

引言 INTRODUCTION

We said last week that people usually become wiser as they grow older. I got another proof one day when I saw a little booklet called “A Father’s Book of Wisdom” in our church library. The author H. Jackson Brown and his family found eight shoeboxes in their dad’s closet after he passed away. They contained papers of various sizes that were full of handwriting. The late Mr. Brown just grabbed whatever paper he could find when words of wisdom popped up on his mind. One of his sons later published those quotes in this book. Let me share a few of them with you. “Pride makes us do things well. But it is love that makes us do them to perfection.” “Don’t judge those who try and fail. Judge only those who fail to try.” “Success is getting what you want. Happiness is liking what you get.” This man was truly a wise person!

Mr. Brown left those wise words for his children. In Proverbs chapter 2, a father also instills wisdom to his children. In fact, the title “my son(s)” keeps appearing in the first eight chapters of the book. In the Biblical world, Jewish children were all home-schooled. Synagogues were a later addition. But even when there were rabbis, a father would train his children at home about life lessons, the Bible and professional skills. When books were rare and expensive, information was given by speaking. Kids were expected to memorize the content. Nowadays, memorization has become a lost art. Search engines replace our brain. Here is a simple challenge for you: can you say all 66 books of the Bible in the correct order? The fact is, you retain the information that you use frequently. For example, your passwords or the birthdays of good friends. The same is true for the Bible. God’s Word will sink in to your heart if you read it daily. As we study Proverbs chapter 2 today, imagine a son sitting in front of a father to listen to his words of wisdom.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 熱切渴慕的智慧 Wisdom to Grasp

We will study this chapter from three angles. First, this father tells his son that wisdom is something he should grasp. There is a pair of action words in each verse. In the Hebrew poetry, there is a common writing style called parallelism. In this case, the two lines in each verse echo each other. The second statement either repeats or elaborates the idea of the first. The logic is to restate the same subject in different ways to get into a child’s mind. In **verse 1**, we see “accept my words” and “store up my commands.” To “accept” means to take in. “Store up” paints a picture of hiding some treasures. The emphasis is not only about security, but also to keep valuable things for future use like saving your money in a bank. We find “turning your ear” echoing with “applying your heart” in **verse 2**. We listen attentively to instructions. The word “apply” makes us think of putting something to use. The Hebrew word actually means to stretch out. Therefore, some English Bible translations render it as

“incline to.” The idea is that both our ears and hearts should make efforts to acquire wisdom. In **verse 3**, the father urges his son to “call out” for insight and “cry aloud” for understanding. Both actions use voice to ask for something. If we need wisdom, then we must ask the source, which is our Lord. He promises us in James 1:5 – **If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.** God will never tell us that He is too busy or He has used up His quota for the day. He loves to give us abundant wisdom. Sometimes I sink into a panic mode when a problem arises. I try to think who I can consult, or I may be hurry to search Google or YouTube for a solution. What I should do is calm down before the Lord and ask Him first! We do not need internet connection to find Him. God loves it when we come to Him with a child-like faith. God’s wisdom is so precious that the author says in **verse 4** that we should “look for it” like silver and “search for it” like hidden treasure. Just imagine you are looking for some lost jewelry your grandmother passed down to you. Its value is bigger than the cost. You will check every drawer and every corner of your house until you recover it. We should treat God’s wisdom the same way. Read God’s Word, crave after His wisdom and cherish it in your heart.

What will happen when we grasp wisdom whole-heartedly? Verses 5-6 say that those who seek after it will find it: **5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. 6 For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.** It comes to a circular argument here: one looks for wisdom will find God, and when one finds God, He will obtain wisdom. Wisdom is more than a tool for solving problems. For example, you use a flashlight to illuminate the dark or get a hammer to hit a nail. Wisdom is built upon a healthy relationship with God. That is why the author reiterates the notion of fearing God. We honor God and love Him. We read God’s Word and pray to Him every day. Then He will speak to us through the Bible verses we read before. There are many occasions when Bible verses surface on my mind when I quiet down before the Lord. God gives me guidance to handle my problems.

