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Chapter 1 – Affections Have Consequences

Realizing What Caused this Fate (vs.32-33)

Proverbs 1:32-33: “For the waywardness of the naive will kill them,
And the complacency of fools will destroy them.

“But he who listens to me shall live securely
And will be at ease from the dread of evil.”

Well, in many ways, we come to Proverbs as a parenting manual. It seems to be kind of fortuitous being that today we celebrate mothers. So, we come into this book, and I trust that you'll see the wonderful applications that there are for us as well. As it begins in the Book of Proverbs, we realized that there are certain groups of people, more specifically the young, at an early age, you're cultivating desires. As this book begins to unfold, you realize that there are parents that are involved in the child's life. If you look at the very beginning of Proverbs 1, you see this in verse 8,

“Hear, my son, your father’s instruction And do not forsake your mother’s teaching.”

Both of those make reference to the parents that are involved in the training of a child and the necessity to cultivate the child's sense of character. In fact, you're cultivating things like humility, sincerity, priorities in the child's life. I trust that in some way, as you begin to teach, you encourage receptivity to the things that are right, discernment, and ultimately an appetite for righteous things; for the things that are right and good.

If you look in Proverbs 1:8, it reads, “Hear, my son...”

That's receptivity, the desire to hear.

Then it says, “... do not forsake your mother’s teaching.”

That is clearly a type of embracing. So, there are two things that you want the child to do. One is to hear, to receive, to be receptive towards the things that are being said, and the other is to embrace the things that are being said, to not let them go. The mother is teaching, and the word that is used within the passage is “Torah,” which is an interesting word that really summarizes the Old Testament. It is the teaching of the word of God.

As you begin to see in 2 Timothy 1, as Paul reminds Timothy to keep in mind the things that his mother and his grandmother taught him. It's an interesting reference within that particular passage because it's dealing with the sincerity of their hearts. I think one of the things that a parent can convey is a sense of genuineness and sincerity about a love for these things. Believe me, kids can discern whether or not you actually care about the things that you're teaching them. So, the emphasis in the connection that a child has with their mother and the sense of a desire that they see in the mother is going to be catching and will begin to move them towards a desire as well. You're fostering these kinds of things. You're fostering appetite. If in fact you don't, believe me, and as the passage will go on to say, there are other sources that will vie for your child's desires.

If you look within Proverbs 10:1,

“My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent.”

We see this clear warning as it goes on. It says that you don't want to love the wrong thing. You don't want to listen to the wrong things. You don't want to follow the wrong people, and you don't want to pursue the wrong things. It's easy to allow these things to come into your life, and for these things to allure, and oftentimes those things allure by virtue of immediate gratification. So, as the Book of Proverbs opens up, “Listen to these things; don't listen to these things.”

The ultimate result in this comes to the end of this particular chapter, and that is if in fact you listen to the wrong things, there are consequences. What we've been talking about as a whole is that affections have consequences. In other words, what you desire, what you love, what you will listen to, the receptivity that you have towards certain things and the embracing of certain things will have consequences. So, make sure that the appetite is appropriate at a very early stage. In other words, foster that good appetite at very early stage because at the very end, if you look at the passage that we're looking at in Proverbs 1:32,

“For the waywardness of the naive will kill them,
And the complacency of fools will destroy them.”

I mean, we're not talking about some minor incident. We're talking about a major consequence. Scripture talks about the calamity, the ruin, the dread, the terror, the distress, the anguish that come because the child pursued the wrong things; because you listen to the wrong voices; because you follow the wrong people. The warning is clear, the message is clear, these things will come upon you like a whirlwind, like a storm. You didn't expect it. You can't prepare for it. The day when it comes, it simply will mock you because you had not listened, you had not prepared, you had not desired the right things. We come to the end of this particular book as we realize that there is a lot at stake. I mean, way too many consequences are at stake, and

they are unforgiving, unyielding, and uncaring. The things that come upon you will not stop. Realizing what is at stake and that there is a time, literally, when it's too late. Once the consequences begin to come and unfold, then it's too late to say, "Hey, wait, where's the wisdom? What are the desires that you want me to have?" At this particular juncture, the question is, "What was it that caused me to go the wrong way?" One of the reasons why proverbs is so inspiring, I think, is because it not only tells you the things that could happen, but it tells you what would cause the things to happen.

