THE REWARDS OF WISDOM

**DATE: 12/21/2014 pm**

**TEXT: Proverbs 3:1-12; 21-24**

**INTRODUCTION**

***“The Rewards of Wisdom”***

***Rewards –*** *are benefits received in an honorary way*

In our case, it’s the tangible, actual results that come to a person who pursues Godly Wisdom

Be Careful though, Not all Wisdom will be Rewarded

**I Cor. 3:19 – *“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness”***

Instruction that is wrong can be costly, not beneficial

But the Wisdom given in God’s Word should be treasured above all else

**James 3:17 *– “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, (compliant) full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy”***

It carries the highest value, emphasizes the greatest good and answers the hardest questions

The Compensations / Rewards of getting Godly Wisdom far excess any earthly wealth we will ever have

Let’s pray and then look at 7 Rewards of Wisdom

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**Verses 1-6** deal with an Exhortation to Obedience

The first Reward of Wisdom is …

**I. “CONSECRATION” – vs. 1, 2**

***“My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:” “For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee”***

Being Consecrated is to dedicate one’s self for a specific purpose

It is being Dedicated, wholeheartedly devoted, committed

Wisdom recognizes the great value of Holy Living

Pursuing Godly Wisdom will allow someone to live a life dedicated to God

**A. The Command – v.1**

***“My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:”***

The word *Command* is an interesting word, it means *to order*

Order speaks of the condition something is in when it is functioning properly

Therefore a *Command* is something that causes a person’s life to function properly

This command is 2-fold

**1.** First, there is the ‘Caution’ of Disinterest

***“Forget not my law”***

Our Devotion To God’s Word is vital in our Keeping Of the Word of God

Daily Bible reading and study are necessary to keep from forgetting the Word of God

David said – ***“Thy Word have I hid*** (kept safe) ***in mine heart”***

Disinterest Results in Forgetting

In order for God’s Word to be profitable there must be an agreement to keep it fresh in our minds

It’s absolutely necessary to give it our undivided attention

***“Forget not”*** - Memory goes a long way in shaping a godly life

**I Cor. 15:1, 2 – *“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and in which you stand;”
“By which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain”***

When the Word of God does not have our full attention … then is it easily forgotten

 The storage place for God’s Word is in the ***“heart”***

 The Heart & Soul are synonymous

They are the seat of the Intellect, Emotions & Will

The Heart indicate the use of all 3 together / unity

The Bible speaks of this as the ***“Whole Heart”***

There is complete commitment when we put the whole heart into what we do

**Psalm 9:1 *– “I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart;”***

**Psalm 119:10 *– “With my whole heart have I sought Thee: O let me not wander from Thy commandments”***

**2.** Second, the ‘Doing’ of the Word

***“Let thine heart keep my commandments”***

The Doing is from the heart, which is to be sincere and steadfast

***“keep”*** - carries the idea of *gripping tightly*

It speaks of holding His Words continually before us

The heart also speaks of love

That which has our heart, has our love

We also keep what we love

Jesus said – ***“If you love Me, keep My commandments”***

Some, like the Pharisees, kept the commandments but not with the whole heart

**The Commandment is … *“son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:”***

**B. The Compensation – v.2**

***“For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee”***

The Promise for time and contentment in someone's life

***… “long life, and peace”***

**James 1:22 – *“…be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves”***

*A godly life is a longer life*

Sin shortens the life / ages a person quickly

**Psalm 55:23 – *“But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in Thee”***

The lengthened life refers more to Quality than Quantity

Some live more in a few, than others in many years

(I think of Stephen)

We will always live a blessed life when we live With and For the Word of God

We will have the privilege of being set apart for the use of God

**“CONSECRATION”**

The second Reward of Wisdom is …

**II. “COMPASSION” – vs. 3, 4**

***“Let not mercy and truth forsake*** *(Leave)* ***thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:” “So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man”***

***Mercy –*** *The benevolence tenderness of heart which disposes a person to overlook injuries, or to treat an offender better than he deserves*