2. 指引方向的智慧 Wisdom to Guide

God’s wisdom is something we should grasp. Then the father tells his son that wisdom will also guide his life. He repeats the words guard and protect in **verses 8 and 11**. They share similar meanings of preserving and watching over. Wisdom will shield us from harm. Wisdom is like a guardrail on the side of a road. The Bible contains many warnings and commands because God wants to protect us. For example, nine of the Ten Commandments say “you shall not.” Only the Fifth Commandment is written in a positive tone: “Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long.” Even so, elsewhere in the Law of Moses says anyone who curses his parents is subject to death penalty. The laws of any country are more than likely warnings too. There will be punishment to any law-breaker. The government will never give you a reward for driving within speed limit or paying your tax on time! Only God’s Law comes with a blessing to those who obey Him. The world thinks that Biblical principles are impractical, naïve and even foolish. But God will keep an account of our good work, and He will award us for our faithfulness. We should always choose to please God rather than ourselves or people. The father tells his son to pursue four virtues in **verse 9**: right,

just, fair and good. Those are the moral codes in God's Law. We must strive for righteousness, justice, equality and goodness in what we do. Hence, we reflect God's character as Christ's disciples. Jesus describes us as light in the world. Light that is covered up will be useless. He says in Matthew 5:16 – **“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”** People naturally thank us for our nice actions. After saying “You are welcome,” you can simply add “glory to God” or “Jesus loves you.” Then people know the reason behind your good deeds. There are many opportunities to share God's love if you pay attention to the people around you. God will lead us to the right direction when we follow Him closely. There are four words in this section that depicts life as a journey: **walk (v. 7), course (v. 8), way (v. 8) and path (v. 9).** They have similar meanings. It is like we use road, lane and avenue to differentiate streets of different width. Our life is a road-trip. Your destination will depend on your direction. Highway 40 runs across the whole U.S. You will arrive at different coast line based on whether you go east or west. You cannot say to yourself that it does not matter, since the earth is round in shape. The secular world tells us to focus on the stops but not the finish line. It is like some people linger on for too long at the gas stations and forget that they are on a trip. Jesus said He is the only way to the Father. Other roads will only lead to a dead end. Even after we are saved, we still need to keep following Jesus. You will pay attention to road-signs when you are driving. For example, the speed limits tell you how fast you can go. God's Word also sets limits for us. Jesus told us that no one can serve two masters. He also asked us not to worry about tomorrow. Then occasionally you may approach a construction zone. You have to slow down. God's Word reminds us to be patient and wait on the Lord. You will trust your GPS when you travel to a new place. Likewise, God will guide us through the unknown future when we rely on His Word.

3. 防範危險的智慧 Wisdom to Guard

God's wisdom is something we must grasp. It guides us on the right path. Thirdly, God's wisdom will guard us from danger. This father cautions his son about two groups of people. He says in verse 12 and 13 that: **12 Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, 13 who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways.** The word “wicked” means ethically evil. In the Bible, wickedness is not only about bad behaviors. People do bad things because they ignore God. Psalm 10:4 reads: **In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.** Their ignorance of God plays out in their arrogance toward others. Their wicked mind will produce wicked words and wicked works. They do not only sin occasionally. Their spiritual status will shape their habits and actions. Jesus tells us in Luke 6:45 that: **“The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.”** We do things according to our values. Our speech is one of the first things people will notice about us. Whether you are courteous or rude, humble or prideful, encouraging or critical are revealed when you talk. The same rule of thumb is extended to our actions. God's judgment is black or white. Therefore, we should use God's wisdom when we evaluate people's behavior. Our work is either good or evil to Him. There is no gray area. It is true that there are many non-

believers who do a lot of good work. They donate money and volunteer their time to serve others. Those are all admirable things. Ultimately, God will judge our motives. He will examine if we do things for ourselves, others or for His glory.

The second group of people the father asks his son to be careful about are the immoral women. Look at verse 16 and 17: **16 It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words, 17 who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God.** By mentioning covenant, it implies a married Jewish lady. But we can surely extend it to women of any background, whether single or married. The father cautions his son about her sweet talk. Our appearance will give people an initial impression about our personality. Next, people will evaluate if we are sincere and trustworthy based on our speech. As such, an immoral woman will reveal her motives by her words. It is natural for men to be attracted to women. That is how God creates guys. That is nothing sinful. The sneaky thing is, Satan attacks men using that disposition. I told you before once a Bible college professor cautioned his male students to watch out for 3G: gold, glory and girls. Those are the weakest links for guys. There are potential dangers on TV, in movies and on the internet. How can a man rely on God's wisdom to stay pure? First, we go back to God's design of marriage. God defines any relationship beyond that confine as adultery. With that foundation in place, a guy should discern if there is any hidden agenda when a lady approaches him. When he senses any temptation, he should immediately ask God for strength, turn back and walk away.

In Sum, let me suggest a simple three steps to deal with both groups of people. Step 1: receive. Use your eyes and ears to pay attention to their speech and deeds. Ask God to help you discern their motives. Step 2: recall. Does the Bible give you any wisdom about the situation you face? Step 3: react. Ask God to give you courage to do the right things. If we rely on ourselves we may stumble and fall. We can only live a victorious life when we love God above all things.

