Pursuing Divine Wisdom
Selected Scriptures
TMC135

What does it really mean to be educated? Is college, in and of itself, university, graduate school really what educates a person? What above all must you know? What is most important to know? What is most needful?

And I think you know the answer to that because the Bible very clearly says, "In all of your learning, get...what?...wisdom...wisdom, spiritual wisdom." I want you to open your Bible to the book of Proverbs and I want to talk a little bit this morning about wisdom.

Some years ago I had a very interesting discipleship group through the years I've discipled men. I had a group that was a very mixed group. I had one guy who was a world record holder in speed water skiing. I had another guy in my discipleship group, same group, who was a movie producer and another one who was a defenseman for the L.A. Kings, and a couple of other assorted common folks like me.

We were discussing what we were going to go through for a period of a year in studying the Word of God and the consensus of all of these guys was we want to learn the book of Proverbs because we want to learn wisdom. Wisdom applies to everything in our lives. And that's exactly what we did and we had an absolutely great year going through the book of Proverbs learning wisdom.

I want you to look, first of all, at chapter 2 just to set a kind of a context with regard to wisdom. Verse 1, "My son, if you will receive my sayings and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom. Incline your ear to understanding," a synonym for wisdom, "cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding. If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures, then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God."

The pursuit of wisdom. You have to search for it as for silver, as for hidden treasures. If you compare that with the chapter in Job. Job has an interesting chapter where he discusses mining. You might not think that in the patriarchal period, the time of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible when Job would have lived and the book of Job been written, that they weren't in to digging into the earth, but they were. They were in to dynamiting, they were in to going down below the surface of the earth, Job says, where even the eagle's eye has never gone, going way down into the belly of the earth, down deep below the waters, down into the waters, the waters on the surface and the waters of the earth to mine out diamonds and gold and silver.

And in Job it says they do that to find earthly treasure but nobody can find wisdom. And here it says, if you're going to find anything, find wisdom. Make your ear attentive. If you want to listen to anything, listen for wisdom, turn your heart toward wisdom, plead for discernment and lift your voice for

understanding.

He goes on all the way through the second chapter to extol the virtues of wisdom and you can read it for yourself. But look at chapter 8 for a moment and you have a similar chapter, in fact the whole eighth chapter really extols wisdom again. It depicts wisdom almost as a person but again makes the very same emphasis in chapter 8 as to the utter importance of wisdom. In fact, go down to verse 11, we'll just sum it up there, "Wisdom is better than jewels and all desirable things cannot compare with her." The most important thing you will ever gain is wisdom.

That leads us then immediately to ask the question, What is wisdom? In Greek, the New Testament word for wisdom in the Greek language is sophia and sophia to a Greek meant a concept. To be wise to a Greek meant to understand a concept, to be able to comprehend something, to analyze something, to think about it, to come to a comprehension with regard to it. That's not the word in Hebrew. The word in Hebrew is chakam and what it means is skill in living. The Hebrews are very concrete in terms of their language and how they think, the Greeks are rather esoteric, mystical and somewhat transcendent in their thoughts, a little bit spacey and so you get these conceptual terms in Greek but in Hebrew it has a very concrete meaning, skilled in living, learn how to live skillfully, that is the issue. You want to pursue something, pursue skillful living, pursue wisdom in every aspect of life.

Now that's really the clarion call of the book of Proverbs, and you can see it repeated in a number of other places, I would just commend for your own reading Proverbs chapter 2 and chapter 8. You can also read chapter 1 where it says, "Wisdom cries in the street, and wisdom pleads and pleads and pleads and you will not listen and you will not hear," and it says, "O you naive ones, and O you fools, and O you people who lack discernment, why will you not turn to wisdom?" If there's anything that should set apart a Christian college, anything that should set apart those of us who are committed to Jesus Christ, it should be that we are not only pursuing learning and understanding of those matters which relate to our created universe, but we are pursuing skill in all aspects of living and that skill comes from the Scripture, from the Word of God. Wisdom personified is God incarnate in Christ and God incarnate in Christ, of course, is revealed verbally through the pages of Scripture. We come to Scripture, we learn wisdom.

Now what I want to share with you are just a few of the lessons that wisdom wants to teach you, okay? We'll take just a few minutes, see how much time we have, I don't know how many I'll get through. Here are the most important factors of wisdom. When you're getting wisdom, here's what you want to get...and there are a lot of things, there are a lot of areas that could help us with the skill of living, but let's take the most important.

