was the reward for all his labor (2:10) this was his confession: "Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun" (v. 11).

(4) The reason why this world is vain is because people of the future will not remember people of this age.

Look at Ecclesiastes 1:11 - "There is no remembrance of men of old, and even those who are yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow." King Solomon said, "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one can say, "Look! This is something new"? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time" (vv. 9-10). The meaning of this word is that 'there is no new thing in this world, and people are not satisfied because they are only repeating old things' (Park Yun-sun). So King Solomon said, 'This world is vanity because the people of the future will not remember the people of this age' (v. 11) (Park Yun-sun). No matter how much wealth, authority, and power you have, what is left of it when you die? Will you not be forgotten after many years pass by after you die? One generation goes and one generation comes (v. 3). And because the past generation has been forgotten, this world is vanity and vanity.

So how should we live? Looking at the first half of Proverbs 28:19, the Bible says, "He who works his land will have abundant food ...." What does it mean? At that time, cultivating land was a common industry of that era (Park), and the Bible says that if we work hard, we have a lot to eat. Therefore, we must work hard in each of our workplaces. Then there will be abundance or plenty in our house (27:27). And we must keep in mind that God makes all grace abound to us, 'so that in all things at all times, having all that we need, we will abound in every good work' (2 Cor. 9:8). I hope and pray that we can be this kind of people.

**Fifth and last, we are not to be the ones who eager to get rich (the ones who rush to become rich).**

Is it a sin to try to get rich? Shouldn't we want to get rich? The Bible Proverbs 23:4 says this: "Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint." Looking at this word, it is inevitable to think that we should not be eager to get rich. Why does the Bible tell us not to be eager to get rich? What could be the reason? Look at 1 Timothy 6:9-10: "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." The reason why we should not strive to be rich is because we fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. Therefore, according to Proverbs 23:4, we must not wear ourselves out to get rich and should have wisdom to show restraint. What is the wisdom that we should show restraint? It is to collect wealth in a false way of man without following the word of God (Park). More specifically, what is the wisdom that shows restraint? We can think in two ways: (1) The wisdom that shows restraint is thinking. We must spread our wings of thought and think wisely rather than freely thinking about the other person. We should not listen to the other person's words unconditionally and believe them all. Instead, we should listen carefully with discernment so that we can grasp the motives of the other person's heart. (2) The wisdom that shows restraint is self-controlling. We must exercise self-control. We should not set our hearts on riches that is increasing (Ps. 62:10). I think that self-control of the heart is to resist the temptation of greed of any kind and to have contentment. If we don't control our hearts in this way, we will fall into the temptation of covetousness and become slaves to covetousness.

Look at Proverbs 28:20 – "A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished." Here, we see that the Proverbs writer is contrasting between "A faithful man" and "one eager to get rich". With this contrast in mind, when we think of a person who is eager to get rich, we can guess that such a person is not faithful. Think about it. How can the person who is eager to get rich quickly do his work faithfully? He who is eager to get rich isn't faithful, but rather walks in a perverse way (v. 18). In other words, such a person lives falsely. That's why the Bible says, "Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a rich man whose ways are perverse" (v. 6). Also, he who is eager to get rich is impatient. Being impatient, he plans this or that in order to make profits by trying his own business to become rich. But he doesn't realize what will happen tomorrow (Jam. 4:13-14). He doesn't know that his life is "a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes" (v. 14). But "a quick-tempered man displays folly" (Prov. 14:29). And the Bible says, "But everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty" (21:5). The Bible says that he who is eager to get rich lives falsely and show his folly will not go unpunished (28:2).

We must strive to be truthful and faithful people rather than eager to get rich. We shouldn't be rich who walk in two ways. In other words, we shouldn't be rich people who outwardly pretend to walk the good way in front of people, but actually walk in the evil way. As we seek God, we must understand the word of God with His wisdom, "Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a rich man whose ways are perverse" (v. 6). This is what

Proverbs 19:22 says, “What is desirable in a man is his kindness, And it is better to be a poor man than a liar.” We should be faithful people (28:20). And we should walk blamelessly (v. 18). Then we will be richly blessed (v. 20).

We shouldn't be this kind of person. We shouldn't be “a wicked ruler” (v. 15) or “a leader who is a great oppressor” (v. 16). We shouldn't be “A man who is laden with the guilt of human blood” (murderer) (v. 17). We shouldn't be the ones who walk the perverse ways (live falsely) (v. 18). We shouldn't be ‘the ones who chase fantasies’ (people who spend time in vain) (v. 19). We shouldn't be ‘the ones who are eager to get rich’ (the ones who rush to become rich) (v. 20). Rather, we should be this kind of people. We should be those who hate greed. Then we will live long. Also, we should be the ones who act faithfully (truthfully). Then we will be saved (delivered). We should be hard workers. Then we will have a lot to eat. We should be loyal (faithful) people. Then we will be blessed abundantly.

## Facts we need to know

### [Proverbs 28:21-28]

One day at the early Morning Prayer meeting, I meditated on the words in John 11 about the miracle of Jesus raising the dead Lazarus. As I meditated on those words, I especially meditated based on verses 5-6: “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days.” In these words, I came to think that the meaning of the time of Jesus and others (Lazarus, Martha, and Mary) was a little different. I think the meaning of the time of Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary, was very precious. The reason I think so is because Lazarus got sick and that disease eventually killed him, and until that time each hour would have been very precious to Lazarus before he died. And from the point of view of his two younger sisters, Martha and Mary, I think how important, precious, and desperate the meaning of time was to them when their beloved brother Lazarus was dying. The place where I can feel it is when Martha said to Jesus after hearing that Jesus was coming to Bethany (vv. 1, 18) after Lazarus died four days ago (v. 39): “Lord, ... if you had been here, my brother would not have died” (v. 21). Mary also said something similar to Jesus: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died” (v. 32). Both of these words indicate that Martha and Mary thought that if the Lord had come a little bit sooner, their brother Lazarus would not have died. As such, the time was tight for Martha and Mary. That is why they sent a person to Jesus and told Him, “Lord, the one you love is sick” (v. 3). However, despite being told that Lazarus was sick, Jesus stayed where he was two more days (v. 6). Why didn’t Jesus quickly go to Bethany and heal Lazarus, who was sick, but rather stayed where he was two more days? Although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus (v. 5), why didn’t Jesus go to their house quickly and heal Lazarus, the one Jesus loved (v. 3) even though He knew that Lazarus was sick (vv. 3, 6)? Rather, Jesus knew that “Our friend Lazarus” was dead (vv. 11, 14) and said to His disciples, “Let’s go back to Judea” (v. 7). Why did Jesus do that? Why did Jesus stay two more days where he was even though he heard the news that Lazarus was sick? The reason is that Jesus said in verse 15: “and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe.” Jesus did it for His disciples. Jesus stayed two more days where he was to make His disciples to believe in Jesus more (v. 6). As I meditated on these words, I was instructed that we must believe in the Lord, even though we don’t have the time for that “two days” (v. 6), and we are at the crossroads of life and death in which we cannot wait for a day. Even though the Lord’s work does not appear as we prayed and expected, we must wait patiently with faith in Him. We must believe that “it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it” (v. 4) even though the situation is getting worse and we don’t see any work of the Lord. The reason is because the heart of the Lord is always for us (v. 15). I was strengthened when I realized the Lord’s heart toward me even a little through the fact

that the Lord is always for us. In this way, the word of God gives me and you strength.

If we look at Proverbs 28:22, the Bible says, “A man with an evil eye hastens after wealth And does not know that want will come upon him.” While meditating on this word, especially “And does not know that want will come upon him,” I think there are facts that we need to know. So I would like to receive a lesson given by meditating on Proverbs 28:21-28 in eight different ways.

### **The first thing we need to know is that we can do wrong with bribes.**

Look at Proverbs 28:21 – “To show partiality is not good, Because for a piece of bread a man will transgress.” One of the books I read while in seminary was Saint Augustine's Book of Confession. In that book, I remember reading Augustine's confession about the sin of stealing bread a long time ago because he was hungry. At that time, as I read the contents, I was a little puzzled, ‘Is it a great sin for stealing one bread?’ And in fact, I think he might be able to think that it was just one bread and forgot about it. But when I think about why and how Augustine considered stealing a piece of bread in the past as such a great sin in his book and confessed it, I think the reason is ‘God's presence.’ In other words, I think that Augustine is living in God's presence and thus has a greater awareness of his past sin. In other words, I think that holy God's presence brought him deeper awareness and realization of the magnitude of his sin. The reason I think so is because I heard a sermon about the apostle Paul through our church retired pastor long time ago. In a word, the content of the sermon was that the apostle Paul became more humble as he realized his sins deeper, greater and more painfully in the holy presence of God in his spiritual journey with the Lord. As a basis, there are three Bible verses from the apostle Paul's letters quoted by the retired pastor in his sermons: (1) (1 Cor. 15:9) “For I am the least of the apostles ...,” (2) (Eph. 3:8) “Although I am less than the least of all God's people ...,” (3) (1 Tim. 1:15) “...sinners--of whom I am the worst.”

What does it mean when the Proverbs writer says in Proverbs 28:21, “To show partiality is not good, Because for a piece of bread a man will transgress.” What do you think “To show partiality” mean? Where do we usually see the unfair treatment of showing partiality? We see in court. For example, what would happen if the judge shows partiality instead of judging fairly? He will never make a right judgment. Why is this happening in court? The reason is because of 'bribery'.

In this world, it seems that there are more people than expected with the idea that 'Money can do everything.' They seem to believe that ‘Money is power.’ So they aren't hesitant to bribe other people to achieve their selfish purposes and ambitions. An example is found in Ezra chapter 4. When the Israelites returned from captivity in Babylon to their hometown of Judah to rebuild the temple of God, “the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard” that news (v. 1) and came to Zerubbabel and to the heads of the families (v. 2). Even though they told Zerubbabel and the heads of the families, “Let us help you build” the temple (v. 2), Zerubbabel and the heads of the families refused to do so: “You have no part with us in building a temple to our God. We alone will build it for the LORD, the God



of Israel” (v. 3). From that time on, “the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building” (v. 4). One of the ways they prevented the building of the temple was bribery (v. 5). The Judah's adversaries “bribed officials to act against them to frustrate their plans throughout the reign of King Cyrus of Persia and until the reign of King Darius of Persia” (v. 5, Christian Standard Bible). In Nehemiah 6, Tobiah and Sanballat, the enemies of the people of Judah, bribed Shemaiah to make Nehemiah false prophesy. The content of the prophecy was, “They will come to kill you. Let us go to the house of God, stay in the outer room, and close the door, and they will surely come at night to kill you” (v. 10). Upon hearing that, Nehemiah responded to Shemaiah: “Should a man like me run away? Or should one like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!” (v. 11) Nehemiah learned that Shemaiah didn’t receive the word of God at that time, but instead received a bribe from Tobiah and Sanballat and made this prophecy to him (v. 12). Why did Tobiah and Sanballat, who opposed the people of Judah, bribe Shemaiah and made such a false prophecy? Look at Nehemiah 6:13 – “He had been hired to intimidate me so that I would commit a sin by doing this, and then they would give me a bad name to discredit me.” In the end, the purpose of the bribe was to frighten Nehemiah, the leader of the people of Judah, to sin against God.

What if the judges of the people of Judah were bribed? Then the judge will not only do injustice, but will never be able to. However, in fact, the Bible records that in the Old Testament times, the leaders and judges of the people of Judah received bribes: “Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them” (Isa. 1:23), “Both hands are skilled in doing evil; the ruler demands gifts, the judge accepts bribes, the powerful dictate what they desire-- they all conspire together” (Mic. 7:3). As a result, the judge who received the bribe “justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!” (Isa. 5:23). In other words, he harmed an innocent righteous man (Ps. 15:5). The judges who received bribes in this way perverted justice (1 Sam. 8:3). As a result, he deprived the poor of justice in the courts so that the poor suffered unjustly (Am. 5:12). Think about it. How unfair the judge's perverted judgment would be from the perspective of the suffering person (Prov. 28:21). So the Bible Proverbs 18:5 says, “It is not good to be partial to the wicked or to deprive the innocent of justice.”

A bribe blinds those who see (Exod. 23:8, Deut. 16:19, 1 Sam. 12:3) and corrupts our hearts (Eccle. 7:7), making us forget God (Ezek. 22:12), and perverts justice (1 Sam. 8:3). As a result, the bribe makes us to show partiality and to do bad things (Prov. 28:21). Bribes turns us aside (Job 36:18). Therefore, we must not accept bribes. We must imitate God who doesn’t accept bribes (Deut. 10:17; 2 Chron. 19:7) and must not show partiality (Prov. 28:21). We must keep in mind that we can make a mistake for a piece of bread. To that extent, bribery can make us sin against God (Neh. 6:13). Therefore, we must not accept bribes.

**The second thing we need to know is that a greedy man is unaware of poverty coming upon him.**

I am sure you know the Christmas children story “Scrooge”? This story, written by British novelist Charles Dickens, is about Scrooge, the protagonist and a cold-hearted miser who met a ghost of his business partner Marley the night before Christmas, and repented his sins by seeing his past, present, and future and found his human heart (Internet). I am sure I heard this Christmas children story when I was a child and have learned its teaching. But I remember more the Korean fairy tale “Heungbu and Nolbu” that I heard when I was in elementary school in Korea. At that time, after listening to this fairy tale at that young age, I was taught that I should be a good person like Heungbu, not like a greedy Nolbu. But now, when I look back on my life after so many years, I think that I am living like a greedy Nolbu on the contrary to the lessons I learned when I was a child. At least Scrooge later repented of his sins and found a human heart. But I'm still struggling with myself because I can't find my heart right. So I am fighting against myself. In particular, I am fighting the “covetousness” in me. Like the enlightenment given in 2 Samuel 12:14, it reminds us that we must be very alert and vigilant that covetousness that leads to adultery, murder, and theft, because if not then we will give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. Even now, the leaders of the church are greedy and are committing the sin of idolatry to God because they love money, honor, and women more than God (Mic. 1:7, 2:2; Col 3:5). We have to pray and ponder how we can resist the temptation of covetousness. The lesson that Acts 20:33-35 gives is to always remember Jesus' words, "Giving is more blessed than receiving," in order to resist the temptation of greed.

If we look at Proverbs 28:22, the Bible says, “A stingy man is eager to get rich and is unaware that poverty awaits him.” This is Darby Translation (DARBY): “He that hath an evil eye hasteth after wealth, and knoweth not that poverty shall come upon him.” Here, “an evil eye” refers to ‘the eye of the covetous one’ (Park). In other words, the eye of the covetous one is evil. The Bible tells us that the selfish person with such evil eye is in hurry to collect wealth (v. 22). Here, the word ‘to be in a hurry’ means that the covetous person with evil eye quickly wants to get rich or that he is in a hurry to become rich (v. 20). Look at Proverbs 28:20 – “A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.”

If this covetous and selfish man wants to get rich quickly, he will want to get rich in the wrong way rather than in the right and legal way. And the wrong way, the Bible says, is lying and violence. Look at Proverbs 21:6-7: “A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare. The violence of the wicked will drag them away, for they refuse to do what is right.” The Bible says that the use of lying and violence to accumulate wealth in order to quickly get rich is the pursuit of death. It is like a fleeting vapor. These who are quick to accumulate wealth with deceitful words don't know fact that they are wicked, and they refuse to act with justice (v. 7). That is why they are accumulating wealth even by using the wrong methods of deception or violence. What is the result? The result is poverty. The problem, however, is that those who are eager to get rich quickly don't know that poverty will come to them (28:22). At first, they seem to succeed in accumulating wealth in an unrighteous way because they have more than their hearts could wish, they increase in riches and are prosper in the world (Ps. 73:7, 12). But when Asaph, the psalmist who wrote Psalms 73, went into the sanctuary of God, he realized the end of the

wicked. What is the end of the wicked? Look at Psalms 73:18-20: “Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.”

This is what 1 Timothy 6:9-10 says: “People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” We must not be money lovers like the Pharisees (Lk. 16:14). We shouldn't love money. The reason is because the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. If we covet money because we love it, we will be deceived and turn away from the faith. Therefore, we must keep in mind that those who are eager for money will fall into temptation, a snare, and various foolish and harmful greed that cause them to fall into ruin and destruction. Therefore, we should not love money. Also, we should not store up for ourselves treasures on earth. What is the reason? The reason is because there is moth and rust will destroy them and thieves will break in and steal (Mt. 6:19). What does it mean? It means that if we store money or wealth on this earth, it is one of the two. Either all of that money or wealth is destroyed or a thief steals it (MacDonald). In a word, the reason why we should not stock up on money or wealth on this earth is because it will be gone. So the apostle James said in James 5:2-3: “Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days.” We must not accumulate wealth on this earth in these last days. Rather, we must store treasures in heaven as Jesus said (Mt. 6:20). Dr. Yoon-sun Park summarized the method as follows: ‘The way to store treasure in heaven is to sacrifice for the Lord all my good things (not only material but also effort and talent and everything else)’ (Park).

We must live on this earth while building up treasures in heaven. In order to do that, we must sacrifice our own things for the Lord. We must put the Lord as our top priority not only in our material but also in our time, body, and family, and sacrifice for the Lord, His church, and the ministry of the gospel. And we must share ours in loving our neighbor (Lk. 18:22). This is what it means to storing up our treasures in heaven (v. 22).

**The third thing we need to know is that rebuking a person is more loved later than flattering with our tongues.**

How would you feel if someone who loves you points out your mistakes? I still remember when I was in college, I had a discipleship with with some seniors and a pastor who taught said ‘James is still hot-blooded youth.’ In Korean, it has some negative connotation so I felt a little bad. Also when I was in college, I remember saying to my friend ‘You are arrogant’. I feel sorry when I think about his feeling and heart.

Personally, I find it difficult to obey the words of Proverbs 27:5. In other words, whenever I deal with this word, I worry: “Better is open rebuke than hidden love.” I am having hard time rebuking someone on his face. I think the reason is not only because of my personality, but also maybe I don’t love the other person enough to reprove him with the love of God. Since not only that I’m not even able to do the hidden love properly, but also I’m not getting better at open rebuke in love, whenever I encounter this word, I am worried and feel remorse. Particularly in the pastoral ministry, if I truly love the flock whom God has entrusted to me, there are times when I feel uncomfortable because I didn’t obey the word of Proverbs 27:5 when I should have obeyed it. Who do you think of people who rebuked face to face in the Bible? I remember the prophet Nathan who rebuked King David face to face (2 Sam. 11). In this biblical story we are well aware of, King David lies with Bathsheba, Uriah's wife, knows that the baby is conceived, and attempts to cover up the sin, even by committing the murder of killing his loyal soldier Uriah. Because “the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord” (v. 27), God sent the prophet Nathan to David for taking the wife of Uriah by the parable of the rich and the poor in a city (12:1- 4). At that time, David became very angry and said to the prophet Nathan, “As the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die” (v. 5). David didn't know that he was the one who deserve to die, maybe because as he tried to cover up his sins, he also covered his conscience. At that time, the Prophet Nathan rebuked David directly: “You are the man!”(v. 7) How shocking was this to David? David himself apparently didn’t think he was the one who deserved to die. But how surprised it would have been when the prophet Nathan rebuked him, saying, “You are that man!”? Wouldn't our conscience be shocked when the holy God reveals that the things we have done are sins after not considering sins as sin?

This is what the Bible Proverbs 28:23 says: “He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favor than he who has a flattering tongue.” This word is asking who we are. The word of God is asking each one of us whether we are “He who rebukes” or “he who has a flattering tongue”. What do you think? Who are we? This word urges us to be the one who rebukes. What is the reason? The reason is because he who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor (v. 23). But in fact, I think our instincts don’t want to be loved more later than to be loved more now. And the way we’re more loved by the other person right now is to buy the person's favor or to flatter, rather than rebuking him for his wrongdoing. For example, some of us seem to be doing it to a person who is in a higher position than us in the workplace. Although sometime we know our superior has done something wrong, we even flatter to him rather than rebuke him in love. In my case, it seems that there is many times where I just cover it up rather than rebuke the person in love. Perhaps the biggest reason I do this is because I don't want to hurt the other person's heart. And another reason is because I am afraid that our relationship will become awkward and cut off after I rebuke him. I don't know if there is a concern in this fear that the person will hate me. When I just cover it up and just pass over it, I think my excuse might be Proverbs 17:9 – “He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.” Obviously, the Bible says, ““He who covers over an offense promotes love” (17:9), and at the same time, the Bible says, “Better is open rebuke than hidden love” (27:5).

There is many times how I can obey these two words of God. What do you think? Should you cover the offense of the people you love or should you rebuke them? What do you think you should do? When should you cover their offense and when should you rebuke them with love? My personal thought is that even though we who promote love should cover their offense in order not to separate close friends by repeating the matter (17:9), we should rebuke them if they repeat the matter so that it doesn't lead to more serious sins (27:5).

This is what the Bible Proverbs 27:6 says: "Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses." The reason why the Bible says "Better is open rebuke than hidden love" (v. 5) is because even though the open and face-to-face rebuke from our friend hurts our hearts, the wounds from that rebuke are trustworthy (v. 6). The Bible says this is better than the enemy's false kisses. Why? The reason is because the enemy hates us and wants to destroy us even through the false kisses, whereas our friend wants to build us up with a sincere rebuke because he loves us. There is a similar saying in Ecclesiastes 7:5 – "It is better to heed a wise man's rebuke than to listen to the song of fools." Here, "the song of fools" refers to 'the false comfort of the wicked' (Park). The Bible tells us to beware of the false comforts of the wicked. Why should we be wary of the false comforts of the wicked? The reason we should guard against the song of fools, the false comfort of the wicked, is because it is in vain (v. 6). The Bible teaches us that what we need to hear is not the song of fools, but the rebuke of the wise. We must keep in mind that the whipping of the wise is better than the praise (encouragement) of the fool

In Psalms 118:18, the psalmist says: "The LORD has disciplined me severely, But He has not given me over to death." I don't know how badly he was rebuked by God, so he said, "He has not given me over to death." But at least we can know from this verse that God always disciplines the children of God whom He loves. But the Bible also says that God doesn't "always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever" (103:9). And when we see the apostle Paul said to his spiritual son Timothy, "... correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Tim. 4:2), we cannot deny that we should rebuke our loved ones with the word of God. Let's not forget the fact that rebuking a person is more loved later than flattering with our tongues.

**The fourth thing we need to know is that a person who steals from his parents and says it is not a sin is no different from a robber.**

Have you ever stolen something from your parents? I am. I still remember vividly. When I was in elementary school, my mother put a coin purse in the kitchen cabinet. However, the kitchen was dug a little deep and the cabinet was a bit high, so it was not easy for me to open the kitchen cabinet door on the top of the cupboard and take out my mother's wallet and steal coins. Haha. Now that I think about it, I remember at that time I was almost like a Spider-Man, clinging my body to the kitchen cabinet, and opened the top door of the cabinet, and took out my mother's purse and the money. I think I stole a 100 won coin which worth less than 10 cents. The reason I stole that money was because I really want to buy a cracker that costs 100 won at the corner shop on the street in

front of our house. Haha. Although stealing my parents' money like this is of course stealing, I think it's also stealing that we don't give our parents what we should give them. Look at Matthew 15:5-6: "But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' he is not to 'honor his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition." This word was spoken by Jesus to the Pharisees and scribes, who at that time violated God's commandment by their own traditions. Specifically, how did they violate the God's commandment? Although God's commandment said, "Honor your father and mother," the Pharisees and scribes taught that they didn't need to honor their parents as long as they give to God what they suppose to give to their parents. If we think that we don't have to give money to our parents as long as we give it to God, I think this is stealing from our parents.

If we look at Proverbs 28:24, the Bible says: "He who robs his father or mother and says, "It's not wrong"-- he is partner to him who destroys." Why is the Bible talking about robbing "his father or mother" among so many others? Like the tenth of the Ten Commandments, why doesn't the Bible talk about coveting a neighbor's property and stealing it but talking about stealing our parents' things? Perhaps the reason is because those who have the evil eyes, that is, those who are greedy and who is eager to get rich (v. 22) can commit an unthinkable sin of stealing their parents' things instead of honoring their parents and practicing filial piety. And I think it is because "A greedy man" (v. 25) is capable of stirring up dissension by stealing their parents' wealth. A robber who has no remorse in his conscience and doesn't even consider the sin of stealing his parents a sin is the robber and such robber can be in the home. Why can't a child steal from his parents and not think it's theft? Why can a child steal a parent's property and say that stealing is not a sin? I looked for the reason in Proverbs 14:8-9: "The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is deception. Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright." According to this word, the reason that the child steals from his parents and says that it isn't a sin is because he mocks at sin (14:9). And the reason why he mocks at sin is because he is deceiving himself (v. 8, Jam. 1:22). The reason we are deceiving ourselves is because we don't have knowledge (Prov. 14:7). And the reason we don't have knowledge is because we are arrogant (vv. 3, 6). And the reason we are arrogant is because we despise Him (v. 2). After all, when I was a child, I thought it wasn't a sin to steal my mother's money because I was despising God. Someone who was despising God like this is also found in the Bible. That person's name is "Micah" in Judges 17. He stole his mother's 1,100 pieces of silver and then returned to her because out of fear of being cursed by his mother, his mother said to Micah as follow: "'Blessed be my son by the LORD. I solemnly consecrate my silver to the LORD for my son to make a carved image and a cast idol. I will give it back to you" (vv. 2-3). How could the mother bless her son who stole her money? Shouldn't she rebuke him? I can't understand Micah's mother. Indeed, it is a broken family. Neither the son Micah nor his mother regarded sin as a sin. The reason is because they were despising God (Prov. 14:2).

We should not take all our sins lightly, including stealing. Rather, we should take our sins against God seriously. Although those who despise God take their sins lightly (Prov. 14:2, 9), those who fear God take their sins

seriously. It is a sin against God's commandments if we don't honor our parents and don't give our parents what they deserve, but give to God. In a way, I think it's stealing from my parents. We must not honor our parents only with our lips (Mt. 15:8). Instead, we must honor our parents with our hearts. Those who honor their parents with heart will give them what they should give them for the benefit of their parents with joy and gratitude. By doing so, I hope and pray that all of us can please our parents (Prov. 23:25).

**The fifth thing we need to know is that a greedy man stirs up dissension, but those who trust in the Lord will prosper.**

Why do quarrels arise in relationships? Look at James 4:1-2a: "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. ...." The Bible says that the reason we quarrel is because of our desires that battle within us and because we want something and are greedy. Are we not quarreling and fighting because of our desires that battle within us and because we are greedy? If there is greed within us, we can never be satisfied. I remember the word of Ecclesiastes 1:8 – "All things are wearisome; Man is not able to tell it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor is the ear filled with hearing." There is no satisfaction in seeing with eyes and hearing with ears means that even as the sea cannot be filled with water that always flows (v. 7), even the greed of a person has no satisfaction (Park). Indeed, there seems to be no end to man's greed. To satisfy that endless greed, he pursues this and that in this vain world, but he isn't satisfied in the end. As for how much King Solomon was, Ecclesiastes 2:10 says, "All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased." He saw and enjoyed everything his heart wanted. He thought it was his reward for all his labor (v. 10). But he confessed: "Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun" (v. 11). If there is greed within us, we rather complain and grumble in dissatisfaction like the Israelites at the time of the Exodus. Dissatisfaction makes us complain. Why are we dissatisfied and complaining? The cause is greed. Like this, greed is scary and very dangerous. But satisfaction and contentment make us grateful. And peace overflows with gratitude. The heart of gratitude is a generous heart. And grateful heart isn't greedy. We must live a life of gratitude to God by counting all the spiritual blessings we have already received in Jesus Christ. Meanwhile, like the apostle Paul, we must live with satisfaction with Jesus alone. In the midst of experiencing poverty or abundance, we must learn the secret of being satisfied with Jesus alone. Then we will be able to avoid complaining in dissatisfaction.

If we look at Proverbs 28:25, the Bible says, "A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts in the LORD will prosper." The Bible contrasts "A greedy man" with "he who trusts in the Lord." First of all, when we think of "A greedy man," we can think in relation to the one with evil eyes (the one with the greedy eyes) that we already talked about in verse 22. In other words, the reason why the greedy man stirs up dissention (v. 25) is

because he is eager to accumulate wealth in his greed (v. 22). This greedy man will try to get what he wants even by using his flattering tongue (v. 23). He can even quarrel with his parents. This is because the greedy man is a person whose conscience is paralyzed by stealing even the things of his parents (v. 24). That's how much a person's greed can paralyze the conscience so that he doesn't regard sin as a sin. That's why he may quarrel even with his parents in the process of stealing his parents' things.

Greed is harmful to us. The reason we fall into foolish and harmful greed is because we aren't content with what we already have. It is also because we only know this truth with our heads: "As he had come naked from his mother's womb, so will he return as he came He will take nothing from the fruit of his labor that he can carry in his hand" (Eccle. 5:15). Therefore, the greedy man loves money and eagers to get rich (1 Tim. 6:6-10). And in the process, he causes quarrels with others (Prov. 28:25). In Genesis 16, there is a story of a woman's greed that moves her husband to get the result she wants, and makes him do what he shouldn't do in the sight of God. That story is the story of Abram and Sarai. Sarai had borne Abram no children (Gen. 16:1). So she said to her husband Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her" (v. 2). At that time, Abram should not have obeyed Sarai. Rather, he should have rebuked and guided her in love, believing that God would give her Isaac as God had promised to them. But Abram agreed to what Sarai said and slept with her maidservant Hagar (vv. 2-4). As a result, when Hagar became pregnant, she became arrogant and despised her mistress Sarai (v. 4). And Sarai said to her husband Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my servant in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me" (v. 5). Isn't it funny that Sarai told her husband Abram to sleep with her maidservant, Hagar, and then said to Abram "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering"? (v. 5) In this way, Sarai's greed even used her husband as a tool to satisfy her greed. But I think the result was an opportunity for Hagar to despise Sarai and for Sarai to blame her husband Abram for her suffering.

We must be wary of greed. The reason is because greed causes quarrels, which leads to sin against God. Greed is a shortcut to unhappiness, so we must be on the lookout for greed. Rather, we must become the ones who trust in the Lord (Prov. 28:25). Those who trust in the Lord obey His word as they rely on the word of God. A good example is Simon Peter in Luke 5. On the shore of Lake Gennesaret (Lk. 5:1), Jesus sat in Simon Peter's boat and taught many people (v. 1) who came to hear the word of God from Jesus (v. 3). When he finished speaking, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch" (v. 4). Simon Peter, who worked hard all night and hadn't caught anything (v. 5), came out of his boat and had already washed the nets (v. 2), answered Jesus, "because you say so, I will let down the nets" (v. 5). As Jesus had said, he went out into the deep and let down his nets (v. 4). As a result, he caught such a large number of fish that his nets began to break (v. 6). In the end, Simon Peter became prosperous because he relied on the Lord and obeyed His word (Prov. 28:25). I hope and pray that we will all be able to enjoy abundant grace by laying down all our desires in front of the cross and relying only on the Lord to obey His word.



## **The sixth thing we need to know is that we must not trust ourselves and act wisely.**

Have you even seen a person who says ‘I absolutely don’t trust in other people. I only trust myself’? I remember one of my friends in high school, who claimed to be an atheist, told me that he believed in no gods, no one, and only believed in himself. At that time, I thought that there could be an atheist who denies and doesn’t acknowledging the existence of God. However, I went to seminary to study John Calvin's interpretation of the words of Romans 1 and came to believe that there could be no atheists in this world from Calvin's point of view. The basis for this is Romans 1:19-21: “since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.” Obviously the Bible says they know God. How do they know God? They know God because God has clearly shown and made known His attributes, that is, the eternal power and divinity of God, through all things He has created. But they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him. But their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Do you think we can trust such a foolish heart? Although it's hard for us to trust others, I don’t think it's easy to trust our own hearts as well. Why? The reason is because we have greed in our hearts (Prov. 28:25). Since we have such greed in our hearts, we are eager to get rich with a selfish heart (v. 22). So such a man even steals the things of his parents (v. 24). In a word, our heart cannot be trusted because “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure” (Jere. 17:9). How deceitful and corrupt are the hearts of men? Jesus said this in Mark 7:20-23: “He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him ‘unclean.’ For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.’” Also, the Bible says in Genesis 6:5: “The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.” Can you believe this heart?

In Proverbs 28:26, the Bible says: “He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.” The Bible says, “He who trusts in himself is a fool.” The Bible tells us not to trust in our own hearts. The Bible says that if we trust in our own hearts, we are fools. Isn't that obvious? Isn't it true that a man who trusts in his foolish heart (Rom. 1:21) is a fool? (Prov. 28:26) The Bible tells us that the foolish heart of the fool claims to be wise, but in fact he is a fool (Rom. 1:22). So the fool doesn’t serve God who lives forever but rather worship idols (v. 23). Also, the fool worships and serves the creature more than the Creator by exchanging the truth of God for a lie (v. 25). As result, God gave him over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done (v. 28). The Bible says that there will be woe to such a man (Isaiah 5:21). The Bible says, “Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil” (Prov. 3:7). Therefore, we must not be wise in your own estimation (Rom. 12:16).