結論 CONCLUSION

I told you at the beginning about a small book I found in our church library. A son compiled words of wisdom from his father. It so happened that the sequel to that book is just under the pile. H. Jackson Brown inherited his father's habit and wrote down his insights too. But before he published his writings, he sent them to his son in college. The young man called up his father, thanked him for his advice. This practice of instruction is passed down the generations. When children reach a certain age, they will find parents' counsel burdensome. They respond: "Dad, mom, I know." One day, they will realize that what their parents taught them actually work. Those wisdom is from someone who has been there and done that. We are forever children in God's eyes. How much more should we obey the One who creates us and knows us completely? Every now and then, we have the same moment of enlightenment too: what God says really works! Perhaps He will say to us with a smile: "Trust me. I got this."

引言 INTRODUCTION

我們上週說過，隨著年齡的增長，人們通常變得更有智慧。最近我找到一個新的證據。有一天，我在教會的圖書館看到一本名為「父親的智慧」的小書。作者布朗先生和他的家人在父親去世後在衣櫥裡發現八個鞋盒。裡面裝著大小不一的紙，上面寫滿了字。原來當已故的布朗先生想到智慧的話之時，他便隨便抓任何的紙把靈感寫下來。他的一個兒子後來整理他的話，把它出版成書。讓我與你分享其中的一些。「引以為傲的心使我們把事情做好。但是愛讓我們把它做到完美。」「不要批判那些因為嘗試而失敗的人。應該去批判那些怕失敗而不敢嘗試的人。」「成功是得到你想要的。幸福是享受你所得到的。」他真是個有智慧的人！

布朗先生為他的孩子們留下了這些智慧的話。在箴言第 2 章，一位父親也將智慧灌輸給他的孩子。事實上，「我兒」這個稱呼在這卷書的前八章中重複出現。在聖經的年代裡，孩子都是在家接受教育的。猶太人的會堂是後來才有的。但即使有拉比當老師，父親也會在家裡教導小孩生活的道理、聖經和謀生技能。以前的書籍是既稀有且昂貴，因此信息都是通過口傳的。孩子們必須記住所聽到的內容。如今，記憶已經成為一種失傳的藝術。我們要找什麼資料便上網去尋索。我給大家一個簡單的挑戰：你能按正確的順序說出聖經的所有 66 卷書嗎？事實是，你會很容易記住經常使用的信息。例如，你的密碼或好友的生日。記聖經也是如此。如果你每天閱讀神的話語，它就會存記在你的心中。今天當我們學習箴言第 2 章時，我們可以想像一個兒子坐在父親面前聆聽他智慧的話。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 熱切渴慕的智慧 Wisdom to Grasp

我們會從三個角度來看這一章。首先，這位父親告訴他的兒子，他必須熱切渴慕智慧。你會注意到每節經文中的兩行都形成對偶。在希伯來的詩歌文體中，平行體是有一種常見的寫作風格。在這裡，第二行重複或是進一步解釋第一行的內容。如此幫助孩子把信息記住。在**第 1 節**，我們看到「領受我的言語」和「存記我的命令」。「領受」就是接受。「存記」是把一些財寶藏起來。重點不僅在於安全保障，另一重含義是留著將來使用，好像將錢存入銀行。**第 2 節**的「側耳」與「專心」互相呼應。和合本中文聖經把兩個字都準確地翻譯出來。

我們要留心聆聽而獲得智慧。在**第 3 節**中，父親敦促他的兒子要「呼求明哲」並「揚聲求聰明」。這兩個動作都是發出聲音來請求。如果我們需要智慧，那麼我們必須去尋問智慧的源頭，那就是我們的神。祂在雅各書 1:5 向我們應許：**你們中間若有缺少智慧的，應當求那厚賜與眾人、也不斥責人的神，主就必賜給他。**神永遠不會說祂太忙，或者祂已經用完了今天的配額。祂樂意賜給我們豐富的智慧。有時當我碰到問題時會陷入恐慌的狀態。我會去想我可以請教誰，或者我可能會急著上網找解決的辦法。我應該做的第一件事情是在主面前冷靜下來去求問祂！我們不需上網就可能找到神。神喜歡我們帶著孩子般單純的信心來到祂的面前。神的智慧是如此寶貴，以至於作者在**第 4 節**中說，我們要尋找智慧「如尋找銀子」，和「搜求隱藏的珍寶」一樣。想像一下，你丟失了祖母傳給你的一些的珠寶。它的紀念價值超過於它的價錢。你會檢查房子的每個抽屜和角落，直到你把它找回來。我們應該以同樣的方式對待神的智慧。我們要閱讀神的話語，渴慕神的智慧，並珍藏在心裡。