Mercy & Compassion *are synonymous*

**A. The Command – v.3**

***“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:”***

Mercy and Truth are inseparable

Truth without Mercy is too hard and Mercy without Truth is too soft

A necklace is a conspicuous ornament

***“bind”*** – to tie something firmly to something else

***“neck”*** - The neck is used in reference to obedience

The yoke placed on the neck of an animal, causes the animal to be under control

The stiff /hardened neck speaks of disobedience

**II Kings 17:14 *– “Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their***

***God”***

**Proverbs 29:1 –** ***“He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy”***

It will not let the head be bowed to the will of God

Things worn around the neck also speak of what is nearest to the heart

Mercy and Truth ought to be evident in the Manners of God’s people

Mercy and Truth not only need to be Worn outwardly

But we are to …

***“…write them upon the table of thine heart:”***

Something that is believed inwardly

Things that are written down are expected to be read

***“table”***  - is something you write on, it is speaking here of a tablet, material to write on

Tables of stone are compared to tables of flesh in …

**II Cor. 3:2, 3 – *“Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:”
“Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart”***

(Tables of Stone are the 10 Commandments) (Law)

The tablet on which the words are to be written are found in the heart (Grace)

Things written on the heart are more easily read than things on paper

People may not read a book but they will read us like a book

The idea here is that Mercy & Truth is something that is seen outwardly because it is believed inwardly

**The Command … *“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:”***

**B. The Compensation – v.4**

***“So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man”***

***“Favor”*** - is *respect, acceptance and recognition, preferential treatment shown to somebody,* *someone showing approval to someone else*

Favor and Good Understanding comes from the recognition of someone’s right living

It’s not something Sought, but something conveyed

A life lived in the Wisdom of God’s Word will be recognized by God and man for its quality

***“good understanding”*** – *is the ability to grasp the meaning of something*

Those who love God’s Word will have a reputation for good sense

It will be observed by the Lord and it will be obvious to others

There is no greater reward than to have favor from the Lord

Being recognized by both God and man is a double honor

Not all will appreciate our manner of life though

But the Bible does say - **Proverbs 16:7 *– “When a man's ways please the LORD, …***

***…He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him”***

Our Compassion (Mercy) comes from our standing on the Truth, living in Wisdom

God Rewards us with **CONSECRATION** & **COMPASSION**

He also Rewards us with …

**III. “CONVICTION” – vs. 5, 6**

***“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths”***

Conviction can come from …

-- Our conscience (our upbringing)

-- From the Word of God (preaching)

-- From the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit takes the Word of God and shows Man their need for Salvation and then Sanctification

Then those Convictions should become our firmly held beliefs, not our preferences

One day we will be very thankful we allowed God to work in our hearts!

In these 2 very familiar verses …

The subjects of Trust, Faith and Conviction are stated

**A. The Command – v.5, 6a**

**1.** Dependence

***“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart;”***

**a.** The placement of Trust must be **Exclusive**

***“Trust in the LORD … “***

***“Trust”*** – *reliance upon & confidence in* *something*

It is not in man, in things, or in self

… but ***“in the LORD”***

It must not be what we add to all other things we trust

But in the absence of all others things that we Trust

We Trust ***“in the LORD”***

Trusting Him must be a priority and not a last resort

**b.** The placement of Trust must also be **Exhaustive**

Complete, it’s ***“with all thine heart”***

Trust in the Lord requires a knowledge of God

**Hebrews 11:6 – *“… for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him”***

We Trust those, whom we know … can be Trusted

We also Trust most … the ones we Love most

Trust is based on knowledge that comes from experience

God can be fully Trusted because of His infinite wisdom, His loving concern and His perfect record of success

God is not only Available to be Trusted

But also Asks us to Trust Him

The placement of Faith demands Total Commitment

It is not halfhearted but wholehearted

**James 1:8 –** ***“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways”***

Dependence

**2.** Deference (respect, submission)

 ***“and lean not unto thine own understanding”***

Human beings have a natural tendency to lean on their own understanding

It’s done in business, in politics and in relationships

**a. *“Lean not”***

Does not exclude making plans for the present and future

It simply means making our plans subject to the will of God

**James 4:15 – *“For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that”***

**b. *“Own understanding”***

When facing a problem, people try to figure out

…what it will take to make something work

Then they lean on themselves and others to make it happen

What seems to be right can be totally wrong

According to **Proverbs 14:12** our own understanding is dangerous!