First of all, number one issue in gaining wisdom is to fear God...is to fear God. How do you know that? Back in chapter 1 verse 7, we read this, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction." The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Proverbs 9:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy one is true understanding."

The beginning, that is to say the first, the most essential, the controlling principle in wisdom is the knowledge of the holy one...the knowledge of the holy one, knowing God, coming to know God, a relationship with God which, as we have been singing, is offered to us through the Lord Jesus Christ. And then having known God, we are to fear God. That means to have a reverence for God, to hold

Him in awe, to hold Him in respect, to do exactly what we were doing this morning in our songs, and that is to worship God.

Those of us who are spiritual fathers, who are responsible for the raising of a generation of godly young people, whether we be parents or college professors, or college leaders, or college presidents, or pastors, or teachers, or just those who influence on a personal basis, we have the responsibility to teach the next generation to live with respect for God...that's the issue. To live with respect for God as holy, as sovereign, all those things that we sang are part and parcel of understanding who God is. Obviously we live in a climate where God is absolutely rejected. University campuses are populated by those who are in to materialistic, naturalistic, evolutionary atheism. They want nothing to do with God. They don't want God in the creation. They don't want God in the morality. They don't want God anywhere in their world.

They therefore do not fear Him. They have no awe for Him. They have no respect for Him. Therefore they have no wisdom, therefore they catapult themselves and all who follow them in their society into he abyss of confusion and tragedy and judgment. We are to teach you to respect God, to fear God, to have an awe for God, to worship God. That means to respect His Word in which He reveals Himself. Psalm 138:2 says, "God has exalted His Word as high as His own name." You can't respect God without respecting His Word, that means obeying His Word, knowing it and loving it and following it.

To respect His Law. To respect His power. To respect His authority. To respect His displeasure about sin. To respect His right to chasten, His right to judge. To respect His love and His mercy and His grace and his tenderness and His kindness. That is to say, to respect everything that's true about God...everything.

We are to worship, says Jesus in John 4, in spirit, that means with emotion and heart but also in truth. We are to worship God as God really is. Wherever God is feared, I might add, sin is also feared. If you don't fear sin, it's because you don't fear God. Show me a holy person, I'll show you a person who hates sin and fears God. Show me a person who tolerates sin, I'll show you a person who doesn't have respect for God. That's the controlling influence in your life. How you view God is the most important thing in your mind. It is THE most controlling reality in your mind, how you view God. If you have complete honor and respect toward God, then you're not going to be so easily led into sin because you know it dishonors Him and you respect Him too much to do that.

If you believe in the sovereignty of God, that is that He rules everything in the universe and brings to pass all His own purposes and is in control of everything, you're not going to doubt and fear when your little world starts to look like it's going bad. How you view God is the most controlling influence in your entire existence.

Fearing the Lord prolongs life, according to Proverbs 10:27. Fearing the Lord is more profitable than wealth, according to 15:16. Fearing the Lord brings abundant life. Fearing the Lord keeps one from evil, results in riches and honor, Proverbs 22 says. Fearing God produces humility and He says that all through Proverbs.

Those who fear God sleep satisfied and are untouched by evil, chapter 19 says. Those who fear God have confidence. Those who fear God will be honored and praised. And those who fear God will

have their prayers answered. All of that is in the book of Proverbs. This is the most crucial lesson, "Fear God." Come to know Him and love Him and respect Him and honor Him, that's the beginning of everything. That in itself will be an immense study.

But let's go to a second one because we just want to introduce them and you can study them for yourself in Proverbs. The second very essential component of seeking wisdom is to guard your mind. The positive side of wisdom is to seek to honor God. The negative side is to prevent other stuff from polluting your thinking. This is also a very important theme in the book of Proverbs, chapter 3, for example.

He says in verse 1, "My son, do not forget my teaching," and, of course, he's teaching here the Word of God, the truth of God. "Let your heart keep My commandments for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. But do not let kindness and truth leave you."

Hold on to the truth, young people, I can't emphasize anything more than that...hold on to the truth. Don't let anything steal the truth. Don't let anyone pollute your mind. Take the truth, bind it around your neck, write it on the tablet of your heart. By the way, heart to the Hebrew means mind cause the Old Testament says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." We think in our mind, not in our heart. Heart refers to the mind. Guard your mind. Inscribe on your heart truth. Bind it around your neck, don't let it get away.

