

## PROVERBS 2

### GOD'S MOUTH TO YOUR EARS

What voices are loudest in your life? Do they all agree with you? Who has permission to speak wisdom into your life, both when it feels good and when it hurts a little bit?

In Proverbs 2:6-7, Solomon assures us that true wisdom is not only God's to give and He does give it. But God's wisdom is not always easy to hear. In fact, Jeremiah 23: 29 describes God's word *as a fire and a hammer that breaks apart the hardest places*. The truth is, sometimes God's wisdom hits us where it hurts. Our natural inclination might be to resist it even reject that wisdom. So we need ears that are ready to receive it and hearts that pursue it. That starts by attentively listening and storing up God's words and commandments. Proverbs 2:1.

Being attentive to something means constantly tending to it. This takes consistent and concerted effort. We must regularly lean into God's Word letting it shape, mold, encourage, inform, and correct us. We must listen for His voice. There is simply no substitute in the life of a believer for time spent with God daily in His Word and prayer.

This is precisely the reason we are seeking to read Proverbs. If we are going to walk in God's wisdom each day, we must establish time each day to receive that wisdom. We must surrender to God daily and seek Him so that we will be transformed, and our lives will prove His will. To move forward in the journey of wisdom we must tend to the words of God and incline our hearts to understand. Many voices shout for our attention; let's ensure that God's voice is the loudest.

#### I. MAKE A DECISION FOR WISDOM

*My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, <sup>2</sup> turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding—<sup>3</sup> indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, <sup>4</sup> and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, <sup>5</sup> then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. <sup>6</sup> For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. <sup>7</sup> He holds success in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, <sup>8</sup> for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. <sup>9</sup> Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path. <sup>10</sup> For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. <sup>11</sup> Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you.*

Verses 1 – 4 give a conditional clause. If you do this, then this will happen as a result. We can't just tell our children what to do; we must tell them why they should do it. Verses 1-4 pose the condition for the son, if he will pursue wisdom. Then verses 5-11 tell him the helpful outcomes it will produce in his life, such a right relationship with the Lord who grants the gift of wisdom and a new ability to walk in righteousness.

Wisdom starts with the “fear of the Lord” (love God which is the greatest command) and leads to how you treat others (love your neighbor which is the second command). Matthew 22:34-40 - *<sup>34</sup> Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. <sup>35</sup> One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: <sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” <sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

Then Solomon says to call out to wisdom like she called out to you. If you will call out to her, she will save you from evil. Wisdom is like a hidden treasure. Go on a treasure hunt for wisdom because wisdom is more precious than silver or gold. Nothing you desire can compare with wisdom.

Seek wisdom and you will find God. Find God, and you will gain wisdom. A right relationship with God will make you wise. Knowledge implies an intimate relationship. This happens by faith. Wisdom-like salvation is both a gift to be received and something to work out with fear and trembling. (Philippians 2:12-13 *<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.*) Wisdom is a pursuit and a gift. James 1:5 says that if *we lack wisdom we should ask the Lord for it because he gives it generously.*

Proverbs 2:6-9 states that the Lord gives wisdom as a gift to his faithful covenant people and he thereby guards them from the temptations that might destroy them. Commit to the Lord’s wisdom and you will understand righteousness and the good path. Again, wisdom is not a high IQ; it’s moral discernment of good and evil. It is the ability to see life from God’s perspective and then act accordingly. Proverbs is not teaching tips for behavior modification. That will not work. You cannot obey the Lord until you know him intimately in a personal relationship and his law is written on your heart. You must listen to the voice of the Lord in order to live wisely before others in the world around you.

2. WISDOM – JESUS – WILL SAVE YOU FROM EVIL (v 2:12-22) *<sup>12</sup> Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, <sup>13</sup> who have left the straight paths to walk in dark ways, <sup>14</sup> who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, <sup>15</sup> whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways. <sup>16</sup> Wisdom will save you also from the adulterous woman, from the wayward woman with her seductive words, <sup>17</sup> who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God. <sup>18</sup> Surely her house leads down to death and her paths to the spirits of the dead. <sup>19</sup> None who go to her return or attain the paths of life. <sup>20</sup> Thus you will walk in the ways of the good and keep to the paths of the righteous. <sup>21</sup> For the*

*upright will live in the land, and the blameless will remain in it; <sup>22</sup> but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the unfaithful will be torn from it.*

Wisdom will save you from the path of evil that leads to death. There are 2 voices that pull you toward ruin and death: (1) evil men and (2) an evil woman.

Men speak perversely (in a way that is not accepted by God). They are a rival to the voice of God. They distort reality and try to get you to follow the distortion. They seduce you. Perverse speech distorts ultimate reality. For example, a couple may genuinely think that marriage is just about two people who really love each other. In the eyes of God, it is a covenant relationship between one man and one woman for a lifetime. A young man and a young woman may genuinely think that being in an intimate relationship before marriage just help you know what you like and don't like, but that goes against God's call to be holy.

Perverse speech calls sin "good" and rejoices in evil. Proverbs 24:24 *Whoever says to the guilty, "You are innocent," will be cursed by peoples and denounced by nations.* For example, telling someone that their grudge is warranted because the hurt they experienced. Proverbs 30:20 *"This is the way of an adulterous woman: She eats and wipes her mouth and says, 'I've done nothing wrong.'* It is okay to flirt at work because my spouse no longer responds to me like they used to. When we justify and rationalize and minimize sin as a way to justify sin is perverse speech and must be avoided.

<sup>16</sup> *Wisdom will save you also from the adulterous woman, from the wayward woman with her seductive words.* It will save you from flattering talk. Her flirtatious words will mimic those of the father in order to get the person to listen. If the son enters into a relationship with the woman, it is by means of sexual sin. Sexual sin and spiritual sin are tied together. Adultery is the distortion of the most intimate human relationship.

*1 Corinthians 6 - <sup>12</sup> "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything. <sup>13</sup> You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup> By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. <sup>15</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." <sup>17</sup> But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.*

*<sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. <sup>19</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup> you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.*

Falling for the forbidden woman means that you are being led away from the Lord. Adultery and sexual sin starts with flattery. Any sexual activity outside of marriage's covenant commitment before God and witnesses to your heterosexual spouse is sinful, foolish and deadly.

If you find yourself giving in to evil, consistently rationalizing your sin, or being enslaved to sexual sin, then circumstances may be revealing to you that you are not listening to the voice of Wisdom. You have, instead, been seduced by the voice of another. If that is true, come to Jesus – the Wisdom of God and follow His leading voice! Listen to Him. He had the words that lead to life.