***“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”***

Sometimes there is more than we understand

Dependence, Deference

**3.** Devotion (totally Committed)

***“In all thy ways acknowledge Him,”***

In everything we do, we must consider the Lord and His desires

We ought to show His control of our thoughts, in everything we say

***Acknowledge”*** - means to *make known, to confess* ***“Him”*** …

As all-loving, all knowing, all-seeing, all holy and all powerful

*Acknowledging* is giving credit that is deserved

Acknowledgement of God also means

… *to surrender to His control*

The thought is that in all of our decisions we want to know His will

Surrender to the Lord should be evident in the home, on the job and in every earthly pursuit

**The Command … *“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; “In all thy ways acknowledge Him,”***

**B. The Compensation – v.6b**

***… and He shall direct thy paths”***

What a wonderful assurance

As we trust Him and seek His leading, He shall direct our paths

As we turn to Him for guidance, He will give guidance and wisdom

The thought in **James 1:5** is a close parallel

***“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God,***

***that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him”***

How can we go wrong when His guidance is so readily available

In leaning on the Lord there will be no lack of direction

The path along which He leads may not be the way we always like

It might be a path of difficulty but it is a course directed by perfect wisdom and loving kindness

The Need for Direction

**Jeremiah 10:23 – *“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”***

Ways of Direction

God’s direction comes

-- By the Holy Spirit with Scripture

-- As a result of prayer

-- By conversations with godly people, counsel

-- By repeated impressions of God-honoring actions

-- By open doors

-- Sometimes God directs by closed doors

**Acts 16:7 – *“After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not”***

The Rewards of Wisdom are …

**CONSECRATION,** **COMPASSION & CONVICTION**

**Verses 1-6** we dealt with the Exhortation to Obedience

**Verses 7-12** deal with an Exhortation to Humility

So the next Reward is …

**IV. “CHARACTER” – vs. 7, 8**

***“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil” “It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones”***

This is a call to right character in our Attitude and Actions

**A. The Command – v.7**

***“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil”***

The command is 3-fold

**1.** First, humility - **“*Be not wise in thine own eyes”***

There will always be a way the seems right to you

This is like the command to …

***“lean not unto our own understanding”***

**Proverbs 12:15 – *“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise”***

It’s a warning against the know-it-all type of attitude

**2.** Second, honor - ***“Fear the Lord”***

Respect and reverence for God (really lacking today)

**3.** Third, holiness – **“*Depart from evil”***

The Bible says in **Rom. 12:9** that God's people are to

***“Abhor that which is evil; and cleave to that which is good”***

**The Command … *“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil”***

**B. The Compensation – v.8**

***“It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones”***

This is a metaphor for spiritual health

… Which will lead to physical health

A Godly lifestyles should promote better health than the lifestyles of the wicked (over indulgence)

**Proverbs 17:22 –** ***“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones”***

The Rewards of Wisdom are …

**CONSECRATION,** **COMPASSION, CONVICTION &**

**CHARACTER**

The next Reward of Wisdom is seen in our …

**V. “CONTRIBUTIONS” – vs. 9, 10**

***“Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:” “So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine”***

Everything comes from … and belongs to … God

The Old Testament Jews was to bring the Lord …

-- The firstlings of their flocks - **Exodus 13:1, 2**

-- The firstfruits of their fields – **Leviticus 23:9-14**

And in this way acknowledged His goodness and sovereignty

**A. The Command – v.9**

***“Honour the Lord with they substance and with the firstfruits of thine increase”***

This command of wisdom is not an order to tithe

Tithing is better than nothing but it is not all that the Scripture exhorts one to give