Rather, the Bible tells us to walk in wisdom (Prov. 28:26). In order to do that, we must pay attention and listen to the sayings of the wise (22:17). And we should keep them in our hearts (v. 18). Then we will be able to trust in God (v. 19). So the Bible Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” Instead of being wise in our own eyes (v. 7), we must act wisely with the wisdom that God gives us. Here, acting wisely means to shun evil by fearing God (v. 7). Just as when we love God and love the truth (3:3), we shun hatred and lies, when we fear God we can shun evil which we consider ourselves wise (v. 7). If we don’t trust in God and don’t acknowledging Him in all our ways, then this is an evidence that we trust ourselves and acknowledge ourselves. This is also the evidence that we are wise in our own eyes. This is the vain faith of the fool who doesn’t fear God (14:16). And the cause of this vain faith is in mind (Rom. 12:16). Why are we haughty in mind? The reason is because we don’t know the great God intimately. When we don’t have the intimate knowledge of God, we consider ourselves wise (Prov. 3:7) and is wise in our own estimation (Rom. 12:16). When we fall into this arrogance, even though we know God, we don’t glorify Him or give thanks to Him. On the contrary, our thinking will become futile and our foolish hearts will be darkened, claiming to be wise but actually we are fools (Rom. 1:21-22). Therefore, we must not be wise in our own eyes. Rather, we must fear God and shun evil. As we fear God, we should not set our minds on high things, but rather set our minds on low things. In a word, the wise who fear God are humble. Because we fear God, we must shun evil and be humble. God will lift up these humble ones and use them on high. Why does the Bible tell us to walk wisely? The reason is because “he who walks in wisdom is kept safe” (Prov. 28:26).

The wise only listen to the word of God. The wise who hear the word of God will live in safety and will be ease, without fear of harm (1:33). In addition, the wise will trust in God, who is a strong tower (29:25), and run to God and is safe (18:10). I hope and pray that you are safe. I hope and pray that we all can enjoy God's salvation and safety by walking wisely with the wisdom that God gives us.

**The seventh thing we need to know is that those who give to the poor will lack nothing.**

Have you ever heard of the term “relative poverty”? There are two types of poverty. One is absolute poverty and the other is relative poverty. “Absolute poverty is when household income is below a certain level, which makes it impossible for the person or family to meet basic needs of life including food, shelter, safe drinking water, education, healthcare, etc. ... Relative poverty is when households receive 50% less than average household incomes, so they do have some money but still not enough money to afford anything above the basics” (Internet). Until now, I had only thought of the concept of absolute poverty when I thought about “poverty”. But one day, I heard about relative poverty through a Korean radio broadcast. The news said that there are more and more people living in relative poverty in this southern California, where I live now. As I remember, the news I heard at that time

was a little shocking to me because, for example, even if we earn \$3,000 or \$4,000 a month, if we spend \$5,000 a month, we are in relative poverty. The reason this news was a bit shocking to me was because I only knew the concept of absolute poverty until then. So, I was a little surprised because even though people who made 3 or 4,000 dollars a month, if they need \$5,000 expense a month, then they are in poverty. However, since then, more and more through the news or through people, I heard that the price here in California is too expensive, especially apartment rentals, but the labor cost doesn't rise as much. As a result, many people are suffering with relative poverty.

The lesson for the "poor" has been learned over and over as we have already meditated on the Book of Proverbs. The most recent lesson we learned was Proverbs 28:18 – "He whose walk is blameless is kept safe, but he whose ways are perverse will suddenly fall." If we translated this in the original Hebrew, it goes like this: 'He who works purely will be saved, but he who deceives twice will fall at once' (Park). Who is the one who deceive twice? A good example is "he who is crooked though he be rich," which we already meditated on in the second half of Proverbs 28:6. In Hebrew, it is translated "a rich man who deceives in two ways" (Park). Who is the rich man who deceives in two ways? He only pretends to walk on a good way while walking in an evil way (Park). One of the evil ways of the rich who walks in two ways is to oppress the poor (v. 3). For a more specific example, James 2:6 says: "But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?" The rich man who walks in two ways not only despises them in oppressing the poor, but also torments them, and causes harm by even taking them to court. Can't you imagine? On the outside, the rich man seems to do good deeds in front of people. But on the inside when nobody sees him, he oppresses the poor (skillfully). The rich, who deceive in two ways, accumulate wealth through their inconsistent actions in front of people and behind people. And they seem to be collecting wealth very well.

If we look at Proverbs 28:27, the Bible says, "He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses." Looking at the Book of Proverbs we have meditated on so far, the Bible says about "the poor": (1) (14:31) "He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker ...," (2) (17:5) "He who mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker ...," (3) (21:13) "If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered," (4) (22:16) "He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich--both come to poverty." These words say that if we oppress or mock the poor, we are showing contempt for God who made the poor, and we will come to poverty. By the way, in the second half of Proverbs 28:27, the Bible says "... he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses." Here, 'to close his eyes to the poor' refers to refusing to respond to the needs of the poor (MacArthur). This is what Proverbs 14:31 says: "... but whoever is kind to the needy honors God." Since the Bible says that he who is kind to the needy honors God, then we can say that he who closes his eyes to the needy (28:27) isn't honoring Him. But 'a man of kind eye or of merciful eye' (22:9) "is kind to the poor" (19:17). That is lending to the Lord and He will repay him for his good deed (v. 17). The Bible says that those with such kind eye or of merciful eye will be blessed by God (22:9).

This is what the Bible 1 John 3:17-18 says: “If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.” If we say we love God, when we see poor brothers and sisters in Christ, we need to help those members with the material we have. We should not just tell others that our brother and sister in Christ are having a hard time. We must love our poor brothers and sisters in Christ sincerely, not only with words, but with deeds. The Bible Proverbs 11:24 says, “There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more, And there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want.” The Bible says that those who give to the poor will not be in need (28:27), but will get richer. If we have seen the poor with faith in this word, I hope and pray that we will be able to reach out and help the poor rather than ignore them.

**The eighth and the last thing we need to know is that when the wicked rise to power, people will hide themselves, but when they perish, the righteous will increase.**

On the afternoon of November 7, 2017, President Trump of the United States gave a speech at the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea as the first President of the United States in 24 years in front of 550 members of the ruling and opposition parties and diplomatic envoys in Korea. President Trump's 35-minute speech was mostly about North Korea, and about 24 minutes of it was about condemning the North Korean system. He started by referring to the Korean War and the history of the Korean-US alliance on June 25, and even sent a warning to North Korean leader Jong-un Kim (Internet). After the speech, foreign media evaluated President Trump's speech, which included the following: ‘Also, by introducing the human rights situation in North Korea through the mouth of our ally, the US President, rather than President Moon, the suffering and cruel reality of the North Korean people was introduced to the South Korean people. It has also been of great help to anti-communist education.’ I watched President Trump's speech again in order to see the pain and the terrible reality of the North Korean people again. He said: ‘North Korean workers work unpaid work under conditions that cannot stand horribly long hours. Recently, orders were issued to the entire workforce to either work 70 days in a row or pay for a day's rest. Families live in houses without plumbing, and fewer than half have electricity. Parents hand over a token of good will to teachers and hope their children will be regulated in forced labor. More than one million North Koreans died of famine in the 1990s, and many more continue to die even after the famine of the 1990s. Nearly 30% of children under the age of 5 suffer from stunting due to malnutrition. Nevertheless, in 2012 and 2013, the North Korean regime spent an estimated \$200 million, nearly half of what it allocated to improve the standard of living of its people, to build more monuments, towers, and statues to idolize the dictator. The marginal harvest of the North Korean economy is distributed according to loyalty to the crooked system. Far from treating its inhabitants as equal citizens, this brutal dictator scales and scores them and ranks them so selfishly for their loyalty to the country. Those who score high in loyalty can live in the capital, Pyongyang. Those with the lowest scores will starve first. One small violation, such as accidentally staining a picture of a dictator printed on discarded newspaper, can affect the social credit rating of

the person's entire family for decades. And an estimated 100,000 North Koreans are subjected to forced labor in labor camps, enduring torture, starvation, rape and murder. In one known case, a 9-year-old boy was sentenced to 10 years in prison. This was the reason the child's grandfather was accused of treason. In another instance, a student was beaten at school for forgetting a detail about Kim Jong-un's life. Soldiers kidnap foreigners and make them work as language teachers for North Korean agents. Although it used to be a stronghold of Christianity before the war, now Christians and other religious people, if caught praying or practicing religion, face detention, torture and, in most cases, even execution. North Korean women are forced to abort fetuses considered racially excluded. When these children give birth, they are killed as newborns. A baby with a Chinese father was dragged in a basket. The guards say the child's blood is impure and not worth living. So why should people feel obligated to help China? Life in North Korea is so terrible that people say they bribe government officials and sell them into slavery abroad. They have rather be a slave. Attempting to run away is a crime punishable by death. The man who managed to escape said: 'Thinking about it now, I was more like an animal than a person. It was only after I left North Korea that I realized what life was like' (Internet).

The Bible Proverbs 28:12 says, "When the righteous triumph, there is great glory, But when the wicked rise, men hide themselves." Isn't North Korea like that now? Aren't the North Koreans hiding because the wicked have seized power? The Bible Proverbs 29:2 says, "When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, But when a wicked man rules, people groan." In fact, people in countries such as North Korea and Syria, where the wicked have taken power, are groaning. This is what the Bible Proverbs 28:28 says: "When the wicked rise, men hide themselves; But when they perish, the righteous increase." We have already meditated on a similar verse, Proverbs 28:12: "When the righteous triumph, there is great glory, But when the wicked rise, men hide themselves." Here the Proverbs writer contrasts the righteous with the wicked. First, the meaning of the word about the righteous is that the righteous are happy because God uses the righteous. And the reason is because God gives great grace and blessing to the righteous (Park). In particular, when God makes the leaders of a nation the righteous and allows them to rule the nation, the citizens are bound to rejoice because there is order and justice in that nation (Walvoord). Look at Proverbs 11:10 – "When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, ...." However, when the wicked arise, that is, when the wicked come to power, people will live in hiding (28:12b, 28a). The reason is because the wicked, who have seized power, are arrogant and oppress the people (Park). Look at Proverbs 28:15 – "Like a roaring lion and a rushing bear Is a wicked ruler over a poor people." Imagine "a roaring lion and a rushing bear". Why does the lion roar? The reason is because the lion is hungry and look for something to eat (Park). In Proverbs 17:12, the Bible says, "Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly." The Bible tells us not that it is better to meet the bear robbed of her cubs than the fool in his folly. How is that? How is the fool more dangerous than the female bear whose cubs have been robbed? The reason is because when the fool is angry, he is more irrational than the bear robbed of her cubs (MacArthur). Therefore, when the foolish and arrogant wicked man comes to power, citizens have no choice but to hide. But when the wicked perish, the righteous increase (Prov. 28:28). When the

foolish and arrogant wicked who have come to power fall, the righteous will multiply and prosper. The reason is because when the number of the wicked increased, the number of sins increased (29:16), but as the wicked perish, the number of sins decreases and of course there will be more righteous people who have lived in hiding. For example, in the time of the Judges, when the wicked rise (when they come to power), as the Israelites took refuge in caves and safe areas in the mountains because of the cruel Midianites who were wicked people (Judg. 6:2) are forced to live in hiding (Prov. 28:28). But after God appointed Gideon as a judge and his 300 men defeated the enemies of Midian, there was peace in the land for 40 years while Gideon lived (Judg. 8:28). In such calm time, people no longer have to live in hiding. The reason is because in such a time of peace the righteous will increase. This is what the Bible Proverbs 28:12a says: “When the righteous triumph, there is great glory ....” And this is what Proverbs 11:10a says: “When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, ....” What does it mean? When the wicked perish and the righteous triumph and prosper, all people (all citizens) rejoice and rejoice.

When I personally pray, I think of the people dying in Syria's civil war, and I pray that the dictator of that country will step down or that the citizens of that country will be free one day. The same goes for North Korea. I pray that one day the dictator will step down and that our brothers and sisters in that country will no longer suffer from poverty and persecution while living a life of faith. Frankly, sometimes I hope and pray for the destruction of the wicked leaders in power, like the psalmist. Therefore, I hope and pray that the citizens of those countries will not only die, but also that they will not suffer and be able to rejoice.

There are the facts that we need to know. We received lessons while meditating on the 8 facts we need to know, focusing on the words of Proverbs 28:21-28: (1) The first thing we need to know is that we can do wrong with bribes (v. 21). (2) The second thing we need to know is that a greedy man is unaware of poverty coming upon him (v. 22). (3) The third thing we need to know is that rebuking a person is more loved later than flattering with our tongues (v. 23). (4) The fourth thing we need to know is that a person who steals from his parents and says it is not a sin is no different from a robber (v. 24). (5) The fifth thing we need to know is that a greedy man stirs up dissension, but those who trust in the Lord will prosper (v. 25). (6) The sixth thing we need to know is that we must not trust ourselves and act wisely (v. 26). (7) The seventh thing we need to know is that those who give to the poor will lack nothing (v. 27). (8) The eighth and the last thing we need to know is that when the wicked rise to power, people will hide themselves, but when they perish, the righteous will increase (v. 28).

## **“A man who loves wisdom”**

### **[Proverbs 29:1-5]**

Personally I am asking God for a certain power. That power is the power of the word of God and the power of love. However, as I continued to meditate on the books of wisdom in the Bible, I began to long for another power. That power is “the power of wisdom.” The motive for asking God for the power of wisdom was that as I have meditated on the books of wisdom, I have been forced to ask God for wisdom because the words of God has been exposing my own folly. In particular, one of the reasons I long for the power of wisdom is to hate evil. In other words, one of the reasons I ask God for the power of wisdom is because I hate evil that God hates, and I love good that God loves more and more.

When we look at Proverbs 29:3a, this is what the Bible says: “A man who loves wisdom makes his father glad, ...” Focusing on this verse, under the title “A man who loves wisdom,” I would like to receive the lessons from the man who loves wisdom by meditating on what or whom they long for in three ways.

#### **First, the man who loves wisdom desires reproof rather than flattery.**

Look at Proverbs 29:1, 5: “A man who hardens his neck after much reproof Will suddenly be broken beyond remedy. ... A man who flatters his neighbor Is spreading a net for his steps.” Do you like to hear reproof or flattery? If you know that he who flatters you lie only in front of you to please you for his own benefit, to get what he wants, would you still want to hear his flattery over and over? Or, although you may feel bad at the time you hear the rebuke, if you know that the person loves you and is rebuking you for your sake (to build you up), would you rather listen to that person's rebuke?

We've already meditated on the words of Proverbs 28:23, “He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor Than he who flatters with the tongue.” This verse exhorts us to be “He who rebukes a man”. Why? The reason is because he who rebukes others will afterward find more favor (v. 23). But in reality, our instinct is to want to be favored more now than to be favored more later. And the way we are now more favored by the others is to flatter in order to please them, rather than rebuke them for their sin. The Bible Proverbs 29:5 says, “A man who flatters his neighbor Is spreading a net for his steps.” Here, the word ‘flatters’ his neighbor means to say a smooth thing to the neighbor. And it is to speak in a pleasant way to fit the sinful nature of the other person (Park). A good example of this is the 400 false prophets who flattered Ahab, the wicked king of Israel, in 1 Kings 22. At that time,

King Ahab told King Jehoshaphat of Judah to go with him to Ramoth Gilead to fight the Aram (v. 4). At that time, King Jehoshaphat asked King Ahab to first seek the counsel of the Lord (v. 5). So King Ahab gathered about 400 prophets and asked them, “shall I go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?” (v. 6) Then the prophets flattered King Ahab, saying, ‘Go, for the Lord will give it into the king’s hand’ (v. 6). Another example is that during the time of the prophet Jeremiah, false prophets made a false prophecy that were pleasing to the ears of the people of Israel. The false prophecy was that “Peace, peace ... when there is no peace” (Jere. 6:14; 8:11). How could there be peace for the people of Israel, who were sinning and had not repented? It was the false prophecy of the false prophets and the lie to the ears of the people of Israel. Why were the false prophets so flattering? Why did they speak pleasantly to King Ahab or to the people of Israel? The reason was because King Ahab and the people of Israel, who were listening to the pleasant sound, were sinning, so their sinful nature and the flattery of the false prophets matched their sinful will and interests.

To flatter people like this is to spread a net for one's feet (Prov. 29:5). What does it mean? Why do hunters spread their nets? Aren't they doing this to catch the animals they hunt? The saying that a man who flatters his neighbor spreads the net at his own feet, even though it may not seem like a problem at first when he flatters his neighbor. Eventually he gets caught in the net. In a word, “a flattering mouth works ruin” (26:28). In Jeremiah 9:8, the Bible says this: “Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks with deceit. With his mouth each speaks cordially to his neighbor, but in his heart he sets a trap for him.” The flatterer's tongue is like a deadly arrow. The flatterer always lies with his mouth. He speaks kindly to his neighbor with his mouth, but in his heart he sets a trap to catch him. Such a flatterer speaks lies with a double heart (Ps. 12:2). Therefore, we must be wary of the double-minded people and those who flatter us. The wise are wary of flatterers. Of course, first of all, we ourselves must never, like the apostle Paul, use flattery (1 Thess. 2:5). In particular, we must not flatter others for our own advantage (Jude 1:16). Flatterers, whom we should be wary of, deceive the minds of naïve people with smooth talk and flattery (Rom. 16:18). They never speak the truth. They even cleverly mix truth and lies and flatter us, making us to go astray and sin in our pride. Therefore, we must refuse to listen to flattery, but be quick to hear the rebuke of those who reprove us out of love (Prov. 28:23). Those who long for wisdom desire reproof rather than flattery.

However, the problem is, as in the words of Proverbs 29:1, we harden our necks even after much reproof. Here, a person who hardens his neck refers to a very stubborn person. Such a person has an unteachable spirit (MacArthur) that is he is difficult to teach. Who can you think of in the Bible of such a very stubborn and stiff-necked person? It reminds me of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, from the book of Exodus. Until God gave ten plagues, King Pharaoh hardened his heart and insisted on his own will instead of listening to God's words through Moses and Aaron. He didn't let the Israelites go. Then, after receiving the 10th plague, his stubbornness was broken and he sent the Israelites out of Egypt according to God's word. But, besides this king, when I think of a very stubborn man in the Bible, I also think of the prophet Jonah. When God saw the deeds of the people of Nineveh, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon



them (Jon. 3:10). But the prophet Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry (4:1) and he wanted to die (v. 3). The reason was because Jonah insisted on his will, even though God relented. What was Jonah's will? It was "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (3:4). That was why "Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the city" (4:5). What did Jonah expect? It was the fall of the city of Nineveh (3:4).

We must be very wary of hardening our hearts. In order to do that, we must soften our hearts by diligently cultivating our hearts as we break up our unplowed ground. Also we must melt and break our hearts with the word of God, which is like a fire and a hammer. We must soften our hearts by piercing our hearts with the word of God, the sword of the Spirit. That is why we should listen with humble learning attitude to the words of those who rebuke us with love and soften our hearts. This is the attitude of those who long for wisdom. In particular, we should humbly hear the Lord rebuking our iniquities (Ps. 39:11). When the Lord rebukes us and reveals our sins before our eyes, we must accept them with humility (50:21). Therefore, I hope and pray that we will all have the grace to confess and repent our sins by going to God by relying on the blood of Jesus on the cross.

### **Second, the man who loves wisdom desires justice rather than bribes.**

Not long ago, I met a colleague from college and we had a meal together. And I saw him lamenting, saying, 'These days, the world seems to be all about money and power.' I think maybe that colleague isn't the only one who laments like that. Many people seem to think that when they look at the world, they can live for their own benefit as long as they have money and power. And they would think that if they had money and power, they could make a mistake and get out without punishment. How can you get out? One of those methods is probably a bribe. For example, if a judge is supposed to give a fair trial, what will happen to that trial if he shows partiality? (28:21) He will never make a right judgment. But why is that happening in court today? The reason is 'bribery'.

There seem to be more people in this world who have the idea that money is everything. They seem to believe that money is power. So they are willing to pay bribes to fulfill their selfish ends and ambitions. An example is found in Ezra 4. When the Israelites who returned to their homeland of Judah after their captivity in Babylon tried to rebuild the temple of God, the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard the news (v. 1) and came to Zerubbabel and other Jewish leaders (v. 2). They told Zerubbabel and the Jewish leaders to let them also build the temple with the people of Judah (v. 2), but Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and other leaders refused: "You have no part with us in building a temple to our God. We alone will build it for the LORD, the God of Israel, ..." (v. 3). From that time on, "the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building" (v. 4). One of the ways they hindered the building of the temple was bribery (v. 5). "They bribed officials to work against them and frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia and down to the reign of Darius king of Persia" (v. 5). In Nehemiah 6, Tobiah and Sanballat, enemies of the people of Judah, bribed Shemaiah to

prophesize falsely against Nehemiah (v. 12). The content of the prophecy is, “Let us meet in the house of God, inside the temple, and let us close the temple doors, because men are coming to kill you--by night they are coming to kill you” (v. 10). Upon hearing this, Nehemiah replied to Shemaiah, “Should a man like me run away? Or should one like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!” (v. 11) Nehemiah then learned that Shemaiah had not received the word of God, but had received a bribe from Tobiah and Sanballat and had prophesied this thing to him (v. 12). Why did Tobiah and Sanballat, who opposed the people of Judah, bribe Shemaiah to prophesize falsely? Look at Nehemiah 6:13 – “He had been hired to intimidate me so that I would commit a sin by doing this, and then they would give me a bad name to discredit me.” Ultimately, the purpose of the bribe was to frighten Nehemiah, the leader of the people of Judah, to sin against God.

Look at Proverbs 29:2, 4: “When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan. ... By justice a king gives a country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down.” What would happen if politicians in power imposed bribes on citizens? What will happen to this country if its leaders, especially the president, force people to bribe? Today's Bible says that the one who is greedy for bribes tears the country down (v. 4). Actually, as in the second half of verse 2, among many nations in this world, aren't there leaders (presidents, kings) who have the power of the wicked to rule over the country and force people to pay bribes? (v. 4) What are such evil leaders if they aren't ruining their own country (v. 4), and what will the citizens think when they see the leaders of their own country ruining their own country? Won't they groan as verse 2 says? In Ecclesiastes 7:7, the Bible says, “Extortion turns a wise man into a fool, and a bribe corrupts the heart.” Just imagine. If the heart of a bribed king or president is corrupted, will such a leader be able to rule his country properly? Rather, such a king will oppress the poor citizens with his corrupt heart. In the days of the prophet Amos, the judges took bribes to oppress the poor (Amos 5:12). If this is happening in court because of a corrupt judge, what do you think will happen in that country because of a corrupt president? Wouldn't that corrupt president take bribes from the wicked rich and despise and oppress the poor? So, in Proverbs 29:2b, 4b, the Bible says this: “...when the wicked rule, the people groan. ... but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down.” On the contrary, as Proverbs 29:2a, 4a says, “When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice ... By justice a king gives a country stability ....” Here I am taught that those who long for wisdom that pleases our Heavenly Father (v. 3) don't long for bribes, but for justice (v. 4). In fact, it is no different from the time in which the writer of Proverbs lived and now, there was a time when evil men forced to pay bribes took power, and there were times when righteous leaders who fortified the nation with justice took power.

I think there are always these two kinds of leaders. Of course, our desire is that the leaders of this country we live in aren't evil people who bribe or force us to pay, but that they are all righteous people who strengthen the country with justice. However, when I see the politicians who are the leaders of our country taking bribes and being punished on the news often, I can't shake the thought that real money can deceive people and make them commit crimes. Look at Proverbs 17:8 – “A bribe is a charm to the one who gives it; wherever he turns, he succeeds.” It

seems that there are people in the real world who treat bribes like a magic wand. Some people seem to believe that they can do anything with a bribe. These people hate to do justice (21:7). But we must yearn for and love justice. Rather, we should hate bribes. We must put aside the false belief that we can do anything with the bribe. And we must neither give nor accept bribes. I think the society we are living in now is a society where justice isn't enforced like the society that the prophet Habakkuk lived in. Look at Habakkuk 1:4 – “Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.” The prophet Habakkuk appeals to God, but complains that a just God doesn't punish the wicked. The complaint is that the law is paralyzed and justice never prevails. Because the law was ignored and paralyzed, there was no justice at all. Because the wicked hem in the righteous, justice is perverted. Since there were more wicked than the righteous, and so many wicked people surrounded the righteous, injustice was prevailing. But the really serious problem is that justice aren't practiced even in the church. A quick share of what I wrote last December: ‘When justice isn't done in the church, the righteous souls will be deeply wounded and will suffer heartbreak. Then the righteous Judge and Head of the Church, the Lord, will rebuke, warn, and lovingly discipline the Church. Before receiving that discipline, we must take the Lord's rebukes and warnings seriously in the fear of God.’ We must take this matter seriously and do justice and righteous before the Lord disciplines us. The reason is that our God is the God who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth (Jere. 9:24).

When we pray for our nation's leaders, let's pray that they can become leaders who do justice and righteousness like God. When our leaders do justice and righteousness, our nation can be established (Prov. 29:4). Then our citizens can rejoice (v. 2). Even though the number of the wicked increases and surrounds the righteous, and it becomes a nation where justice is perverted, let us continue to cry out to God like the prophet Habakkuk. At that time, God answered Habakkuk's prayer, saying, "The righteous shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4). Let's not forget that God who answers our prayers wants us to live only by faith in Him. Even if this society ignores laws and no justice is enforced at all, by faith in God who does justice and righteousness, we pray that we may all be those who please God by doing justice and righteousness (21: 3).

**Third and last, the man who loves wisdom desire God the Father rather than prostitutes.**

Now in the US, the “Me Too movement” continues. Here, the “Me Too movement” is a movement in which people who have been sexually assaulted break their silence and expose “Me Too”, saying, ‘I suffered like this too’. On December 6, 2017, the American weekly magazine Time magazine selected ‘Silence Breakers’ as Person of the Year. These are a large number of unspecified women who participated in the “Me Too” movement and exposed sexual violence by influential people, saying, ‘I suffered like this too.’ When selecting them as Person of the Year, he explained that from the first molestation accuser against Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein, to the many people who shared their stories of harm using 'Me Too', especially women. The New York Times reported on

the 'Weinstein Scandal' in early October. Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein allegedly sexually harassed dozens of women. Afterwards, famous celebrities such as Angelina Jolie, Gwyneth Paltrow and Lady Gaga followed, and in the end, Weinstein was kicked out of his film studio. Actress Alyssa Milano started the "Me Too" campaign, where women who were sexually assaulted after the "Weinstein scandal" reported their experiences by adding a hashtag to "Me Too", meaning 'I was also a victim' on social media. This campaign sparked a 'sexual assault accusation craze' throughout American society, and millions of sexual assault victims were exposed and reported in various fields, including politics, business, labor, and the media, beyond the film industry (Internet).

Why have there been so many millions of victims of sexual violence? Victims of sexual violence like this will continue to happen now and in the future. What could be the causes?

(1) I think the cause is “the lust of the eyes” (1 Jn. 2:16).

Satan is stimulating the lusts of our eyes to become sexually sinful. Satan arouses greed within us and makes us covet other women too much. If we succumb to Satan's temptations, we are drawn to the lust of the eyes to look at a woman other than our wives. But our eyes aren't satisfied with how many women we see. Look at Ecclesiastes 1:8 – “All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.” Because the lust of the eyes cannot be satisfied, we covet another woman by looking at her over and over again.

(2) I think the cause is “the cravings of sinful man” (1 Jn. 2:16).

Satan tempts our fleshly lusts into sexual sin. Satan makes us covet women other than our wives. Satan is always dissatisfied with our wife's breasts and makes us not to be captivated by her love (Prov. 5:19). As a result, Satan compels us to commit sexual offenses such as molestation, sexual assault, and rape. Greed is the cause of our infidelity. Greed aren't satisfied (Isa. 56:11). Therefore, greed makes us dissatisfied with our wives (Prov. 5:19) and makes us covet our neighbor's wives (Exod. 29:17). The desires of the flesh on this earth eventually lead to sexual sin through fornication, impurity, lust, evil desire, and excessive greed (Coloss.3:5).

(3) I think the cause is ‘foolishness’.

A good example of this is “a youth who lacked judgment” or a fool in Proverbs 7. That fool is one who has fallen into the temptation of the seductive words of the adulteress (v. 5). How did Satan tempt this fool? I thought of three things:

**(a) Satan tempts the youth who lacks judgement to walk along in the direction of the adulteress' house.**

Look at Proverbs 7:8 – “He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house.” When the fool was going down the street near the adulteress’ corner (7:8), he shouldn’t set his foot on that path and walk in that way. Rather he should turn away from that path and left (4:15). But the foolish young man didn’t turn away from the adulteress’ path. Rather he walked closer to the corner of her street and walked along in the direction of her house (7:8). When the sun sets and twilight, as the dark of night set in, the foolish youth walked along in the direction of the adulteress’ house (v. 9). Why did the young man walk in the direction of the adulteress’ house during the dark night, not broad daylight? It was because he didn’t want anyone to see him. In other words, the foolish young man went secretly to the adulteress in the deep night to hide his actions from others (Park).

**(b) The adulteress comes out and greets the youth who lacks judgement with hidden intentions.**

Look at Proverbs 7:10 – “Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.” When the foolish young man without wisdom fell into the Satan’s temptation and passed through the street in the twilight, in the evening, in the middle of night and in the darkness and went near to the adulteress’ corner and took the way to her house (vv. 8-9). She dressed as a harlot and greeted the foolish young man with cunning of heart (v. 10). The cunning adulteress hid her true intentions in meeting the foolish young man who lacked judgment. In fact, the literal meaning of the original Hebrew word ‘to be cunning’ here is ‘hidden’ (MacArthur). What was her hidden intention? Look at Proverbs 23:27-28: “For a harlot is a deep pit And an adulterous woman is a narrow well. Surely she lurks as a robber, And increases the faithless among men.” The hidden intention of the adulteress in greeting the foolish young man in dressing like the prostitute was to set a trap and render him faithless in marriage. In other words, the adulteress’ hidden intention is to force many married men to break what they had promised at marriage (Park).

**(c) The adulteress seduces the youth who lacks judgement with her flattering lips.**

Look at Proverbs 7:21 – “With her many persuasions she entices him; With her flattering lips she seduces him.” How the adulteress seduces and corrupts the young man who lacks judgement:

**(c1) The adulteress seduces the young foolish man by being seen.**

Look at Proverbs 7:10 – “And behold, a woman comes to meet him, Dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart.” When the Bible says the adulteress ‘dressed as a harlot’, it means in these days that the adulteress is dressed like a prostitute. It seems that prostitutes wear clothes seductively and the exposure is severe. But they are dressed enough to sexually stimulate the lust of men’s eyes and the lust of their flesh. I think it’s really stimulating to seduce foolish men.

(c2) The adulteress seduces the young foolish man by touching.

Look at Proverbs 7:13 – “So she seizes him and kisses him ....” Can you imagine a heavily exposed prostitute rushing at the foolish young man, squeezing him tight with her arms and kissing him with her lips? At that time, the foolish young man would have already felt sexual excitement visually when he saw the adulteress’ clothes worn like a prostitute. But if he was held by here and even was kissed by her, then he would have had to feel sexual impulse at that time. This cunning adulteress even uses physical contact in seducing the foolish young man who lacks judgement. If the adulteress touches and even kisses the foolish young man, how can it not sexually arouse the young man?

(c3) The adulteress seduces the young foolish man by being heard.

In other words, in seducing the foolish young man, the adulteress seduces "with persuasive words" and "with her smooth talk" (v. 21). I think that women are the same, but especially men seem to have weak sense of sight, of touch and of hearing. In other words, when a man is seduced by a woman, he may be tempted not only because he sees a woman's body, or he may be seduced through skinship, but he can also be tempted by listening to what the woman says.

Look at Proverbs 29:3 – “A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.” The Bible tells us that he who is a companion of prostitutes squander his wealth. In other words, he who hangs out with a prostitute is wasting his fortune. And if the wealth belongs to the father, how would the father feel if his foolish son wasted and lost his property by dating a prostitute? He will never be happy. The parable of the prodigal son of Jesus in Luke 15 of the Bible comes to mind. A man had two sons (Lk. 15:11) and his second son received his portion from his father and went to a distant country, where he led a prodigal life, squandering all that he had received from his father (v. 13). In the end, the prodigal son used up all he had, and a great famine came in the country. And he began to be in need (v. 14). He was starving to death (v. 17). If the father of the prodigal son had known about this, how would he have felt? Therefore, the Bible advises not to be a companion of prostitutes (Prov. 29:3). We must not long for the prostitute. Rather, the Bible exhorts us to love wisdom (v. 3). We have already thought about a person who loves for wisdom is based on the words of Proverbs 29:1-5. That is, we have been taught that he who loves wisdom not only desires reproof rather than flattery (vv. 1, 5), but also desires justice rather than bribes (vv. 2, 4). It is said that those who love wisdom make their father happy (v. 3). In Proverbs 27:11, the Bible says, “Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart; ....” According to this word, when we become wise people, we can make Heavenly Father's heart rejoice. Why does a man who loves wisdom please his father? I have thought of three reasons for this: (1) The man who loves wisdom pleases his Father God by fearing Him and hate evil (8:13). (2) The man who loves wisdom pleases his Father God by obeying His word (3:1, 3). (3) The man who loves wisdom pleases his Father God by experiencing His love through His

discipline (3:11-12).

Let us all become those who love wisdom that pleases our Heavenly Father. Let us desire reproof rather than flattery, and justice rather than bribe. Let us be those who love wisdom who desire God the Father rather than prostitutes, and please Him.

