

PEARLS FROM PROVERBS – Lesson 9

The Wise Man

By Beverly McKey

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. In **Matthew 7:26-27** Jesus compares everyone who hears the word of God and does not obey them to a foolish man who built his house on the sand.
1. No foundation was prepared for this house.
 2. Sand is unstable and it shifts when the floods rise and erode the sand.
 3. Then when the strong winds blow against the house, the foundation gives way and the house collapses completely.
 4. The house on the sand may last through calm, sunny days but it is not designed to withstand the storms that eventually come.
 5. Jesus ended by saying "*great was its fall*".
- B. Previously, in **Matthew 7:24-25**, Jesus told of another man who built his house on the foundation of a stable and secure rock.
1. This house and its foundation were strong enough to stand firm no matter the fierceness of the storm or the amount of the rain.
 2. In all types of weather, this man's house stood firm.
 3. The first man is described by Christ as being a fool, while the second man is called wise.
- C. In another parable in **Matthew 25:1-13**, Jesus told of a group of ten virgins who were attending the bride as they waited on the bridegroom to arrive.
1. The custom was that the bridegroom would try to select a time that would surprise the bride and her attending maidens.
 2. In this parable, five were called wise and five were called foolish.
 - a. The five foolish maidens had not adequately prepared for a long stay by bring extra oil for their lamps.
 - b. The five wise maidens thought ahead and brought extra oil for their lamps.
 - c. The laws at that time forbid any woman to walk through dark streets without having a lamp of her own.
 - d. When the bridegroom arrived, the foolish maidens did not have enough oil to get them to the wedding feast so they asked the wise maidens to share their oil.
 - e. The wise maidens had prepared for themselves, but had not brought enough for the foolish maidens, so the foolish maidens were told to go to the market and buy more oil for themselves.
 - f. When they returned, everyone was gone. The bridegroom had come and taken the wise maidens and the bride to the feast.

- g. The foolish maidens went to the feast and begged to enter the feast. Unfortunately, the door was locked and no one else was allowed inside.
- h. In these two comparative parables, Jesus divides all people into two categories: the wise and the foolish.
- 3. Other designations could be given to these groups, and the same conclusions would be drawn.
 - a. For example, in **Psalm 1**, all men are classified as either righteous or wicked.
 - 1) The righteous described in **Vs. 1-3**, are much like the wise man who builds his house on the rock.
 - a) Does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly **Vs. 1**
 - b) Does not stand in the path of sinners **Vs. 1**
 - c) Does not sit in the seat of the scornful **Vs. 1**
 - d) Delights in the law of the Lord **Vs. 2**
 - e) Meditates day and night upon the law of the Lord **Vs. 2**
 - f) He will be fruitful like a tree planted by a river **Vs. 3**
 - g) Whatever he does prospers **Vs. 3**
 - 2) The wicked are described in **Vs. 1:4-6**, much like the foolish man who builds his house on the sand.
 - h) Like the chaff which the wind drives away **Vs. 4**
 - i) Shall not stand in the judgment **Vs. 5**
 - j) Shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous **Vs. 5**
 - k) The way of the ungodly shall perish. **Vs. 6**
- 4. For another example, consider the judgment scene of **Matt. 25:31-46**.
 - a. Here Jesus uses the parable of the Master dividing the "sheep and the goats" as an example of the good and the evil.
 - b. In these passages, all men are classified as either blessed (**Vs. 34**) or cursed (**Vs. 41**).
 - c. The difference in these two groups is very similar to the difference between the wise and foolish virgins; one group used their time leading up to judgment to prepare for eternity, but the other did not.
 - d. Consequently, all men today are divided into two categories.
 - 1) If we are wise, then we will be righteous and spiritually blessed.
 - 2) However, if we are foolish, then we will be wicked and spiritually cursed.

II. Man's search for wisdom began all the way back in the Garden of Eden.

B. When Eve ate of the restricted fruit, she did so because the serpent promised it would "*make one wise*" **Gen. 3:6**.

