

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Purity of Heart and Life

LESSON TEXT FOR AUGUST 10—
Proverbs 2:1-5, 10-17; 4:14-17; 5:1-4;
11:10-13; James 1:13-15.

MEMORY SELECTION—Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.—Proverbs 4:23.

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IT IS well for us to face squarely such a topic as the one assigned. It is particularly necessary to review the biblical standards with regard to holiness of life, since the day in which we live is one of lowered conceptions.

You will probably remember the story of the celebrated artist who was renowned because of his ability to put on canvas colors of accurate hue and great beauty. His secret was that he kept a number of valuable gems of all colors. He would turn frequently from his painting to study the color of these gems.

We need to spend time with the precious gems of the Word of God that we may clearly understand how he would have us live.

I. True Wisdom Involves the Fear of Jehovah (Prov. 2:1-5).

IN THE opening chapters of Proverbs, Wisdom is personified. Anyone who believes in Jesus Christ cannot help understanding something of his relationship to wisdom. In him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). To those of us who trust him, he has been made unto us wisdom. (1 Cor. 1:30).

In this passage in Proverbs the point is that if we observe his commandments, if we incline our ears unto wisdom, if we apply our hearts to understanding, if we long for discernment, as earnestly as we would seek for silver and hidden treasures, we shall understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

God will meet every individual who really wants to know him. Said our Lord, "If any man will, he shall know..." (John 7:17).

II. True Wisdom Involves Holiness of Life (Prov. 2:10-17; 4:14-17; 5:1-4).

TO truly know God is, of course, to be spared the headache which results from being deceived by sin and Satan. When wisdom enters the heart, the result is discretion and understanding (Prov. 2:10, 11). Thus God delivers us from the way of evil and from men that speak evil things (v. 12).

Attention should be given to the description of these evil men in verses 12-15: they speak perverse things; they forsake the paths of uprightness; they walk in the ways of darkness; they rejoice to do evil; they delight in the perverseness of evil; their paths are crooked and wayward.

Deliverance from the strange woman is likewise vouchsafed, as we have true wisdom. The description of these women is informative—flattering, forgetful of both friends and God; their lips drop honey, their mouths are smoother than oil.

Notice the conclusion of the matter: In the end they are bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword, their feet go down to death, and their steps take hold on Sheol.

How much we need God's wisdom in this world. It is easy to be deceived.

III. True Wisdom Means Peace at the End (Prov. 4:18-27).

TO walk with God, to walk in wisdom, is indeed as the dawning light, shining more and more unto the perfect day. If there were no other reward for living for God (and there are many, many others), the benediction at eventide would be enough to cause us to think seriously before we float the ways of God.

IV. A Representative of True Wisdom (Prov. 31:10-13).

THIS passage describes the wise woman. She is indeed to be extolled. The worthy woman, the woman who loves God, the woman who is therefore wise, is in price far above rubies.

V. Sin's History (James 1:13-15).

THE wise man, the man who will be pure in heart and life, ought to understand something of the history of sin in his individual life. Temptation here refers undoubtedly to a solicitation to evil. God does make trial of men (Gen. 22:1), but he does not dangle before them that which is evil in itself.

The history of personal evil is, that because of our lust we are enticed. Thus when lust has conceived (that is to say, we have succumbed to the enticement), sin is born, and sin, when it is finished—but it is never finished; it goes on and on; no power on earth can arrest it—bringeth forth death.

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CROWS CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE

It isn't hard to fool a crow. Just hang some tattered clothes on a stick—and the crow thinks he's looking at a man. That's why the ragged gentleman in the picture has been so successful in keeping the field to himself.

But we know he's just a "scarecrow." We can tell the difference! We can tell a real man from an imitation of a man... and we can tell a man of moral strength from one of moral weakness. We are not easily deceived by false fronts: we look for character in the people we meet.

We seek to build character, also. That's why our churches are so important. We rely on our churches to mold the character of our children through religious education. And in our churches we fortify our own character through regular worship of God.

Thoughtful men and women attend worship services and support the Church. They see the difference that religious faith makes in the life of the individual and the welfare of the community! Go to church this Sunday.

THE CHURCH FOR ALL... ALL FOR THE CHURCH

The Church is the greatest factor on earth for the building of character and good citizenship. It is a storehouse of spiritual values. Without a strong Church, neither democracy nor civilization can survive. There are four sound reasons why every person should attend and support the church of his choice. They are: (1) For his own sake. (2) For his children's sake. (3) For the sake of his community and nation. (4) For the sake of the Church itself, which needs his moral and material support. Plan to go to church on Sunday and read your Bible daily.

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