In fact, look at chapter 4 and verse 23, where he says, "Watch over your heart with all diligence. Literally again, your mind, with all diligence for from it flow the springs of life. Now remember to the Hebrew heart had to do with mind. When we talk about heart, we're talking about emotions. But in the Bible, when they're talking about emotions, they don't usually refer to the heart, strangely enough, they refer to the bowels. That's probably not a fair translation. It's really kind of the stomach because when you feel something very, very strongly, you feel it in the gut, you feel it, anxiety hits you right there, fear hits you right there. And that's what they were expressing. But the heart was synonymous with the mind where you think. So Proverbs 4:23 is saying, "Guard your mind for our of it comes your conduct." Out of it are the issues of life. How you think determines how you live. Be careful what you put in to your mind. Be careful what you see when you to go a theater. Be careful what you read. Be careful what you expose your mind to. Be careful of the ideologies and the false speculations that are the fortresses of 2 Corinthians 10, that wicked men build up to capture a world apart from God. Be careful of those damnable heresies, those lies, those deceitful lies that come from hypocritical liars, Paul calls them, who are infested with doctrines of demons. Be careful of all of that because your mind is the controlling influence in how you act.

In fact, in the book of Proverbs, the writer of Proverbs talks about simpletons. And in the Hebrew language it says, "O you simple ones," in chapter 1, and it repeats that, "O you simple ones," the word "simple" really is the Hebrew word for an open door. Again, I told you the language is very concrete. And the word means an open door. And that's a great way to look at somebody's mind. And that's how the Hebrews viewed the mind. They said a naive person, a simpleton, a fool was a person who had the door open to his mind all the time. Everything came in and everything went out. It's the inability to discriminate. It was the inability to protect himself, to keep some things out and hold some things in. It's like the person who says, "I'm an agnostic," and they're sort of proud of it. "Well, I'm an agnostic," and they don't understand the Latin equivalent is ignoramus. I've never heard anybody say, "I'm an ignoramus and proud of it." It's the same thing. What it means is I don't know...I don't know. You hear people say, "I have an open mind," well the Hebrew would say, "Shut it. You

need to be discerning. You need to know what to let it and what to keep out. Guard your mind.

That's what you need to get. If you want to be an educated person, if you want to be able to live life to the fullest, you need to fear God, that's the positive side. You need to guard your mind, to protect it from evil influences. Guardians of the mind. In a real sense, I look at myself as having that responsibility. Fathers, in the book of Proverbs, are given that responsibility. Not only physical fathers, but spiritual fathers. As I look at you as a student body, as I look at a congregation of people in my church, as I look at people who would read books that I write, or listen to me preach on the radio or on tapes or whatever, I have in my mind all the time the responsibility to help them discern truth from error, to help them to guard their minds from the influence of things that effectively influence their behavior away from God and away from blessing.

Thirdly, in learning wisdom you not only need to fear God, guard your mind, but, thirdly, select your companions...select your companions carefully. This too a very practical aspect in life. In chapter 1 of Proverbs and verse 10, "My son, if sinners entice you, don't consent." When sinners entice you to do something you know is wrong, simply don't do it. You have the responsibility to put yourself in relationships that lift you up, not relationships that pull you down. And I tell you, it can be just that simple the distinction between success and failure in your life. A student can come to this college in whatever kind of spiritual condition, find himself in a group of godly young people and have an immensely positive and transforming effect take place in his life.

On the other hand, a student can come here and she might wind up in a group of people who pull her down. And before you know it, she's plunged into some kind of sin that's destructive. Carefully select your friends.

Verse 11, "If they say, 'Come with us. Let's lie in wait for blood. Let's ambush the innocent without cause. Let's swallow them alive like Sheol.'" They're going to kill somebody. This is a pretty bad group, I don't think we have any of those here. But you get the picture. Let's jump in the car and go do a drive-by shooting and kill some little kid.

Verse 13, they say, "We'll find all kinds of precious wealth. Let's go steal, let's go fill our houses with spoil. Throw in your lot with us. We'll all have one purse. Hey, we'll split the deal."

"My son, don't walk in the way with them. Keep your feet from their path for their feet run to evil, they hasten to shed blood. Indeed it is useless to spread the net in the eyes of any bird, but they lie in wait for their own blood. They ambush their own lives. So are the ways of everyone who gains by violence. It takes away the life of the possessor."