In a very short sentence in verse 32, we actually read what caused all the problems. Why did the person not listen to reason? Why didn't they listen to the words of righteousness for words of wisdom? Why didn't they follow the instruction or the discipline of the father? Why did they reject the teachings of the mother? Why did they do this? It seems pretty clear within the passage. Let's read it within the text in verse 32,

"For the waywardness of the naive will kill them..."

So, it actually uses this one word that really seems to summarize what the problem is of the naive, and it's going to give us two categories. One is the naive and the other is the fool. So, the question is "Ok, first of all, what is the naive?" Well, as we understand, the word itself makes reference to "a simple one." More specifically, we would probably refer to somebody as an "airhead" because of the fact that it actually seems to convey that there's nothing upstairs; it's just a breeze that's going through. The fundamental point of the naive is that they listen to anything and everything. They're simple-minded. They're open-minded; would be the one thing that, interestingly enough, the world conveys as what a wonderful trait this is to be open-minded, and the words of wisdom would say that's not too smart. So, "the naive" is making reference to the simple ones; the open-minded.

Proverbs 1:4 says that they lack discretion and understanding.

Proverbs 7:7 says that they lack sense.

Proverbs 22:3 says that they don't know enough to avoid evil when it's coming.

Proverbs 27:12 says that they act impulsively.

Proverbs 14 says that they believe anything.

Clearly, as we begin to realize this and let me just say this too, this is one of the reasons why propaganda is so effective. Especially in our day, I have seen, society is raising a bunch of children that are highly capricious. So, these capricious children ultimately end up to be adults that are capricious and they're not listening. In fact, they don't know what is right. They have no sense of depth of understanding. So, you have these simple-minded and propaganda goes, and

they just throw out pamphlets or they proclaim something, and people go, "Well, I believe it. Somebody said it. I believe it." And they swallow it hook, line and sinker. We find a lot of problems in nations because of that. So, the great warning that is clear within the passage is that you clearly don't want to be naive. The question is, what caused the naive to fall into the trap they're in? The passage makes it very clear. It was the "waywardness." Did you see the word there? The Hebrew word that is used within the passage is "m^ašûbâ." The King James will actually translate this particular word as "backsliding." More specifically, and if we were to take the direct translation, it would mean a turning away from something. In the context, it is a turning away from the teaching, from the wisdom of God. So, you're turning away from God. Now, that in and of itself doesn't seem to really fully define for us the main problem, but you'll see it unfold as we look at particular verses dealing with this.

One of the passages that I'd have you turn to is Jeremiah 4, in which this word is used again within this particular context. You'll see a sense of turning away that is repeated throughout this chapter. In fact, at the very beginning of the chapter, it starts off with, "If you will return..." Now, the word "return" is the word "šûb." What was the word we were looking at earlier? "M^ašûbâ." So, to not return would be to repel or to turn away; that's "m^ašûbâ." God wants us to "šûb." He wants us to return, to come back.

(Jeremiah 4:1) "“If you will return, O Israel, declares the LORD, then you should return to Me. ...”

Now, what's interesting about this chapter is it seems to relate to the children of Israel in particular as ignorant children that are foolish.

(Jeremiah 4:21) "How long must I see the standard
And hear the sound of the trumpet?

(Jeremiah 4:22) "For My people are foolish,
They know Me not;
They are stupid children
And have no understanding..."