- 3. The reason that men seek wisdom is because there are benefits associated with being wise; these benefits are noted in the Proverbs written by Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived.

- a. **Proverbs 24:5** – *“A wise man is strong, yes, a man of knowledge increases strength;”*
 - b. **Proverbs 21:22** – *“A wise man scales the city of the mighty, and brings down the trusted stronghold.”*
4. Solomon used the word “wise” or “wisdom” many times in the Proverbs.
- a. “Wise” is used sixty-six times in sixty-two verses.
 - b. “Wisdom” is used fifty-four times in fifty-three verses.
 - c. That is a total of one-hundred-twenty times in only thirty-one chapters.
 - d. With so many verses devoted to the wise man or wisdom, it is deserving of our time to study this subject.
5. Before we enter into our discussion of the wise man, as a foundation, let’s consider that being wise involves two things:
- a. First, being wise is a choice.
 - 1) Solomon was wise because he chose to be.
 - 2) God presented Solomon with the equivalent to a blank check when He told Solomon, “Ask! What I shall give you?” **2 Chron. 1:7.**
 - 3) Consider the magnitude of this opportunity.
 - a) The all powerful God would have no limitations to what He could give Solomon.
 - b) There would be no financial, material, or geographic restrictions that would be considered too difficult for God.
 - c) When Solomon made his request, it was surprising that he did not ask for material wealth, power to subdue his enemies or long life.
 - d) In this once-in-a-lifetime chance, Solomon chose wisdom: **2 Chronicles 1:9-10** – *“Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. ¹⁰ Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?”*
 - 4) The choices we have to make may not be wisdom over riches, but rather it may be the choice for heavenly wisdom over earthly wisdom.
 - a) James tells us the difference between earthly wisdom and heavenly wisdom:
 - b) **James 3:13-17** – *“¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, **demonic**. ¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. ¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without*

hypocrisy."

- b. Second, wisdom is a chore.
- 1) Despite Solomon's request for wisdom and despite God's granting that request, Solomon did not always act wisely.
 - a) Why not? Because making wise decisions requires work.
 - b) According to **Proverbs 13:16**, "*Every prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool lays open his folly.*"
 - c) There is a distinct difference between knowledge and wisdom.
 - i A wise man not only has knowledge, but he uses that knowledge in the decisions that he makes.
 - ii In fact, the wise man works diligently toward having knowledge in the first place.
 - 2) Again, Solomon stated, **Proverbs 14:15** – "*The simple believes every word, but the prudent considers well his steps.*"
 - a) Here, Solomon compares the one who believes everything he hears and the one who looks intently on what he hears and investigates it to see if it is true.
 - b) The Bereans were called "noble" because they "*searched the Scriptures daily*" to make sure what they heard was true. **Acts 17:11**
 - c) They did not just take someone's word for it: they explored for themselves.
 - d) The wise person will do that today as well.

III. LET'S CONSIDER SOME ASPECTS OF A WISE PERSON AS DESCRIBED BY SOLOMON.

- B. The Wise Person's Fortune – Many attain great wealth because of their earthly or business wisdom.
1. According to Solomon, "*The crown of the wise is their riches.*" **Proverbs 14:24**
 2. It is true. There are financial benefits of being knowledgeable and using wisdom in the business world.
 - a. This fortune can be gained by the godly or the ungodly.
 - b. In **Psalms 73**, Asaph wrote a lengthy discourse telling why he almost stumbled when he "*envied the prosperity of the wicked.*"
 - c. Jeremiah's generation also questioned the financial successes of the wicked: **Jeremiah 12:1** – "*Righteous are You, O LORD, when I plead with You; yet let me talk with You about Your judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously?*"
 - d. Although they may lack spiritual wisdom and understanding, many people are wise in the ways of the world.
 - e. It is this wisdom that promotes them to great worldly status.