That's just one illustration in Proverbs of how important it is to select carefully your friends. You don't want to be the foolish one who's lured away by those who say, 'Join us, join us.'" You remember what the Apostle Paul said? "Bad company corrupts...what?...good morals. Bad company corrupts good morals." The whole appeal here, you'll notice in Proverbs 1, the whole appeal is on the attraction of excitement, of power and of being a part of the gang. And he says run from it...run from it.

Don't get seduced by those who want to do evil. Chapter 2, he warns them about leaving the paths of uprightness and walking in the ways of darkness. He warns about paths that are crooked and

devious. He warns about getting delivered from the strange woman, the adulteress who flatters with her words. You have to carefully choose your companions. That's an absolutely essential thing.

In Proverbs 18:24, just to call your attention to one verse. Proverbs 18:24, "A man of many friends comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." This is a great verse. A man of many friends comes to ruin. By the way, if you don't know the Hebrew, you're going to miss the whole point of this verse because it translates friends here twice, but they're two different words. This is what the Hebrews says. "A man of many reya comes to ruin, but there is an ahab who sticks closer than a brother."

A man of many reya, that means acquaintances, superficial relationships. But there is an ahab, what is that? A loving, loyal, intimate friend. If all you have, young people, in your life is a lot of superficial, trivial, surface kind of relationships, you're on your way to ruin because you lack accountability. You lack those kinds of people who will ask the hard questions, who will confront the hard issues in your life. What you really need is an ahab, you need a loving, intimate, close friend who is there and who asks those hard questions and who expects accountability. A few superficial friends, a lot of superficial friends make for a superficial life. And a superficial life makes for a sad ending. A few close, loving friends, loyal, honest, uplifting are much more valuable, they are priceless...they are priceless.

That's part of our responsibility as leaders is to put you in an environment where you are surrounded by godly friends, faculty, staff, administration, fellow students, coaches, all of that.

When you talk about getting wisdom, you're talking about learning to fear God, guard your mind, select your companions.

Number four, control your body. Pretty practical. Proverbs 5, "For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord." Verse 21, Proverbs 5, "And He watches all His paths." First of all, realize this, God sees everything...He sees absolutely everything. And it says in verse 22, "His own iniquities will capture the wicked." In other words, people who sin are going to get caught in their sin. He'll be held with the cords of his own sin. When a person gets into sin and gets so habitually into sin that it ties him up and he can't get out of it, verse 23, "He will die for lack...and here's the Hebrew...of self control. He will die for lack of self-control."

By the way, starting back in chapter 2 verse 16, the book of Proverbs begins to talk about an adulterous woman, talk about sexual sin, talks about how she lures someone, how she draws him away into this illicit relationship. And that becomes a theme that runs all the way through chapter 7. Proverbs wants us to be very careful about self-control in the sexual area. Chapter 5 talks about it. Chapter 6 talks about it. Chapter 7 talks about it. We don't have time to go pursuing all of those but very, very important teaching.

The sad demise of the person who engages in adultery, sad, sad thing. You can read about the terrible end of those who follow t he sin of adultery. Chapter 7 closes with this word, "Her house is the way....this is the house of the adulterous...her house is the way to Sheol, descending to the chambers of death." Descending to the chambers of death.

Back in chapter 6 verse 32, "He who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense. He who would

destroy himself does it. Wounds and disgrace he will find and his reproach will not be blotted out." That's a reproach that never goes away.

I had one of the saddest moments yesterday to call a friend who had been caught in an illicit relationship and who realized at this very moment, only hours after this whole thing had been exposed, that his entire life was destroyed in that moment when he sought some pleasure.

Self-control, I can't tell you, young people, how important that is. The lack of self-control will destroy every good thing that's been built up in your life. Everything your parents ever did, everything your pastors and youth pastors ever did, everything your grandparents hoped for and prayed for in your life, everything that Christian friends wanted for you, faculty, everything you came here and heard and learned, all the songs you sung, all of that you just trash if you enter into that kind of reproach which leaves you with a terrible disgrace.

It's a tough world out there and there's a tremendous amount of solicitation toward sexual sin. We must pray constantly, diligently, faithfully and seek self-control. Proverbs 5:23, "He will die for lack of self-control."