## A wise righteous man

### [Proverbs 29:6-11]

As we all know, we have heard the phrase “praise and worship” a lot. But what do you think “praise” is and what do you think “worship” is? Among the books I read a long time ago, I still remember what I read about praise and worship in a book written by Pastor Seong-Geon Hong, who served in Youth with Mission in Korea. According to Pastor Hong, “praise” is to praise what God has done for us, and “worship” is to worship the existence of God, that is, who God is, His being. At that time, as I read what he said in his book, it came to my mind that I must have been a little persuaded. In particular, when I think about the difference between praise and worship, I felt it was right to worship God no matter what situation I was in. The reason is because even though there are many times when I don’t understand what God is doing in my life, and there are countless times when I cannot praise God with faith, when I know and believe that God is God, I have no choice but to worship Him no matter what. In Nehemiah 9:6, we see the Levites Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hasabneiah, Serebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah (v. 5) tell the Israelites gathered together (v. 1), “You alone are the LORD” (v. 6). As I meditated on these words before, I was taught that we too must confess, “You alone are the Lord” (v. 6). We have no choice but to confess, “You are the Lord God” (v. 7). The reason is because our God is a righteous God who faithfully fulfills His promises to us, who forgives all our sins, and who has mercy on us and saves us with His great mercy. Therefore, we sincerely confess, ‘O God, You are my God’. There is a gospel song called “Step by Step.” If we look at the lyrics of the song, it says: “Oh God, You are my God And I will ever praise you ....”

Today, under the title of “A wise righteous man,” I would like to receive three lessons on how the wise righteous man acts.

#### **First, the wise righteous man sings and rejoices.**

Look at Proverbs 29:6 – “By transgression an evil man is ensnared, But the righteous sings and rejoices.” The Bible says that the righteous sings and rejoices. Why does the righteous sing and rejoice? Could it be because there is something good happen to him? Who wants to sing and rejoice when something bad happens? Then what good will happen to the righteous man who sings and rejoices? In order to answer this question, we must consider the first half of verse 6. Look at Proverbs 29:6a – “By transgression an evil man is ensnared, ....” Isn’t it natural for the wicked to commit sins? Isn’t it true that a man sins because he is wicked? If he is righteous, then would he sin? One of the sins of the wicked is mentioned in Proverbs 29:10 – “Men of bloodshed hate the blameless, But the



upright are concerned for his life.” In other words, one of the sins of the wicked is that he hates the blameless and the upright, and likes to shed blood in search of his life. No wonder the wicked hate the blameless and the upright. And one of the reasons for the hatred is because the sins of the wicked are revealed through the blameless and the upright (Ref.: Eph. 5:11). What are the consequences of these wicked people? In other words, what is the result of hating the blameless and the upright and shed blood in search of his life? Look at Proverbs 28:10a – “He who leads the upright along an evil path will fall into his own trap, ....” The result of the wicked is that they fall into their own trap (28:10). The Bible Proverbs 29:6, says that it is to ensnare themselves. Also, in the first half of Proverbs 12:13, the Bible says, “An evil man is trapped by his sinful talk, ....” This word of God says that the wicked are trapped. When we look at both the preceding verse, 5 that says, “A man who flatters his neighbor Is spreading a net for his steps” and verse 6 that says “By transgression an evil man is ensnared ....,” the Bible says that he who hates the upright and the blameless, and not only seeks his life and sheds blood, but also flatters his neighbors, in the end casts the net at his feet and makes himself the snare. Then, if we think of the righteous as opposed to the wicked, I think it will be easier to understand. In other words, the righteous man doesn’t sin as the wicked man does, and therefore the righteous man doesn’t do anything that would ensnare himself (v. 6). Rather, the righteous man escapes trouble (12:13). Looking at this word, we can understand why the righteous man sings and rejoices (29:6). In other words, the reason the righteous man sings and rejoices is because the Lord helps the righteous man to escape trouble. Although the righteous man suffers tribulation because the wicked man persecutes the blameless and the upright, the Lord rescues the righteous man from the tribulation. That is why the righteous man keeps his faith in the midst of tribulation and persecution, and praises and rejoices in God with faith. That praise is the praise of God's salvation, and that joy is the joy of salvation.

Then, the question we can ask is, ‘How could Paul and Silas in Acts 16 be able to praise God while being imprisoned?’ In other words, the question is, ‘How did they praise God in that prison even though they had not yet been delivered from prison?’ As I asked this question, I meditated again on the words of Acts 16. At that time, I was reminded again that the providence of the true God is interesting. The reason is because Paul and Silas came to Philippi (Acts 16:12) and were looking for a place to pray (vv. 13, 16) and their place of prayer was the deep prison. It is also that Paul was eventually imprisoned because he healed the slave girl who had spirit by which she predicted the future in the name of Jesus Christ (vv. 16-18). And they eventually prayed and praised God in prison (vv. 23-25). Isn't it interesting to you that God doesn't make us pray in chapels, but in places like deep prison? But how could Paul and Silas pray and praise God in prison? (v. 25) How could they praise God in such a situation when the Lord had not yet delivered them from the prison? I think it was possible because Paul and Silas believed that God would deliver them from prison. In other words, they praised God even in prison because they had faith in the God of salvation and the assurance of salvation that God would deliver them from prison. Like Paul and Silas, shouldn't we also praise God with such faith and assurance of salvation under any circumstances?

We must be wise righteous Christians. The wise righteous Christians sing and rejoice. The reason is

because of the God of salvation. Although the wicked hates the wise righteous people, and sin, that is making a snare to themselves. On the surface, the righteous can suffer because of the persecution of the wicked. But in the midst of suffering, the wise righteous Christians can praise and rejoice in God because of the grace of salvation God has given them in Jesus Christ. Look at Isaiah 38:20 – “The LORD will save me, and we will sing with stringed instruments all the days of our lives in the temple of the LORD.”

### **Second, the wise righteous man concerns for the rights of the poor.**

Who do you think concern you the most? Is that your spouse, your parents or your best friend? I think the person who concerns us the most is a proof that that person loves us the most. However, no matter how well that person knows us, he will never know us fully. Nevertheless, we are comforted and strengthened by him who concerns us the most and understands us the most. In the midst of this, as we get to know the circumstances of those we love, as we often say, we cannot get rid of the thought that there is no person or family without an inside story. For example, on the surface, it seems that they are a couple living happily without any problems. But as we talk, they have their own inside story, and I think that we cannot fully understand them and their story. In Genesis 40:14, Joseph, who was falsely accused and imprisoned, interprets the dream of the cupbearer of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and says: “Only keep me in mind when it goes well with you, and please do me a kindness by mentioning me to Pharaoh and get me out of this house.” When the chief cupbearer restored his job according to the Joseph’s interpretation of the dream, Joseph asked him to think of him and does him a kindness by mentioning him to Pharaoh, king of Egypt. But the cupbearer had forgotten Joseph for two years. That is, he didn’t do as Joseph requested, nor did he mention Joseph to Pharaoh. Then, two years later, when King Pharaoh had a dream and there was no one to interpret his dream, only then did the cupbearer remember Joseph and told Pharaoh about Joseph (41:9-13). As a result, Joseph stood before Pharaoh and became the one who was in charge of the whole land of Egypt by interpreting his dreams. I wrote this while meditating on this Bible story: ‘If someone who knew my circumstances was doing well, he should have thought of me and showed me kindness. But he could not remember me and forgot me (Gen. 40:14, 23). Although I could have been discouraged, I trusted in God, who knows my situation best, and put my hope in Him. Two years later, God made that person who knew my circumstances to remember me through some kind of opportunity. And he did what I asked him to do for me (41:9-13). As a result, God not only delivered me, but exalted me (vv. 37-43).’ Our God knows our situation better than anyone else. We must trust in that God and put our hope in Him.

Look at Proverbs 29:7 – “The righteous is concerned for the rights of the poor, The wicked does not understand such concern.” If we look at this verse, the Bible says that the righteous is concerned for the rights of the poor. The righteous is kind to the poor (14:31, 19:17), shares his food with the poor (22:9) and gives to the poor (28:27). A righteous king faithfully judges the poor (29:14) and protects the life of the poor (v. 10). But the wicked doesn’t understand such concern (29:7). So the wicked not only shuts his ears to the cry of the poor (21:23), but

also closes his eyes to them (28:27). The reason is because the wicked is hardhearted toward the poor (Deut. 15:7). Rather, the wicked mocks the poor (Prov. 17:5), threaten them (13:8), and even abuse the poor to increase his wealth (22:16).

A biblical example of this is Ahab king of Israel in 1 Kings 21. He longed for Naboth's vineyard close to his palace, even though he had "a better vineyard" (1 Kgs. 21:1-2). But Naboth said, "The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers" (v. 3), so "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers" (v. 4; Ref.: v. 6). So Ahab "lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat" (v. 4). Seeing this, his wife Queen Jezebel asked Ahab, "Why are you so sullen? Why won't you eat?" (v. 5), and King Ahab told her everything (v. 6). In the end, Queen Jezebel plotted to kill Naboth and took his vineyard and gave it to Ahab. The Bible says that Ahab sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord (vv. 20, 25). The Bible says that "There was never a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD" (v. 25).

The Bible Isaiah 32:7 says, "The scoundrel's methods are wicked, he makes up evil schemes to destroy the poor with lies, even when the plea of the needy is just." What does it mean? It means that the wicked man has evil plans to destroy the poor with lies, even when the plea of the needy is just, the wicked man put the poor in a corner. Would such wicked man care about the poor? By no means does the wicked man care not to pay attention to the needs of the poor, nor to recognize the needy. The reason is because "The wicked does not understand such concern" (Prov. 29:7). Therefore, the wicked ruler oppresses the poor people (28:15). And an evil judge deprives the needy of justice and robs the poor of their rights (Isa. 10:2). But the righteous is concerned for the rights of the poor (Prov. 29:7). So the righteous defends the afflicted among the people and saves the children of the needy (Ps. 72:4). The righteous man who knows God can solve the problems of the poor and those in difficult circumstances and handle everything well (Jere. 22:16). Above all, the righteous man brings good news to the poor (Isa. 61:1). In other words, the righteous man preaches the gospel to the poor (Lk. 7:22).

Jesus preached the gospel to the poor (Lk. 7:22). The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, has come upon us, so we must preach the gospel to the poor (4:18). And we are to be gracious to the poor (Prov. 28:8), consider them (Ps. 41:1), and give gifts to the poor (Esth. 9:22).

### **Third and last, the wise righteous man turns away anger.**

As I was reading the book "THE HEART OF REMARRIAGE" by Gary & Greg Smalley, I thought about the need for righteous anger in a marital relationship. The reason is because righteous anger brings healthy changes in the marital relationship. But unrighteous anger worsens the marital relationship by sinning through each other's words and deeds. I think one of the biggest problems in the marital relationship is the inability to control anger. If even one of the two cannot control their anger, it seems that the small spark of the couple's conflict can be enough to turn into a wildfire and burn the entire couple's relationship. So we should not express our anger at ourselves to

other family members. It is also a bad habit to express sinful anger on family members. One of the ways to break that bad habit is to first humbly admit why we are angry with ourselves and that it is our own fault.

Look at Proverbs 29:8 – “Scorners set a city aflame, But wise men turn away anger.” Here, “Scorners” who set a city aflame refers to the proud and the angry men. And these proud and angry men blow the sparks of contention and stirs up the city (MacArthur). Look at Proverbs 26:21 – “Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife.” Can you imagine? What if you add charcoal to hot embers and wood to a burning fire? Wouldn't the burning fire become the bigger fire? Such a quarrel-loving person fuels a fight, turning a small fight into a whale fight. So Proverbs 29:9 says this: “When a wise man has a controversy with a foolish man, The foolish man either rages or laughs, and there is no rest.” Such a proud and contentious angry man is a fool, and the wrath of the fool is more dangerous than a bear robbed of her cubs (17:12). What is the reason? It is because the fools are less rational in anger than wild bears (MacArthur). Can you imagine the fool irrationally showing anger right now? (Prov. 12:16) The fool not only irrationally expresses anger right away, but also kills the other person after holding anger in his heart with perverse thoughts for a long time. An example is Absalom the son of David in 2 Samuel 13. He continued his anger for two years to kill Amnon, who raped his sister. In this way, if a person holds anger for a long time, he will surely commit a sin (Park). If we hold anger like this for a long time, we can stir up trouble not only at home but also at the church. So, I think, we should not get close to people who get angry easily (Prov. 12:16). Those who harbor anger for a long time with twisted thoughts should be avoided (2 Sam. 13). We should never meet anyone who is irrational when he is angry (Prov. 17:12).

The Bible Proverbs 29:8 talks about the person we need to approach and meet like this: “... But wise men turn away anger.” A proud and easily angered man disturbs a family, church, or city, but a wise man turns away anger. How can the wise man turn away anger? I want to think about only two things:

- (1) Look at Proverbs 15:18 – “A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger calms a dispute.”

The wise man seldom gets angry. As in the second half of Proverbs 29:11, the wise man holds his anger back. That is, he is slow to anger (Jam.1:19). He is not in a hurry. And he calms a quarrel (Prov. 15:18). But when we are quick-tempered and easily angered, we are bound to quarrel. The reason is because we cannot control our mouths in anger and speak rudely, but we speak harsh words and words that hurt others (v. 4). That's why we need to shut our mouths a bit when we're angry. In other words, when we are angry, we must restraint from speaking. The reason is because the words that come out of our mouths can be a harsh word that stirs up anger if we don't control our anger (v. 1). Therefore, we should be slow to speak when we are angry because we can hurt others (Jam. 1:19).

(2) Look at Proverbs 25:15 – “By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded, And a soft tongue breaks the bone.”

The wise man speaks soft words. And his soft tongue can break the bone, which means he can do hard work (Walvoord). What hard work can the soft tongue of the wise man do? The Bible says that the soft tongue can persuade the hearts of a ruler (v. 15). Here, the term “ruler” refers to a high-ranking official such as a judge. He who demands a certain judgment from an unjust judge is easily resentful because of the judge's negligence. But if the wise man maintains a gentle attitude to the end, the judge will be moved (Park). How is this possible? How can we turn the heart of an unjust judge with a gentle tongue? It is possible with persistent persuasion (v. 15).

I remember the word of Proverbs 15:1 – “A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.” The wise man turns away anger of others with soft words. I hope and pray that we will become wise people to turn away anger.

We must be the wise righteous Christians. The wise righteous Christians sing and rejoice. The reason is because the Lord brings the righteous out of tribulation. In other words, the reason the wise righteous Christians sing and rejoice is because of the God of salvation. Although they may suffer, the wise righteous Christians can praise and rejoice in God in the midst of suffering because of the grace of salvation that God has given them in Jesus Christ. The wise righteous Christians are concerned for the rights of the poor. They relieve the injustice of the poor and saves (delivers) the descendants of the needy. Also, the righteous Christians who know God can solve the problems of the poor and needy and handle everything well. Above all else, the righteous Christians bring good news to the poor. In other words, they preach the gospel to the poor. The wise righteous Christians turn away anger. The wise Christians seldom get angry. Rather, they restrain their anger and are slow to anger. They not only put their opponents to rest with their soft words and their gentle answers, but also make peace with them by their perseverance and persuasion. I hope and pray that we will become such wise righteous Christians.

## **We should not leave it alone.**

### **[Proverbs 29:12-21]**

What would you do if a family member you loved was doing something wrong? Wouldn't you rebuke him at least once with a loving heart? But what would you do if that beloved family member didn't listen and continued to do wrong?

The lesson I personally learned from meditating on Romans 1 is that God's leaving us alone is a terrible punishment. The reason I think so is because in Romans 1:24, 26, 28, three times the Bible says that God gave them over: (1) "Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another" (v. 24), (2) "Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones" (v. 26), (3) "Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done" (v. 28). What would happen to us if God allowed us to live according to the sinful natures of our hearts? Listen to these 3 Bible verses: (1) (Mt. 15:19) "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander," (2) (Gal. 5:19-21) "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. . . ." (3) (2 Tim. 3:2) "People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy." Just looking at these three Bible verses, if God allows us to live according to our sinful natures, then we will have no choice but to commit these terrible sins against God. Therefore, we should ask God not to let us live our sinful natures, but to hold on to us and keep us from sinning.

In Proverbs 29:15, the Bible says: "The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother." I would like to receive a lesson from this verse today by meditating on five things under the title "We should not leave it alone."

### **First, we must not leave our ears to hear lies.**

Look at Proverbs 29:12 – "If a ruler listens to lies, all his officials become wicked." How would you feel if you could tell the truth from the heart and the other person would not listen to you, but rather hear the lie of the other person? Wouldn't you be very upset and frustrated? Another question is, 'What would you do if you found out that

someone you trusted was lying to you little by little? In particular, what would you do if that person didn't show you the truth, but rather told a lie as if it was the truth? Personally, I think you should stop associating with such people and stay away from them. The reason is because we can no longer trust them. Also, it is because we can also adversely affect ourselves by their lies. Of course, I personally believe that God refines our hearts even with those who lie around us. I think that God also makes us truthful by removing all falsehoods that are impurities in our hearts through them.

In Proverbs 29:12, the Bible says, "If a ruler listens to lies, all his officials become wicked." What do you think about this Bible verse? If a country's leader hears lies, will the people under him become evil? I think it's highly likely. The reason is that when the leader of the country with power hears lies, he will act falsely, and he thinks that there is a high probability that those under him will have no choice but to participate in the leader's false action. Think about it. When the leader of the powerful country hears lies and acts falsely, the people under that leader cannot reject that power, and in the end, they themselves have no choice but to act falsely. One example is that Jezebel, wife of Ahab, the wicked king of Israel mentioned in 1 Kings 21, wanted to take Naboth's vineyard that she wanted for her husband Ahab and give it to him (v. 6). "So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, placed his seal on them, and sent them to the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city with him" (v. 8). At that time, what did the elders and nobles living in the city of Naboth, who received the letter from Queen Jezebel, do? Did they really do what the wicked and false Jezebel wrote, or did they reject it? In 1 Kings 21:11, it is said that they did as Jezebel instructed. It must be the evil queen and the evil elders and nobles under her. How can they tell such a blatant lie? One of the things that the wicked Jezebel gave to the elders and nobles who lived in the city of Naboth was to set up two scoundrels to give false testimony about Naboth to the people who gathered (v. 13). This wicked Queen Jezebel made a lie, and set up two scoundrels as false witnesses so that the elders and nobles who lived in the city of Naboth under her also told the lie.

We must not listen to the lies of leaders who are stronger and more powerful than us. No matter how powerful the leader may be, we must rely on the Lord who rules over us and don't listen to the leader's lies, but only to listen to the Lord's words of truth. The reason we disobey the Lord is because we hear Satan's lies that we shouldn't listen to. We should not listen to Satan's lies at all, nor should we mix the word with Satan. But if we are already mixing it with Satan's lies in the realm of our thoughts, it is evidence that we are ignoring the voice of the Lord in disobedience, and rather obey Satan's lies. Therefore, we must listen to the Lord's words of truth, and be quick to hear them. Not only that, but we must strive to live obediently to the word of truth we have heard. So we must become truthful people who are becoming personified of the Word. Therefore, we should influence the people around us for good so that they too will obey the word of truth and become truthful people.

**Second, we should not leave our children alone to go their own way.**

Children's education can be a real challenge. I can't help thinking about how to raise our children the way God wants them to be. According to an Internet article I read one day, under the title 'What is the 4th Industrial Revolution's education for children?', it proposes how the parents should educate and nurture their children in a world where humans and artificial intelligence are increasingly coming together (Internet). For example, despite human efforts in a certain drama, the eldest daughter of a family no longer studies hard because of her inferiority complex towards artificial intelligence that cannot be replaced. When the parent asks why her grades fell, the daughter cries and says: 'The best is nothing. Whatever I do, AI is better. So what do I need to study?' I read this article all the way because the title was interesting. There is a part of the article that caught my attention while I was reading it, and I would like to share it with you: 'Maybe there is no more competition regarding the question of what more must we teach our children to be competitive? However, it is a fact that a shift in perspective is necessary because it is a generation that is more important how to look, think, and talk, not what to see, what to think, and what to learn. In the era of the 4th industrial revolution, let's remember that the real key for children to be respected as human beings is not human 'competence' but 'humanity' (Internet).

How should we educate and nurture our children? If I look at this e-mail message sent to me by a brother in Christ before, the number of international students (universities and graduate schools) in the United States in 2006 was about 60,000. This number ranks third after India and China, and it is said to be a number that far exceeds 10% of the total number of international students. But more people than us are Jews. Their home education and children's education are really special. It can be said that it is by far the best in the world. However, in Judges 2:10, we see the Israelites and their descendants who failed the child education: "All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel." This was the spiritual state of the people of Israel after the conquest of Canaan was over and before the judges began to rule. Clearly, in Deuteronomy 6:7, God said to the Israelites, "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." So the Israelites must have been diligently teaching their children all these things, such as the Red Sea incident, the manna, and the victory in the battle of Jericho, and so on. Then why didn't they know God? What could be the cause? The cause lies in not obeying God's word (Judg. 2:2). They disobeyed with fear (since there was an iron chariot), seeing the environment, and compromising with injustice. Because they disobeyed God's command and didn't drive out the Gentiles completely, they eventually became a thorn in the side of the Israelites and a snare.

It is often said that children learn by looking at the back of their parents. It means that we learn by doing our best in everything we do without lies and taking the initiative and setting an example. But more important than this is to show a life of obedience to God's word while meditating on it. As parents, are we showing our children a life of obedience to God's word?



The Bible Proverbs 29:15 says this: “The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother.” From this verse, we are taught that we should not leaven our children to go their own way when it comes to their education. In other words, we should not be bystanders in raising our children. To that extent, we think that we should enter into our children's lives and actively intervene to educate our children. But we must not interfere too much to dominate and control their lives. It's not easy to draw that line. God's wisdom is desperately needed as to where to draw the boundary line, which is not to be a parent who is too controlling and a parent who is too neglectful of their children. I remember one day my wife said that I'm a little neglecting and she's a little controlling in raising our children. So, from a certain point of view, my wife and I need each other in order to complement each other's shortcomings in raising the three children God has given us as gifts of grace.

The Bible Proverbs 29:15 says that if we let our children do their own thing in raising them, they will dishonor their mother. That's why whip and rebuke is necessary in educating our children. Although in this United States we live in, if a father disciplines his child with a rod as a punishment for love, the father can be arrested if the child sues his father. However, I believe that discipline is necessary in raising children, as Proverb says. The Bible Proverbs 13:24, which we have already meditated on, says this: “He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.” The Bible says that when parents spare the rod to their children, it is hating their children. The Bible says that if we truly love our children, we must faithfully discipline them. Do we really love our children in the eyes of God? I think we need ask ourselves again and again. The Bible Proverbs 23:13 says, “Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you strike him with the rod, he will not die.” Perhaps no parent will discipline a child with a rod in the hope that the child will die when he disciplines his beloved child. No matter how angry the father may be over his child, he will not beat him to death. But, on the other hand, what would happen to a child if his father not only refused to discipline him at all, but hesitated to even discipline him? As our children continue to be crooked, eventually they will be wrong too, but wouldn't that end up dishonoring us, the parents? So Proverbs 29:17 says this: “Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.” I think it is one of two things: whether parents are reviled because they let their children do what they want, or whether they are happy and at peace because they discipline their children. When we should discipline our children, we should discipline them with love. This is not so that we may not be reviled and obtain peace and joy, but that our children may grow well in the sight of God. Of course, in raising children, as Pastor Tripp said, ‘conversation and a rod’ are all necessary. Think about it. What if there was only a stick in raising children? We should try to talk with our children. We all know the importance of talking to our children. However, there are times when things are no longer just words. Then we have to lift the rod of love. Look at Proverbs 29:19, 21: “A servant cannot be corrected by mere words; though he understands, he will not respond. ... If a man pampers his servant from youth, he will bring grief in the end.” Of course, this verse is talking about the servants at the time of the writer of Proverbs. But when we apply this verse to raising children, we must first not raise our children unconditionally and nicely. Then our children will be spoiled. Second, when our children have something

to fix, we as parents should try to talk to them. We should not unconditionally discipline our children with the rod. But if our children know what they need to correct but don't intentionally and continue to do wrong, then we should discipline them with love. I think this applies to us too. When we continue to disobey our Heavenly Father even though we know we should obey Him, and if we persist in disobedience even though Heavenly Father speaks through the Bible again and again, then shouldn't our Heavenly Father discipline us with the rod of love? Look at Hebrews 12:6, 10b: "because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. ... but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness." Although our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best, God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness (v. 10). Therefore, Heavenly Father's discipline is a blessing. This is because we not only confess and repent of our sins through the discipline of God the Father, but also realize the love of God for us more deeply and more greatly. A good example of this is David. David did evil in the sight of God because he committed a sin against Bathsheba, and eventually killed her husband Uriah to cover up his sin. One of those disciplines, when he fled from his son Absalom to the wilderness of Judah, he confessed: "Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you" (Ps. 63:3).

We can't just leave our children alone and let them go their own way. It is an act that causes our children to dishonor us. Even if we rebuke our children and discipline them with the rod of love, we must educate them so that they may gain wisdom (Prov. 29:15). I hope and pray that Heavenly Father will raise our children as wise children of God.

### **Third, we should not leave the wicked to multiply.**

Do you think there are many wicked people in this world? If you think so, do you think there will be more poor wicked people or more rich wicked people? I think there are a lot of wicked people in this world, especially rich wicked people. I am talking about the the rich people who deceive in two ways (28:6). These rich people only pretend to walk on a good way while walking in an evil way (Park). Then, what is the evil way for the rich who walks in these two ways? As Proverbs 28:3 says, one of the evil ways of the rich who walks in two ways is to oppress the poor. For a more specific example, James 2:6 says: "But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?" The rich people who walk in two ways not only despise them in oppressing the poor, but also torment them, and cause harm by even taking them to court. Can't you imagine? On the outside, the rich people seem to do good deeds in front of people. But on the inside when nobody sees them, they oppress the poor (skillfully). In this way, the rich people who deceive in two ways are accumulating wealth because of inconsistent actions in front of people and behind them. They seem to be doing well in terms of financially. So the suffering poor and righteous people can even think that it is vain to keep their hearts pure and not sin because the wicked rich people "always carefree, they increase in wealth" (Ps. 73:12-13). But we must not forget that the rich wicked people who deceive in two ways are accumulating their own evil

while accumulating their wealth. And the Bible says that such rich people will suddenly fall (28:18). There will come a time when they will surely fall (Park). Look at Proverbs 10:16 – "... but the income of the wicked brings them punishment." The wicked people seem to sin more as their income increases. Therefore, I think that increasing wealth for the wicked people is a curse, not a material blessing.

Look at Proverbs 29:16 – "When the wicked thrive, so does sin, but the righteous will see their downfall." What does it mean? The more the wicked people, there is the greater the number of sins. Especially if those wicked people who are increasing are those who have power and authority in the world, then those under them will also become evil (v. 12), so the number of wicked will increase even more. As a result, the number of sins committed by the increasing number of wicked people will inevitably increase. For example, in a communist country such as North Korea, when the dictator with the highest power commits a sin, all those under that dictator will also become evil, and will also commit sins at the dictator's command. The problem is that the more the wicked people increase, their sins will increase. Then the righteous people who are justified by believing in Jesus will suffer more. The righteous people will suffer because as they live among the wicked people day after day, their righteous souls will be tormented by the lawless deeds they see and hear. A good example is righteous Lot, who lived in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot, who lived in the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, suffered greatly because of the immoral conduct of wicked and lawless people (2 Peter 2:6-8). At that time, what did God do to the wicked people and the righteous Lot living in Sodom and Gomorrah? Look at 2 Peter 2:7, 9, 10a: "and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men ... if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. ...." God judges and punishes the wicked, and rescues the righteous.

Isn't this the work of a just God? Did He not only judge the wicked living in Sodom and Gomorrah, but also the ungodly people in the days of Noah through the flood? (2 Peter 2:5) But God, who is gracious and merciful, rescued righteous Lot from the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Even in Noah's flood, all of them were destroyed by the flood, but Noah and his seven family members were saved by God (v. 5). Even at the time of the Exodus, God judged and destroyed the Egyptian soldiers who were chasing the Israelites in the Red Sea, and rescued the Israelites from their hands (Exod. 15). Therefore, we must live in this world with this assurance of salvation and the belief that a just God will surely judge the wicked. As the number of wicked people and sins increase, we must not just staring at the increase in sins and leave them alone. What should we do? As Romans 12:21 says, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Also, we must strive to do good in this sinful world, knowing that God has created us anew in Jesus Christ for good works (Eph. 2:10). In the same way, we must let our light shine before people, that they may see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven (Mt. 5:16). And above all, we must do our best to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with them and lead them to Jesus.

#### **Fourth, we should not leave people to become chaotic.**

I am you know that in any organization order matters. The reason is because if the organizational order is broken, chaos will come. But when order is maintained, there is peace and harmony in the organization. Consider, for example, the order in the home. If a husband, wife, or children in a family are faithfully fulfilling their roles by obeying God's word, then the right order will be established in that family and they will enjoy peace. However, if each person doesn't fulfill his or her biblical responsibility/duties in the home and breaks the order, there can be no peace in the family due to strife and discord. For a biblical example, when Sarah, the wife, disobeyed her husband Abraham, and made him lie with her maidservant Hagar the Egyptian (Gen. 16:1-4), there was no peace because of the family strife. Hagar despised her master Sarah because she was pregnant with Ishmael, and Sarah mistreated Hagar (v. 6).

Our God is a God of order. But the problem is that we are disorderly. An elder wrote an article in the Internet newspaper "Christian Today" under the title 'God of order, disorderly people' so I read it. Among the contents of the article, the elder who wrote the article said, 'Man has broken the order of creation because of his covetous desire to become God himself by doubting Him. Then he asked the question: 'Aren't you changing the order of creation created by God into a new order only because of my will and my own sweet greed?' (Internet) How would you answer this question? 'Only my will' and 'because of my own sweet greed', are we breaking down the new order that God has established in our homes and the Church, and changing it into a worldly order? For example, the order created by God is not 'infinite competition', and it isn't God's order that forces the weak to compete fiercely for their own greed. Aren't we pursuing this unrighteous human order even in the church?

Look at Proverbs 29:18 – "Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, But happy is he who keeps the law." What does it mean? In the absence of God's revelation, people cast off restraint and act disorderly. Look at Exodus 32:25 – "Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies." At the time of the Exodus, the Israelites were out of control. "When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron," and told Aaron to make them gods who would go before them (v. 1). And in the end, they made a golden calf and worshiped it (v. 8). In Moses' view, the Israelites were out of control. It was because Aaron had had let them get out of control and and so become a laughingstock to their enemies (v. 25). Truly, they were corrupt people (v. 7) and sinners against God, who had been quick to turn away from what God commanded them (v. 8). Also, they were a stiff-necked people in the sight of God (v. 9). Aren't we Christians now just like the people of Israel at the time of the Exodus out of control? Not only the people of Israel at the time of the Exodus, but also the people of Israel at the time of the prophet Ezekiel were out of control in the sight of God. The Bible Ezekiel 16:30 refers to their conduct as "the actions of a bold-faced harlot." In other words, the people of Israel believed in the splendor that God had bestowed on them, and played the harlot because of their fame (vv. 14-15). They made for themselves high places

of various colors and played the harlot on them (v. 16). They made idols and played harlot with the material blessings God had given them (v. 17). Moreover, they took their children whom they had borne to God and sacrificed them to idols to be devoured (v. 20). Yet they regarded their harlot as a small matter (v. 17). They played the harlot with the Assyrians because they still weren't satisfied. They also multiplied their harlotry with the land of merchants, Chaldea, yet even with this they weren't satisfied (vv. 28-29). This is "the actions of a bold-faced harlot" in the sight of God (v. 30). Their hearts were so weak that the people of Israel committed the bold-faced harlot. Aren't we now committing the same sin against God like the Israelites at the time of Ezekiel's prophet?

Then why does the Bible say that we are out of control? In Proverbs 29:18, the Bible says that the reason is because there is no vision or no revelation from God. In other words, the reason why we break God's law and go against His will and go our own way is because the lack of His word (Ref.: 1 Sam. 3:1) and the lack of hearing His word (Exod. 32:25, Lev. 13:45, Num. 5:18) (MacArthur). Actually, we are facing a famine (drought) in which we cannot hear the word of God according to the prophecy of Amos 8:11. The sermons are pouring out like a flood through the Internet or the media, but now we cannot hear them even though we have ears. As a result, we don't know God's will and precepts, so we do it our own way and do our own will.

What should we do? Look at the second half of Proverbs 29:18: "... but blessed is he who keeps the law." We must keep the law. We must obey the word of God. In order to do this, we must open our hearts and listen diligently to His word. We must also seek the illumination and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. We need to pray that the Holy Spirit will help us understand the word of God and teach us lessons. And when there is enlightenment, we must obey it. We must keep the word of God. Then there will be order in us, in the home and in the church. We will not be out of control. Rather, as we obey God's word, we will receive and enjoy the blessings God gives us.

### **Fifth and last, we should not leave ourselves to speak hastily without thinking.**

What if we are impatient? It is easy for us to make mistakes. But the problem is that after making a mistake because we are impatient, we should not be impatient again and should be careful. But there are many times when we cannot do so. When I look back on myself, I have a temper and a quick side. I also have a lot of impatience in doing the Lord's work and tend to think too impatiently. And if I think hastily, I will inevitably make many mistakes in my words and actions. A greater danger than this is that I can ruin God's work. How can I ruin God's work? It is by going ahead of God. The impatience in my heart keeps me from getting ahead of God's will and not waiting for His will. Not only that, my impatience in my heart makes me think of wrong plans and methods, sinning against God and make to go through painful consequences. In the end, when I look at myself and think about why I am impatient, I think the cause is a proud heart (v. 8). The proud heart has no patience. Rather, there is impatience in the proud heart. That is why I impatiently go ahead of the Lord not only in my word and deed but also in the realm of my thought.