Proverbs 14:35 – “*The king’s favor is toward a wise servant, but his wrath is against him who causes shame.*”

3. The honest use of worldly wisdom in financial affairs is not condemned in Scripture.
 - a. However, those who rely on earthly wisdom are first to take credit for their prosperity.
 - b. When financial gain is the only goal, honesty is often sacrificed and the ends justify the means.
4. Jesus told a parable involving the dishonest use of worldly wisdom to make financial gain. **Luke 16:1-11**
 - a. The parable of the unjust steward tells the story of a man who cheated his master (employer).
 - b. This steward was certainly not a spiritual man, since he wasted his master’s goods.
 - c. He understood the risk he was taking and that there would be consequences when his master caught him.
 - 1) Before his master arrived to examine his accounts, this steward began to approach those who owed his master.
 - a) He found out how much they owed and then he reduce their debt, giving them a great bargain.
 - b) In doing so, he made friends of those in debt to his master.
 - c) When his master fired him, he would be able to go to the ones he had helped to get a new job.
 - d) Even though he made new friends through dishonesty and deceitfulness, his master commended him and even called him “wise” for having the foresight and craftiness to plan and carry out such a scheme to ensure his future. **Luke 16:8**
 - 2) The application is made in a later verse:
 - a) **Luke 16:11** – “*Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?*”
 - b) **I Corinthians 3:19** – “*For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.*”

C. The Wise Person’s True Riches: The spiritual “wisdom” we seek is what the world calls foolishness.

1. **I Corinthians 1:22-23** – “²² *For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;* ²³ *but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,* ²⁴ *but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*”
2. We must remember that all blessings, physical and spiritual, come from the Father of Lights (**James 1:17**)
 - a. We are merely managers and stewards of those blessings.
 - b. **1 Corinthians 4:2** – “*Moreover it is required in stewards that one be*

found faithful."

- c. **Luke 16:10** – *"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much."*
 - d. **Luke 16:11** – *"Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"*
3. Whether great or small, the evidence of a spiritually wise person is the way he uses earthly riches.
- a. Those who are spiritually wise will also have a crown:
 - b. **Proverbs 14:18** – *"The simple inherit folly: but the prudent (wise) are crowned with knowledge."*
4. Just as an earthly wise person will use riches to produce more riches, so will a spiritually wise person use knowledge to produce more knowledge.
- a. Solomon writes, *"Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning."*
 - b. A wise person will realize that there is no stopping point in spiritual growth.
 - c. There is a song in our song books entitled "I Love To Tell The Story."
 - 1) The last verse of this song opens with these words: *"I love to tell the story, for those who know it best seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest."*
 - 2) The wise person will polish the crown of knowledge with continual study and meditation.
 - 3) Near the close of his life, Paul still wanted the opportunity to study the Scriptures by calling for the parchments. **2 Tim.4:13**
 - 4) Perhaps Solomon said it plainest: *"A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel."* **Proverbs 1:5**
- D. Let us also consider that there is more to a crown of knowledge than just studying and reading God's Word.
- 1. Wearing a crown of knowledge indicates living what we know to be truth.
 - a. James forever linked the wise to faithful activity by asking and answering this inspired question:
James 3:13 – *"¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom."*
 - b. The wise man will receive instruction, even if it is in the form of reproof:
 - 1) **Proverbs 9:8** – *"Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you."*
 - 2) **Proverbs 15:31** – *"The ear that hears the rebukes of life will abide among the wise."*

- c. The wise will also use knowledge to their benefit.
- 1) The wise person will take into account what he knows about sin, death, and judgment whenever any decision must be made.
 - 2) Solomon makes reference to this on more than one occasion in the book of Proverbs.
 - a) **Proverbs 14:16** – *“A wise man fears and departs from evil, but a fool rages and is self-confident.”*
 - b) **Proverbs 27:12** – *“A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself; the simple pass on and are punished.”*
 - c) The passage from **Psalm 1:1-6** which we began this study with was written by Solomon’s father, King David, made this observation:
Psalm 1:3 – *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”*
 - 3) The New Testament continues this teaching as well:
 - a) **Ephesians 5:11** – *“...have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”*
 - b) **I Thessalonians 5:22** – *“Abstain from every form of evil.”*