Verse 22 is very eye opening. If you look at the understanding of this particular passage, that it's making reference to the fact that they're foolish, and the next phrase that is used in verse 22 is "They know Me not." What a great phrase that is, because it's actually dealing with the sense of relationship. What we're dealing with the naive is a sense of a lack of depth of character, and more specifically, the lack of ability to form relationships. The problem with the naive is that they're very superficial and surface thinking. So, when you begin to talk to them about things like loyalty and fidelity, it just goes over their head because the only thing they can think about

is buying a new car. The only thing they can think about are the things that they desire, which are once again highly superficial. So, they're unable to form the bonds that are necessary.

It is in this context if you back up into Jeremiah 3 that he begins to deal with the people as children, so to speak, and he says, "Your main problem is that you keep turning away."

(Jeremiah 3:22) "Return, O faithless sons..."

"Faithless." That's an interesting word. "*šôbāb*," backsliding is probably another way of putting it.

"...I will heal your faithlessness..."

"*Mšûbâ*." That's actually the word. So, when we're dealing with waywardness, we're dealing with a turning away, an infidelity, because we're dealing with people that can't have a relationship. They have no sense of loyalty and depth of a relationship. What created that? Well, what created that is the teaching of superficiality. You give your child everything they want. It's more important that they acquire things than that they share things, because sharing would actually foster, a what? A relationship. So, you begin to see all of the things that parents begin to do that really detour from a child perceiving things in a way of depth and character. They become shallow in their thinking, and I think it's one of the reasons why in Jeremiah 4:3 he says, "Break up your fallow ground" because this ground hadn't even been plowed yet.

I don't want to be too hard on mothers today, but oftentimes, as mothers, we try to shelter from difficulty. But difficulty and problems create depth, and the one thing you want the child to do is to feel deeply; understand what this other child is going through because you're not sharing, you're not doing what you're doing, or because you hit them, understand what's going on. Instead, oftentimes, the parent tries to in some way shelter them from these things.

(Jeremiah 3:22) "Return, O faithless sons,

I will heal your faithlessness.'

Behold, we come to You;

For You are the LORD our God.

(Jeremiah 3:23) "Surely, the hills are a deception..."

You've been listening to the wrong thing. You've been going after the wrong thing.

As it reads in Jeremiah 3:20,

"Surely, as a woman treacherously departs from her lover,
so you have dealt treacherously with Me..."

Why is there that sense of treacherousness? Because once again, there's a shallow individual that has no sense of what is important, and that's what caused them to turn away. What will that cause? Well, if you invest in the wrong things, it will literally kill you. The perception is that "Perhaps the shallowness is a wonderful thing. It keeps me from being frustrated." But in the end result it would destroy your life.

The second thing that he puts within the passage is not only the "waywardness of the naive," but "the complacency of fools." The word itself, when it's dealing with complacency, is dealing with a sense of having an abundance. It has that focus of prosperity, abundance, ease, comfort. The fact is you have everything you need. You become overconfident and careless. We've oftentimes make mention of the word "fools" within the text "*k^asîl*," which strangely enough, as you read in both Amos and Job, it's in reference to the constellation Orion. The word "Orion" in the Hebrew is "*k^asîl*," the grand fool. It's a picture literally of this dimwit. It's actually the way that it's described within the text, dimwit, a dull and brutish bully. That's one of the reasons why he's so big up there, he's a big bully. As the story goes, in the sky he's going after Pleiades. We won't go into all the detail of that, but the point is that it's a picture of one that seems to be extremely confident and one that seems to be extremely complacent in where he is and what he has. This is the complacency of fools, as Scripture would go on.

It's interesting, as you go into Proverbs 14, it talks about the fool will go places and not knowing what the problem is, will run into evil, not understanding where he's going because he has no understanding. The fool will go into and run into evil not because he has no understanding, but because he's so proud he doesn't think anything will happen to him. It's a pretty interesting point that we begin to see the arrogance that begins to come in.

If you look with me in Proverbs 18, you have some pretty clear definitions of the fool in this particular context.

(Proverbs 18:1) "He who separates himself seeks his own desire..."

Why would somebody separate himself? Well, it's because they have their own way. Why should they listen to anybody else? They know better than everybody else. They obviously are far more confident and competent in the things that they have.