A good biblical example is Sarah, Abraham's wife in Genesis. She didn't believe and doubted the word of God, "So shall your offspring be" (Rom. 4:18; Gen. 15:5), the promise God gave to her husband Abraham. What made her doubtful was that she believed in her clearly visible reality more than her invisible future. Here the reality shown is that her womb was dead (and her husband Abraham's body was good as dead) (Rom. 4:19) and the invisible future, according to God's promise, was that their descendants would become as numerous as the stars in the sky in God's time. So Sarah could not endure in faith until Abraham was 100 years old, 25 years after the word of the promise he received from God when he was 75 years old, but 10 years later (Gen 16:3) she made Abraham to sleep with her maidservant Hagar. As a result, when Abraham was 86 years old, Ishmael was born (v. 16). Sarah didn't persevere in her faith. She couldn't wait. She was hasty. So, she tried to fulfill God's promises on her own. So I wrote to myself, 'Let's beware of impatience in my heart': 'I should believe that God's will is done in God's time and God's way. I should not make the wrong choice hastily because my mind is impatient with worry due to unexpected difficult situations. I should beware of impatience in my heart, and should pray in faith and wait in anticipation. Surely God's good, pleasing, and perfect will be fulfilled. God's way, not my means, and not my way, and in God's time ....'

Look at Proverbs 29:20 – "Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him." What do you think of a person who speaks hastily without thinking? Have you ever been in a hurry to speak? In particular, have you ever regretted speaking hastily to the other person without much thought? This reminds me the Bible Proverbs 10:19 – "When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise." One day (July 2013), I meditated on 11 things about 'A foolish woman who destroys her house' focusing on the words of Proverbs chapter 14. When I reflect on that meditation in connection with today's text again, I have come to this conclusion: 'A fool who destroys his own family is quick-tempered (Prov. 14:17, 29), arrogant (v. 16), and has no knowledge on his lips (v. 7), while speaking a harsh word (15:1) and mocks at sin (14:9).' Don't we have this foolishness? Dr. Yoon-sun Park said that a person who is hasty in words is also hasty in other actions as well. And there are many misfortunes that those mistakes bring, and he mentioned four things: (1) He will be ashamed (18:13), (2) He will become poor (21:5), (3) He will exalt folly (14:29), and (4) He will sin (19:2). He who is impatient with word has no hope because it will bring these results (29:20).

We should not be impatient (Prov. 29:20; 2 Tim. 3:4), but we should be panting (Ps. 42:1). Look at Psalms 42:1 – "As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God." Rather than becoming discouraged and anxious because we think that God's answer of our prayers seems slow, we should put our hope in God (vv. 5, 11), longing for God's unchanging love (v. 8) and continue to pray to God. We must pray (v. 8). As we pant for God (vv. 1, 2) we must seek Him who is our rock (v. 9).

## **The Christians who are unrestrained**

**“Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, But happy is he who keeps the law” (Proverbs 29:18).**

At the time of Prophet Ezekiel, the Israelites did “the action of a bold-faced harlot” in the eyes of God (Ezek. 16:30). They believed in the splendor that God bestowed on them, and trusted in their beauty, they played the harlot because of their fame (vv. 14-15). They took some of their clothes, made for themselves high places of various colors and played the harlot on them (v. 16). They made idols and committed adultery with the material blessings that God gave them (v. 17). They played the harlot with the Assyrians because you were not satisfied; they played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied. They also multiplied your harlotry with the land of merchants, Chaldea, yet even with this they were not satisfied (vv. 28-29). These were the actions of the bold-faced harlot in the eyes of the Lord God (v. 30). Aren't we Christians now doing the same actions of the bold-faced harlot like the Israelites at the time of Prophet Ezekiel?

At the time of Exodus, the Israelites were out of control (Exod. 32:25). When they saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain Sinai, the Israelites assembled about Aaron and asked him to make a god who would go before them (v. 1). So they made a molten calf and worshiped it (v. 8). In Moses' view, the Israelites were out of control (v. 25). The reason is because Aaron had them get out of control (v. 25). God promised Moses that “I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth” (Deut. 18:18). And God told him that that prophet would speak to the Israelites all that God would command him (v. 18). But the problem was a false prophet. The false prophet spoke in the name of God which God had not commanded him to speak, or in the name of other gods (v. 20). And the Israelites could know the false prophet if the thing that he spoke in the name of the Lord didn't come about or come true (v. 22). Aren't there still many false prophets and false pastors around us who speak in the name of the Lord that doesn't come about or come true?

The Bible Proverbs 14:16 says, “A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, But a fool is arrogant and careless.” Although the wise Christians leave evil by fearing God, the foolish Christians are haughty and careless. The foolish Christians refuse to be restrained by God's law because they don't fear God (29:18). But the wise Christians keeps their soul by keeping God's law and refraining from their careless conduct (19:16). The Bible says that such Christians are blessed (29:18). Are you a foolish Christian? Or are you a wise Christian? Are you a Christian who is unrestrained or a blessed Christian who keeps God's law?

## He who trusts in the Lord

### [Proverbs 29:22-27]

Do you think the word of the Lord is enough? If we look at the article, 'Reliance is faith,' the text is based on the story of Pastor Canon Battersby, an evangelical minister of the Church of England, who heard the sermon about a king's servant who came to Jesus from Capernaum to Ghana and asked Him to heal his son and a lesson he learned. The lesson was that none other than the king's servant who believed Jesus' words, "Go, your son lives" (Jn. 4:50). When he heard that his son would be healed, his faith was to confess that 'The word of the Lord is enough' when God promises to protect me, even though I have nothing in the world to depend on. This is what faith and trusting is (Internet).

What do you think? Do you think that faith confesses that 'The word of the Lord is enough'? I had this thought when I asked myself this question: Is the word of promise the Lord gave to Victory Presbyterian Church "... I ... will build my church ... ' enough (Mt. 16:18)? Or 'Am I not often dependent on myself and/or others besides this promise?' Now, if I am carrying out my ministry with full faith in that word of the Lord, I am sure that I will not be afraid of any situation, nor will I become anxious or discouraged by anything. The soul who believes and is convinced that the word of the Lord is sufficient is totally dependent on God. As the lyrics of the Korean hymn "Simply Trusting Every day," I hope and pray that we will live a life of faith that confesses that "Trusting as the moments fly, Trusting as the days go by, Trusting Him whate'er befall, Trusting Jesus, that is all."

This is what the Bible Proverbs 29:25 says: "The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted." I would like to receive a lesson from Proverbs 29:22-27 on what does he who trusts in the Lord do in two ways under the heading "He who trusts in the Lord."

#### **First, he who trusts in the Lord doesn't fear man.**

Look at Proverbs 29:15a – "The fear of man brings a snare ...." We can have different kinds of fears. For example, we may have fears about the future. There are times when we are afraid and anxious when we think of an uncertain future situation that has not yet happened. When we do, we can hurt ourselves as well as the loved ones around us. We may also have a fear of being rejected by others. When I was single before getting married, there were many times when I was afraid even though I want to be in a relationship: 'What will that sister in Christ really think of me? Wouldn't she reject me if I confessed that I like her?' There were times when I was afraid of rejection



from the other person in these thoughts. Because this fear was within me, I was more afraid of the other person by mobilizing my imagination to enlarge the size of the other person's reaction rather than the size of God. If we have this fear within us, it can lead us to form a false self that responds to the expectations and needs of others (Joon-soo Kim). So, we can have these kinds of fears, but I think the most common fear among them is the fear of people. I think we can fear 4 kinds of people in Proverbs 29:22-27.

(1) We can be afraid of an angry man.

Look at Proverbs 29:22 – “An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.” How do you feel about anger in a relationship? While reading the book “THE HEART OF REMARRIAGE” by Gary & Greg Smalley, I wrote about two angers in marital relationships: ‘A righteous anger in marital relationships is necessary to bring about healthy change. But the unrighteous anger worsens the marital relationship by sinning in each other's words.’ What do you think of this saying? Perhaps when we think of “anger” mainly in marital relationships, we think of “unrighteous anger” and not righteous anger. So when we say “anger,” it seems that we tend to think only of the negative side. But we must recognize that we need righteous anger. This is because righteous anger brings healthy changes in marital relationships. However, we must be very wary of unrighteous anger. The reason is because unrighteous anger causes us to sin not only against each other, but also against God. We know that we should be slow to anger in a relationship and calm a quarrel (15:18). However, many times we can't hold back our anger and get angry easily, so we quarrel with our spouses (15:18, 21:9, 19). Why is that? One of the reasons is because when we are angry we speak harsh words (15:1). What would happen when we speak harsh words to our spouses in anger not just once or twice but like a constant dripping (19:13)? What would happen especially if we or our spouse are fools? In Proverbs 17:12, the Bible says, “Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly.” What would happen to the couple's fight if we or our spouses are more irrational than the bear robbed of her cubs and are angry?

We may be angry and our spouses may be afraid. We may fear our spouses who are angry, especially if our spouses are fools. Not only our spouses, but also our neighbors or people at work who are easily angry can be frightening. But the Bible tells us: “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isa. 41:10), “Then I said to you, "Do not be terrified; do not be afraid of them” (Deut. 1:29). When the Israelites heard the report of the unbelief of the 10 men who spied out the land of Canaan, they became discouraged and were afraid of the Canaanites. To them God told, “Do not be terrified; do not be afraid of them.” In addition to these two Bible verses, there are many other words in the Bible telling us not to be afraid. Christians who rely on God and trust in Him are not afraid of those who are angry with them by obeying God's command not to be afraid. I hope and pray that we may not be afraid of the wrath of man, but fear

the holy wrath of God.

(2) We can be afraid of a proud man.

Look at Proverbs 29:23 – “A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.” How can we know if we are proud in God's sight? As I meditated on the book of Esther, I thought about what kind of person a proud person would be in three ways based on Haman:

**(a) The proud man cannot be satisfied (Esth. 5:13).**

“all this” gave Haman no satisfaction as long as he saw the Jew Mordecai sitting at the king’s gate. Here, “all this” refers to Haman’s great glory, the number of children, and the fact that King Ahasuerus exalted him above all the king’s governors and servants, and that he was the only one permitted to come with the king to the banquet that Queen Esther had given him (vv. 11-12).

**(b) The proud man is prone to misunderstanding (6:6).**

King Ahasuerus wanted to honor Mordecai (v. 2) a Jew who had exposed those who plotted to assassinate King Ahasuerus. So he called Haman and asked, “What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?” (v. 6) At that time, Haman misunderstood by thinking, “Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?” (v. 6)

**(c) The proud man likes to be exalted (honored) (6:7-9).**

Haman, who misunderstood that King Ahasuerus was trying to honor him even though King Ahasuerus wanted to honor Mordecai, said to the king, “For the man the king delights to honor, have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!’” (vv. 7-9) When we see what Haman, who knew how to be exalted, told King Ahasuerus that he had to do something like this or that to give honor to a man, we can see that Haman liked to be exalted.

We must be very wary of the penetration of pride into our hearts. As we meditate briefly on the pride of Haman, who was insatiable, misleading, and adored to be exalted (honor), we should see if we ourselves are not proud like Haman. If we look at Psalms 73, the Bible says that the pure-hearted psalmist Asaph (Ps. 73:1) saw the prosperity of the wicked and envied the arrogant (v. 3). Here, the prosperity of the wicked means “They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from the burdens

common to man; they are not plagued by human ills” (vv. 4-5) and so on. Among them, not only do the wicked make pride their necklace and violence their garment (v. 6), but also they scoff and speak with malice (v. 8). Aren't you afraid of these proud wicked men? But we, who trust in God, need not fear the proud. Why? Look at Proverbs 29:23 – “A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.” The reason we need not fear the proud is because God will humble them (v. 23, cf. 2 Sam. 22:28; Job 40:11). Our God is a God who humbles us when our hearts are proud. Just as God humbled the Israelites at the time of the Exodus by feeding them manna in the wilderness, which their ancestors didn't know (Deut. 8:16), He humbles us by feeding us with His word. Therefore, we must humble ourselves before the Lord (Jam. 4:10). We must humble ourselves as little children (Mt. 18:4). Let us humble ourselves, following the example of Jesus, who humbled himself and became obedient to death on the cross (Phil. 2:8), and live a life of obedience to the word of the Lord. Then the Lord will exalt us in His time (Jam. 4:10). What the Bible teaches is clear: “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Lk. 14:11). The Lord who exalts the humble gives grace to the humble (Prov. 3:34; 1 Pet. 5:5) and saves the humble (Job 22:29, Ps. 149:4). The Bible says that if we are humble we will be honored (Prov. 29:23). Humility comes before honor (15:33).

### (3) We can be afraid of thief and conspirator.

Look at Proverbs 29:24 – “The accomplice of a thief is his own enemy; he is put under oath and dare not testify.” Do you know who the famous thief in the Bible is? That is Judas Iscariot. Six days before the Passover, when Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus raised from the dead, the people there made him a supper (Jn. 12:1-2). Then Mary took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, poured it on Jesus' feet, and wiped His feet with her hair (v. 3). Seeing it, Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples, who had betrayed Him, said to Mary, “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?” (vv. 4-5) The Bible says that Judas Iscariot said this, “not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it” (v. 6). Judas Iscariot may have looked like a man who cared for the poor on the surface, but in reality he was a thief. What if this thief was paired with a powerful country leader or a false religious leader? Look at Isaiah 1:23 – “Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them.” When thief like Judas Iscariot is paired up with the leader, they all love bribes, ask for gifts, and don't even solve the problems of orphans or widows.

In Proverbs 29:24, the Bible says, “He who is a partner with a thief hates his own life; He hears the oath but tells nothing.” Here, “He who is a partner with a thief” is the one who plans to steal with the thief and pull the wires from behind (Park). A good example is Ahab and Jezebel who took Naboth's vineyard in 1 Kings

21. When Queen Jezebel, who asked her husband King Ahab “How is it that your spirit is so sullen that you are not eating food?” and found out that it was because Naboth the Jezreelite would not give his vineyard to Ahab said to him: “Do you now reign over Israel? Arise, eat bread, and let your heart be joyful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite” (1 Kgs. 21:4-7). Then “she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and sent letters to the elders and to the nobles who were living with Naboth in his city” (v. 8). The essence of the letter was to slander Naboth by saying that Naboth cursed God and the king and then to stone him to death (vv. 9-10). Truly, she was a wicked woman with many wiles (2 Ks. 9:22). The elders and nobles who lived in the city who received her letter “did as Jezebel had sent word to them, just as it was written in the letters which she had sent them” (1 Kgs. 21:11). “So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones” (v. 13). In the end, Jezebel lets Ahab take over Naboth's vineyard, as promised to her husband (vv. 7, 15). Even though she killed Naboth (vv. 14, 15, 16), she took his vineyard and gave it to Ahab. She was the person behind Ahab. She was the one who persuaded Ahab to do evil before God (v. 25). She is the one who made Ahab to act very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the LORD cast out before the sons of Israel (v. 26). We can be afraid of such person who plans to steal a thing from another person with a thief even by killing that person. But we who trust in God need not be afraid. The reason is, of course, because God is with us according to Isaiah 41:10. And because He is with us, He is our God, He strengthens us and helps us, and He upholds us with His righteous hand, we don't need to fear the thief or the person behind the thief. The truth we need to know is Proverbs 29:24, “He who is a partner with a thief hates his own life ....” In 1 Kings 21:20, 25, Elijah rebukes King Ahab, saying, ‘You sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord.’ Will a man who loves his soul sell himself and join a thief, doing evil in the sight of God? Never. It is an evil sin committed by he who hates his soul.

The Bible Proverbs 29:24 says that he who hates his soul and sells himself to a thief does not hear the oath but tells nothing. Why? Why doesn't the thief's partner say anything in court when told to tell the truth? The reason is because he who conspires with the thief who hates his soul is evil and deceitful. Evil and liars never tell the truth. He would rather lie than eat a meal. We who trust in God should not fear those who conspire with thieves. The reason is because our God on whom we depend is the lover of our souls. The God who loves our souls neither slumbers nor sleeps, but keeps us (Ps. 121:4-5). God will keep us from all tribulation and will keep our souls from now to everlasting (vv. 7, 8).

#### (4) We can be afraid of an unjust man.

Look at Proverbs 29:27a – “An unjust man is abominable to the righteous ....” When we question God, we doubt God. And when we doubt God, we distrust Him. That unbelief causes us to disobey God and ultimately leads us to do unrighteousness. Here, “unrighteousness” is “wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy,

murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful” (Rom. 1:29-21). When we do this unrighteousness, God’s wrath will be upon us and He will punish us. In Numbers 22, there is a person named Balaam, son of Beor (Num. 22:5) who practiced divination (Josh. 13:22). The Bible says that the people of Israel followed Balaam's advice (Num. 31:16) and went astray (2 Pet. 2:15) and sinned against God. When the Israelites stayed in Shittim, they not only committed fornication with the women of Moab (Num. 25:1), but also when those women sacrificed to their gods, the Israelites also bowed down to their gods as well (v. 2). Therefore, God’s anger burned against the Israelites (v. 3), and as a result, the leaders of the Israelites were killed by hanging themselves before God (v. 4), and 24,000 of the Israelites were killed by the plague (v. 9). Why did the Israelites come to this point? It was because of Balaam, “who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Pet. 2:15). Like this, unrighteous people who love the wages of unrighteousness make not only themselves but also others do unrighteousness, so they all sin against God. God’s burning anger will be upon these people and He will punish them.

In Proverbs 29:27a, the Bible says, “An unjust man is abominable to the righteous, ....” Why is the unrighteous man abominable to the righteous? The reason is because the unrighteous love unrighteousness, and those who love unrighteousness don’t believe in the truth (2 Thess. 2:12). Therefore, the righteous man who believes the truth and loves righteousness not only hates the unrighteous, but also hates all the unrighteousness of the unrighteous. The Bible says that “There is no injustice with God” (Rom. 9:14). Also, the Bible says that the Lord is righteous and He does no wrong (Zeph. 3:5). The Bible also says that God is the truth, and His wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18). Therefore, we need not fear the unrighteous. Rather, we should hate the unrighteous and hate their injustice.

We who trust in God should not fear the angry man, the proud man, the thief and the conspirator and the unjust man. If we fear these people, we will fall into a snare (Prov. 29:25). To fear such people is to disbelieve that a great and awesome God is among us (Deut. 7:21). And when we fear people in our disbelief in God, that fear itself will lead us into a snare. Therefore, we must not be afraid of people because we are totally dependent on God. Look at Matthew 10:28 – “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

### **Second and last, he who trusts in the Lord is kept safe.**

Look at Proverbs 29:25b – “... but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.” What do we Christians need to be careful about? The Apostle Paul said to the Philippian church members in Philippians 3:1 – “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.”

From this verse, we can see that Paul wrote the letter hoping that the Philippian church members would be safe. In that letter, Paul said “Beware” three times in 3:2 – “Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision.” When Paul told them to beware of dogs, he meant the Jews especially the Judaizers. Who were the 'Judaizers' here? The Judaizers were the one of the groups that initially attacked the gospel. They insisted that the Gentiles should observe certain ordinances of the Old Testament, especially circumcision, in order to be righteous. Paul spoke of these Judaizers and their false gospel with heresy and he even cursed them (Galatians). But the problem was that Judaizers were recognized as true believers by most people in the church. For example, it was like that in the Galatians church (Gal. 2:12). However, the Judaizers actually undermined the clarity of the gospel in that church, seriously defiled the gospel and confounded the Gentile believers. To briefly summarize the cause of the confusion, their argument was that somebody (1) believes in Christ, (2) do his best to keep the Law and (3) then justified. But Paul’s argument was that somebody (1) believes in Christ first, (2) then is justified before God, and (3) immediately prepares to keep God's law (Machen). Do you understand this difference? Although this looks like a small difference, it is actually a very big difference. And the big difference is that while Paul says that by the grace of God we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ alone, the Judaizers said that we are saved by working that is keeping the law. The true gospel preached by Paul focuses on what Jesus Christ did on the cross (grace), but the false gospel the Judaizers claim is focused on what sinners do (merit). In a word, to Paul salvation is by God’s grace, but to the Judaizers it is by human action. Thus, Paul referred these Judaizers as “dogs” because they coveted the wealth and went around as self-proclaimed teachers (3:19). Therefore, Paul told the Philippian church saints to beware of the Judaizers because they were the false teachers who preach this false gospel and thus they were dangerous. In this way, we must beware of a false pastor and a false teacher who preach a false gospel. We must be careful and beware of the false gospel that we are saved through faith plus human effort or good works, rather than preaching the true gospel that we are saved by believing in Jesus Christ only by the grace of God. We should beware of all teachings that focus on human merit rather than on the merit of the cross of Jesus.

The Bible Proverbs 29:25b says, “... but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.” Who is the one who trusts in the Lord here? We can think of it in three ways:

(1) He who trusts in the Lord is humble.

Look at Proverbs 29:23 – “A man's pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will obtain honor.” The proud man believes in himself and doesn’t trust in the Lord. The Lord humbles such a proud man. But the humble trust in the Lord. In other words, he who trusts in the Lord is humble. And the humble man who trusts in Him pleads with God. He seeks His help and seeks His deliverance. And he takes refuge in the Lord, relying on Him as his refuge in times of danger (Ps. 31:1).

(2) He who trusts in the Lord believes that He brings justice for man.

Look at Proverbs 29:26 – “Many seek the ruler's favor, But justice for man comes from the LORD.” When we are having a hard time, especially when we are faced with injustice, we may be tempted to rely on someone stronger and more powerful than us and try to win favor with that person for help. And when we try to please him, we may use flattering remarks or give a bribe gift. These words and deeds show that we depend more on that powerful man than on God. However, Proverbs 29:25-26 tells us that he who trusts in God will be safe, and he believes that God brings justice for him. In other words, he who trusts in the Lord doesn't try to win the favor of the ruler because he believes that the decision of man doesn't belong to the ruler, but come from God.

(3) He who trusts in the Lord is upright.

Look at Proverbs 29:27 – “An unjust man is abominable to the righteous, And he who is upright in the way is abominable to the wicked.” He who trusts in man rather than God fears man rather than Him (v. 25). Therefore, such a man seeks favor from men (rulers) rather than from God (v. 26). In other words, he who is afraid of people and depend on them will try to win their favor. Such a man doesn't do what is right and does injustice. Therefore, he is abominable to the righteous (v. 27). But he who trusts in the Lord (v. 25) isn't afraid of people. So he doesn't seek favor with people (v. 26) and doesn't do injustice but do right things (v. 27). He does justice among his neighbors, by true rightness in way and deeds (Jere. 7:5). He hates all deceit (Ps. 119:128) and doesn't delight in foolishness (Prov. 15:21).

The Bible Psalms 146:3 says “Do not trust in princes, In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation.” We must not depend on those who don't have the strength to help. Don't rely on those who are famous in their eyes. Dr. Yoon-sun Park said this about trusting people: ‘Human trust is an evil idea that blocks the path of trust in God. Therefore, the psalmist first forbids the sin of human trust, in order to lead others to the act of trusting God’ (Park). Trusting those who don't have the strength to help prevent us from trusting in God as our true helper. Therefore, we must first stop trusting people who don't have the power to help. We need to stop trusting people. We must trust in God alone. We who trust in God will be safe (Prov. 29:25). We who trust in God have no fear of man. When we trust in God, we aren't afraid of the angry man. Also, we aren't afraid of the proud man and thief and conspirator. And we who trust in God aren't afraid of the unjust man. We who trust in God will be safe. We who trust in God are humble. We who trust in the Lord believe that He brings justice for man. We who trust in the Lord are upright. We who trust in the Lord will be safe because God will protect and keep us.

## He who learns wisdom

### [Proverbs 30:1-9]

What are you learning on your journey of faith? One of the things I am learning on my journey of faith is from “I can” to “I can’t, but the Lord can.” When I am working as a pastor, there are many times when I feel that I truly need the power of God. That is why there are many times when I ask God for His power in my prayers to Him. I thought this was right. In other words, I believed that I needed to rely more on God's power as I thoroughly realized my weakness and incompetence while pastoring the church. Of course, I don't think this is a wrong prayer. But God made me to realize that there is a problem with priority. In other words, I didn't know that I had to seek God's heart before asking God for His power. So, I want to learn God's heart while seeking His heart. And I pray that my heart will be changed to the heart of God. So, like the apostle Paul, I want to love my brothers and sisters in Christ with the affection of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:8).

In Proverbs 30:3, the Bible says, “Neither have I learned wisdom ....” Here “I” refers to “Agur the son of Jakeh” (v. 1). This man, Agur, is mentioned only here in the entire Bible, so we know little about him. However, as it is said in verse 1, his father's name is “Jakeh” and the meaning of the name “Agur” is “gatherer” (Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary). According to Pastor John MacArthur, Agur was probably a student of wisdom in Solomon's time (MacArthur). Although the Bible said that Agur has not learned wisdom (v. 3a), I thought about it in opposite way as I meditated this word. In other words, I want to become a learner of wisdom rather than an unlearned person of wisdom like Agur. So, I would like to receive the lessons from Proverbs 30:1-9 under the title “He who learns wisdom” by meditating on three things about he who learns wisdom.

#### **First, he who learns wisdom knows his own folly and ignorance.**

Look at Proverbs 30:2-3: “Surely I am more stupid than any man, And I do not have the understanding of a man. Neither have I learned wisdom, Nor do I have the knowledge of the Holy One.” We must get to know ourselves. We must get to know ourselves by knowing God. For example, the Bible 1 John 4:16 says “God is love.” The more we come to know the truth that God is love, the more we must realize how unloving we are. Also, in Leviticus 11:45, God says, “I am holy.” The more we get to know a holy God, the more we must realize how unholy we are. In a word, we must get to know ourselves by growing in the knowledge of God. However, the problem is that as the prophet Hosea prophesied, we don't have the knowledge of God now. So as the number of church members increases, we are sinning against God more (Hos. 4:6, 7). The reason we don't have the knowledge



of God is because we have rejected it (v. 6). Therefore, the Bible tells us to press on to acknowledge God (6:3). When we press to know God, we will be able to truly know ourselves. Then we will realize that our thoughts are different from God's thoughts (Isa. 55:9). We will come to realize that there is a difference between our standard and God's standard.

In Proverbs 30:2-3, the writer of Proverbs Agur said, "I'm more like a dumb animal than a human being. I don't even have human understanding. I haven't learned wisdom. I don't have knowledge of the Holy One." He said that he was so foolish that he was "like a dumb animal" (v. 2). As I meditated on this verse, the word of Psalms 73 came to my mind. The psalmist Asaph, who was envious of the arrogant when he saw the prosperity of the wicked (Ps. 73:3), realized the end of the wicked when he entered the sanctuary of God (v. 17), and said of himself: "I was senseless and ignorant; I was a brute beast before you" (v. 22). Eventually, Asaph entered the temple of God and realized not only the end of the wicked, but also realized that he was a beast before the Lord because he was foolish and ignorant (v. 22). The reason Agur said in Proverbs 30:2, "I'm more like a dumb animal than a human being" is because he himself had no human understanding, had not learned wisdom, nor did he have the knowledge of the Holy One. In a word, the reason Agur said that he was like the dumb animal was because he had no knowledge of the Holy God. To lack the knowledge of the Holy God also means to lack wisdom and understanding. And the lack of wisdom and understanding is like an animal. In this way, Agur confessed about himself to "Ithiel and Ucal" (v. 1). These two were probably Agur's favorite students (MacArthur). Agur asked the two of them: "Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His son's name? Surely you know!" (v. 4) The reason Agur asked this question was because he knew that he could not understand without divine revelation. In the end, Agur showed his humility by confessing his ignorance to Ithiel and Ugal (MacArthur).

What is true wisdom in God's eyes? It is the right profession of faith through the knowledge of Jesus Christ. When we look at Matthew 16:15, Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say I am?" At that time, the apostle Peter confessed, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16). Jesus heard this confession and said, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven" (v. 17). In the end, it was because of the revelation of God that Peter was able to confess his faith in Jesus. Therefore, as learners of wisdom, we must long for God's revelation. And we must be able to humbly admit our ignorance, knowing that we cannot know God without His revelation. We must also know that we cannot have the knowledge of the Holy God without His revelation (Prov. 30:3). We cannot know Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, without the revelation of God. Therefore, as learners of wisdom, we should humbly acknowledge our ignorance, and we should yearn more for God's revelation. I hope and pray that God will reveal to all of us so that we can come to know Jesus Christ more and more.

**Second, he who learns wisdom trusts in the pure word of God.**

When I think about the word 'test', it reminds me Job 23:10 – “But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.” God is a God who tests our hearts (Prov. 17:3). God has tested us “in the furnace of affliction” (Isa. 48:10). In the end, God is testing and refining us through the hardships we go through. God makes us like pure gold by walking through the pathway of suffering. In particular, God purifies our faith that is like dross and impure (Isa. 1:25) through the furnace of suffering, so that our faith becomes like pure gold. God also purifies us through suffering (Dan. 11:35).

Look at Proverbs 30:5 – “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto those that put their trust in him” (JUB). Here, the word “flawless” refers to ‘a product made pure by melting silver or gold to remove impurities’ (Park). Do you roughly know how to get rid of the dross from silver? We can remove the dross, which are impurities, by putting silver in the furnace and applying high heat. However, it is said that impurities aren’t easily removed. Therefore, in order to obtain pure silver, it must be smelted several times with high heat. However, it is said that blacksmiths don’t hesitate to do this in order to obtain the pure silver they want (Internet). The Bible Proverbs 17:3 says, “The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart.” What does it mean? Just as a blacksmith smelts silver with high heat many times to obtain pure silver, God lets us pass through the “furnace of affliction” (Isa. 48:10) to refine our hearts. In other words, God allows us to go through trials and hardships that are the furnace of affliction in order to remove these things from us when there are impurities that remain in the flesh and earth like the dross (Internet). A good example is Job from the Old Testament Book of Job. Look at Job 23:10 – “But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.” So why does God let us go through the furnace of affliction to remove the dross from the silver? Look at Proverbs 25:4b – “... out comes material for the silversmith.” What does it mean? It means that the silver is subtracting the dross to make it a usable vessel. In this way, God wants us to pass through the furnace of affliction so that we may eventually come out like pure gold. What is the purpose? Why is God making us like pure gold? Look at 2 Timothy 2:21 – “If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.” The reason is because the Lord cleanses us and prepares us worthy of His use so that we may become vessels that the Lord uses preciously

So what are our responsibilities? I want to briefly consider three things:

(1) We must crave the pure word of God (1 Pet. 2:2).

We must crave for the pure, unmixed word of God. We must not add to the pure word of God (Prov. 30:6). If not, God will rebuke us and prove that we are liars (v. 6). In fact, if we crave too much for the pure word of God, we may be tempted to add to it. That is why the Bible Revelation 22:18 says: “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.”

(2) We must trust in the pure word of God (Prov. 30:5).

The word 'to trust in' here means 'to hide oneself'. This meaning refers to a faith that completely depends on God in difficult and perilous times (Park). This reminds me the Korean hymn "Simply Trusting Every day" lyric 1 and the chorus: "Simply trusting ev'ry day. Trusting through a stomy way Even when my faith is small Trusting Jesus, that is all. Trusting the moments fly, Trusting as the days go by Trusting Him whate'ver befall, Trusting Jesus, that is all." We must trust in Jesus every day. We must trust His pure word. We must hold on to the Lord's pure promise and seek the true God of the covenant by faith who gave that promise. Then the Lord will be our shield (v. 5). The Lord will protect and keep us.

(3) We must obey the pure word of God.

Then the Lord will purify our souls. Look at 1 Peter 1:22 – "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart." Also, when we obey the pure word of God, the Lord will purify our conduct. Look at Psalms 119:9 – "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word."

All the words of God are pure (Prov. 30:5). God purifies us with the pure word of God. God removes all abominations from our church. Therefore, God preserves the purity of the church. What should we do? We must trust in the pure word of God. We should not be afraid to suffer. Rather, we should expect and experience the work of God who refines and purifies us through suffering.

**Third and last, he who learns wisdom prays to God.**

Before you die, what are the prayer topics you want God to answer? If you look at Mitch Albom's 'Tuesdays with Morrie,' he says 'Forgive yourself before you die and forgive others.' I wrote this short writing based on the content of this article: 'You must forgive before you die. Failing to forgive yourself and others even in the face of death is not a beautiful death. What is unforgivable in the face of death? All must be forgiven. In order to do this, we must remember the death of Jesus on the cross. And we must face death with an attitude that commemorates the death of Jesus. In other words, just as Jesus died on the cross to forgive all our sins, we must forgive ourselves and others before death. We must offer this genuine forgiveness even in the face of death.' I personally believe that before we die, we should forgive all those who have sinned against us, be reconciled to them, and then leave, realizing more deeply, more greatly, more broadly and more highly that our beloved brothers and sisters in Christ have been forgiven in Jesus Christ. This should be our earnest prayer. I hope and pray that God will answer our prayer.

In Numbers 27:16-17, Moses, who knew that he would die like his brother Aaron (Num. 22:13), asked God

for what he wanted. He didn't ask God to extend his life (cf. 2 Kgs. 20:6). He didn't even ask God to let him enter Canaan, where he really wanted to go (cf. Deut. 34). In fact, Moses went up to Mount Abiram and only saw the land of Canaan, which God had given to the Israelites, but could not enter and died according to God's word (Num. 27:12-13). So, what did Moses want before he died? What he wanted was to set up a man over the congregation of Israel so that the congregation of God would not become like sheep without a shepherd (vv. 16-17). In other words, before Moses died, he asked God to raise up the leader in the congregation of Israel who could lead the Israelites to the land of Canaan instead of him. From this, we can see that Moses thought more about the Israelites than himself. In other words, Moses cared more for God's people than for himself.

Look at Proverbs 30:7-8: "Two things have I required of thee; do not deny me them before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the bread of my judgment" (JUB). Agur asked the Lord for two things. He prayed that the Lord would grant these two prayer requests before he died:

(1) The first prayer request was "Remove far from me vanity and lies"(Prov. 38:8a).