IV. WE CAN TELL MANY THINGS ABOUT A PERSON BY HIS FEATURES

- A. The Lips – Oftentimes wisdom is found to be lacking because of things that a man says.
1. **Proverbs 26:28** – *“A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it, and a flattering mouth works ruin.”*
 2. **Proverbs 12:18** – *“There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health.”*
 - a. The foolishness of speech can include gossip, cursing, swearing, lying, slander and obscene jokes.
 - b. Beware of one who always talks and never listens:
Proverbs 19:19 – *“In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise.”*
 - c. In **Matthew 26:59-64** Jesus knew that sometimes it is wiser to remain silent and sometimes you must speak up.
 - 1) *“⁵⁹ Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, ⁶⁰ but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward ⁶¹ and said, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’”⁶² And the high priest arose and said to Him, “Do You answer*

*nothing? What is it these men testify against You?"⁶³ **But Jesus kept silent.** And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"⁶⁴ **Jesus said to him, "It is as you said."***

- 2) Jesus knew that there was no use answering the charges of witnesses that were lying.
 - 3) However, when He was plainly asked, under oath, whether He was the Son of God, He answered truthfully.
3. Numerous proverbs teach that a wise person uses speech for good to:
- a. Spread knowledge –
 - 1) **Proverbs 15:2** – *"The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly..."*
 - 2) **Proverbs 15:7** – *"The lips of the wise disperse knowledge..."*
 - b. Turn away wrath
 - 1) **Proverbs 15:1** – *"A soft answer turns away wrath..."*
 - 2) **Proverbs 29:8** – *"...wise men turn away wrath."*
 - c. Preserve life
 - 1) **Proverbs 13:3** – *"He who guards his mouth **preserves** his life..."*
 - 2) **Proverbs 14:3** – *"...the lips of the wise will **preserve** them."*
 - d. Convert souls or guard his own soul
 - a) **Proverbs 11:30** – *"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise."*
 - b) **Proverbs 21:23** – *"Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles."*
 - e. Spread good will
 - 1) **Proverbs 15:23** – *"A man has joy by the answer of his mouth, and a word spoken in due season, how good it is!"*
 - 2) **Proverbs 16:24** – *"Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones."*
 - 3) **Colossians 4:6** – The New Testament reiterates this same teaching – *"Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one."*
- B. The Heart – the heart of a person is revealed in attitudes and actions
1. **Proverbs 16:23** – *"The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips."*
 2. **Matthew 12:34b-35** – *"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."³⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things."*
 3. The wise will daily seek to keep his heart pure by study and application of God's word.
 - a. Moses gave this instruction to the Israelites: **Deut. 32:46** – *"Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall*

command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law."

- 1) We should develop the same attitude as David:
 - a) **Psalm 51:10** – *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."*
 - b) **Psalm 119:11** – *"Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You."*
 - c) **Psalm 119:133** – *"Direct my steps by your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me."*

C. The Feet – One can identify the wise person and the foolish person by the direction their feet take them.

1. Although Proverbs does not mention the feet of a wise man, the direction in which they carry the wise man is described.
 - a. **Proverbs 15:21** – *"Folly is joy to him who is destitute of discernment, but a man of understanding walks uprightly."*
 - b. **Proverbs 10:9** – *"He who walks with integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will become known."*
 - c. Perhaps the wise walks uprightly and with integrity because his feet are grounded in the fear of the Lord:
 - 1) **Proverbs 14:2** – *"He who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD, but he who is perverse in his ways despises Him."*
 - 2) The wise will influence others to walk the same path:

Proverbs 13:20 – *"He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed."*

V. THE WISE PERSON'S FUTURE

- A. Most people in this world are concerned about their physical future.
 1. Providing for our own and ensuring that our families are supplied with their future needs are godly principles that we should heed.
 2. However, many who are interested in their physical future never take thought for their spiritual future.
 3. Those who are not concerned about their spiritual futures are noted as being fools.
 - a. Jesus told a story about a foolish farmer planned far ahead for his physical future. **Luke 12:13-21**
 - b. However, he gave no thought to his spiritual future.
 - c. **Vs. 20** - Because of his greed for physical wealth, God said to him, *"Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?"*
 - d. Jesus then concluded by saying, *"So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."*
- B. For the wise man, thoughts about the future are both encouraging and filled with hope.