Proverbs 28:26 says, "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool..."

"Oh, I think I know what's best." Scripture said, "I don't think you do."

One of the reasons why you want to teach Scripture, what God says, is because, here's a grand epiphany, God is smarter than us. That's the reason we go into the Bible. We believe God is actually smarter than us.

1) He's been around a lot longer.

2) Scripture tells us that He's omniscient. There isn't anything He doesn't know.

I like the way that it's put in Proverbs 18:2,

"A fool does not delight in understanding,
But only in revealing his own mind."

"Don't tell me the facts, my mind is made-up." The sense of the fool is "I don't need to understand anything. I just want you to know everything that I know." My father used to say, "While you're talking, you're not learning anything new." You begin to realize that oftentimes fools are more concerned with letting you know what they know rather than the desire to know what is truth.

It goes on and talks about the fool in Proverbs 18:6,

"A fool's lips bring strife..."

Obviously, he's contentious, argumentative, a troublemaker because he thinks he knows it all and he's obviously smarter than everybody else.

(Proverbs 18:7) "A fool's mouth is his ruin..."

Now, we understand according to the passage that the complacency of fools brings about the problem. It will actually destroy them. Once again, the complacency is that sense of prosperity and abundance and ease and comfort. In other words, "I have all the bases covered." One of the worst problems that could actually occur to somebody is everything go well in their life because it actually develops a false confidence.

I don't know if you remember as we were going through the study of Jeremiah, but Jeremiah 48 deals with the Moabites. The phrase that is used in the passage is that the Moabites rested on their lees. Do you remember that? "Lees" is kind of a way of talking about wine, in which you let it sit too long because it really should be stirred up every so often. When you let it sit too long, it just gets old and then it goes bad. The point is that you haven't been stirred up; you haven't had any problems. And the Moabites thought that they were really, really, really good at fighting. They were great warriors, and God says, "You guys haven't even fought yet." You know how people actually think that they could? They watch all the video games, and think, "I'm sure I could do this." And the problem is you've never done that. Young people oftentimes criticize adults before they go into the workforce. "I don't know why they can't just do that simple job." And I go, "Well, you haven't worked yet. Go out and get a job and see how hard it is to work." I've never had a job which surprised me that it was easier than I thought it was. Almost every job that I've had, I go, "Wow, there's a lot more involved to that job than I

thought was ever involved.” And it sort of takes away that sense of overconfidence in yourself and injects a little bit of humility, which is a necessary ingredient.

If you look in chapter 18, there is a reason why verse 11 is put within the passage, and of course that is because the fool is very self-confident and his thoughts are that his prosperity and his abundance, his ease and his comfort actually not only create a sense of entitlement in his life, but a sense of invincibility in his life.

(Proverbs 18:11) “A rich man’s wealth is his strong city,
And like a high wall in his own imagination.”

“I think I can handle anything.” “Why?” “I have a lot of money.” “Oh, good for you. When you get ready to breathe your last, it's not going to do you a whole lot of good.” The passage begins to talk about these kinds of things, and obviously if you look in Chapter 18, it ends with a relationship with a wife is actually more important than you getting money. There's an amazing thought.

(Proverbs 18:24) “A man of too many friends comes to ruin,
But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

Well, who is that person?

(Proverbs 18:22) “He who finds a wife finds a good thing...”

What does the fool do? Well, if you look at the beginning of the chapter, a fool will separate himself from people. Why does he do that? Because he thinks he knows it all. In a way, I would say this, if you're giving advice to maybe your older son when he's getting ready to go on a date, just go, “Don't act like a know it all. Maybe listen to what the girl has to say. Actually care about the relationship more than unveiling your own mind and quit thinking that you're all that.” So, it's an interesting way of revealing these kinds of things within the passage.