Like Agur, we must also offer this prayer to the Lord. First we need to pray to the Lord, "Remove far from me vanity and lies." When I think of "vanity," I am reminded of a verse from Ecclesiastes that I meditated on in 2010: 'The vain world' (Eccle. 1:1-11), 'The vain wisdom' (1:12-18) and 'The vain pleasure' (2:1-11). The reason why this world is vain is because it is useless, that is there is no gain (1:3), because life ultimately returns to dust (vv. 5-6), because there is no satisfaction with human greed (v. 8), and because people of the future will not remember people of this age (v. 11). The reason why wisdom is vain is because the conclusion of his empirical research is painful (v. 10), because there is no way to save a human being through human wisdom (v. 15), and because all the things that is done under the sun was meaningless and chasing after the wind (v. 14). Although King Solomon experimented with alcohol for the pleasures of this world (2:3), tried great projects (v. 4), and had many wives and concubines to satisfy his fleshly lusts (v. 8), his conclusion was "that also proved to be meaningless" (v. 1). We must keep away from these vain and meaningless things. Therefore, like Agur, we should pray to the Lord to remove all these vain things far from us.

Agur asked the Lord to remove far from him not only "vaintiy" but also "lies. So we must pray to the Lord to remove lies far from us. When I think about "lies", the words of John 8:44 come to my mind: "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." The devil is a liar and the father of lies. Therefore, when we ask the Lord to remove lies far from us like Agur, it implies that we stay away from Satan, the father of lies, and that we don't become liars.

When I think of this prayer topic of Agur, I am taught that we who learn wisdom should seek the truth and what is useful in God's sight when we pray to God by relying on His pure word. In other words, we should pray to God to remove far from what is useless, while to be close what is useful in God's sight. Also, when we pray to God to remove far from lies, while to be close to God's truth.

(2) The second prayer request was “give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with the bread of my judgment” (Prov. 30:8b).

When I think of this second prayer topic of Agur, I remember the Lord's Prayer. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus is also teaching us, “Give us today our daily bread” (Mt. 6:11). Here, “daily bread” refers to the bread needed for that day. This means that at the time of the Exodus, the Israelites could only bring manna and quail that God had provided for them to take with them only bread for a day (Exod. 16: 4). If we look at the background of this word, on February 15th, exactly one month after they came out of Egypt (v. 1), the whole congregation of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron (v. 2). The content of their complaint was “Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger” (v. 3). God heard the complaint and said to Moses: “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily” (vv. 4-5). God heard the complaint of the entire congregation of Israel and promised to rain down bread from heaven. At that time, the responsibility of the people of Israel was to go out and gather a day's portion every day (v. 4). Moses told the word of God to the people of Israel. But they didn't listen to Moses and some left part of it until morning (v. 20).

In Proverbs 30:8, the second prayer request that Agur asked to God encourages us not to live like the people of Israel who didn't obey God's word out of resentment at the time of the Exodus, but rather to live in asking the Lord for our daily bread as Jesus taught in the Lord's Prayer. As Agur prayed, we should pray that God feeds us with food that is our portions. That means we should not ask God to give us the daily bread that we want, but only the daily bread that we need. As I meditated on the content of Agur's second prayer “give me neither poverty nor riches” (v. 8), I was reminded of Philippians 4:11-12: “... for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.” Paul learned the secret of being contentment in any circumstance. So it didn't matter that he himself be poor or wealthy. Especially because he could do all things in the Lord who gave him strength (v. 13), poverty or riches didn't matter so much to him.

In Proverbs 30:9, Agur mentioned the reason why Agur asked God, “give me neither poverty nor riches”: “That I not be full and deny You and say, "Who is the LORD?" Or that I not be in want and steal, And profane the name of my God.” How relatable is this? Of course, just because we are poor, we should not dishonor God's name by stealing in violation of the eighth commandment of the Ten Commandments, “You shall not steal” (Exod. 20:15). However, I can relate a lot to the reason why Agur asked God not to make him rich. The reason was because he feared that he be full and deny God and say “Who is the Lord?” The reason why Agur's reason resonates with me is because I have been meditating on the Bible and have often seen people who believe in God become arrogant and forsake God and sin against Him.

Those who learn wisdom pray to God like Agur. Therefore, we who learn wisdom should pray to God like Agur. We should pray to God to remove vanity and lies far from us. I hope and pray that God hears and answers our prayers and help us. In addition, we must pray to God, “give me neither poverty nor riches” (Prov. 30:8). We must fear like Agur. What should we fear? We should fear that we may deny God and say, “Who is the Lord?” when we are full and rich (v. 9). We should also fear that we may steal and profane the name of our God by becoming poor and be in want (v. 9). Like Agur, we should pray, “feed me with the bread of my judgment” (v. 8). We should pray to God, “Give us today our daily bread,” according to the prayer the Lord taught us.

We must be learners of wisdom. We who learn wisdom knows our own ignorance and foolishness. As learners of wisdom, we should humbly acknowledge our ignorance and folly, and must crave more for God's revelation. I hope and pray that God will reveal to all of us so that we may come to know more about His begotten Son, Jesus Christ. And we who learn wisdom trust in the pure word of God. The Lord purifies us with the pure word of God. The Lord who purifies and cleanses us wants us to long for the pure Word. We must trust in that pure word. The Lord will purify our souls and deeds as we obey His pure word. We who learn wisdom pray to God. We pray that God will keep us from vanity and lies, and that we will neither be poor nor rich. Let us pray to God to feed us with our daily bread. May we all continue to learn wisdom.

## **We should not do these things.**

### **[Proverbs 30:10-17]**

What kind of people should we really be? One day, I once wrote something like this under the title ‘I shouldn’t be this kind of person ...’: We should not be someone who misunderstands too quickly rather than to understand, someone who is quick to criticize rather than sincerely praise, someone who gets angry too easily rather than to be patient, someone who is too busy to assert herself rather than to listen to what others have to say and so on. What kind of people should we really be?

I would like to receive a lesson by meditating on 7 things we should not do as Christians, focusing on Proverbs 30:10-17.

#### **First, we should not slander.**

Look at Proverbs 30:10 – “Do not slander a slave to his master, Or he will curse you and you will be found guilty.” I read an article on the Internet with the title, ‘How to get rid of a talkative coworker’ (Internet). According to the article, ‘There is one thing that is a source of conflict in many workplaces.’ It’s called ‘the constant chatter of co-workers who share too much privacy.’ According to one survey of 514 professional and corporate workers, three out of five workers said they had at least one co-worker who shared their personal lives too much, at least once a week. These gossips often interfere with the work of their co-workers and risk putting their careers as well as the careers of others at risk. If you have one of these chatty coworkers around you at your workplace, what would you do if that coworker went to your boss and chatted about you and then slandered you? What would your relationship be with you and your boss if the colleague laughed at you and slandered you at your boss? How would you feel if your boss looked bad at you because your financial situation is difficult and you have to keep working at that job, but your co-worker goes to your boss and criticizes you? What would you do to your co-worker if your boss heard slander about you from a co-worker and fired you, so you can no longer work and you becomes more difficult financially?

In Proverbs 30:10, the Bible says, “Do not slander a slave to his master ....” In other words, we must not criticize someone else’s slave against his master. If the slave is serving his master as a servant, and another person comes and slanders his master against him, what will happen to that slave? Wouldn’t that slave suffer a disadvantage from his master? In particular, what if the slave’s master believes the word and views the slave not

only suspiciously but also badly, despite the fact that the slander is false accusation? This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘Anyone who insults a slave to his master is an evil act that cuts off the master's love for him. A slave’s livelihood depends on his master, and if the master hates him, he becomes miserable. Therefore, whoever blasphemes him in front of his master is not only committing the sin of blasphemy, but also the cruel sin of trampling on the weak’ (Park). The Bible Deuteronomy 23:15 says, “If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand him over to his master.” Here, the reason the slave fled from his master is because his master is an unjust master. So if the slave ran away to you, the Bible says not to hand him over to his master. The reason God spoke this word to the Israelites through Moses about a slave who wasn’t treated as a human at that time was because God, who is righteous, thought about the slave who was treated unjustly by his master. But, contrary to God's heart, what will the slave do toward the person who slanders his master? Look at Proverbs 30:10b – “... Or he will curse you and you will be found guilty.” That slave could not only curse a man who made false accusations against his master, but he could also make him pay the price. And the cost will be high. In other words, the cost of false accusations (slander) against the slave can be great for the master. Therefore, the Bible says, “Do not slander a slave to his master” (Prov. 30:10).

These days, we see countless comments on social media that slander many people, including famous celebrities. Because of the slanderous comments, it seems that famous celebrities and others suffer from extreme stress and depression. What I still remember is that through Internet news, a famous entertainer filed a criminal complaint against a case of defamatory posts/comments such as dissemination of malicious false information related to him on online SNS, personal attacks, and sexual harassment, and filed a criminal complaint in Gangnam, Seoul. I heard the news that it was submitted to the cyber investigation team of the police station (Internet). It seems that we have entered an era where every word in the comments on the Internet is killing and saving people. When I saw an article posted by someone on the Blue House website in Korea, it said: ‘Those who lead people to suicide by criticizing and slandering are truly killers through language.’ We who are living in these times, I think we should be more careful with our mouths. In particular, we should be careful about talking about others (I’m talking to myself because I’m not very good at it). In particular, we should not criticize/blame/slander others. In Romans 14:4, the Bible says: “Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.” The Bible says, ‘Do not judge someone else’s servant.’ The Bible says in Romans 2:1 – “Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.” Also, the Bible James 4:11 says: “Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.” We must not judge and slander others (Prov. 30:10), whether they are co-workers, brothers or sisters in Christ, or even family members. If we don’t, we will be cursed and will be found guilty (v. 10).

**Second, we should not curse.**



Look at Proverbs 30:11 – “There is a kind of man who curses his father And does not bless his mother.” I think that the age we are living in is no longer an age to honor our parents. It seems that this time is no longer the time to be filial to parents. The biblical basis for this I think is 2 Timothy 3:1-2: “But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy.” This is terrible times and time to suffer. One of the signs of these terrible times in the last days is disobedient to our parents. People of this generation don’t obey their parents. Not only are they disobedient, but people of this generation even curse their parents.

In Proverbs 30:11, the Bible says, “There is a kind of man who curses his father And does not bless his mother.” Actually, according to this word, aren't there many children who curse their fathers even now? Some of the sisters in Christ I have known have very bad relationships with their fathers. Some members end their relationship with their father. The reason is because they have suffered great wounds from their father. To that extent, there are brothers and sisters in Christ here and there who have a very bad relationship with their father. Then, considering how the relationship with the mother is, in general, the relationship with the mother seems to be better than that with the father. However, I have doubts when I think about whether they are blessing their mother. In Proverbs 30:11, there is something interesting. The interesting thing is that the writer of Proverbs, Agur, uses both the words ‘curse’ and ‘blessing’. Why did Agur say, “There is a kind of man who curses his father And does not bless his mother” instead of saying, ‘There is a kind of man who curses his father and mother or his parents’? I think Agur’s intention was to let us know that our parents are not the object of a ‘curse’ but a ‘blessing’. Therefore, the lesson is that we should bless our parents, not curse them. The Bible Leviticus 20:9 says this: “If anyone curses his father or mother, he must be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother, and his blood will be on his own head.” Also, this is what the Bible Matthew 15:4 says: “For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death'” (Note: Mk. 7:10). In this way, the Bible says cursing parents is a mortal sin. That is why God wants us to honor our parents. We must bless our parents in the name of Jesus.

Primarily, we know that parents should bless their children. For example, like a book titled ‘Bless your children once a day,’ we parents think it is good (precious) to bless our children once a day. But perhaps we haven't been thinking that children have to bless their parents once a day. If the Bible says, “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse” (Rom. 12:14), shouldn't we bless our loving parents instead of cursing them? As the Bible says in Luke 6:28, “bless those who curse you,” we should bless our parents even if they curse us.

### **Third, we should not be pure in our own eyes.**

One day, while I was exercising at YMCA, a woman was having a conversation with a man. She was talking so loudly that I could hear her. I was concerned about what she said because she kept on using the “F ...”

word while having conversation with the man. At that time, in my mind, I thought, 'That woman's mouth is ugly'. A few days after that, I was browsing the internet news and saw a famous, devout Christian basketball player who said the "F..." word in last year's NBA basketball western final. The news said that he was rebuked by his mother. After that, I shared that internet news article on the Facebook page that I am running along with my short writing about not to say the bad word even in our minds. I said that we Christians who believe in Jesus need to purify our hearts and lips when we see even Christians saying "F..." word and other bad words as well. Of course, this is only talking about bad words, but that doesn't mean that we are only saying bad words and not committing other sins. I saw this writing in a Bible study material called '5 principles to teach new families' at a church in Korea: '... We sin a lot in our hearts. The Bible says that just having lust is the same as committing adultery, and hating our brothers in Christ is like murder. How then are committing filthy and ugly sins as adulterers and murderers?' (Internet) That is why we often think of praying to a holy God and referring to ourselves as 'these filthy and ugly sinners'. If you have never confessed (acknowledged) that you are 'this filthy and ugly sinner' in prayer to God, then you have probably heard other people pray to God like that. Why do we pray to God like that?

Look at Proverbs 30:12 – "There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, Yet is not washed from his filthiness." What kind of people do you think consider themselves clean? Who do you think when you think about a man who is pure in his own eyes yet isn't washed from his filthiness? Don't you remember the Pharisees who justified themselves? In Proverbs 30:12, those who consider themselves clean refer to those who justify themselves like the Pharisees. There are four characteristics of these people (Park): (1) Those who justify themselves focus on external religious regulations and neglect the state of their hearts (Mt. 23:25-27), (2) Those who justify themselves are exalted as if their whole character was perfected by one or two things well done (Lk. 18:12), (3) Those who justify themselves regard others as inferior and discriminate (v. 11), (4) Those who justify themselves are arrogant because they think they are right, so they don't fully believe in the atoning Christ. What do you think of these 4 characteristics?

The righteousness that the Pharisees, the religious leaders of Jesus' day, sought was "self-righteousness." Here, "self-righteousness" refers to the attitude to stand before God by relying on one's own religious conduct. This is righteousness by observing the law. This "self-righteousness", that is, the righteousness by observing the law, can never be justified by God (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16). The reason is because a person can be justified not by observing the law, but only by faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, he who believes in Jesus and is justified considers his own righteous acts like filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). The "righteousness" Jesus spoke of is "the righteousness of God" (Rom. 3:21-22). "The righteousness of God" is the righteousness based on the redemption of Jesus Christ. God has forgiven all our sins and set us free from our sins on the basis of the blood of Jesus (Acts 13:38). Therefore, we receive the forgiveness of sins through the atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross, and we are justified by the resurrection of Jesus (Rom. 4:25), so we depend only on the righteousness of Jesus imputed to us (3:22).

We must not rely on our own righteousness. We must depend only on the righteousness of God, the righteousness of Jesus. Although the instinctive 'selfishness' within us to seek 'self-righteousness' makes us constantly self-glory and 'self-idolatry' to this day, we should worship only the Lord, boast of Him, and live a life of selfless love and service like the Lord. The reason is because Jesus died on the cross for all our unclean and ugly sins and rose from the grave on the third day to justify us (Rom. 4:25).

#### **Fourth, we should not be haughty.**

Look at Proverbs 30:13 – “those whose eyes are ever so haughty, whose glances are so disdainful.” Don't we have a desire to be exalted in front of people? When I think of this instinct within us, I think of a biblical figure named King Saul. Of course, when we think about King Saul, we will think of the famous Bible verse “To obey is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam. 15:22). But if we look back at this word in the context of the Bible, King Saul should have destroyed all their possessions without leaving any when they defeated the Amalekites in the war (v. 3). But he disobeyed God's command. And the reason of his disobedience to God's command was pride. How can we know this? Rather than truly repenting of his sin after hearing the rebuke of the prophet Samuel, King Saul asked Samuel: “I have sinned. But please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel; come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD your God” (v. 30). How could Saul, even after sinning against God and being rebuked, ask Samuel to exalt himself before the elder of the Israelites and before Israel? I think the reason was that King Saul, who was humble enough to consider himself small (v. 17), has turned into the proud man. And I think there are at least two reasons for that perversion:

- (1) The reason of the perversion from humility to pride is because we don't walk by faith, but by sight.

Many times we walk by what we see with our physical eyes rather than by faith. Especially when we are in an emergency situation, we are often caught up in the urgency of the situation and are led by the situation rather than acting in faith. King Saul was like that. When we look at from 1 Samuel 13:6, we see that the Philistines, as many as the sand of the seashore, were encamped at Michmash (v. 5). When the Israelites saw that their situation was critical, they all trembled in fear (v. 7), scattered (v. 8) and hid here and there (v. 6). Seeing the people of Israel scattered before him, and seeing the multitude of Philistines gathered at Michmash (v. 11), King Saul didn't keep what God had commanded him (vv. 13, 14). Instead of waiting for Samuel to come, he himself offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to God (vv. 9-10, 12). King Saul committed the sin by offering the sacrifices that should be offered only by the priests. It was the disbelief and pride of King Saul who disregarded the sacred sacrificial law (Park).

- (2) The reason of the perversion from humility to pride is because we see our own glory rather than the glory of God.

It seems that we often steal the glory of God. It seems that we often don't glorify God, but rather glorify ourselves, especially in situations where we deserve glory. King Saul was like that. He didn't glorify God. Instead glorifying God, he built a monument in his own honor (1 Sam. 15:12) in the circumstances of his victory in the battle against Amalek. How could he build the monument in his own honor? Rather, shouldn't King Saul have built an altar to God after winning that battle? (Note: 14:35) Why did he act so foolishly? The reason was that King Saul already had pride in his heart. So he glorified himself rather than glorified God. What is surprising is that even though King Saul disobeyed God's command, God gave him victory in the war. And yet he didn't glorify God, but glorified himself.

This is what Proverbs 30:13 says: "those whose eyes are ever so haughty, whose glances are so disdainful." The phrase "eyes are ever so haughty" here refers to the prideful eyes (6:17) or "a proud heart" (21:4). The proud people with such haughty eyes are the prosperous wicked spoken of by the psalmist Asaph in Psalms 73:3. They wear pride as their necklace (v. 6), their eye bulges from fatness (v. 7), and they mock and wickedly speak of oppression (v. 8). To a certain extent they speak arrogantly, while they have set their mouth against the heavens (v. 9). They said, "How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?" (v. 11) In Proverbs 29:8, the Bible says, "Mockers stir up a city ...." Here the "Mockers" refers to ones who are proud and angry. And these proud and angry ones blow the flames of contention and stirs up the city (MacArthur).

When I think of my own pride, how can I know if there is pride in me? I can know it by seeing myself not listening to the advice of a mature believer who loves me because I hate his rebuke. Furthermore, my arrogance is such that I hate the one who loved me and rebuked me. The arrogance in me makes me despise and reject the teachings and reproofs of the truth. And that arrogance makes me hear too quickly the sounds of the world's foolishness and temptation. I should hear the voice of wisdom. That's why the Bible says, "Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you ..." (9:8).

Pride is something God hates (Prov. 6:16). That is why the Bible says that God doesn't tolerate a man with haughty eyes and a proud heart (Ps. 101:5). The Bible says that God will bring low those whose eyes are haughty (18:27). We must be humble. We must imitate the humility of Jesus. Just as He humbled himself and came to this earth to serve rather than be served, we must humble ourselves and live a life of service.

### **Fifth, we should not exploit others to pursue our own profit alone.**

Have you ever heard of the term 'exploitation of the gap'? One of the words we often hear in Korean news is 'Gapjil'. When a contract is concluded in Korea, Gap (甲) and Eul (乙) always appear at the beginning of the contract. A letter simply indicates the contracting party. The letter that simply indicates the contracting party Gap is usually the contract giving party and Eul is the contract receiving party. So, in general, the Gap is stronger one. Therefore, the contract is written in Gap's advantage, and even if Gap makes an unreasonable request, Eul has no

choice but to follow. This kind of tyranny seems to be called “Gapjil”. It would mean acting arrogantly (Internet). One of the arrogant acts of Gap to Eul is exploitation. Exploitation of Gap is when a person in Gap’s position infringes on the rights of a person in Eul’s position and exploits the labor force or share to be distributed (Internet). A exploits numerous Eul’s, but by doing things like labor exploitation, Gap exploits even money because he doesn’t pay the promised money from Eul’s who are weaker and less powerful than him.

In the Bible, exploitation of Gap is found in Psalms 73:6. The Bible says that “they clothe themselves with violence”. This means that all actions and expressions of the wicked are tyranny, oppressing and exploiting others (Park). But not only the wicked did this exploitative act, but in Nehemiah 5:7-9, we can see what the leaders of Judah did to their own people: “I pondered them in my mind and then accused the nobles and officials. I told them, ‘You are exacting usury from your own countrymen!’ So I called together a large meeting to deal with them and said: ‘As far as possible, we have bought back our Jewish brothers who were sold to the Gentiles. Now you are selling your brothers, only for them to be sold back to us!’ They kept quiet, because they could find nothing to say. So I continued, ‘What you are doing is not right. Shouldn’t you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies?’” Nehemiah pointed out that the ordeal was made worse by the unjust exploitation of the people by the leaders of the day. He also pointed out the lack of a ‘brotherly consciousness’ that used these difficult times to lend money and enslave the children of those who could not pay. He also pointed out that Gentiles were looking at us, and if we live in this way, we would hide the glory of God. In other words, all the problems occurred because they didn’t fear God (Dong-won Lee).

Look at Proverbs 30:14 – “those whose teeth are swords and whose jaws are set with knives to devour the poor from the earth, the needy from among mankind.” Here, the phrase “those whose teeth are swords and whose jaws are set with knives” is a poetic expression that compares cruelty (Park). In other words, it refers to the cruelty of those who exploit the poor and needy. These people are greedy people who don’t have pity on the poor, but cruelly exploit them for their own profit. A good biblical example is Ahab king of Israel. In 1 Kings 21, King Ahab coveted the vineyard of Naboth, a loyal citizen, and eventually killed Naboth, who was innocent in order to take Naboth’s vineyard. Another example is that in the days of the prophet Isaiah, Israeli shepherds pursued their own interests only to fill their stomachs through covetousness. Look at Isaiah 56:11 – “They are dogs with mighty appetites; they never have enough. They are shepherds who lack understanding; they all turn to their own way, each seeks his own gain.” The Israeli shepherds were living today and tomorrow, seeking pleasure while drinking wine and strong drink. They loved to sleep (v. 10) and were covetous (v. 11). Still, there was no awakening and they led a selfish life (v. 11). They got drunk and took pleasure in their own affairs (vv. 11-12).

We should not live a life that only looks after our own circumstances and pursues our own interests. This is because, as 1 Corinthians 13:5 says, love isn’t self-seeking. Rather, we should seek the good of our neighbors. This is because Jesus commanded, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt. 22:39). The apostle Paul loved his

neighbor as Jesus commanded. He sought the benefit of his neighbors, the Ephesian church members. The apostle Paul, who gave his last farewell sermon in front of the elders of the Ephesian church, while serving the brothers and sisters of the Ephesian church for three years, taught them whatever was beneficial to them, whether in public or in each house, without hesitation (Acts 20:20). It was about turning to God in repentance and have faith in Lord Jesus (v. 21) that he didn't hesitate to preach anything that would be helpful to them. This was the mission of the Apostle Paul. His mission was to testify to the gospel of God's grace. And he considered his life worth nothing in testifying the gospel of God's grace (v. 24). Also, Paul loved the Corinthian church members. According to 2 Corinthians 11:9, when he was with the Corinthian church members, he needed something. But he wasn't burden to anyone. He kept himself from being a burden to them in any way (v. 9). Nevertheless, Paul was misunderstood. There was some misunderstanding among the Corinthian church members who cunningly said that Paul had exploited them (12:16). How did Paul feel at that time? Although he was very careful not to be burden to the Corinthian church members because he loved them, how must Paul have felt when he thought of them who deceitfully said that he had exploited them? The Korean hymn "O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee" verse 1 comes to my mind: "O Master, let me walk with Thee In lowly paths of service free Tell me Thy secret, help me bear The strain of toil, the fret of care." I hope and pray that we will humbly serve our neighbors with love with the strength that the Lord gives us, and seek the interests of our neighbors rather than our own.

**Sixth, we should not be dissatisfied. We should guard ourselves against covetousness.**

Our hearts cannot be fully satisfied with any love in this world. Our hearts can be completely satisfied only with the eternal love of the Lord. Look at Psalms 90:14 – "Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days." The reason is because God has given us a heart to long for eternity. Look at Ecclesiastes 3:11 – "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end." Our longing for eternity can only be satisfied with the eternal love of the Lord. Our satisfaction comes only from God: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. 3:5, KJV). Our self-satisfaction is never complete. So we will be dissatisfied again. And this dissatisfied heart seeks futile things (Eccle. 5:10, 11).

Look at Proverbs 30:15-16: "The leech has two daughters. 'Give! Give!' they cry. 'There are three things that are never satisfied, four that never say, 'Enough!': the grave, the barren womb, land, which is never satisfied with water, and fire, which never says, 'Enough!'" Here, "a leech" or "two daughters" of a leech, or "the grave," "the barren womb," and water and fire are all things that don't know they are enough. So the Bible says, "... never satisfied ... Enough! ... never satisfied with ...." In a word, the point the writer of Proverbs is talking about is that all of these are talking about greed, wanting and insatiable (Park). For example, an annular animal called a "leech" is only 3-4 cm long, but has suckers on both ends of its body to attach to the flesh of other animals and suck blood

(Internet). But the leech has two daughters whose names are “give give,” which means that it isn’t enough to suck blood constantly (Believer’s Bible Commentary). Dr. Yoon-sun Park said that “the grave” swallows the dead and doesn’t get cold even after swallowing it, “the barren womb” always wants to conceive, “land” permeates as soon as water is poured, and “fire” continues to supply fuel and burn it all and it burns more (Park). The leeches, the two daughters of the leeches, the grave, the barren womb, the land that cannot be filled with water, the fire that aren’t enough are unsatisfactory. The Bible teaches us to be very wary of dissatisfaction with covetousness.

In addition to all these, there is another thing in Ezekiel 16:28-29 that we don’t know that it is enough, which is “harlot”: “Moreover, you played the harlot with the Assyrians because you were not satisfied; you played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied. You also multiplied your harlotry with the land of merchants, Chaldea, yet even with this you were not satisfied.” The Bible says that there is no satisfaction in the eyes of man except for lust that isn’t enough (Prov. 27:20). In other words, the lust of the eye isn’t satisfied. Our human eyes are full of fornication and we sin constantly (2 Pet. 2:14). That is why Pastor Lloyd-Jones said in his book “Darkness and Light” focused on the words of Job 31:1, “I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?” like this: ‘Your eyes are the problem. When you see something, the mind follows it. ... If there is anything that makes you tempted, don’t look at it! ... Don’t let your eyes covet anything. Don’t let go of looking straight ahead. ... Make a covenant with your eyes and look straight ahead. Pay attention only to the direction God directs, holiness and heaven’ (Jones). If we have greed in our hearts, we cannot be satisfied with that desire. Man’s greed knows no satisfaction. Just as the sea will never be filled with flowing water (Eccl. 1:7), it seems that man’s greed is endless. In order to satisfy his endless greed, he pursues things in this empty world, but in the end he is not satisfied. According to Ecclesiastes 2:10, King Solomon, who wrote Ecclesiastes, didn’t forbid anything that his eyes desired, nor did he refuse his heart pleasure. He saw and enjoyed everything his heart desired. He thought it was the reward for all his labor (2:10). But he confessed: “Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.”

If we have greed in us, we commit the sin of complaining and murmuring in dissatisfaction like the Israelites at the time of the Exodus. Dissatisfaction makes us complain. Why are we dissatisfied and complaining? The reason is greed. Greed like this is terrifying and very dangerous. Not only that, greed is harmful to us. The reason we fall into foolish and hurtful greed is because we don’t have the sufficiency of not knowing what we already have. It is also because even though we know the truth that we cannot take anything with us because we brought nothing into this world, we don’t know it with our hearts. Therefore, we who is greedy wants to be rich by loving money in covetousness (1 Tim. 6:6-10). And in the process, it causes quarrels with others (Prov. 28:25). We must live contentedly with the Lord alone. The benefit and meaning of life is to walk the path of salvation through faith in Jesus alone, and to live content with the Lord alone. There is only Jesus who can satisfy our souls while living a shadowy life. The reason is because our soul longs for eternity, so only the eternal Jesus can satisfy our soul.

## **Seventh and last, we should not mock and despise our parents. We must obey them.**

I read an article titled '6 Regrets Every Time I See My Parents Growing Older' (Internet): (1) Saying hurtful things to my parents, (2) Indifference to my parents, (3) Failure to properly express affection, (4) Not spending much time together, (5) Not being financially helpful, and (6) Not taking care of parents' health in advance (Internet). We see our parents are suffering from diseases as they get older. In the meantime, we see our parents caring for each other and loving each other. Even when we see our father or mother at the crossroads of life and death, we cry as we blame ourselves. Still, we often struggle with things that we cannot help when we think realistically. Can we really not regret having to let our beloved parents go?

Look at Proverbs 30:17 – “The eye that mocks a father And scorns a mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.” What does it mean when a child mocks his father? Looking at the Naver dictionary, the meaning of the word 'to mock' is 'to ridicule or make fun of' (Internet). The original Hebrew meaning is to ridicule another person to the point of disparaging it (DBL Hebrew). An example of this is, as Proverbs 17:5 says, “He who mocks the poor ....” The Bible says that to ridicule the poor is to despise the Lord who made him (v. 5). So how could the child mock his father? Of course, the child can ridicule his father by disparaging him. In other words, the child will be able to ridicule his father by making derogatory remarks. However, I believe that words don't necessarily mean that the child mocks his father. The reason I think so is Isaiah 37:22 – “this is the word that the LORD has spoken against him: "She has despised you and mocked you, The virgin daughter of Zion; She has shaken her head behind you, The daughter of Jerusalem!” This word was spoken by God through the prophet Isaiah that the people of Judah would despise and ridicule the king of Assyria. When we see the second half of this verse “...She has shaken her head behind you, The daughter of Jerusalem!” I think that the child shakes his head at his father. For example, if a father speaks to his child and the child turns his back to his father and shakes his head as he walks, what non-verbal behavior is the disrespect and contempt of the father? The reason is because the child doesn't honor his father. Obviously, the Bible says, 'Honor your father and mother' (Ex 20:12; Deut 5:16; Mt. 19:19; Eph. 6:1, 2). But the child who mocks his father ignores this word so he ignores, despises and ridicules his father. More specifically, the foolish child who mocks his father mocks him because he doesn't fear God (Lev. 19:32) and doesn't honor his father. The foolish child despises and ridicules his father because he doesn't fear God and therefore doesn't fear his own father (see Mal. 1:6).

Then why does the child hate to obey his mother? Why does the child despise his mother? The reason, of course, is because the child is proud. When we are proud, we don't obey the word of God and despise it. So we despise our mother and hate to obey her. Not only that, if the child isn't wise (Prov. 11:12), or foolish (23:9), he despises his mother and hates to obey her word. Such proud and foolish child doesn't fear God's word and despise it (13:13). So he disobeys God's word, and doesn't honor and obey his mother. The Bible says that child who hates to obey his parents, but ridicule and despise them will surely be rewarded. What is the reward? Look at Proverbs



30:17 – “The eye that mocks a father And scorns a mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.” Can you imagine the birds in the air eating dead bodies? Especially can you imagine that a crow or an eagle finds a dead body while flying in the air, and come down and climb onto the corpse and peck at the life of the corpse? When we think of that scene, we need to realize how terrifying the end result of a disobedient child who doesn’t honor or obey his parent, but rather despise and ridicule them.

This is what Proverbs 23:22 says: “Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.” We must not despise and ridicule our parents. Rather, we should honor and obey our parents. This is a command from God (Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; Mt. 19:19; Mk. 10:19; Eph. 6:2). By obeying this command of God, may we be able to please our Heavenly Father and also our parents.

As Christians who believe in Jesus, we need to know clearly what to do and what not to do. We learned 7 things about what we should not do based on Proverbs 30:10-17: (1) We should not slander (v. 10). (2) We should not curse (v. 11). (3) We should not be pure in our own eyes (v. 12). (4) We should not be haughty (v. 13). (5) We should not exploit others to pursue our own profit alone (v. 14). (6) We should not be dissatisfied. We should guard ourselves against covetousness (vv. 15-16). (7) We should not mock and despise our parents. We must obey them (v. 17). I hope and pray that we will be obedient to these words of God.

## **He who is not pure in heart**

**“those who are pure in their own eyes and yet are not cleansed of their filth”  
(Proverbs 30:12).**

It takes at least two months to publish a book. Nevertheless, as God's gracious hand helped me (Neh. 2:18), my insufficient book “Those Who are Pure in Heart” came out quickly after about a month and a half so that at our church 30th year anniversary commemorative service I was able to give my book as a gift to our church members and their neighbors. It was surely God's grace! When I first received my book from a publisher, I read and re-read it. As I was reading the book first time, I thought ‘Oh, that's why people don't publish books.’ The reason was because I thought that my writings in the book were too insufficient. And when I read the book for the second time, God planted a prayer topic in my heart, ‘God, please purify my heart’. The reason was because since the publication of that book, the Holy God has been revealing more and more of the dirty, ugly, and sinful things in my heart than before. It was sad. I was disappointed and sad because of myself as I faced the ugliness of my heart revealed in God's holy presence. But this, too, could be a joy. The reason was because I realized that I have no choice but to depend more and more on the blood of Jesus on the cross.