The gifts to God must not come from what we have left

… When everything else has been paid for

God must have the first claim on our gifts

Giving God the firstfruits involves self-denial

This act recognizes Him as having the first place in our lives

***“Firstfruits”*** - The word refers to fruit gathered at the start of the harvest

It is the choice fruit at the beginning and not the leftovers

It is our best for the Best

The giving of self must precede the giving of substance

God wants the man before his money

**II Corinthians 8:5 – *“And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God”***

**Matthew 6:21- *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”***

**The Command … *“Honour the Lord with they substance and with the firstfruits of thine increase”***

**B. The Compensation – v.10**

***“So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine”***

Prosperity is the compensation

I am not a *“name it and claim it”* guy

But I do believe that when we …

***“Honour the Lord with (our) substance and with the firstfruits of (our) increase”***

When we give to God Faithfully and First …

He will see to it that we are adequately taken care of

**Matthew 6:33 – *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”***

The Rewards of Wisdom are …

**CONSECRATION,** **COMPASSION, CONVICTION, CHARACTER & CONTRIBUTIONS**

**VI. “CHASTISEMENT” – vs. 11, 12**

***“My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of His correction:” “For whom the LORD loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth”***

Wisdom recognizes the value of chastisement

***“Despise”*** – to dislike intensely

Rather we need to embraces it … ***“despise not”***

**A. The Command – v. 11**

***“My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of His correction:”***

Clearly implied is that God chastens His children

**Hebrews 12:5** quotes this verse …

***“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him:”***

The word *“****chasteneth”*** has the sense of *discipline,*

*instruction*, or *correction*

God disciplines and corrects His children as all good fathers do

Children at times may rebel at the discipline of a parent

That’s folly

It is even greater folly to resist the correction which God brings into our lives

**B. The Compensation – v.12**

***“For whom the LORD loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom He delighteth”***

**Hebrews 12:6 – *“For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth”***

And Finally the Benefits of Wisdom

**VII. “COMMANDMENTS” – vs. 21-24 …**

The final thought on the Rewards of Wisdom is separate from the first six, but it is just as important

**A. The Command – v. 21**

***“My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:”***

This command simply exhorts someone to be faithful in keeping the commands of wisdom

Too many are Fickle and not Faithful and then wonder why the Rewards are Far and Few between

To gain the Rewards of Wisdom, one must have a great dedication to behaving in Wisdom

A different Hebrew word for *“****wisdom”*** is used here

It has the sense of the *application of wisdom*

The thought is to observe practical wisdom and discretion in our day-to-day living

**Hebrews 2:1 – *“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip”***

**B. The Compensation – vs. 22-24**

The Rewards are 6-fold and make this portion of **chapter 3** almost a summary of **vs. 1-12**

And a great way to close out this message

**1.** Spirituality **– v.22a**

***“So shall they be life unto thy soul”***

Wisdom and Discretion remembered, thought on …

And applied / put into practice

… Will bring Spiritual (***“thy soul”***) Health (***“be life”***) to the Faithful Follower

Again the soul, is that part of man that houses the Intellect (reason), Emotions and Will (determination)

The Whole Heart is these 3 working together

The Inward

**2.** Splendor **– v.22b**

***“… and grace to thy neck”***

The Outward sign of ***“keeping sound wisdom and discretion:”***

**Psalm 90:17 – *“And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it”***

**3.** Safety **– v.23a**

***“Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely”***

**4.** Steadfastness **– v.23b**

***“… and thy foot shall not stumble”***

When sound Wisdom and Discretion are developed in our lives,

It will lead to safety and stability

A life which is secure and stable brings confidence

**5.** Serenity **– v.24a**

***“When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid:”***

**6.** Sleep **– v.24b**

***“yea, thou shalt lie down, … and thy sleep shall be sweet”***

Accordingly, one possessing such godly Wisdom and Discretion in life will sleep in peace

His sleep will be sweet

In contrast, the world is frequently speaking of panic and anxiety attacks and sleepless nights

There may be pleasures in sin for a season,

But the world’s crowd is often tied up in knots of anxiety and have trouble sleeping

Truly Godly Wisdom is of Great Reward!

**CONCLUSION**