You begin to realize that in verse 23, look at the end of that verse, “the rich man,” what? “Answers roughly”. Why? Because he has everything. He doesn't have friends. “Oh, he has a lot of friends. He's got all these friends that really like him because he has a lot of money.” No, no, no, no, those aren't your friends. Here again, he's focusing on the wrong things. His pursuit is, in his own imagination, that this is his high tower. It's a confidence that really then ultimately becomes highly destructive.

It's an interesting passage in Ezekiel, if you look with me in Ezekiel 16, that makes a reference specifically to this, and it's really in the context of the woman or the girl. in Ezekiel chapter. You begin to see God's graciousness to Jerusalem. It uses a metaphorical language within this

particular passage in which He refers to Jerusalem as this young child that He saw, and He began to foster the child and make it great.

(Ezekiel 16:1) “Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

(Ezekiel 16:2) “Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations

(Ezekiel 16:3) and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem, “Your origin and your birth are from the land of the Canaanite, your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.”’

In other words, Jerusalem was under the care of the Canaanites at one time, until David comes in and takes the city and makes it his own.

Within the passage, as we go on, he begins to describe Jerusalem as this child that he sees, and the child is born, but nobody cares for the child.

(Ezekiel 16:4) “As for your birth, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water for cleansing; you were not rubbed with salt or even wrapped in cloths.

(Ezekiel 16:5) “No eye looked with pity on you to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you. Rather you were thrown out into the open field, for you were abhorred on the day you were born.

(Ezekiel 16:6) “When I passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood...” (“And I took you in.”)

And as the passage goes on, “I bathed you. I clothed you. I adorned you. I gave You beautiful clothes. What did you do with that?” And the end result, if you look in verse 14, “In your fame, you left Me and you went to other nations and you long for other things.”

It begins to mention in verse 26, the Egyptians.

(verse 28) “You went to the Assyrians.”

(verse 29) “You went to the Chaldeans and the Babylonians, and you took My grace, you took My mercy, and you took My love, and you became hostile by virtue of having all of these things.”

One of the things we know, of course, by the time Solomon comes in the picture, Jerusalem becomes one of the wealthiest cities in the world as Solomon has all of this tremendous wealth. What are you going to do with the wealth? As parents, our thoughts are, “If we just give our kids everything that we didn't have, they're going to be really good kids.” But nothing could be further from the truth, and Scripture begins to reveal this. I mean, every parent wants to give their kid everything. There's no doubt about that. When would you not give them anything and

everything? You long to do that, but you also realize the harm that it will cause the child. This passage gives that interesting picture. Just to clarify this, it not only creates a harm to the child itself, but as the child grows old, the child becomes cruel towards others.

If you look in Ezekiel 16, “I gave you all these things, but...”

(Ezekiel 16:20) “Moreover, you took your sons and daughters whom you had borne to Me and sacrificed them to idols to be devoured...”

(Ezekiel 16:21) “You slaughtered My children and offered them up to idols...”

What creates this sense of detachment? In Romans, Paul talks about the sense of the day is coming when people will be without natural affections. What is this thing that a mother doesn't love her child? That she'll discard the child for a job? What? Why would somebody do that? There is a sense of entitlement. There is a sense of complacency, “I'm invincible and it's all about me.” And when the world revolves around you, then you become cruel to others.

(Ezekiel 16:45) “You are the daughter of your mother, who loathed her husband and children. You are also the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite.”

Once again, we go back to Ezekiel 16:3.

(Ezekiel 16:46) “Now your older sister is Samaria, who lives north...”

It begins to describe Samaria and then Sodom as their sisters because they act like them and corrupted themselves in the same abominations.

I want you to pick up with me in verse 49 because it is the key verse to all of this.

(Ezekiel 16:49) “Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy.”