When I was reading Proverbs 29-31 last night, my eyes stopped at Proverbs 30:12. I think the reason is because of the word, “those who are pure in their own eyes”. When I read the Bible again, I remembered the title of my book, “Those Who are Pure in Heart,” so I think my eyes stopped on that verse. And I thought about it and I asked myself couple of questions: ‘Am I considering myself pure?’, ‘Do I consider myself pure while my heart is full of filth?’ When I thought about these questions and examined my heart, the thought came to my mind was ‘I have pride in my heart.’ What is truly terrifying and frightening is the pride that is always lurking in my heart. Pride is so scary because it makes me spiritually blind. In other words, pride is terrifying because it blinds my spiritual eyes so that I cannot see my sin with the flaming eyes of my holy God. Instead, pride makes me see the sins of others more and more, and make me to judge and condemn them with my heart. In other words, pride is scary because it makes my eyes so haughty (v. 13) that it prevents me from looking at the sins of my own heart, but rather makes me look at the superficial sins of others. It may not take time to see my own sins in the presence of holy God. But I can't help but be proud of my heart as I diligently look at the sins of others and despise, judge, and condemn them with my heart. My heart is full of filthy things, and I cannot but acknowledge and confess that I am not pure in heart.

God has pity on such proud and unclean man and is giving me grace. That grace is God brings out the filth that fills my heart, so that I can count sin as a sin and confess my filthy and ugly sins in my heart as I trust the power of the blood of Jesus on the cross. And the indwelling Holy Spirit is making me depend on the fact that the Spirit is praying for me with groanings that cannot be expressed because I am weak and I don't know what to ask for. I want my heart to be pure. Of course, I know that even though I may be able to fix all my bad deeds and forsake all thoughts of sin, I cannot boast my purity in the presence of the Lord. But I still want to ask God to help me to throw away all sinful thoughts. I want to keep throwing them away until I die. Although I am in agony due to my sinful thoughts that I keep on trying to throw away again and again, I see myself holding onto sinful thoughts that harden my heart. But I want to become a Christian with a pure heart by humbly repenting and repenting my sins as I keep on relying on God's mercy and grace.

“O Lord, purify my heart.”

## The wisest life?

### [Proverbs 30:18-33]

How should we live? When I pray for my son Dillon, I am praying that he will be a faithful and truthful Christian according to his name. As I have been praying for him like this, I started to seek wisdom from God for my first daughter Sophie a few years ago because of an incident in her elementary school. And I ended up asking God for wisdom not only for Sophie but also for the youngest child Karis as well as Dillon. Perhaps one of the great reasons why I am asking God wisdom for my three children is because I have been asking God wisdom for myself due to my lack of wisdom. I have been holding onto the promise word of God James 1:5 – “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.” Because God is making me realize that I desperately need God’s given wisdom in order to live in this sinful world, I am asking God for wisdom when I pray for not only myself but also my three children (Of course I have been praying for my wife as well). Nevertheless, considering that Solomon who committed the great sin of idolatry during his last life, it is very important for me and my family to live a faithfully and wise life while living on this earth until the day the Lord calls us to Heaven. So, what is a wise life?

In Proverbs 30:24, the Bible speaks of the four smallest and wisest animals on earth. Based on this verse with the title of “The wisest life?,” I would like to receive the lessons from Proverbs 30:18-33, by meditating on the five most wise lives that the Bible teaches us.

#### **First, the wisest life is to let go of hypocrisy.**

Look at Proverbs 30:18 – “There are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I do not understand.” What do we do when our wishes conflict with what the Bible says? For example, what we want is to act according to our sinful old instincts, and the Bible tells us not to live according to our old instincts, but to live according to the Word of God because we became new creatures in Jesus Christ. What should we do? Perhaps our answer is that we must live in obedience to the word of God. I am sure no one will say that we should break God's word and live by our old sinful instincts. But the main problem is that we aren’t living what we say and believe.

The word of God is bound to collide with our overflowing greed. At that moment, our conscience tells us not to act according to our greedy desire. But there are times when we have already made up our minds to act according to our desires and do so. In my case, I am not living according to what I believe and say. So my

hypocrisy is finally exposed. At the same time, there are times when I stand in front of the church members again and preach, 'I am what I am because of God's grace' (1 Cor. 15:10). My lips are filled with 'God's grace', but deep in my heart it is filled with 'my merit' consciousness. After all, I am making God's precious grace into cheap grace. I am only revealing my own glory as a man, not the glory of God. Hypocrisy is that the outside is different from the inside. Hypocrisy is the difference between what we say and do in our church and what we say outside the church. Inside the church, our words and actions seem to be careful, right, and exemplary. However, outside of the church, there are many cases where we behave in a completely different way than the people of the world. Also, hypocrisy is when our words and our hearts are different. For example, we may hate someone in our heart, but be kind on the outside. This is hypocrisy. The hypocrite has an evil heart toward the other, yet he speaks smooth words with his lips, and ends his mischief, but disguises his evil heart with words of very warm love (Prov. 26:23). As we have already meditated on Proverbs 26:23-28, we have learned six things about the difference between the lips and the heart of the hypocrite: (1) The hypocrite's lips are meek, but his heart is evil (v. 23). (2) The hypocrite hides his feelings of hate with flattery (v. 24). (3) Even though the hypocrite's speech is charming, his heart is filled with abominations (v. 25). (4) Even though the hypocrite may conceal his hatred by deception, his wickedness will surely be exposed in the congregation (v. 26). (5) The hypocrite digs a pit, but he will fall into it. (6) The hypocrite lies (v. 28).

In Proverbs 30:18, the writer of Proverbs says, "There are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I do not understand" and talks about 4 ways: (1) The way of an eagle, (2) The way of a snake on a rock, (3) The way of a ship on the high seas, (4) The way of a man with a maiden, the way of an adulteress (vv. 19-20). Among these four ways, the key point the writer of Proverbs is trying to say is the way of the adulteress. Look at verse 20: "This is the way of an adulteress: She eats and wipes her mouth and says, 'I've done nothing wrong.'" When the writer of Proverbs says, 'I have done nothing wrong,' even though the adulteress committed fornication, he is pointing out that she is trying to conceal her sin. Just as the way of the eagle flying in the air, the way of snakes crawling on the rock, the way of the ship passing by the sea, and the way of the man with the maiden are hidden, so the adulteress tries to hide the way of her fornication. With the lips she says, "I have done nothing wrong." In Proverbs 7:10, there is a scene where the woman dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent meets the foolish young man without wisdom. The reason the Bible speaks of this crafty woman here is because she has hidden intention in welcoming the young man. In other words, the crafty adulteress is hiding her true intention in meeting the ignorant, foolish young man. In fact, the literal meaning of the original Hebrew word for 'crafty' here is 'hidden' (MacArthur). What is her hidden intention? Look at Proverbs 23:27-28: "for a prostitute is a deep pit and a wayward wife is a narrow well. Like a bandit she lies in wait, and multiplies the unfaithful among men." The hidden intention of the adulteress who dressed like the prostitute to greet the unwise young man is to set a trap to make him unfaithful to marriage. The adulteress' hidden true intention is to make many married men break the covenant they made when they got married (Park). Thus the adulteress does evil, but she says, "I have done nothing

wrong” (30:20). This shows the hypocrisy of the adulteress, and the lesson the writer of Proverbs is trying to give us in today's passage is that the wisest should put away hypocrisy and must abandon it again (Note: 1 Peter 2:1).

How can we get rid of our hypocrisy over and over again? First of all, we must realize our hypocrisy. I hope and pray that the Holy Spirit will expose and rebuke our hypocrisy through the word of God. Look at Matthew 7:5 – “You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.” When the Holy Spirit rebukes and exposes our hypocrisy with the word of God and makes us aware, we must acknowledge our hypocrisy before God and confess our sins and repent by relying on the blood of Jesus Christ. We must confess and repent that we appear righteous to others on the outside, but inside we are full of hypocrisy and sin (Mt. 23:28). In addition, we must strive to live a life that is in harmony with the outside and the inside. We must be true Christians. We must cast away all lies and pursue a life of unity in words and deeds. We should not, like the Pharisees, clean the outside of cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence (Mt. 23:25). Finally, we must ask God for the wisdom that comes from heaven. The reason is because the heavenly wisdom has no hypocrisy. Look at James 3:17 – “But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”

Our God is a God of order. Our God is by no means a disorderly God. For example, if we look at the order of creation created by God the Creator, a man and a woman marry and become one flesh in the Lord. However, people disregard this creation order and are led by the sinful desires of their hearts and shameful lusts (Rom. 1:24-25). They do not act according to the creation order, but exchange it and do the opposite, in which women exchange natural relations for unnatural ones and the men also abandon natural relations with women and are inflamed with lust for one another (vv. 26-27). This is what ought not to be done in the sight of God (v. 28). In 1 Corinthians 14:40, the Bible says, “But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.” We must obey this word. We must first keep order in our homes. In order to do this, each of us must faithfully and humbly take on our biblical responsibilities in the home. For example, a wife's responsibility in the home is to submit to her husband. The Bible says that it is fitting in the Lord (Col. 3:18). This is a wife's duty. It is fitting in the Lord's sight to submit to the husband as a wife does to the Lord in the family system established by the Lord. The wife must also recognize and respect the divine authority God has given to her husband, the head of the household. These days, the authority of the husband is being ignored in the home. There are many reasons for this. But one of them is that the wife disregards the authority of her husband. That is why children imitate their mother and ignore the authority of their father, who is the head of the household. It really is a serious problem. Obviously, God has given divine authority to the man who is the head of the household, but his wife isn't submissive to that authority (Eph. 5:22). Obviously the Bible commands “the wife must respect her husband” (Eph. 5:33), but the authority of the man is disregarded in the home because of his wife who refuses to respect her husband. As a result, the order of the family is broken. It shouldn't be like this anymore. In order for us to establish family order, the wives and children of the family must recognize and respect the authority God has given to the husband/father, who is the head of the

household. And in obedience to the word of God, the wife should fear and respect her husband. At that time, the children who see the mother's face will also fear and respect the father and obey the father's words. Also, we the fathers must not abuse the authority God has given us. The reason is because when we abuse our God-given authority, we will never win the hearts of our children. Rather, we should use the authority God has given us wisely to keep peace and order in the home.

So is the church. We must keep order in the church. In order to do that, we must refrain from saying and doing things that are beyond our boundary. Neither should we take the office given to each of us lightly or further downgrade. In serving the church, as office-bearers, we must not break the peace that disrupts the order of the church by forming factions like Korah, the descendant of Levi in Numbers 16:9. God is never a God of disorder. But those who break the peace that disturb the order of the church don't refrain from words and actions beyond the boundary with pride in their arrogance. We should not build a faction in the church and exalt ourselves in front of the church congregation in order to eventually obtain a church office by human power while envying and coveting a post that is bigger and higher in the eyes of people. We should not go beyond our boundary by slandering and condemning others, and even using malicious rumors to build a faction in the church. As office-bearers, we should not try to exalt ourselves before the congregation of the church. We must refrain from speaking and deeds that are beyond our boundary. We must regard the office given to us as a great grace of God. It should never be regarded as grace only in the first moment of being given an office. The more we serve as officers, the deeper we need to understand God's grace. Therefore, we must be more humble. We must humbly assume the office given to us. No need to compare with other officers. Just as an official, we should be humbled and grateful for the responsibilities entrusted to us.

### **Second, the wisest life is to live in order.**

Look at Proverbs 30:21-23: "Under three things the earth trembles, under four it cannot bear up: a servant who becomes king, a fool who is full of food, an unloved woman who is married, and a maidservant who displaces her mistress." Here, the writer of Proverbs speaks of four states of upside down order (Park). The four states are (1) a servant becomes king, (2) a fool is full of food, (3) an unloved woman is married, and (4) a maidservant displaces her mistress. What all these four states have in common is that unqualified persons were seated in high positions (Park). Is the servant eligible to be the king? Of course not, isn't it? However, if the servant becomes the king, then the earth will tremble (v. 21). But what about "a fool who is full of food"? (v. 22) The meaning of this word is that the fool becomes rich (Park). Is this acceptable in the world? Of course not. How can the fool become rich? What about "the unloved woman who is married"? (v. 23) How can the unloved woman marry? Isn't it an unacceptable fact that a woman who doesn't deserve to marry has married? Isn't it also unacceptable that "a maidservant who displaces her mistress" (v. 23), in other words, the maidservant who took the place of her mistress? In all of these four states, the unqualified were seated in a high position, which means that the order is upside down

(Park).

What will happen to the family, the church, society, or the world if the order is turned upside down? In particular, without realizing that we aren't qualified, what if we say 'A servant ought to be a king', 'A fool ought to be rich', 'An unloved woman ought to marry', 'A maidservant should displace her mistress,' doesn't that show our pride? If such pride is in our hearts, the family and church we belong to will inevitably become disordered. We must never tolerate arrogance. We must be very wary of becoming proud in our hearts. We should not break the order of the family and the church by having thoughts, words, and actions that are beyond our boundary. Rather, we must keep the order in our home and church. In order to do that, we must all be humble. We must have the humble heart of Jesus. In particular, we must bear in mind that we have been saved and become children of God because of Jesus, who came to this low world and was crucified and died on the cross, the tree of the curse in order to save us who deserve to die forever. We must not forget this wonderful fact that we, who never deserved to become children of God, have received the authority to become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. It was totally by God's grace. This is an astonishing rise in status that cannot be compared with the succession of the servant becoming the king, the fool becoming rich, the unloved woman marrying, and the maidservant displacing her mistress. Therefore, while we are more aware of this grace of God, we must obey God's word with the power of God's grace and keep the order of the home and church well. When we do this, I hope and pray that we will live the wisest life in the sight of God.

**Third, the wisest life is to be industrious like the ants, to anticipate danger like the shephanim and make their houses in the rocks, to be united like the locusts, and act swiftly and cunningly like the lizard.**

What are you learning these days? What do you think God is trying to teach you? I read Pastor Joon-Min Kang's column, 'The Wisdom from the Storm,' that I read once again. And I want to summarize only two things and share with you. For one thing, to live is to learn. A disciple of Jesus is a learner who must yearn for learning. And learning also requires wisdom. The right thing to learn is to grow up right. That is why we must learn to learn well. Learning how to learn well will benefit us for a lifetime. Another thing is that learning is ability. 'Learning is the ability to grow in storms. We sometimes encounter storms. Sometimes we pass through the wilderness. Sometimes we go into the furnace of suffering. Of course, life isn't always about suffering. However, it is unavoidable to encounter tribulation in life. The ability to learn is the ability to overcome the difficulties encountered in life. If we live with a learning attitude, we can turn every life experience into an opportunity to learn. The storm is school. Hardship is a teacher' (Kang). In learning, we must also learn from animals. There was an article I read at Health Chosun two years ago and I read it again. The article is titled '5 Health Habits Learned from Chickens' (Internet): (1) Sleeping early and waking up early. It is said that chickens start their activities from 4-5 am, just before dawn, crying 'Cock-a-doddle-doo ~'. On the other hand, they don't move very well at night. (2)



Cherishing their young. The chickens are said to be highly maternal animals. They don't hesitate to sacrifice their chest hairs to keep the eggs warm, and during the 20 days of incubating the eggs. They are said to not move in the cold or heat. Also, chickens rarely eat feed. (3) Eating evenly. The chickens are said to be omnivores and eat any kind of food. It is important for people to eat evenly. (4) Moving diligently. They are said to be constantly moving. Regular exercise is also an essential condition for physical health. (5) Drinking a lot of water. Everyone has seen the behavior of chickens drinking water and looking at the sky at least once. The chickens are said to drink a lot of water. Water is a major component of the body, accounting for about 70% of the human body.

In Proverbs 30:24-28, the writer of Proverbs says: "Four things are small on the earth, But they are exceedingly wise: The ants are not a strong people, But they prepare their food in the summer; The shephanim are not mighty people, Yet they make their houses in the rocks; The locusts have no king, Yet all of them go out in ranks; The lizard you may grasp with the hands, Yet it is in kings' palaces." These four kinds of animals are weak. But they live well by the instinctive wisdom God has given them (Park):

(1) Let's consider the ants.

What can we learn from the ants? Look at Proverbs 6:6 – "Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!" What wisdom should we learn from the ants? At least two things (Park):

**(a) The ants work diligently and cooperatively, voluntarily, even without a supervisor.**

Look at Proverbs 6:7 – "Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler." What comes to your mind when you think about the ants? I read an article on the Internet to learn about ants. And I have some interesting points about ants (Internet):

(i) The ants are said to be thoughtful to each other.

When we mainly think of "the ant", we think of it as a queen ant and a worker ant, but there is a "patrolling ant". In general, the ants are said to send out the patrolling ant to find food. After finding it, the patrolling ant is said to take an inexperienced companion and slowly go vertically (parallel) and lead it to the place where the newly discovered prey is. And it is said that the following ants gain knowledge thanks to the leader ant. It is said that both the guide ant and the ant following are very considerate enough to slow down the guide if the ant following it procrastinates, and move quickly again if the rear ant catches up again.

(ii) The ants are said to help each other.

The ants' mutual help can be seen by looking at their communication. The ants are said to communicate with each other by means of pheromones (a chemical signal used to communicate between animals of the

same species). The ant's chemical cues are much more advanced than other logging insects. And like other insects, the ants are said to smell as long, thin, and moveable antennae. It is said that the pair of antennae can convey information about the intensity or direction of the smell. Most of the ants live on the ground, so it is said to leave a path with pheromones on the surface so other ants can follow. It is said that among species that scout in groups, the patrolling ant who is scouting for food display traces from its prey to the anthill. Other ants follow this trail, and each time they return home with food, they are said to reinforce the odor path. When all the food is gone, the returning ant marks it, and the smell slowly disappears. This behavior is said to help the ants adapt to changes in their environment. For example, it is said that if the scent trail that leads to the prey is blocked by an obstacle, the ant behind the fence goes off the road and finds a new path. When the ant finds the new path, the ant returns and marks the shortcut with smell. It is said that as the ants flock to the good path, the smell of the shortcut increases and gradually finds the best path.

(iii) The ants divide professional occupations according to their size.

Looking at the ants' food cultivation, most ants are omnivorous predators and deal with dead creatures. But there are other ants that have developed special nutritional methods. Such ants are called 'scissor ants,' and they are said to grow mushrooms only in their ant nest. They continue to collect leaves, bring them to their colonies, cut them into small pieces, and place them on mushroom farms. The largest ants are said to cut the stem, the smaller worker ants chew the leaves, and the smallest ants care for mushrooms.

**(b) The ant prepares ahead for the future.**

Look at Proverbs 6:8 – “yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.” Do you know the Aesop’s fable “The ant and grasshopper”? According to that famous story, the grasshopper sang and mocked the ant which worked hard in the summer: ‘Hey ant, is something wrong with your head? Why are you preparing food in summer for winter?’ Despite such ridicule, the ant worked very hard for cold winters, even in hot summer days. However, the grasshopper didn’t work every day and only sang. As a result, he had no food to eat in the winter so he begged for food. When I read this fable story as a child, I was taught that I should be like the ant, not the grasshopper. I learned that I must live diligently like the ant, not lazy like the grasshopper. However, as I grew older when I thought about this story, not only that I learned the lesson of being diligent like the ant, but also being wise in preparing for the future. When we are young, who cares about the future and prepares for it? In Proverbs 6:8, the Bible urges people who are worse than the ant to go to the ant and learn the wisdom to prepare for the future. Even in Proverbs 30:25, the Bible introduces the ants as “they prepare their food in the summer”. Why do the ants prepare winter food ahead of time in summer? According to Dr. Park, summer is the harvest time in Palestine. So, at this time, the ants are said to collect food for winter (Park).

(2) Let's think about the shephanim.

In this way we must learn from the ants the diligence of preparing our food in advance in the summer. And then we must learn from the shephanim to foresee the dangers that lie ahead, and to fortify our dwellings. Look at Proverbs 30:26 – “The shephanim are not mighty people, Yet they make their houses in the rocks.” The shephanim are small, timid and weak animals like a hare (Internet). However, the shephanim are extremely wise (The Pulpit Commentary). So the shephanim build their houses in the rocks in order to defend themselves from the big animals, anticipating the impending danger (Park). Interestingly, the shephanim live in crevices in rocks in groups and have sentries to keep watch around them. When these sentries squeak, blink, and signal, everyone enters the cave (Internet). Look at Psalms 104:18 – “The high mountains are for the wild goats; The cliffs are a refuge for the shephanim.” The shephanim take their refuges among the rocks.

When I think about “a refuge,” I think of our Lord because the Lord alone is our strong refuge (Ps. 14:6; 46:1, 7, 11; 59:16; 61:3; 62:8; 91:2; 142:5). The Lord is also the Rock of our strength (62:7) and the Rock of our salvation (2 Sam. 22:47). Christ is our Rock (1 Cor. 10:4).

(3) Let's think about the locusts.

What wisdom should we learn from “the locusts”? Look at Proverbs 30:27 – “The locusts have no king, Yet all of them go out in ranks.” What comes to mind in the Bible when we hear the word “the locusts”? I remember the eighth of the ten plagues that God brought upon Egypt at the time of the Exodus, when a swarm of locusts covered the entire surface of Egypt (Exod. 10:1-20). When Pharaoh, king of Egypt, didn't humble himself before God and didn't let God's people Israel out of Egypt (10:3), God sent swarms of locusts to Egypt, covering the entire land of Egypt so that the land could not see (vv. 4-5). As a result, the locusts covered the entire land of Egypt and the damage was great (vv. 14, 15). In Proverbs 30:27, the writer of Proverbs spoke of “the locusts,” one of the smallest and wisest animals on the earth, and said, “The locusts have no king, Yet all of them go out in ranks.” What is the reason? When we say “the locusts”, we can see that not only Exodus 10 but also Joel 1:4 were used as instruments of God's punishment. In other words, God used the swarm of the locusts when He brought disaster on a nation. What is interesting is that the swarm of the locusts that were used as an instrument of God's punishment is like an army that is well-ordered and moving even though it has no leader (“king”). They move systematically and appear to act under clear direction and strict discipline (Thru the Bible With J. Vernon McGee Commentary). After all, the reason the writer of Proverbs speaks of the locusts that have no king but all of them go out in ranks in Proverbs 30:27 is instructing us to be united like the locusts (Park).

I have applied this lesson to my home and church. Our families and churches should be united like the

locusts. Although we are different in many ways, we must unite our hearts and strengths as one family in Jesus. In particular, if there is no leader in the swarm of the locusts, how well should the family and the church with leaders united? I think this is the wisest life in the sight of God.

(4) Let's think about the lizard.

Look at Proverbs 30:28 – “The lizard you may grasp with the hands, Yet it is in kings' palaces.” Perhaps we have all seen the lizards. Of course, I have seen the lizards in front of our house many times. But the most memorable is that when I went to see my church Elder Yoon, who was on a medical mission in the Philippines a few years ago, I saw a lizard stick to the ceiling of the hotel where I was staying. As Proverbs 30:28 says, it was a small lizard that I could grasp with my hands. But I didn't even try to catch the lizard. The reason may be because the lizard eats the bugs, and because I thought I couldn't catch it. The Bible says that such a lizard lives in king's palaces (v. 28). Have you ever heard of the characteristics of the lizard? The lizard's characteristic is to lure enemies by waving its tail when facing danger, then cut off its own tail to run away while the enemy panics (Internet). The lesson this teaches us is that the wisest life is to act swiftly and wisely like the lizard (Park).

Who do you think of in the Bible who acted swiftly and wisely? According to 1 Samuel 17:48-49, Goliath moved closer to attack David when David was fighting with Goliath. So David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet Goliath. “Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground” (v. 49). Do you remember what Jesus said, “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves; therefore be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Mt. 10:16)? Here, the serpent is a symbol of wisdom. The Lord speaks of the wisdom of the serpent, above all else, that the serpent avoids the difficulties by carefully coping with various difficulties that come to it. And that the serpent is wise means careful discernment. The serpent's wisdom is the ability to discern and judge all things. We must be as wise as serpents because the Lord has sent us into this world, and there are many false prophets who come to us in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves (Mt. 7:15; 10:16). Therefore, we must speak wisely and act wisely in preaching the gospel to this world and living a life worthy of the gospel.

**Fourth, the wisest life is to lead with dignity and the strength to not retreat, to take the initiative to take the lead, identify problems, and act as guardians at the forefront.**

Harvard Medical School psychologist Steven Berglass has this to say about ‘Success Syndrome’: ‘Even if you get a great sense of accomplishment, if you don't have the basic character to support it, you're headed for ruin.’ He believes that such people will fall into one or more of the following four A's: (1) Arrogance, (2) Painful feeling

of Aloneness, and (3) Destructive Adventure-Seeking, and (4) Adultery. These four things are that people with weak character are always asking for a price that is too high to pay. The thing to keep in mind here, Berglass says, is that you should never forget that in the valley you're in right now, that you're stuck in one or more of the four A's, you'll never get past time or money or more fame. The reason for this is because the rifts of character become more destructive as time goes by, increasing in depth. Whether we lead people at home, at work, or in meetings, we must never forget that character is our most important asset (Maxwell). Alan Bernard, Chairman of Mid Park, Inc, said of character: 'The respect leadership must have, it requires an ethical life of the individual. Leaders must not only be on the borderline between right and wrong, but also live a transparent life without 'gray areas' (Maxwell). I think the most important list in leadership is character. Therefore, we must devote ourselves to "character building" in order to find potential leaders, raise them up as mature lay ministers, and send them out. And the important thing in the "character making" process is crisis or adversity. The reason is because a crisis doesn't necessarily shape character, but it is as clear as it reveals character. Adversity is a crossroads between character and compromise, and life always has to choose between them (Maxwell).

Look at Proverbs 30:29-31: "There are three things which have a magnificent walk; yea, the fourth is stately in going: The lion which is strongest among beasts and does not turn away for any; the greyhound who is girded up of loins; the goat also, and the king, against whom no one rises up" (JUB). Here, the writer of Proverbs says, "There are three things which have a magnificent walk," referring to the strongest of all beasts, the lion, the greyhound, the goat, and the king. Here, he gives three examples of animals to teach the qualifications of the leader (the king) (Park). And he refers to these three animals as the ones that have the magnificent walk (v. 29). In other words, to say that the lion, greyhound, and the goat walk magnificently means that they walk with dignity (Park). As such, the king, the leader of a country, must possess dignified virtues (Park). Pastor John MacArthur said dignity and confidence (MacArthur). When I think of the word "dignity," I remember the words of the pastor of the church that I served when I was studying and ministering in Korea. At that time, I remember that the pastor said that I had reduced his dignity in front of the church elders and their wives. Haha. At that time I didn't fully understand his words. The reason was because I didn't fully understand the meaning of the word "dignity". I searched the Internet and found that the dictionary meaning of the word "dignity" is "the state or quality of being worthy of honor or respect" (Internet). The leader should have this dignity. Then, when I thought of the word "confidence", one day I came across an article I wrote under the heading '3 C's of Leaders': (1) The first "C" is Conviction. If we do the Lord's work without conviction, one day we will have to lean left or right. Especially in the work that the leader wants to do, if he doesn't have conviction in the words of the Holy Spirit, those who follow him cannot help but be anxious. Therefore, the leader must first be sure whether it is the will of the Lord or not. (2) The second "C" is Confidence. The leader who has conviction that it is the Lords' will has confidence. Therefore, he is confident that what he is doing is what the Lord wants him to do. So he doesn't get discouraged, shaken, and confused by what anyone says. The basis for this confidence is the assurance given by the Holy Spirit. We have confidence because

we believe that it is the Lord's will, and we are confident that the Lord will faithfully accomplish it through us. (3) Third "C" is Consistency. The leader who has conviction and is confident is consistent in his work. The leader shouldn't do this and that. The leader should not be told that he is inconsistent from his followers. When I think about why some leaders do this and that inconsistently, I think the reason is lack of conviction and confidence. I think too many leaders forget the value or importance of consistency. They must be confident in what they believe and should have conviction that it is the Lord's will, and must complete their work with consistency. If the leader goes one way or another without consistency, the followers will inevitably be confused. In addition to this, we are taught that there are three things the leader needs, especially when we consider the three animals in Proverbs 30:30-31:

(1) The leader must have dignity and strength not to retreat from the presence of any beast, just like the lion, the strongest of all beasts (v. 30) (Park).

It means that the leader must have the strength to not back down in dignity and confidence. A good biblical example is David, who stood confidently in front of the Philistine general Goliath and spoke boldly to Goliath. Look at 1 Samuel 17:45-47: "... You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands."

(2) The leader must take the initiative with a clear sense of purpose like the greyhound.

As we know, the greyhound goes ahead of hunters and tracks their prey (Internet). As such, the leader must take the initiative with a clear sense of purpose. In this way, those who follow can follow the leader with the same goal. I think a good example is the Apostle Paul. Look at Philippians 3:13-14: "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

(3) The leader must act as a protector at the forefront like a goat (Park).

For the Israelites, the story of the sheep and the goats is a familiar and interesting story. And it is impossible to raise the sheep alone without the goats. Therefore, it is common to raise one goat for every three sheep (1 Sam. 25:2). There are two reasons why the goats are mixed with the sheep this way:

**(a) The first reason is to protect the pasture.**

There is not enough grass for the sheep to graze because the wilderness is a barren environment where there isn't much rain. Therefore, it is necessary to protect the grassland, and while the goats eat only the leaves of mature grass, the sheep eat the leaves without distinguishing between young and mature leaves. However, if you raise a small number of the goats, the sheep will follow you.

**(b) The second reason is that the goat's role is necessary when going through the rough roads and the high rocks in the wilderness.**

The road from the Judean wilderness to the green pastures isn't a rosy road. But sometimes you have to climb high rocks and sometimes go down a steep slope. After the rain, there is a calm waterside in the valley, so it is necessary to go down the steep slope. The sheep are fearful animals. So the goats are the ones that act as a charger (Internet). In this way, a leader needs to act as shock troops for those who follow him. In other words, the leader must stand in the front and lead those who boldly follow. And the leader has responsibility to protect them.

We need a wise leader. The life of the wise leader has majesty that shows dignity and confidence and strength that don't retreat. The wise leader also takes the initiative to identify problems and act as guardians at the forefront. Let's pray for our leaders to become such leaders.

**Fifth and last, the wisest life is to cover our mouths with our hands and stop when we need to.**

We must be patient in order to edify one another in the home and in the church (1 Thess. 5:11, 13). Especially when we have anger against the other person, we need to be able to control it. Such a wise man restrains his anger, but a fool gives full vent to his anger (Prov. 29:11). When he gives full vent of his anger in this way, he is bound to quarrel (v. 22). Therefore, when anger arises in our hearts, we must first close our mouths. The reason is because if we don't, then in anger we will speak harsh words toward other (15:1). As a result, the person who hears the harsh words will not only get hurt, but also get angry and say the harsh words himself. Then the fight will inevitably escalate. In Job 21:5, Job says to his friends who came to comfort him: "Look at me and be astonished; clap your hand over your mouth." The reason Job told his friends to "clap your hand over your mouth" was because even though they had come to comfort Job in his affliction, it was no comfort to him at all, but rather they mocked him (v. 3). So Job referred to them as miserable comforters. Look at Job 16:2 – "I have heard many things like these; miserable comforters are you all!" Job, who was suffering, was not comforted at all by his friends, but rather suffered. So he told them to cover their mouth. But when we look at Job 40:4, Job himself put his hand over his mouth. The reason is because God said to Job, "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him

who accuses God answer him!” (v. 2) So Job said, “I am unworthy--how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth” (v. 4). Ecclesiastes 5:2 comes to mind when I think of Job covering his mouth before God: “Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.” According to this word, we must not be quick with our mouths in the presence of God. And we must not be hasty in our heart to utter anything before God.

Look at Proverbs 30:32-33: “If you have been foolish in exalting yourself Or if you have plotted evil, put your hand on your mouth. For the churning of milk produces butter, And pressing the nose brings forth blood; So the churning of anger produces strife.” Why does the Bible say, “put your hand on your mouth”? The reason is because we are fools. In other words, the Bible tells us to cover our mouths with our hands if we are fools. And the Bible tells us that we can show our follies in two ways. Those two follies are, first, that we exalt or boast ourselves, and second, that we plan evil things (v. 32). That is, the Bible tells us to put our hands on our mouths if we are fools who exalt or boast ourselves. Also, the Bible tells us to put our hands on our mouths if we are fools who plan to do evil. In a word, “put your hand on your mouth” here means stop it (The Nelson Study Bible). In other words, if we are fools and exalt ourselves, and plan evil things, we must stop doing them.

We must cover our mouths with our hands when we exalt ourselves. It is because if we don't shut our mouths we will make arrogant noises out of our mouths. When we exalt ourselves, we must cover our mouths with our hands, because if we speak proudly we will glorify ourselves rather than glorify God. Also, if we plan to do something evil, we must stop that plan. If we don't stop the plan we will surely sin against God by doing that evil thing. We must not exalt ourselves. We don't have to brag about ourselves. If we exalt ourselves or boast in the church, our pride can break the unity in the church and cause quarrel and strife. A good example is “the congregation in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38). The leaders of the congregation in the wilderness were Moses and Aaron. But Korah the Levites, certain Reubenites named Dathan and Abiram, and On (Num. 16:1) rose up against Moses with 250 well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council (v. 2). They said to Moses and Aaron, “You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD's assembly?” (v. 3) Upon hearing this, Moses first fell down and prayed to God (v. 4). Then he rebuked Korah and all his people: “... You Levites have gone too far!” (v. 7) How can we know that Korah and all his people had gone too far? They thought God's grace was small. They took lightly the noble office that God set them apart to serve the Israelites in God's tabernacle (v. 9). So, like Aaron, they sought priesthood. They considered the ministry God had given them small and light, so they overestimated them (pride that exalted themselves), and spoke and act too far to Moses and Aaron. They did this because they pursued vain glory in their hearts. The reason they rebelled against Moses and Aaron, the leaders of the congregation in the wilderness, was because they sought vain glory. The Bible says that they were not only against Moses and Aaron, but also the God who set them up in the congregation of the wilderness (v. 11). In the same way, if we have vain glory in our hearts, we can overthink and try to exalt ourselves. And indeed, if we exalt ourselves in



the church, then we are more likely to quarrel with one another, angering other brothers and sisters in Christ by our behavior that is gone too far (Prov. 30:33). Ultimately, if we exalt ourselves in the church, we break the church's reconciliation and unity. Therefore, we must not fool ourselves into exalting ourselves.