We have responsibility to teach you self-control, to teach you self-discipline, to teach you spiritual discipline, to teach you to bring your body into subjection, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9, so that you are not a castaway.

In fact, I was talking to my friend last night, he was weeping, his wife was weeping. And he looked at me and he said, "Tell me you won't discard me. Please don't discard me. I don't want to be a throwaway." In some sense, I said, "I love you, I'm not going to throw you away, I'm not going to discard you. But in terms of the ministry you wanted for your life, you're discarded. And that is absolutely heart wrenching. I could hardly sleep all night, looking at what has been lost.

Those are the lessons of life. There are more. Let me give you another one. Fear your God, guard your mind, select your companions, control your body, watch your words...watch your words. In Proverbs chapter 4 and verse 24, and again, I'm only giving you a sample, there are just all through the place. But Proverbs 4:24, "Put away from you a deceitful mouth." Tell the truth. When you speak, let it be the truth. "Put devious lips far from you." Chapter 5 verse 2, "Your lips may reserve knowledge, let them speak truth, let them speak knowledge. Verse 12 of chapter 6, "A worthless person and a wicked man is the one who walks with a false mouth."

Over in chapter 10 of Proverbs, just a number of comments about the mouth. Verse 11 of chapter 10, "The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life. But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence."

I remember reading years ago when I was a young Christian, a wonderful book and in that book a man said the most life-changing decision he ever made in his life was the day he determined this, wrote it down, made it a part of the fabric of his life. He said this, "I want to covenant with my God that every time I open my mouth, it will be to the praise of Jesus Christ." That is a life-changing covenant, if kept.

Chapter 10 verse 13 talks about the lips of the discerning, on those lips wisdom is found. The contrast in verse 14, "The mouth of the foolish just brings ruin. It talks about lying lips in verse 18, the

transgression that is unavoidable with many words, verse 19, when there are many words, transgression is unavoidable. Learn to restrain your lips and be wise. Keep your mouth shut, don't talk too much.

Verse 20, "The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver." Guard your words, watch your words. They can minister grace to the hearers. Verse 32, "The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable. The mouth of the wicked, what is perverted."

Just summing it up what it says in Proverbs about this. The lips of the righteous speak wisely. They endure forever. They are a fountain of life, a tree of life. They're like silver, they're satisfying, they feed others, they bring healing, they bring deliverance. They are patient, kind, wise, truthful, honest, pure, soft, gentle, slow to anger and are mouth pieces for the Lord Himself. Watch your words.

On the other hand, the words of fools are crooked, foolish, violent, hateful, full of malice. Too many words bring strife, ruin, slander, belittlement, gossip, disgrace. They're like a scorching fire producing mischief and perversity.

Let me give you another principle of wisdom. Work hard...work hard. One of the themes in Proverbs again, look at chapter 6 verse 6, "Go to the ant, O sluggard." You know what a sluggard is? We call him a flake today, a goof-off. Lazy person, "Go to the ant, O sluggard, observe her ways and be wise." Then he uses a little analogy about ants. "They have no chief officer or ruler, but they prepare...she prepares her food in the summer, the feminine, gathers her provision in the harvest. How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest and your poverty will come in like a vagabond and your need like an armed man."

You know how to be poor? People come to college and say, "I want to make it in life, I want to have a career, I want to earn money." You will if you work hard, it's just that way. If you don't, you won't. You just want to lie around and loaf and float, your poverty will come in like a vagabond, just like a stranger who wanders in will your poverty come and your need like an armed man, just invade your life and take over.

The sluggard or the lazy man, you know what that is? You know what a lazy man is? It's a man with too many excuses...too many refusals, too many postponements. Very important issue.

Chapter 10 verses 4 and 5, "Poor is he who works with a negligent hand." You want to be poor? Don't work hard. "But the hand of the diligent makes rich." I mean, there is a promise right out of the Word of God. Young people, let me tell you. You're here in college, you're smart enough to be successful. If you're getting through here, you're plenty smart enough. Most of you are probably smart enough to be in charge of something, to have a lot of people under you. You're learning the things you need to know to make a difference in the world, how to think, how to speak, how to write, how to socialize, how to lead, all of those kinds of things. You're getting a diversity of social experiences, interpersonal relationships, the richness of life. You're learning biblical wisdom. You have what it takes in terms of the input you've received and when you graduate from this school to make a huge difference in the world but it's going to come down to whether or not you are willing to pay the price of effort.