1. Solomon believed that as well.
 - a. **Proverbs 16:20** – *“He who heeds the word wisely will find good, and whoever trusts in the LORD, happy is he”*
 - b. **Proverbs 12:8** – *“A man will be commended according to his wisdom.”*
2. The world values the accolades of their fellow man. Awards are given for many worldly activities.
 - a. Oscars for movies
 - b. Grammys for music
 - c. Super Bowl winners
 - d. Master’s Golf Champions
 - e. You name it and there is an award for it.
3. While Christians may receive commendations from many because of their wisdom, their faithfulness and their admirable lifestyle, this is NOT their goal.
4. The wise Christian is commended by others who look at life correctly.
 - a. The New Testament provides many examples of commendation and appreciation being given to many Christians who were great servants of the church.
 - b. **Romans 16:1** – *“I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea.”*
 - c. **I Corinthians 4:17** – *“For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord,”*
 - d. **3 John** was written to an elder of the church named Gaius. **Vs. 1 Vs. 5-6** – *“⁵ Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, ⁶ who have borne witness of your love before the church.”*
5. While we want to live the kind of life that will be seen as admirable by others, the commendation we seek will occur on the Day of Judgment.
 - a. To the wise man, that day will be a day of spiritual victory.
 - b. No earthly award can compare with the reward God has promised to those who are “faithful until death”. **Revelation 2:10**
 - c. No sacrifice we might make in order to “keep ourselves unspotted from the world” (**James 1:27**) will even be remembered when we see the glory of heaven.
 - d. Every occasion of persecution or hardship in this life will be worth it all when we stand in the presence of God.

Romans 8:18 – *“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”*
 - e. Solomon knew that this was the future the wise could expect:

Proverbs 15:24 – *“The way of life winds upward for the wise, that he may turn away from hell below.”*
6. In anticipation of a future in eternity, we must increase our commitment to travel the narrow road that leads to eternal life.
 - a. Don’t be lulled into complacency by Satan who wants the world to think

that “everyone is going to Heaven”. I wish that were so.

- b. Jesus said the narrow way is **difficult**.

Matthew 7:13-14 – *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”*

- c. In **Colossians 3:1-4** we are given an action to take to help us focus on the goal AND a promise that the result will be eternal life.
*“If then you were raised with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² **Set your mind on things above**, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then **you also will appear with Him in glory.**”*
- d. One important word begins this passage – **IF**.
- 1) If is a word that implies a “condition”.
 - 2) The condition is: IF you were raised with Christ, which refers to being raised from the “watery grave of baptism” that symbolizes our old sinful self dying, being buried and being “raised again”.
 - 3) **Romans 6:3-4** – *“³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*
 - 4) Nothing in these two passages instructs us to “ask Jesus into our heart” because that is accomplished in baptism.

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. There are many, many uncertain things about the future that we cannot know.
1. How long will we live?
 2. Will we be alive when Christ returns?
 3. Will we see our grandchildren grow up?
 4. Will this country remain free so that we can continue to worship openly?
 5. Will our health endure or will we suffer serious illness?
- B. While we don’t know these things, there is one thing that is certain!
1. We have a promise that we can fully count on:
Galatians 3:29 – *“²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for **you are all one in Christ Jesus**. ²⁹ And **if you are Christ’s**, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*
 2. **Romans 8:16-17** – *“¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and **if children**, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him**, that we may also be glorified together.”*
 3. How can we NOT be excited about that promise! All we have to do is **remain faithful**.