Also, we must not promote evil. In other words, we must not plan evil things (v. 32). You might think that we are planning something evil, but if we see that David, a man after God's heart, also did evil in God's sight, wouldn't we be at greater risk of doing the same? Why did David do what was evil in the sight of God? Although the Bible clearly says, "Do not do wrong to your Christian brother by taking his wife for yourself" (1 Thess. 4:6, WE), King David took Uriah's wife Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:27). He did so even by deliberately planned to kill Bathsheba's husband and a loyal soldier Uriah (vv. 14-26). Why did David do such an evil thing in the sight of God? (v. 27) He seems to have relaxed, careless, when God gave him victory in battle wherever he went (8:6, 14). So, mainly when the war started, he sent the Israeli army and Joab to war, and he stayed in the royal palace in Jerusalem (11:1, 2). Then he saw Bathsheba bathing (v. 2). And he saw her exceedingly beautiful (v. 2). He saw a sight he should not have seen. He sent someone to find out about Bathsheba (v. 3). And he knew that Bathsheba was Uriah's wife, that is, a married woman (v. 3). He sent messengers to bring Bathsheba, and he slept with her (v. 4). Later, David found out that Bathsheba was pregnant (v. 5). So he twice tried to send Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, into his house (vv. 8, 12-13). The reason seems because David wanted to make the baby that Bathsheba was pregnant with as Uriah's baby by making Uriah to go home and sleep with Bathsheba. Since Uriah didn't go home according to David's plan, he eventually forms an alliance with Joab and killed Uriah in battle (vv. 14-26). Then, after Uriah's burial, David sent and came down to the palace to take Bathsheba as his wife (v. 27). The Bible says that what David had done was evil in the sight of God (v. 27).

We have to cover our mouths with our hands when we need to. Especially if we have foolishness in our hearts, we should keep our mouths shut. We must not be fools to exalt ourselves or boast of ourselves. Also, we must not devise or plan to do evil. In particular, we must not provoke the other's anger. If we don't stop provoking the other person's anger, quarrels are bound to happen. Therefore, we have to cover our mouths with our hands when we need to and stop when we need to stop.

In this perilous and sinful world, we desperately need God's wisdom to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves (Mt. 10:16). In Proverbs 30:18-33, we meditated on five things about the wisest life: (1) The wisest life is to let go of hypocrisy. (2) The wisest life is to live in order. (3) the wisest life is to be industrious like the ants, to anticipate danger like the shepherds and make their houses in the rocks, to be united like the locusts, and act swiftly and cunningly like the lizard. (4) The wisest life is to lead with dignity and the strength to not retreat, to take the initiative to take the lead, identify problems, and act as guardians at the forefront. (5) The wisest life is to cover our mouths with our hands and stop when we need to. I hope and pray that all of us can live the wisest life.

## 3 lessons a mother taught her son

### [Proverbs 31:1-9]

Among the lessons your mother gave you, what are some of the precious lessons your mother has engraved on your heart? One of the most well-known American basketball players is Stephen Curry of the Golden State Warriors. He loudly said the ‘F...’ word at the beginning of Game 3 of the NBA Finals against the Houston Rockets in May 2018. It is said that his mother, who saw it on TV, later called her son and rebuked him. His mother Sonia showed him two videos to inform her son of his mistake. Stephen Curry said in an interview with ESPN: ‘My mother said, ‘Go and wash your mouth with soap,’ and told me how I can clean my lips. My mother told me the same thing before. ... My mother was right. I will get better in the future and will not be able to speak that way’ (Internet). Personally, I read an article about the late Bon-moon Koo, chairman of a Korean LG company, who passed away in May 2018 and thought that his mother had a great influence on him. The article about him was titled ‘LG’s Impression. Evergreen Foundation ... He kept his mother’s will of life of giving throughout his life.’ Among the contents of the article was this: ‘The deceased Koo practiced the will of the late mother, Jeong-im Ha, throughout his life by giving to others. He said ‘If it is not trusted by the people or society, it cannot endure.’ So as the chairman and CEO of public welfare foundations such as the LG Welfare Foundation, the LG Yonam Cultural Foundation, and the LG Yonam Academy, he invested heavily in social contribution activities (Internet).

In Proverbs 31:1-9, we find important words of instruction that the mother gave to the son King Lemuel, a son of her vow (vv. 1-2). By meditating on those important words of instruction in three ways, we want to receive the lessons God gives to us (vv. 3-9).

### **First, the mother admonished her son, “Do not give your strength to women.”**

Look at Proverbs 31:3 – “Do not give your strength to women, Or your ways to that which destroys kings.” Do you know what “sexual energy” is? I read an article on the Internet saying, ‘Increase your vigor in life’. According to the urologist who wrote the article, there is no other people who are obsessed with vigor like Koreans. He said that no one really knows what vigor is, even though they value it so much. According to the urologist, vigor is simply ‘blood’. A man’s penis has three soft spongy bodies with holes in them like sponges and loofahs. When sexually stimulated and the central nervous system gives an erect command, the cavernous body swells, and blood is concentrated 7 times as much as usual. At this time, since the penile vein is pressed by the expanded cavernous

body, the blood entering the cavernous body cannot escape and is trapped. Blood is the substance of what is commonly referred to as vigor, which is hard to expand' (Internet). Look at Numbers 11:6 – “But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at” (ESV). In the context of this word, the sons of Israel wept in their tents at the time of the Exodus (v. 4). This was because they have imitated the rabble who were among them who had greedy desires (v. 4). As a result, “the children of Israel also wept again, said, “Who will give us meat to eat?” and longed for “the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic” (vv. 4-5). And the Israelites were not content with the manna that God had given them in the wilderness. So they were weeping in discontent and murmuring that their strengthen (vigor?) was gone because there was nothing at all to look at except manna (v. 6). This was the Israelites' resentment against God's provision. Because of their greed, they could not thank God. Instead, they thought about the food of Egypt and blamed God for losing their strength (vigor?) because they could not eat meat. After all, they complained to God that “we were well-off in Egypt” (v. 18) or that they ate and lived well.

If we look at Proverbs 31:3, King Lemuel's mother gave this admonition to her son, King Lemuel: “Do not give your strength to women, Or your ways to that which destroys kings.” Here, the Hebrew meaning of the word “strengthen” is “vigor,” the male strength in sexual intercourse (DBL Hebrew). The reason King Lemuel's mother admonished her son King Lemuel not to give his strengthen to women was because that will destroy kings (v. 3). A good example is the famous King Solomon. According to 1 Kings 11:1-4, King Solomon loved many foreign women besides the daughter of Pharaoh King of Egypt (v. 1). Although God clearly told the Israelites concerning the pagan nations, “You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods,” King Solomon disobeyed God and loved the pagan women (v. 2). King Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines, and they turned his heart away from God (v. 3). Eventually, when King Solomon was old, the women turned his heart to follow (serve) foreign gods (v. 4). In the end, King Solomon did evil in the sight of God by worshipping idols because of the foreign women (v. 6). Although God appeared to King Solomon twice and warned him not to worship foreign gods, King Solomon didn't obey God's word (v. 9). So, in Deuteronomy 17:1, when there was no king in Israel, God through Moses said to the Israelites at the time of the Exodus: “He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.” This means that when the Israelites enter the land of Canaan and occupy the land and live there, if they think that they should set up a king, like all the nations around them (v. 14), they must appoint a king whom God has chosen. And he must be from among the Israelites (v. 15). God commanded the person who would become the king not to have too many three things: (1) Horses (v. 16), (2) Wives, and (2) Silver and gold (v. 17). However, King Solomon disobeyed these words of God and had many of these three things. As a result, he sinned against God. When I think of Solomon's disobedience to God's command and having many wives, he eventually committed the sin of worshipping idols against God as a result of exerting his vigor on the women. And this reminded me the story of his father David who slept with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, who was his faithful soldier. David should not have consumed his

vigor on women (Prov. 31:3). But he consumed his vigor on his many wives and also on Bathsheba. After committing this sin of adultery, he tried to cover it up. And eventually he committed the greater evil of killing Bathsheba's husband, Uriah (2 Sam. 11). One of the consequences was that David's son Amnon raped his half-sister Tamar, and Tamar's brother Absalom killed Amnon (ch. 13). If we use our vigor on women like King David or his son Solomon did (Prov. 31:3), then our years will inevitably be lost to others (5:9). The Bible tells us that when we refuse to hear the word of God and draw our way near the door of the house of the adulteress, the first unfortunate outcome is that we lose our honor. Here the word "honor" can be interpreted as "strength" or "vigor." I think both interpretations make sense. It is true that we lose our strength (vigor) when we fall into the adulteress' temptation because we don't stay away from the harlot and get close to the door of her house. But we also lose more honor than vigor. The Bible Proverbs 31:3 says that when kings use their vigor on women, it will ruin the kings. Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: 'He who is deceived by women is, in reality, deceived by his own vigor. How can the weak, enslaved by lust, rule the country? If a ruler becomes a slave to lust, so are all the officials and so are the people. In such a case, the nation will be filled with filthy beasts and will eventually perish' (Park). It reminds me of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis. Why was that city judged by God and destroyed? The reason is sexual depravity. There is a word in English called sodomy. This is a word used to refer to abnormal sexual behaviors, such as bestiality or homosexuality. Sodom was a place of sexual depravity to the extent that the word Sodomy was derived (Internet). Besides Sodom and Gomorrah, the Roman Empire comes to mind. Edward Gibbon, author of the book 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' cites the destruction of families through sexual depravity as one of the causes of Rome's decline (Internet). It is said that sexual corruption took place in the bathhouses to such an extent that Rome was destroyed because of the baths. There were about 900 baths in Rome alone and the one that was built by Emperor Diocletian was capable of bathing 3,000 people at a time (Internet).

We must be very wary of sexual depravity. If everything in this sinful world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 Jn. 2:16), we must be very wary of this lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh. We must clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and don't think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature (Rom. 13:14). The Bible says, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24). Therefore, we should not all practice the desires (lusts) that are pass away. But we must become those who do the will of God (1 Jn. 2:17). From now on, we must live the rest of our lives not for our lusts (human desires), but for the will of God (1 Pet. 4:2).

## **Second, the mother admonished her son, 'You must not get drunk.'**

Why do you think people drink to get drunk? I saw this article on an internet: A cup is said to be drunk for health, but if it is tipsy - it is drunk for pleasure, if drunk - it leads to indulgences, and if drunken - it drives madness (Internet). One of the reasons for drinking is that it feels good. Why do people feel better when they drink alcohol? The reason is that when you drink a little alcohol, the central and peripheral nerves are initially excited, the secretion

of the stomach is promoted, and the neurotransmitter called dopamine is secreted. However, alcohol overuse or long-term abuse can lead to brain cell destruction, which, unfortunately, inhibits brain function. If not, normally 100,000 brain cells die automatically every day. Drinking a lot of alcohol causes more brain cells to die. Both academic and memory or thinking abilities decline and their decline is directly proportional to the concentration of alcohol. When you drink alcohol too much, you cannot remember what you said and what you did. This is called 'film break' phenomenon (Internet).

When we discuss the question of whether it is okay for us Christians to drink alcohol or not, what is important is what the Bible says. One theologian concluded on the matter, demonstrating that the Bible clearly says not to get drunk, explaining that drunkenness is a serious sin and is forbidden. He then pointed out that it was true that Jesus and his disciples drank wine to the extent that they didn't get drunk, making a distinction between drunkenness and drinking. And he said that drinking is the "adiaphora" problem of Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8, that is, it may or may not be. In conclusion, this theologian's conclusion is that in light of the recognition that alcohol and tobacco are harmful to the body and to the family, if you apply the principle of love and good health (fundamentally the principle of tolerance established for the weak in the faith), it is better not to drink and not smoke (Internet).

We have already meditated on the word of God under the title, "Let's not show our own foolishness with alcohol" centered on Proverbs 20:1. Look at Proverbs 20:1 – "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise." Besides the "wine" mentioned here, "strong drink" was made from barley, jujube, or pomegranate to make those who drink it drunk (Isa. 28:7). Therefore, in the Bible the priests (Lev. 10:9), the Nazarites (Num. 6:1-3), and others (Isa 5:11) were also forbidden to drink (Walvoord). For example, in Isaiah 28:7, the Bible says: "And these also stagger from wine and reel from beer: Priests and prophets stagger from beer and are befuddled with wine; they reel from beer, they stagger when seeing visions, they stumble when rendering decisions." Can you imagine God's servants, priests and prophets, staggering over wine and strong drink and making mistakes in their judgments by misinterpreting visions? If the pastors were drunk and preached during the Sunday service, what would you think? So God said to Aaron in Leviticus 10:9 – "You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the Tent of Meeting, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come." In Proverbs 20:1, the Bible says that wine or strong drink has two adverse effects on us. Those two adverse effects are none other than wine and strong drinks that are mocker and lead us astray. Wine and strong drink leads us down the path of foolishness. It leads us in foolish path, not only to our immediate anger (Prov. 12:16), to strife (20:3), but also to mock at sin (14:9). After all, wine and strong drink makes us show our own foolishness.

Look at Proverbs 31:4 – "'It is not for kings, O Lemuel-- not for kings to drink wine, not for rulers to crave beer.'" Why did the mother of King Lemuel give this admonition to her son? Look at Proverbs 31:5 – "lest they

drink and forget what the law decrees, and deprive all the oppressed of their rights.” The reason King Lemuel's mother admonished her son, King Lemuel, not to drink wine and strong drink is that when the king gets drunk, he forgets the law, and it is easy to judge the poor people unfairly (v. 5, Park). More specifically, because when a king gets drunk, his thinking and judgment are weakened, he cannot solve his convictions, or he is prone to twist his mind. It is because drunkenness isn't fitting for rulers who need clear, steady mind and sharp judgment (MacArthur). So King Lemuel's mother said to her son King Lemuel, “It is not for kings, O Lemuel-- not for kings to drink wine, not for rulers to crave beer ... Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish” (vv. 4, 6). Why did King Lemuel's mother say “Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish”? Look at Proverbs 31:7 – “let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more.” The reason is because for those who are dying or who are troubled in heart, strong drink and wine are as effective as a cure for depression, forgetting their own needs and suffering (Believer's Bible commentary).

There are times when we want to forget our own suffering or poverty. But we must not forget the commandments (words) of God. No matter how severe our suffering or poverty, we should not get drunk. This is because drunkenness is a work of darkness (Rom. 13:13). Also, we should not get drunk because drunkenness is not living according to the will of God, but according to the lusts of men (1 Pet. 4:3). Another reason we should not get drunk is because it will weight our hearts down (Lk. 21:34). And as King Solomon confessed in Ecclesiastes 2:3, it is foolish to try to enjoy pleasure through drunkenness, so we must not get drunk. Therefore, we should not get drunk with wine in our suffering, but rather on the word of God. We must draw closer to God's word and remember it (Prov. 31:5). When our hearts are filled with sorrow, our God calls us to the word of God (Isa. 54:6). The Word of God is, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me” (Jn. 14:1). Therefore, we must trust God in our sorrow and cast all our burdens on God, who takes care of us according to His word (1 Pet. 5:7). Then God will comfort our troubled hearts and rejoice in our souls (Ps. 94:19).

### **Third and last, the mother admonished her son, ‘Take care of the poor.’**

Do you remember the news about the last time in Korean news about the allegation that the Court Administration Office, which is a part of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Korea in charge of judicial administration, tried to negotiate with the Blue House over the legislation of the Court of Appeal? At that time, it was mentioned in an Internet article that a person named Chief Judge Choi made this point: ‘Regarding the ‘trial transaction’ revealed in the documents of the Court Administration, he said, ‘The Judiciary exists by itself by denying the constitutional value of independence of the judiciary and the expectation of a fair trial of the sovereign people by using the trial as a political transaction or bargaining object. It has produced disastrous results that collapse the evidence’ (Internet). I watched the news at the time and wondered how a trial transaction could happen in the Supreme Court with the Chief Justice intervening if the trial transaction was true. If there was a trial transaction in a country's highest court, how would the citizens feel about the damage caused by the trial transaction?

Wouldn't the citizens who suffered the damage be embarrassed? How unfair it would be for the powerless to suffer in front of the empowered power. What the citizens of our country want is a fair trial, and no one wants an unfair trial.

According to Amos, even in the days of the prophet Amos, the judges took bribes to oppress the poor. Therefore, the poor suffered injustice (Amos 5:12). In the end, if you take a bribe, you will be biased (2 Chron. 19:7) and have no choice but to pervert the way of justice (Prov. 17:23). In 1 Samuel 8, we see the elders of Israel coming to Samuel and requesting that they appoint a king to rule over them, just like other nations (vv. 4-5). The reason was because when he appointed his two sons, Joel and Abijah, to judge Israel in place of the old Samuel (vv. 1-2), they didn't walk in the ways of their father Samuel (v. 5). Samuel never took a bribe from his youth to old age as a leader in Israel, and the Israelites admitted that "You have not taken anything from anyone's hand" (12: 1-4). However, his two sons, Joel and Abijah, unlike their father Samuel, "turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice" (8:3). That's why all the elders of Israel said to Samuel, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have" (v. 5).

In Acts 5, the magistrates imprisoned Paul and Silas after they ordered the crowd to be stripped and beaten and severely flogged them (vv. 22-23). At that time, people with Roman citizenship were to be tried through a very fair and just procedure compared to non-citizens. Although Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they didn't receive a proper trial according to Roman law and were beaten and imprisoned without a fair and just procedure (Sang-seop Yoo). Looking at the fact that fair trials have not been conducted since the Old Testament times, it seems that there are many people who are suffering unfairly from unfair trials in the New Testament times and even now. That is why God also tells us in Deuteronomy 24:17 – "Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge." Also, God tells us in James 1:27 – "Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world."

Look at Proverbs 31:8-9: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." King Lemuel's mother didn't want her son, King Lemuel, to give an unfair judgment to the needy people by drinking wine and strong drink and getting drunk and forgetting the law (v. 5). Rather, she wanted King Lemuel to give a fair trial to the needy, especially the poor, the powerless and the unfortunate. She wanted King Lemuel to speak for them, to defend their truth, and to solve their injustice. In a word, King Lemuel's mother wanted her son to care for the poor. Look at Proverbs 14:21, 31 – "He who despises his neighbor sins, But happy is he who is gracious to the poor. ... He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, But he who is gracious to the needy honors Him." The Bible says that those who are gracious to the poor and to the needy are blessed and honor God. King Lemuel's mother wanted her son to be such a person who honors God and is blessed. So she exhorted her son, King Lemuel, to open his mouth to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute, speak up and judge fairly, defend the

rights of the poor and needy. In a word, she exhorted King Lemuel to have pity on the poor.

How should we pity the poor? I know a brother of my college roommate now works as a lawyer and also volunteers at Justice Ventures International. I know that the brother took a vacation from work in the summer and went to India to serve with the people of the group. What he and other people do in India is to help the poor and powerless there to get a fair trial. They are doing their job to defend and help the powerless and who are in need. The organization's vision is: "Our vision is to see unjust communities transformed into communities ordered according to God's standard of love where human rights and dignity are respected by all." So the volunteers and all those working in the organization are committed to bringing freedom, justice and restoration to men, women and children who are suffering from human trafficking and other forms of extreme injustice, not only in India, but around the world as they are working with local organizations and global stakeholders. When I looked at the email I received from the organization not long ago, I received a newsletter and the title of the newsletter was "Four Girls Rescued from Domestic Slavery". Of course, this is what my college friend is serving to take pity on the poor and powerless, and each of us should follow the Lord's guidance in our own way to care for and help those who are poor and powerless. King Lemuel's mother wanted her son to give a fair trial to the unfortunate who were poor, powerless, and suffering. She wanted King Lemuel to speak for them, to defend their truth, and to solve their injustice. Regarding this king, the psalmist said in Psalms 72:4, 12-14: "He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor. ... For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight." If such a king rules the country, wouldn't there be hope for the poor and needy? How much hope, comfort, and strength would it be to know that the person who recognizes their injustice, oppression, and violence, takes pity on them, and rescues them from it is their king? King Lemuel's mother wanted her son to be such a king. Seeing her own son wanting to care for the poor in this way, we must also commit ourselves to caring for the poor. With the heart of the Lord, we need to care for and help those around us who have a pitiful heart with the Lord's love.

Hyo-seop Choi, a children's writer and pastor, wrote an article titled 'Mother, that's a bad name.' Among the contents of the article are these: 'Children, it is your mother who has left the most distinct mark on your hearts. There is a western proverb that says, 'The last mark the devil takes from a human being is the mark of a mother.' It means that the devil can easily take away the influences from books and your heroes, but even the devil cannot take away the mark of a mother because it is so deep' (Internet). To that extent, the influence of a mother on a child is very great and it influences the rest of their life. Today's text Proverbs 31:1-9 are three lessons the mother of King Lemuel gave to her son King Lemuel: (1) "Do not give your strength to women" (v. 3), (2) 'You must not get drunk' (v. 4), (3) 'Take care of the poor' (vv. 8-9). We must be very wary of sexual corruption. We are to clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and not to think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature (Rom. 13:14). We should not all practice the desires that are passing away, but we must become those who do the will of God (1 Jn.



2:17). From now on, we must live the rest of our lives not for our lusts (human desires), but for the will of God (1 Pet. 4:2). Also, we should not get drunk with wine in our suffering, but rather get drunk with the word of God. We must draw closer to God's word and remember it (Prov. 31:5). We must commit ourselves to caring for the poor. With the heart of the Lord, we need to care for and help those around us who have a pitiful heart with the Lord's love.

## **A wife of noble character**

### **[Proverbs 31:10-31]**

I still vaguely remember seeing a Bible verse embroidered with Proverbs 31:10-31 in English about a “A wife of noble character” on a frame in the living room when I went to a dormitory to meet someone at a college in Southern California a long time ago. It occurred to me that the single brother was longing to marry a sister like the noble woman of Proverbs 31. I am sure it isn’t just him. If not all single brothers who believe in Jesus, millions of brothers would dream of the noble woman of Proverbs 31:10-31 as their future spouse. Here, the word “A wife of noble character” literally means ‘A woman of power’, which refers to ‘A woman capable of execution in morality and courtesy’ (Park).

I personally thought that “A wife of noble character” only appears in Proverbs 31. Then in 2009, while reading the book of Ruth, I found out that Ruth 3:11 also speaks of a “a woman of noble character”: “And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character.” This word was spoken by a Jew named Boaz to a Moabite woman named Ruth. And Boaz said that all the people of the city knew that Ruth was “a woman of noble character.” So I meditated on three things about what kind of woman Ruth was, so that Boaz and the people of her town knew that she was “a woman of noble character”:

**First, Ruth was a woman who longed for grace. In other words, “a woman with noble character” longs for God's grace.**

Boaz was gracious to Ruth, and Ruth, who received his grace, confessed that she could not understand why he was being gracious to her and notice her, even though she was a foreigner (2:10). In the midst of this, Ruth, who was comforted by Boaz and heard the words of joy in her heart, confessed: “May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord” (2:13). He said that she was not like one of Boaz's servant girls (v. 13). Ruth, such a woman with noble character, humbly longed for the Boaz’s grace.

As I meditated on these words, I came to realize that I must first become a Christian with noble character. And I am taught that in order to become the Christian with noble character, I must long for God's grace more and more. The word that comes to mind at that time is Romans 5:20 – “... But where sin increased, grace increased all the more.” I want to realize the grace of God more and more in the midst of my sins that are continuously exposed because of the presence of a holy God. Then I will be compelled to confess like the psalmist: “O LORD, what is

man that you care for him, the son of man that you think of him?” (Ps. 144:3) Also, as I gradually realized God's abundant grace, I cannot but pray to God, ‘Lord, how could you pour out such great grace to such sinner like me?’ like Ruth who confessed “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me--a foreigner?” (Ruth 2:10) and Paul who confessed “of whom I am the worst” (1 Tim. 1:15). The reason is because the grace of God that is bestowed upon the greatest among sinners like me is beyond comprehension and will never be understood. Then I will be forced to humble myself before the Lord. So like Ruth who said to Boaz, “my lord ... though I do not have the standing of one of your servant girls” (Ruth 2:13), and the prodigal son who said to his father, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son” (Lk. 15:21), I confess to the Lord, “My Lord, I am not like one of your servants’ (Ruth 2:13). Because I am the chief of sinners, ‘I am not worthy to be considered as precious and honorable to God’ (Isa. 43:4).

**Second, Ruth was an obedient woman. In other words, “a woman with noble character” obeys the word of God.**

Ruth was a daughter-in-law who obeyed her mother-in-law Naomi. She was an obedient daughter-in-law who did everything her mother-in-law Naomi had told her (Ruth 3:5-6). Ruth was a woman who knew grace, and she longed for it even more. And I think she had an obedient heart out of humility. So, Ruth simply obeyed her mother-in-law's orders with a simple heart. Naomi told Ruth, “Wash yourself therefore, and anoint yourself and put on your best clothes, and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. It shall be when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies, and you shall go and uncover his feet and lie down; then he will tell you what you shall do” (vv. 3-4). Ruth said to Naomi, “All that you say I will do” (v. 5) and “she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law had commanded her” (v. 6). This woman of noble character Ruth obeyed her mother-in-law Naomi.

When I meditate on these words, I receive a lesson that in order to become a Christian with noble character, I must understand God's abundant grace and obey His word with the power of that grace. The word that comes to mind at that time is 1 Corinthians 15:10 – “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.” This verse came to mind because the apostle Paul “worked harder than all” other apostles by the grace of God. That is, those who gradually come to know God's grace more and more are bound to become more humble [“For I am the least of the apostles ...” (v. 9), “Although I am less than the least of all God's people ...” (Eph. 3:8), “... sinners--of whom I am the worst” (1 Tim. 1:15)] and have no choice but to obey His word more and more. That’s why he didn’t consider his life worth nothing in finishing the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus gave him – the task of testifying of the gospel of God’s grace (Acts 20:24). Therefore, I also want to be humbled more and more in my life of faith where I realize God's grace more and more, so that I may obey the Lord's word, even to the point of death like Jesus (Phil 2:8).

**Third and last, Ruth was a kind woman. In other words, “a woman with noble character” shows kindness.**

In obedience to mother-in-law Naomi's order, Ruth, who uncovered Boaz's feet and lied down (Ruth 3:4, 7). In the middle of the night, Boaz who startled and found Ruth, said: “May you be blessed of the LORD, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first by not going after young men, whether poor or rich” (v. 10). In this way, Ruth was a woman who knew how to show kindness.

As I meditate on these words, in order for me to become a Christian with noble character, I need to obey His word with the power of that grace as I taste and yearn for God's grace more and more so that my love for the Lord is progressively more and more filled than when I first believed in Jesus. As I do so, the hymn that came to mind is “More Love to Thee, O Christ”: “. . . This is my ear-nest plea: More love, O Christ, to Thee, More love to Thee, More love to Thee! . . . This all my prayer shall be: More love, O Christ, to Thee, More love to Thee, More love to Thee!” Like this lyric, I want to love the Lord more and more. So when the Lord sees me, I want to become a person who loves the Lord more than when I first believed in Jesus by the grace of God.

The woman of noble character desires God's grace more and more, obeys His word more and more, and loves God more and more. Such a noble woman is more precious than pearls (Prov. 31:10). Have you ever heard the saying, ‘Pearls are the jewel of pain’? I learned a bit about why pearls are jewels of pain through an internet article. During various activities for survival such as feeding and respiration, foreign substances such as grains of sand or small worms penetrate into the body of the clam and dig into the flesh. At this time, the clam continues to secrete secretions to overcome the pain. The fight to protect life begins when this substance enters and the unbearable pain begins, and the crystal of pain grows as the secretions are thinly wrapped. Pearls are called jewels of pain because the more they are injured, the more secretions are secreted, which grow bigger and brighter. The thicker the nacre layer, the more beautiful the luster, and the luster and thickness are important factors that determine the quality of pearls. Those with thick nacles and no flaws are said to be ‘the finest pearls’ (Internet). So when Jesus told the parable about the kingdom of heaven, he said in Matthew 13:46, “Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (KJV). In this way, pearls are extremely valuable so that they sell all they have to buy them. The Bible says in Proverbs 8:11, “For wisdom is better than jewels; And all desirable things cannot compare with her.” That is how valuable, important, and precious wisdom is.

However, in Proverbs 31:10, King Lemuel's mother said to her son King Lemuel, “A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies” [“An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels” (NASB)]. What a wise mother she was. I think Lemuel's mother was a wise mother who taught her beloved son Lemuel about the woman with noble character who is more precious than jewels. I think the reason Lemuel's mother taught her son Lemuel about the woman with noble character who was more precious than pearls

was because she wanted her son to find such a noble woman and marry her. Then, what is the value of the woman with noble character who is more precious than the pearls that King Lemuel's mother saw? Look at Proverbs 31:29 – “Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.” The woman with noble character, who is more precious than pearls (v. 10), surpasses all women (v. 29) in the eyes of her husband (v. 28). That is why the husband said to his wife with noble character, “Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all” (v. 29). And her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her (v. 28). So how do we find this woman? When we see King Lemuel’s mother said “A wife of noble character who can find?” (v. 10a), who and how can we find her? This is what Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘It is difficult for those who seek only the physical beauty to find such a capable noble woman. Only those who pray and seek God will find such a capable noble woman. Such a wife is a gift from God’ (Park). Then he said two Bible verses: “He who finds a wife finds a good thing And obtains favor from the LORD” (18:22) and “House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the LORD” (19:14).

In Proverbs 31:10, King Lemuel's mother said to her son King Lemuel (v. 1), “A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies” (v. 10). I would like to receive lessons by meditating on six things under the title of “A wife of noble character”, focusing on Proverbs 31:10–31.

### **First, the wife of noble character gives her husband trust.**

Look at Proverbs 31:11-12: “Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.” It's like a world where we cannot trust anybody. There are a lot of people who trust people and then get disappointed and get hurt. As a result, many people don't want to trust anyone. Even married couples don't fully trust each other. Rather, it seems that many couples are suspicious of each other. And it seems that there are many couples who doubt that my husband/wife is having an affair with another woman/man. In particular, trusting a spouse who broke the relationship of trust after having an affair once again can be a great adventure. In this way, we are living in a world where even the ones we love cannot trust. What should we Christians do in this world of unbelief? We need to build strong trust with those we love. In particular, we need to build strong trust with our God-given spouse. How do we do that? There are 4 things to think about:

#### (1) In order to build trust with the person we love, we must first trust God.

The ultimate reason why we don't trust each other is because we don't trust God. For example, the couples who don't trust in God cannot trust each other. The reason is because only when there is trust in a vertical relationship with God can trust in a horizontal relationship with a loving spouse be possible. Therefore, the first thing we must do to build trust with the person we love is to trust God.

#### (2) In order to build trust with the person we love, we need to give trust to him by trusting God.

We who love trust each other as we trust God. The more we trust God, the more we can trust each other. We must first trust the other before we can expect him to trust us. Rather than giving trust only when he has something to trust, we trust him even if there is nothing to trust him by trusting God. Just as God's love is unconditional, we must love our loved one unconditionally. And if we love unconditionally, then we have to give trust to him we love unconditionally. Then, even if we are betrayed by our loved one, the God-centered couple sees and relies on Jesus, who had been betrayed by His own people, and thus overcome our own struggles. And in the meantime, we forgive our spouses who betrayed us with God's love. It is impossible for our understanding. But it is possible if we trust God. God can make it possible. By trusting in that God, we must give trust to the one we love.

(3) In order to build trust with the person we love, we must be true to him as we are to God.

We who love should be truthful Christians. And we should be honest. We must not lie to each other. We must not do anything to deceive each other. We must be truthful not only before God but also with each other. To what extent we must be truthful to one another, and to the extent that we can tell each other, 'God is my witness' (Phil. 1:8). God sees us all. Also, God knows all our thoughts. Therefore, just as we are true to God, we must also be true to our loved one.

(4) In order to build trust with the person we love, we must admit our fault and ask for forgiveness when we do something wrong to him. And we must commit ourselves to change.

If we deceived the person we love and lied to him, we should ask him for forgiveness. We must confess our sins to him frankly and honestly. And we must not only commit to him that we will never commit the same wrong sin again, but we must demonstrate that devotion to him in action. Not only that, but when someone we love asks us to forgive him for his sins, we must forgive him. We must not keep no record of wrongs that he has done to us (1 Cor. 13:5). Just as God blots out our transgressions according to His great compassion (Ps. 51:1), we must erase all his wrongdoings from our hearts. And we must commit ourselves to love him with the unchanging love of God. We must also recommit ourselves to trust him whom we love. We should rather use our relationship with him that can be perverted as an opportunity for change in the Lord. Therefore, we should rather grow together with him whom we love in the Lord. We must be built up as mature Christians.