What is that telling us? Well, it literally is the complacency of fools. In other words, fools become this brutish bully that has a sense of entitlement that says, “It's all about me, and I can't think about anybody else.” Once again, the carnage that comes behind this is intense. Where did it come from? If you look at the passage, it says the same thing that Proverbs says, it was out of your arrogance and abundance; by the way, that's the same word as “complacency.” “It was out of your arrogance and your abundance of food, careless ease, and you had no regard for the poor and the needy.” Show me somebody that doesn't really care about the suffering of somebody else, that they can look at somebody else hurting and really have no response and I'll show you somebody that is according to Scripture, a fool. Because they become arrogant and brutish in their way of thinking, and they're arrogant against God, they perceive literally success and ease and comfort as a source of entitlement, and they will

ultimately perceive themselves as invincible in this state. Therefore, they'll do things that nobody else would presumptuously do. Scripture is warning us with these two things. Let me just summarize so that you can be clear about this, that destruction is going to come and the lives of individuals, and in the lives, oftentimes of our own children, if we don't pull them away from the waywardness of the naive. That is to say, if we don't give them a sense of what is valuable, if we don't give them a kind of depth of understanding; when you're teaching, you shouldn't just simply be teaching rote memorization stuff, you should be teaching things like character and depth and sincerity. Once again, you go back to Timothy's mother, who had a sincere faith. The point is that you taught somebody to feel. You taught somebody to care.

As you look in Proverbs 3,

(Proverbs 3:1) "My son, do not forget my teaching..."

(Proverbs 3:3) "Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck..."

As you begin to go down the list, you begin to realize that a respect for God and honor for Him begins to cultivate the right kind of appetite, and that's what parents should be doing. We go around teaching our kids how to make a living, but they don't know how to live. So, they go out into the world with great anxiety and great failure and oftentimes great anger and great hostility. People are finding themselves making decisions that they should never make, but they listen to the wrong people because they were never taught to care for what is right. So, the fundamental point is that you want to teach and give them a sense of value. You want to give them a sense of depth and understanding about what is truly valuable. Then, you clearly want to make sure that they don't get too much success. Don't give them too much. Don't give them an abundance, and I would say this as well, that there is a tendency oftentimes when something bad goes into the life of a child, that the child begins to maybe complain to a parent and the parent feels in some way that they need to compensate for the difficulty that the child is going through. You know, "Because you went through this, then I need to make sure that you don't feel the pain of this particular incident." And I would say the only thing you're doing is you're raising a fool. You're raising somebody that's going to walk away thinking, "I don't deserve to have any problems at all in my life. So, when I have a problem in my life, it's somebody else's fault." And then they become hostile towards everybody else.

Psalms 19 gives these wonderful words and great words of wisdom as you begin to realize just the power of God's word.

(Psalm 19:7) "The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul..."

Think about that. The greatest thing that a parent could do is proclaim the word of God; begin to share the things of God, God's wisdom, God's way of seeing things, the value system of God.

"... The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. (naive)

(Psalm 19:8) The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

(Psalm 19:9) The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.

(Psalm 19:10) They are more desirable than gold..."

I don't know, with much of the training that's going on, I think it's all about job, career and what college you go to, and you're emphasizing the wrong things.

If you're emphasizing these things of the word of God,

(Psalm 19:11) "Moreover, by them Your servant is warned;
In keeping them there is great reward."

"I want my kid to have the best." Ok, get him in the word of God.

(Psalm 19:12) "Who can discern his errors? ..."

I would say this too, that as a parent your thought is, "I'm a good parent. I know what I'm doing." Match your parenthood with God, and make sure that you're doing what He says to do, because if you're not, you're not a good parent; you're not parenting right.

"Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults.

(Psalm 19:13) Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins..."

That would be the fool, wouldn't it? "I can do this. I'm basically invincible. I have no problems." The passage is telling us that it can make wise the simple.

Psalm 119:130 literally conveys the same thing. Don't overindulge your child. Don't overcompensate for the things that go wrong. If in fact you do, you're going to raise a fool by virtue of doing this. Teach the word of God. Help them to fall in love with things that are valuable. Take them out and help them practice these things. Holding others in higher esteem than yourself, what does that mean? That means that you might forgo something that you desire to help somebody else that is in need, and maybe you'll take your child along with you to show him that. You're going to teach them the things that are truly valuable. I would say this above all else, 1 Corinthians 1:20, and just a couple of passages I want to leave with you in closing.