There's no magic. I know young people, I know what's on their minds. You know, they're in business school hoping they'll get out and start their own business and build it big. And those who work hard, generally do. Work hard. Don't be lazy.

I'll tell you, hard work is the most rewarding thing in life in this world. According to Proverbs, the lazy man will suffer hunger, poverty, failure, because he's sleeping through harvest. He wants but won't work to fill is wants. He loves sleep, he's glued to his bed. You know, the first principle of success? Get up, that's it. Second? Get up early. Third? Get dressed. And fourth? Get out of the house.

The lazy man is glued to his bed, follows worthless pursuits. You know what I've noticed about lazy people? They always have some get-rich-quick scheme waiting around the corner that never shows up...never shows up. They're great at scheming for the big wind fall. Never happens. The man who pursues his work, Proverbs says, earns a good living, has plenty of food, is rewarded for his effort, earns the right to have respect even before kings.

Let me give you one more. Manage your money...manage your money. Back in chapter 3 of Proverbs, very practical stuff. Verse 9, "Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the first of all your produce so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine."

Now the first thing involved in managing your money is...what?...giving it to whom? To the Lord, that's off the top, that's where you start. I can give you testimony after testimony, after testimony of how God has responded to giving in the lives of many believers, including my own life. Start there. Give to the Lord. Even now, right now with whatever you have. It's not a question of what you don't have, it's a question of what you do have. I'll be preaching on that Sunday morning. It's not what you don't have, it's what you do have. All God wants is what is reasonable from what you do have. He doesn't want you to give what you don't have. But what you do have needs to start with Him.

Chapter 6, here's another very important principle. "If you have become surety for your neighbor, have given a pledge for a stranger." What is he talking about? Don't cosign for a debt for a stranger. That is to obligate your assets for somebody else's indebtedness. Don't do it. If you have been snared with the words of your mouth, have been caught with the words of your mouth. In other words, you made a silly promise and now the guy comes back and says, "I can't get this loan, I need this loan to get out of debt, or to buy this, or to do this, and would you cosign for it because your credit will qualify me to get it and qualify for you to get it, and then you just cosign and I'll be sure and pay you back."

What you have just done is you have yielded up your resources to his accountability. And if he isn't faithful, it's going to cost you your own resources. Don't do it. Don't put yourself into the hands of your neighbor. He also talks about not being lazy there. Don't cosign. I'm not talking about a member of the family in desperate need if you're inside the family. Obviously we meet each other's needs. Don't get outside the family. And there are lots of other things, chapter 13, chapter 22, just...there's a lot of stuff about managing money here and a lot about giving money all through Proverbs.

I just thought of one more I need to mention real quick. Love your neighbor. Chapter 3, and just one illustration of it. Verse 27, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, 'Go and come back and tomorrow I will give it,' when you have it with you."

In other words, when your neighbor has a need, don't hold it back. If you have it, give it. Show love. Build a friendship. Give to a neighbor. Be generous.

Summing it up. The most important thing you could possibly learn is wisdom. Wisdom is not some spacey kind of thing, out in the air somewhere, some conceptual thing. Wisdom is skill in living and it starts with fearing God, moves to guarding your mind, selecting your companions, controlling your body, watching your words, pursuing your work, managing your money and loving your neighbor. Very simple. But that's it. And when you've done that, you've learned wisdom.

It's so important to be taught. I can say as a father, for example, if I fail to teach my son to fear God, the devil will teach him to hate God. If I fail to teach my son to guard his mind, the devil will teach him to have an open mind. If I fail to teach my son to obey his parents, the devil will teach him to rebel and break his parents' hearts. If I fail to teach my son to select his companions carefully, the devil will choose them for him. If I fail to teach my son to control his body, the devil will gladly teach him to give it completely over to his lusts. If I fail to teach my children to enjoy speech that is honorable to God, the devil will fill their mouths with filth. If I fail to teach my children to pursue their work, the devil will make them lazy. If I fail to teach them to manage their money, the devil will teach them to waste it on riotous living. If I fail to teach them to love their neighbor, the devil will gladly teach them to love only themselves. Learn wisdom.

Let's pray.

Father, we thank You this morning for this wonderful reminder that in getting everything else we're getting, wisdom is most important. Teach us wisdom through Your Word and Your Spirit for Your glory in Christ's name. Amen.

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