In Proverbs 31:11-12, King Lemuel's mother said to her son Lemuel, "A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies" (v. 10) and specifically talked about her: "Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life." King Lemuel's mother told her beloved son, King Lemuel, that the husband of the woman with noble character who is more precious than

pearls, that is, more precious than all the treasures in the world (Park), believes in her. That is, the noble woman's husband trusts her. Why does he trust his noble wife? I think the closest reason is written in verse 12: "She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life." In other words, the reason why the husband of the wife with noble character trusts her is because she does good to him "all the days of her life" and not harm. What do you think about doing good and not harm to her husband throughout her life? When I think of this word, I think that the woman with noble character is a good woman who does good, and that she is a faithful woman who does good to her husband all the days of her life. That is why her husband trusts in his noble wife. I looked in verse 30 for some more ultimate reasons why the husband of the noble woman trusts her in addition to the reasons given in this close verse 12: "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised." In other words, the reason the husband of the noble woman trusts her is because she is a God-fearing wise woman. This God-fearing wise and noble woman hates evil (8:13). And such a woman not only hates evil, but loves good (Amos 5:15). Also, the God-fearing woman who belongs to God doesn't imitate what is evil, but imitates what is good and does good (3 Jn. 1:11). Personally, I often admonish my beloved children that the character of their spouse is very important in their future marriage. And the character I emphasize to them is "truthfulness." I urged my children to be wary of liars. The reason I emphasize the truthfulness of character to my children is because I hope and pray that they may meet their future spouses who are trustworthy.

We must become the church of the bride whom Jesus, the Bridegroom, can trust. In other words, the church, the bride of the Lord, must be the church that believes in the eyes of Jesus. To that end, the Lord's church must do good and not evil to Jesus, the Bridegroom, until the last moment of existence on this earth. Here, the church does good to Jesus means those who were created in Christ Jesus for good works (Eph. 2:10) must fulfill God's good will (Rom. 12:2) on this earth by doing good works. Therefore, I hope and pray that we the church will become a church that can give trust to Jesus.

### **Second, the wife of noble character works diligently.**

Even if we are married, we must work diligently to make sure that our loved one is attracted to us. In the effort, there must be not only physical attraction, but also personal attraction. And in that personal attraction, I think it's important to have truthfulness to give trust to our spouses, like the lesson we learned based on verses 11-12, 'The wife of noble character gives her husband trust'. In other words, one of the personal attractions that a couple should strive for is truthfulness that can give them trust. In the midst of this, I think that another thing that the couple should strive for is "diligence".

If we look back on the Book of Proverbs that we have meditated on at every Wednesday prayer meeting for a long time, the writer of Proverbs often mentioned laziness and diligence. For example, the writer of Proverbs said about laziness in Proverbs 6:10 and 24:33: "A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest ... A

little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest.” This lazy man not only say “A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest,” but actually sleep more, lie down more. In other words, the lazy man doesn’t wake up at the time he should wake up, but postpone it until later. Also, the lazy man doesn't work when he is supposed to, and put it off until later. In doing so, he doesn’t blame his own laziness, but others (situations, people, etc.). In other words, the lazy man doesn’t know how to take responsibility. What is the result? Look at Proverbs 6:11 and 24:34 – “Your poverty will come in like a vagabond And your need like an armed man. ... Then your poverty will come as a robber And your want like an armed man.” What does it mean? It means that poverty is inevitable for the lazy man. Poverty comes just as a victim is struck by a robber and is overwhelmed (24:33) (MacArthur). One interesting thing is that Proverbs 24:30 tells us that the writer of Proverbs saw him as he passed through the fields of “the sluggard” and the vineyards of “the man who lacks judgment.” Here, the write of Proverbs uses “the sluggard” and “the man who lacks judgment” as synonyms. In other words, the lazy man is the man who lacks judgment. What is the judgment that the lazy man lacks? I think it’s a priority. In other words, the lazy man lacks judgment about what to do first and what to do later. For example, Jesus said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Mt. 6:33). However, at the time of the prophet Haggai, the Israelites were busy building their own houses before God's house (Hag. 1:4, 9). They left the temple, the house of God, to be in ruins, and were busy building their own houses in splendor. Their priorities were wrong. As a result, God punished the Israelites. What was that punishment? Look at Haggai 1:6, 9a: “You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it. ... You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. ....” What does it mean? God caused the crops of the people of Judah to suffer from famine (Hag 1:11), and the harvest was little (vv. 6, 9) (Park). In the end, God makes us needy by causing a drought in our finances when we don’t first seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. In other words, if we don't put our priorities right in God's eyes, we're bound to be in need. This lazy man is poor because he lacks wisdom and doesn’t do what he should do first. So the writer of Proverbs said in Proverbs 6:6 – “Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise.” Why? Why should the lazy man go to the ant and see what it does and gain wisdom? Doesn't that mean that the lazy man is already more foolish than the ant? What wisdom should the lazy man learn from the ant? There are two things (Park): (1) The ant works voluntarily, diligently and cooperatively, even without a supervisor. Look at Proverbs 6:7 – “Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler.” The lazy man should go to the diligent ant, which voluntarily cooperating with each other in a spirit of mutual aid, even without overseeing ant, to take a closer look and gain wisdom. (2) The ant prepares in advance for the future. Look at Proverbs 6:8 – “Prepares her food in the summer And gathers her provision in the harvest.” The Bible exhorts the lazy man to go to the ant and learn the wisdom of preparing for the future. In Proverbs 30:25, the Bible also introduces the ants which prepare their food in the summer. Why do the ants prepare winter food in advance in summer? According to Dr. Yoon-sun Park, summer is the harvest time in Palestine. So it is said that at this time the ants gather food for winter (Park). In this way, the



ants prepare their winter food in advance at harvest time.

Look at Proverbs 31:13-19: “She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls. She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night. In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.” The words of this section are about the labor of the wife with noble character. In a word, the wife with noble character possessed the beauty of labor to run a business diligently (Park). Dr. Park talked about how the wife with noble character diligently ran her business in three ways:

(1) The wife with noble character is engaged in the production of fabric/cloth.

Look at Proverbs 31:13, 18, 19: “She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. ... She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night. In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.” The wife with noble character runs a small-scale industry within the house, producing on a small scale using her hands and simple tools. For example, in verse 13, the wife with noble character “selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.” She holds the distaff in her hands and grasps the spindle with her fingers (v. 19). And she does business with it. And when she realizes that the business is going well, she works until late at night so as not to turn off the lights (v. 18). When I thought of these words, I thought that it would be good for the wives at home, like this noble woman, to cherish home craftsmanship and engage in productive small-scale industry. Especially in today's world, I think that it is an era when wives can sufficiently run various small-scale, productive businesses such as computer Internet in addition to home-made handicrafts at home. That means there are small businesses that wives can do while doing household chores if they take care of their children at home. I think it would be good for each wife to find the things she wants to do at home and to do business diligently according to the talents of each wife.

(2) The wife with noble character manages her family life well.

Look at Proverbs 31:14-15a: “She is like merchant ships; She brings her food from afar. She rises also while it is still night And gives food to her household ....” Personally, I think a woman who works hard at church but neglects her family life is living a life of faith that is out of balance. In particular, if her husband is an unbeliever who doesn't believe in Jesus, I think that it is against 1 Peter 3:1 of the Bible for her to neglect her family life: “Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives.” Now, many Jesus-believing wives who have unbelieving husbands are working hard in church life but neglecting their

family life. They may be setting an example in the church, but they are not setting an example in the home. I think their Christian life is out of balance. What should they do? A wise wife sets an example not only in the church, but especially in the home. She sets an example in her home as she submits to her unbeliever her husband as to the Lord. Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘When an unbelieving husband sees his wife’s devotion, he realizes the truth of the gospel and can be converted. It is preaching the gospel of God through action. Our gospel witness is powerless unless it goes hand in hand with our good life’ (Park). The wise wife does not just speak the gospel witness. She never just tells her unbeliever her husband, ‘Let’s go to church’. Rather, she shows the truth of the gospel by submitting to her husband as she would to the Lord. She shows Jesus Christ with her life. Therefore, the Lord uses her to save her unbeliever husband as well.

In Proverbs 31:14-15, King Lemuel’s mother said to her son, King Lemuel, about the woman with noble character, saying, “She is like merchant ships; She brings her food from afar. She rises also while it is still night And gives food to her household ....” What we do know about the woman with noble character here is that she buys food for her family from afar and brings them home. But the food she brings from afar is not just regular food, it’s the best food (MacArthur). Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘The purpose of her purchase of food from a distance is to purchase quality products at a low price. So she discharges her household’s food policy with agility’ (Park). Shouldn’t our wives have this kind of agility? The wise wives should manage their finances wisely and well in terms of household food policy as well as household chores in general, so that they don’t waste their money, but rather buy good products at low prices. If not, what would happen to that family if they wasted money and their finances? In fact, the mother of Proverbs writer King Lemuel said in Proverbs 31:27 that the woman with noble character takes care of her household chores, and doesn’t eat the bread of idleness. The woman with noble character diligently takes care of her household chores, and works hard to eat food. She not only buys her goodies cheaply, even from afar, for her own family, but she gets up early before dawn and prepares breakfast for her family (v. 15). Perhaps in the beginning of the newlyweds, there are cases where the wife prepares breakfast and then goes to work. Of course, I don’t think that all newlyweds are like that. It seems that some newlyweds either make their own breakfast from the start, or they almost skip breakfast. Especially in today’s world where there are a lot of dual-income couples, I don’t think it will be easy for a wife to prepare breakfast for her husband. In particular, I think it is a great challenge for a wife of a family with young children to prepare breakfast for not only her husband but also her children. Nevertheless, in Proverbs 31:15, the Bible says that the woman with noble character “rises also while it is still night And gives food to her household And portions to her maidens.” Regarding this statement, Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: ‘She personally prepares and provides food for her family. The family table is prepared with such care, and there is the warmth and joy of the home’ (Park). The woman with noble character gets up early in the morning with joy and prepares breakfast for

her loved ones. This means that she is diligent in household chores.

(3) The woman with noble character develops an industry.

Look at Proverbs 31:15b-19: "... And gives food to her household And portions to her maidens. She considers a field and buys it; From her earnings she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength And makes her arms strong. She senses that her gain is good; Her lamp does not go out at night. She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hands grasp the spindle." If we look at these verses, we can see that the woman with noble character didn't do the housework alone and did a small-scale industry, but worked with a female servant who told her what to do. Then, seeing that this woman with noble character showed her maid what to do, I think she must have had some leadership of her own. And when we see that she considers a field and buys it; From her earnings she plants a vineyard (v. 16), she 'considered deeply' (Park) vineyards by collecting the money she earned from a small business at home I think he bought a field and cultivated that vineyard. That is, the wise and noble woman diligently runs the family and does her own work to expand her industry. Dr. Yoon-sun Park said: 'She develops the industry, working to operate her products far away to increase her income (vv. 17-19)' (Park). Such a woman with noble character is financially strong because of her diligence (Park) (v. 17). So she knows that what she is doing is useful, and she works late into the night (v. 18). I think that one of those useful things is said in verse 24: "She makes linen garments and sells them, And supplies belts to the tradesmen." Seeing that young women are also selling clothes online these days, I think that the wise and noble woman can do a good job at home while diligently selling clothes and other things online.

The wise and noble woman knows whether what she is doing is beneficial or unprofitable. Therefore, she doesn't do unprofitable things, but diligently does useful things. And the woman with noble character who is industrious has financial power. Therefore, she collects her earned money, uses it prudently and works diligently, thus developing and expanding her own industry. This is what our church, the bride and groom of Jesus, should be like. Knowing what is beneficial in God's sight, we must diligently do the Lord's work to expand the kingdom of God.

**Third, the wife with noble character helps the poor and needy.**

One day (May 8, 2018), there was an article in the Korean JoongAng Ilbo Internet newspaper titled, "7 out of 10 Christians, 'Help the poor neighbor'" and I read it. According to the article, "Barna Research, a public opinion polling company, recently published a report on the topic of '3 reasons to have hope for the global poverty problem.'" According to Barna Research, 7 out of 10 practicing Christians (75 %) said 'I have provided food to poor people or low-income families.' Here, 'practicing Christian' refers to a member of the church who regularly participates in religious activities and says that he or she lives a practice of the doctrine. Christians have donated

clothes or furniture, including money (72%, general adults 64%), Pray for the poor at a specific time (62%, general adults 33%), local Have volunteered for the low-income class in society (47%, general adult 29%), have volunteered at a volunteer organization in the United States (39%, general adult 24%), go abroad to help the poor. The response rate was higher than that of general adults in all areas such as have ever gone out (10%, 6% of general adults). Barna Research believes that there is hope for solving the poverty problem ► Practicing Christians are involved in a variety of philanthropic activities in the United States and around the world ► People who feel the need for active participation in poverty alleviation are also interested in other social issues ► People who have hopes for alleviating poverty are more likely to be more actively involved in solutions (Internet).

In Proverbs 31:20, King Lemuel's mother said to her son, King Lemuel, about the wife with noble character: "She extends her hand to the poor, And she stretches out her hands to the needy." The meaning of the word 'extending a hand' here refers to kindly sending relief materials even to the poor who are far away (Park). This means that the wife with noble character not only kindly gives alms to the poor near, but also kindly sends the alms to the poor far away. Why is she kindly giving relief not only to the poor near, but also to the poor far away? I think the reason is because she has compassion for the poor. In other words, the wife with noble character is that she kindly gives relief to those in need because she has compassion for the needy.

Personally, when I think of 'a heart of compassion,' I can't forget what Henri Nouwen wrote about "compassion". He said that the original Hebrew word for "compassion" is "rachamim," which refers to the womb of YHWH (God). So, while searching for articles on "the womb" on the Internet, I came across three characteristics of the uterus, and I compared them with God's compassion like this: (1) Just as the womb doesn't reject foreign matter but accepts it, so God the Father doesn't reject us sinners, but accepts us. (2) Just as the womb receives the penetration of placental blood vessels and thus nourishes the placenta to grow, so Jesus the Son also tolerates the 'sin penetration' of us sinners by dying on the cross for our sins and provided the bread of life. Therefore, everyone who believes in this Bread, Jesus, is now blocking the 'infiltration of sin' and preventing the 'communication of sin' so as not to defile the whole body and soul. (3) Furthermore, just as the endometrium prevents the natural death of cells while the baby is growing in the womb, and in the latter part of pregnancy, the uterus becomes thin and soft to facilitate the movement of the fetus in the mother's belly wall, the Holy Spirit is making us to live a life of faith so that we can move freely in the Lord.

Those who have this kind of compassion help the poor and needy obey Jesus' words in Matthew 6:2-4: "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Interestingly, those who are compassionate don't only do charitable works to help the poor, but also pray to God. In other words, they not only give alms in love for their

neighbors, but also faithfully lead a prayer life in their relationship with God. So, after Jesus talked about almsgiving in Matthew 6:2-4, he talked about prayer in verses 5-15. A good example of this is devout and God-fearing Cornelius Acts 10. Look at Acts 10:2 – “He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.” And God said to Cornelius through an angel, “Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor” (v. 31). In other words, godliness that God remembers is prayer and almsgiving.

In Proverbs 31:20, the wife with noble character works diligently (v. 13) and works hard (v. 17) to expand her own business (vv. 15b-19) and feed not only her own household (v.14) but also helps the poor and needy in her neighbor. When I think of this wife with noble character, I think of her as “the wise rich.” The reason is because the wise rich woman fears God (22:4, 31:30), works diligently, and since she knows the needs of the poor in humility (29:7) and has compassion on them (Ps. 72:13), she gives alms (Prov. 28:27) and helps them (31:20). Such a wise rich woman doesn’t exalt her heart, and doesn’t set her hopes on unpredictable riches, but set her sights on God, who gives abundantly. And the wise rich woman is a generous woman who does good, does many good works, and loves to share (1 Tim. 6:17-19). The Bible says in Proverbs 28:27 that he who gives to the poor is not in need: “He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.” Rather, the Bible says in Proverbs 11:24, “One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.”

I hope that our church will become a church that gives alms like the church in Antioch. In order to help the Jewish brothers who were suffering from the great famine, the church in Antioch voluntarily collected a relief offering according to their own financial ability and sent it to the elders of the Jerusalem church through Barnabas and Paul (Acts 11:29-30). Like the church in Antioch, if our church helps not only close neighbors but also difficult churches in distant mission fields to build the Lord’s church and to raise the Christ-centered visionary leaders, isn’t this the beautiful bride church of Jesus, the Bridegroom?

#### **Fourth, the wife with noble character doesn’t worry.**

We live in a world where there are so many things to worry about right now. In a world full of things to worry about day by day, even though we know that we should cast all our anxieties on the Lord according to the words of 1 Peter 5:7, it seems like we cannot cast all our anxiety on the Lord. But, as Jesus said in Luke 12:22, 29, we must not worry about our lives, what we will eat or drink, or what we will wear for our bodies. Why? (1) The first reason is because no one can add a single house to his life by worrying (v. 25). What good is it for us to worry? We shouldn’t worry about anything that doesn’t help us. (2) The second reason is because we “cannot do this very little thing” (v. 26). Why do we worry about the rest if we cannot do this very little thing? (v. 26) (3) The third reason is because “the pagans run after all these things” (Mt. 6:32). (4) The fourth reason is because our Father

knows that we need them (Lk. 12:30). Although we shouldn't be anxious because Heavenly Father knows everything we need, we worry and are anxious. It is because we are "of little faith" (v. 28). Because we are of little faith, we worry about what we will eat for our lives and what we will wear for our bodies today and tomorrow (v. 22).

What should we do? We must think of the crow (v. 24). We must see the birds of the air (Mt. 6:26). I still remember. Last time I went to the English Ministry retreat to the mountain, and in the morning I sat on a chair on the back porch outside the hostel and looked at the birds flying and perched on a tree. And I remembered the word of Matthew 6:26 – "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" So when I looked at the birds and meditated on this word for a little while, I thought: 'My heavenly Father who feeds the birds, will He not feed me who is much more precious and honored than the birds (Isa. 43:4)? In fact, throughout my life, my Heavenly Father raised me and gave me my daily bread plenty, so I never went hungry. Also, Heavenly Father provided me with clothes to wear, so I never went naked without clothes. Rather, God allowed me to live in abundance, enjoying food and clothes. Nevertheless, I worry about other things. I worry about what to say to the other person in a relationship (Mt. 10:19). Also, as I am concerned about the affairs of this world, I am concerned about how to please my wife (1 Cor. 7:33). I am concerned about church affairs (2 Cor. 11:28, cf. Lk. 10:41). I am afraid that some of the members will leave the church and leave Jesus (Deut. 29:18). In particular, I fear that I might fall into Satan's temptations (1 Tim. 3:7). In this way, my heart is weighed down with the anxieties of life (Lk. 21:34). And because of this anxieties of life, the word of God is choked and never bears fruit (Mk. 4:19). Although I know I shouldn't be like this (Mk. 4:19), I am still worried about various things. Not only I'm worried about today's events, I'm also worried about tomorrow (the future) that hasn't happened yet. This is what the Lord is saying to me: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Mt. 6:34).

Look at Proverbs 31:21-22: "She is not afraid of the snow for her household, For all her household are clothed with scarlet. She makes coverings for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple." According to this verse, the Bible says that the wife with noble character was clothed in scarlet, so as not to be anxious for the people of her household, and she wore linen and purple for herself. Here, both linen and purple clothes were expensive (Bible Knowledge commentary). Looking at it, we can see that the wife with noble character didn't make her family to be in need, but rather made her family affluent. It is that such a noble woman worked diligently (verse 13) and developed her own industry (vv. 15b-19) so that her family didn't have to worry about life (vv. 21-22). To a certain extent, her husband has no lack of gain because of the wife of noble character he trusted (v. 11). After all, the reason the wife with noble character wasn't concerned for the people of her household was that she took good care of the household chores so that her family didn't have to worry about life. That is why she has strength and dignity and doesn't worry about the future (v. 25).

Let us not worry. Especially we the parents should not be anxious in front of our children. The reason is because when we worry in front of our children, they will be anxious. Rather, we should show our children that we cast all our anxieties on the Lord in prayer. Even if we don't hide our concerns from our children because our faith is weak and we don't deny them, we must show that we surrender all our worries to the Lord according to the Scripture. The grace I experienced a few years ago was that God already knew all my concerns about the weakness of my faith and provided me with what I needed in a way I never expected. At that time, I realized at least little bit that my Heavenly Father loved me so much, and I thanked Him. At that time, I keep trying to live according to what my eyes see even though I have to live by faith moment by moment. So I was anxious as I tried to anticipate the results. I was relying on my understanding, rather than trusting God and waiting and praying silently for God to work. I don't want to do that anymore. Now I don't want to live day to day with anxiety and worry anymore. Rather, I want to cast all my anxieties on the Lord and live by faith. I hope and pray that all members of our church will put all their worries on Jesus by faith. Let's not rely on our understanding. Let's trust and rely entirely on the Lord and let's not worry any more.

**Fifth, the wife with noble character makes her husband to be respected by other men.**

What kind of woman do you think a wise wife is? 'Seven Things Her Husband Wants from His Wife' are among the highlights that Sungshin Women's University psychology professor Chae has compiled during her 20 years of marital counseling. One of them is that the husband wants his wife to respect and boost his self-esteem. The hardest thing for her husband to bear is the feeling of being ignored by his wife. Especially he hates his wife comparing himself to other husbands. The regular menu items that women compare to their husbands are salary envelopes, gifts, vacations, things that are good for their in-laws, and helping with housework and so on. Professor Chae is saying that women should not try to modify their husband's behavior by comparing their husbands with other men, but rather focus on their husband's current behavior, point out what they are good at, and ask for the behavior they want.

I would like to share with you what I wrote on May 22, 2005 under the heading 'The Wise Wife': 'A wise wife is a wife who is submissive to her husband, and a wife who respects her husband. However, in this day and age, the words "submission" and "respect" are hard to find in marital relationships. Even though the unchanging Word should be applied in the changing times, I am concerned that many Christian couples, bachelors, and virgins are ignoring the principles of the unchanging eternal Word in the uncontrollable flow of the changing times. Although it is the duty of a wife to submit to her husband out of reverence for the Lord as she would to the Lord (Col. 3:18) and her great divine calling to witness to her unbelieving husband, I think there are many wives who aren't able to fulfill this divine calling well. Also, I think many wives are ignoring their husbands even though respecting their husbands as a wife is a precious thing to build their husbands. This shouldn't be like this anymore. Wise wives, be

submissive to your husband and beautify your home by respecting him!’

Look at Proverbs 31:23 – “Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land.” What this verse suggests is that the wife with noble character is a wise woman who made a significant contribution to the establishment of her husband, to sit at the gates with the elders of the land (MacArthur). You may think this is such a big deal. But it is said that at that time, the city gate was where the leaders of the city or other provinces were located (Job 31:21) (Park). But the fact that there the husband of the wife with noble character sat there with the elders of the land meant that he was known as a leader and not a commoner (Prov. 31:23). Without the assistance of such a wife with noble character, would her husband have become a leader? This husband's success would have been impossible without the assistance of his noble wife. Such noble woman sets her husband up to be recognized and respected by men (v. 23). Those who are married women, how would you feel if you found out that your husband is not only successful in his own way, but also recognized and respected by others? Won't you be happy?

I was browsing Christian Internet websites today and came across an interesting article. The article was about the wife of the famous Pastor Spurgeon. The article was titled ‘3 Things You Didn't Know About Spurgeon's Wife’. First of all, Pastor Spurgeon's wife, Susannah, had no choice but to learn a difficult lesson about marriage. Living with a husband who has great responsibility for the kingdom of God, the work of the Lord, and the ministry of the gospel, she had to learn the hard way that as a wife she could never put herself first in her husband's heart. Therefore, she should have committed herself not to be an obstacle to her husband's Kingdom ministry and the Lord's work. Second, through her sickness and suffering, God shaped her personality to draw her closer to God. Not only did she have to help her husband struggling with depression and illness, but she also suffered from severe medical warfare. But she believed that God was shaping her character through her breakage. And she believed that her own physical suffering brought her closer to the Lord. Third, Mrs. Susanna has established a worldwide ministry. She had organized a charity called “The Book Fund,” which distributed 3,058 theological books and 71,000 copies to poor pastors (Internet). Because she had such a wise wife with great faith, I think her husband, Pastor Spurgeon, was an influential pastor who did many great things for the Lord's church and the kingdom of God. According to Proverbs 31:23, a wife with noble character Susanna has established her husband as a pastor who is respected by many people

The noble and wise woman not only respects her husband (Eph. 6:33), but also causes him to be respected by others (Prov. 31:23). How, then, can the noble woman make a great contribution to getting her husband to sit at the gates of the city with the elders of the land and to build him up to be recognized and respected by the people? I found the answer in Proverbs 31:11-12: “The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil All the days of her life.” The wife with noble character does good to her husband all her life and never harms him, so that her husband trusts in her. Therefore, since her husband, who trusts in her has no lack of gain (v. 11), sits at the gates with the elders of the land with her help (v. 23).



I read an article called “A wife who does not understand her husband, a husband who hurts her with his words.’ The article says that when a husband feels unappreciated by his wife, he becomes frustrated. Then the husband said that he would not get the strength from his wife to go out into the world and win the fight. So he would become frustrated and lose all his energy. And this is what he said: ‘Wives are often overlooked without realizing how much influence they have over their husbands’ (Internet). Women, you need to know how much influence you have over your husband. I think the best way for you to influence your husbands for good is to obey God's word. The word of God is Ephesians 5:33, which says that the woman with noble character obeys the command to “respect her husband.” Therefore, the wife with noble character makes her husband respected by others. Our church as a bride should respect Jesus, the Bridegroom. Therefore, we must make others respect Jesus. In order to do that, we must obey the word of the Lord. We must live in this world like the church, the bride of Jesus, just like the church in Antioch in the book of Acts. Then, the Lord, the Bridegroom, will be respected by the people of this world.

### **Sixth and last, the wife with noble character has a wise mouth.**

Have you ever heard the phrase ‘You have to use your three inches tongue well’? It means that the tongue is that the words that come out of a short tongue are so important that life goes back and forth. The tongue is as short as that, but the result of the words coming from that tongue is enormous. Look at James 3:5 – “So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!” The words that come out of our tongues become great scars, frustrations, disappointments, and curses for some, hope, courage, and life for some. And in other cases, inadvertent words can kill others. If so, how important is a word from us Christians who believe in Jesus? So Proverbs 18:21 of the Bible tells us this: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.”

In Proverbs 15:2, the Bible says: “The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, But the mouth of fools spouts folly.” Focusing on this word, we already meditated on the tongue of the wise in four ways:

#### **(1) The tongue of the wise turns away wrath.**

Look at Proverbs 15:1a – “A gentle answer turns away wrath ....” The wise man will not be angry with the other when the other is angry. Rather, the wise man is slow to get angry even when the other person is angry (v. 18). Meanwhile, he knows what to do with his angry opponent. It's about taking the other person's anger off with a gentle answer. In other words, the wise man uses gentle words to relieve his opponent's anger. Not only that, the wise man is patient with those who are angry (25:15). He persuades others with a soft tongue, and puts the wrath of the angry

#### **(2) The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable.**

Look at Proverbs 15:2a – “The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable ....” What does it mean? The tongue of the wise means speaking the word of God well (Park). In other words, the tongue of the wise speaks the word of God well and spread knowledge (v. 7). The reason is because the eyes of the wise read the word of God, his ears seek knowledge (18:15), and his life meditates on the word of God day and night (Ps. 1:2). In other words, since the wise man meditates on the word of God day and night, he has knowledge of God's word so that he can convey that knowledge to others well.

(3) The tongue of the wise heals wounds.

Look at Proverbs 15:4a – “The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life ....” The lips of the fool speak harsh words and hurt the other person's heart. But the tongue of the wise heals the wound. Don't you want to have this healing tongue? How does the tongue of the wise heal wounds? It heals the wounds by speaking the word of God well (v. 2). The tongue of the wise speaks well with gentle words (v. 1) to heal the other's broken heart. Dr. Yoon-sun Park speaks of this healing tongue, saying that it is truthful and peaceful word that comforts, saves, and gives hope to the listeners. Such words are referred to as “full of grace, seasoned with salt” (Col. 4:6) (Park). The Bible says that the tongue of the wise is the “tree of life” because it comforts, gives life and hope to those who hear it (Prov. 15:4). In other words, the tongue of the wise is the tree of life to heal dying souls by preaching Jesus Christ, who is life.

(4) The tongue of the wise speaks a timely word.

Look at Proverbs 15:23 – “A man finds joy in giving an apt reply-- and how good is a timely word!” As I personally meditate on this word, I think of how beautiful the right word is at the right time. And in fact, I often experience the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit, letting me speak the right word at the right time. For example, when I talk to others through internet chat, there are times when I get a glimpse of what is working in the other person's heart because God the Holy Spirit makes me to share the Bible verses by reminding me those verses. When that happens, sometimes I am surprised by myself. The reason is because the words that the Holy Spirit reminded me were appropriate words for others at that time. So personally, when I think of Proverbs 15:23, I believe that God will bring us joy by letting us speak the word of God through us in His time. This is what Proverbs 25:11-12 says: “Like apples of gold in settings of silver Is a word spoken in right circumstances. Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold Is a wise reprovener to a listening ear.” What does it mean? In case of proper advice, it means that it produces good fruit (Park). Here, the original Hebrew word for “right circumstances” means “wheel”. In other words, it refers to the turn by adjusting the circumstances at that time. This teaches that the adviser should take a number of things into account and control it when speaking to the other person (Park): ‘Those who give advice should speak when they have love and peace. They should not speak in a humiliating manner.

They should not speak hasty. Don't speak without courtesy. The Bible says that when the other person accepts such advice, it becomes a great treat (meaning of “apples of gold” and “setting of silver”) to the person giving them (Park).

Look at Proverbs 31:26 – “She opens her mouth in wisdom, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.” The wife with noble character is not only a good housewife who works diligently to develop her own industry, but she also guides her family in the words of wisdom (The Pulpit commentary). What are the words of wisdom that come out of her mouth here? I believe that the words of wisdom that come out of her mouth are knowledge (15:7), and that knowledge is truth (8:7). The reason I think this way is because her heart is full of the truth of life (18:4, Park). From the mouth of the wise and noble woman should flow the gospel of Jesus Christ who gives eternal life. Not only must the knowledge of Jesus Christ be preached out of her mouth, but the good news of Jesus Christ, who was crucified and resurrected three days later, in order to give us eternal life. And the word of truth of God must flow out of her mouth. The knowledge to know God must come out, and the words of wisdom must flow out. Furthermore, the Bible says that the wife with noble character speaks “the teaching of kindness” with her mouth (v. 26). I think that in the heart of the wife with noble character, not only the words of the truth of life are abundant, but also the love of God. That is why she speaks the teaching of kindness with her tongue. Her tongue is a tongue regulated by the love of God, speaking the teaching of kindness (The Pulpit commentary). I think that the teaching of kindness is Jesus' double commandment if it applies to us who are living in the new covenant age. The double commandment is “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt. 22:37, 39). The wife with noble character not only show this twofold command in her home to her her husband and her children with her life, but also opens her mouth to teach her children.

This should be the image of the church, the bride of Jesus. The church must not only show the law of God's love by living in obedience to Jesus' twofold command, but also we must open our mouths to spread the word of truth. We the church must open our mouths to preach Jesus Christ, who is the true wisdom. In other words, we must preach the gospel. This is the appearance of the church, the wise and the noble bride of Jesus, the Bridegroom.

There are some words I will never forget among the words my grandmother said to me when she was alive. That word was Proverbs 31:30 – “Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.” I still vividly remember it. I don't remember what conversation we had when I visited the nursing home to see my grandmother. But I do remember that my grandmother memorized Proverbs 31:30 even though she was old and had many wrinkles on her face. At that time, as I listened to that word through my grandmother, I could not help but feel the words, “Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain.” The reason is because I could not help thinking about the meaning of a woman's beauty in the face of the passing years. However, it struck me how important it was to say: “But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.” And the only God-fearing woman who is praised is

the wise and noble woman. The wife with noble character means she gives her husband trust, works diligently, helps the poor and needy, and doesn't worry. Not only that, but the wife with noble character has a wise mouth and her husband is also respected. Her children thank (and are grateful for) her own mother and her husband tells her, "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all" (there are many great women in the world, but you are the greatest of them all"). I hope and pray that all of us may become a church that trusts the Lord, the Bridegroom. I hope and pray that we will become diligent in doing the Lord's work, helping the poor and needy, worrying about nothing, and preaching and teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and the truth of God with our wise mouths. Therefore, when we stand before the Lord, I hope and pray that we will all be praised by the Lord as "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Mt. 25:21)

## Conclusion

I want to let go of my foolishness and walk the path of wisdom. I want to keep putting off not only my foolishness, but also the sinful things such as hypocrisy, laziness, greed and arrogance, and walk the path of understanding as a Christian should walk. I hate what God hates, and I want to love what God loves too. I want to live a right Christian life. I want to become a Christian who lives a life that fears God. I want to be a wise Christian. I want to be wise in the sight of God and “shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (Dan. 12:3).

So I long for, seek, and learn more and more wisdom. I want to know more and more of the benefits of wisdom, and want to experience the power of wisdom. And I believe that wisdom is the best, and I ask God for wisdom to obtain it. At the same time, I want to pay attention to the word of God, and meditate on it day and night to hear the voice of wisdom. When the indwelling Holy Spirit continues to teach me through His word, I am humbly admonished with wisdom and learn the word of God not only in my personal life of faith but also in my family in terms of how to love my wife and raise my children, and to love my neighbor according to His will. I want to protect my own soul and heart with the wisdom God gives me. And even when I am discouraged, I want to rise again in the name of Jesus. Not only that, I entrust all the management and events of my heart to God, and I pray that I will live a life that pleases God while relying on Him in the presence of God who is examining my heart. I want to build relationships wisely with the tongue of a wise man and an honest heart, raise my beloved wife as a noble woman who fears God, and raise my three children as wise Christians. I want to become a man who is dedicated in building a harmonious family centered on the Lord and also makes the hearts of parents happy. I want to be a wise friend who sharpens my friends. I want to make peace with the wisdom God gives me, and I want to be a peacekeeper. I hope and pray that we will humbly participate in the Lord's work of building the body of the Lord, and that everything will be a church that meets the glory and purpose of God. I hope and pray that we will become wise Christians who please God by living a life that fears God.