1 Corinthians 1:20 makes reference to the fact that the world doesn't think we're too smart. So, I appreciate Scripture at least letting me know that ahead of time so that when the world comes up to me and says something like, "I don't think you're too smart." I go, "Hey, Scripture said you would say that. Thank you."

(1 Corinthians 1:20) "Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"

(1 Corinthians 1:21) For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God..."

I mean, you can fundamentally talk to probably some of the smartest people, self-proclaimed smartest people in the world and you say, "Do you have a relationship with God?" And they go, "What? How do you do that?"

"... God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message..."

That is this gospel message which the world listens to the gospel message, and they go, "Ok, so this Jesus died on the cross for your sins, and if you believe in him, you'll have everlasting life? Let me get this straight." And you go, "Yeah, that's pretty much it. Wonderful things that come out of this, but by faith we're saved. It's not by works. It's not by anything we do." "So, you don't even have to be as smart as me?" "No, don't have to be as smart. All you have to do is humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and admit that you aren't perfect, admit that He is. That's all you have to do, and admit that He's the Savior, not you. I mean, it's not really complicated." And the world goes, "Ah. I think that's stupid." That's what the world's going to say, and Jesus to them is stupid, but don't shy back from teaching your children about Jesus. Because the way it reads in verse 30,

"But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God..."

Christ is wisdom. Teach your child to follow the life of Christ; pattern their life after Christ; to serve Christ in all they do. It's the wisest thing that you could ever do. It's the wisdom of God. God's actually given you the path of wisdom as parents to point. Let me just say this, if you're following Christ, it's impossible for your child to be selfish. It's impossible for them to be inflated in their head, dimwitted or we would say as a fool. Probably the best description of the word "fool" is fat head because it has the perception of you have everything, and you think that you're everything.

The last verse that I want to leave with you is found in James 3. When you come to the end of the passage, the way it starts off in verse 13 in this closing paragraph is this,

(James 3:13) “Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.”

“Oh, I'm really smart.” Ok, so who have you helped this week? There's nothing smart about being selfish. There's just nothing smart about it.

(James 3:14) “But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.”

Aren't you a fool?

(James 3:15) “This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

(James 3:16) For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder...”

Have you been seeing any of that lately?

“... and every evil thing.

(James 3:17) But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable (willing to yield), full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”

Genuine. Sincere.

(James 3:18) “And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

I oftentimes hear mothers say, “I want my children to be happy and safe.” How does it end in Proverbs 1? Let's just make sure we got this right. You want your children to be happy and safe. How does that end?

(Proverbs 1:33) “But he who listens to me shall live securely And will be at ease from the dread of evil.”

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word and for the direction of Your word. We begin to understand what it means to be wayward. The fact of the matter is that all we like sheep have gone astray. We've each gone our own way, and in the capriciousness of our childishness, we have pursued what we felt was best for us. We have no sense of depth, no sense of character. No sense of honor, fidelity, caring, and kindness which are unnecessary in our lives. We're too

busy pursuing things like status, recognition, applause. We soon find ourselves in a quagmire of difficulty, anxiety, and trouble. We've listened to the wrong people. We've pursued the wrong things. Our thought has often been that because we have everything that life is ok at the moment; that we've got this. I mean, why do we need God? I mean, surely there isn't such a thing as death, and it would never knock at my door. Father, we come before You and we surrender our hearts to You. We realize that there is a wise way to go. It is the wisdom of God that is seen in the person of Jesus Christ. One who came to Earth not to seek His own will, but the will of the Father, and one who would give His life a ransom for many without one moment of thought for Himself. The wisest man that has ever existed would willingly get up on the cross and die for me.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed, the question is, who are you following? What are you attracted to? Who you're listening to? What are you pursuing? If it's not Christ, you're not smart. There is no wisdom in turning away.