當我們熱切渴慕智慧時會產生什麼效果？第五和六節說，尋求智慧的人必然能尋見：**5 你就明白敬畏耶和華，得以認識神。6 因為，耶和華賜人智慧；知識和聰明都由他口而出。**這裡有一個循環論證：尋找智慧就會找到神，找到神就會得到智慧。智慧不僅僅是解決問題的工具。例如，你用手電筒照亮黑暗或是用錘子敲釘子。智慧是建立在我們與神的健康關係之上。因此作者重申敬畏神的重要。我們尊崇神並愛祂。我們每天閱讀神的話語並向祂禱告。然後祂會藉著我們曾經讀過的經文向我們說話。很多時候，當我安靜在主面前時，一些經文便浮現在我的腦海中。神透過這樣的方式給我指導來處理我的問題。

2. 指引方向的智慧 Wisdom to Guide

我們應該熱切渴慕神的智慧。接下來這位父親告訴他的兒子，智慧將指引他的方向。他在**第 8 節**和**第 11 節**中重複了保守和護衛這兩個用詞。它們具有保護和看顧的含義。智慧會保護我們免受傷害。智慧就像路邊的防護欄。聖經包含許多警告和命令，因為神要保護我們。例如，十誡中有九條誡命說「不可」。只有第五誡是用肯定的語氣寫的：「孝敬父母，使你長壽。」即便如此，摩西律法的其他地方也說任何咒詛他父母的人都會被石頭打死。任何國家的法律也是用警告方式寫的。任何違法者都會受到懲罰。如果你按照限速駕駛或按時付稅，政府絕對不會給你獎勵的！只有神的律法會給順從祂的人帶來祝福。世人認為聖經的原則是不切實際、幼稚甚至愚蠢的。但神會記錄我們的善行，祂會因我們的忠心而獎勵我們。我們應該始終選擇取悅神，而不是取悅自己或別人。這個父親在**第 9 節**告訴他的兒子要追求四種美德：仁義、公平、正直和善道。這些是神律法中的道德準則。我們必須在我們所做的事情中爭取公義、平等、正

直和良善。如此，我們便反映出基督門徒的品格。耶穌形容我們是世上的光。被掩蓋的光將失去用處。祂在馬太福音 5:16 說：「你們的光也當這樣照在人前，叫他們看見你們的好行為，便將榮耀歸給你們在天上的父。」人們自然會感謝我們的好行為。在說「不客氣」之後，你可以簡單地加上「感謝神」或「耶穌愛你」。然後人們就會知道你的善行背後的原因。如果你關注身邊的人，你就能找到很多機會分享神的愛。當我們緊緊跟隨神的時候，祂會帶領我們走向正確的方向。在這一段中有幾個用詞把生命描述為旅程，例如第 8 節中的路和道。我們的生命就像開長途車。你的目的地將取決於你的方向。40 號公路橫跨整個美國，根據你向東或向西行駛，你將到達不同的海岸線。你不能說沒關係，因為地球是圓的。這個世界告訴我們只要關心中途站，而不是終點。就像有些人在加油站逗留太久而忘記了他們還沒有到目的地。耶穌說祂是通往天父的唯一道路。其他道路只會導致死胡同。即使在我們得救之後，我們仍然需要繼續跟隨耶穌。你開車時會注意路標。例如，速度限制告訴你可以走多快。神的話語也為我們設定了界限。耶穌告訴我們，沒有人可以事奉兩個主人。祂也提醒我們不要為明天憂慮。然後有時你在中途可能會碰到修路。你必須慢下來。神的話語提醒我們要忍耐等候主。當你前往一個從未去過的地方時，你會信任導航儀。同樣，當我們依靠神的話語時，祂會引導我們邁向未知的將來。

3. 防範危險的智慧 Wisdom to Guard

我們應該熱切渴慕神的智慧。它會指引我們走在正確的方向。第三，神的智慧會幫助我們防範危險。這位父親提醒兒子要注意兩類人。他在第 12 和 13 節說：12 要救你脫離惡道，脫離說乖謬話的人。13 那等人捨棄正直的路，行走黑暗的道。「惡」是指道德上的邪惡。在聖經中，邪惡不僅與不良行為有關。人們做壞事是因為他們忽視神。詩篇 10:4 說：惡人面帶驕傲，說：耶和華必不追究；他一切所想的都以為沒有神。他們對神的無知體現在他們對他人的傲慢中。他們邪惡的心會產生邪惡的言語和行為。此外，他們不僅偶爾犯罪。他們的屬靈狀態將塑造他們的習慣和行為。耶穌在路加福音 6:45 節告訴我們：「善人從他心裡所存的善就發出善來；惡人從他心裡所存的惡就發出惡來；因為心裡所充滿的，口裡就說出來。」我們會按照我們的價值觀做事。我們的言語是別人首先會注意到我們的事情之一。無論你是彬彬有禮還是粗魯，謙虛還是驕傲，充滿鼓勵還是挑剔，都會在你說話時顯露出來。同樣的道理也適用於我們的行為。神的標準是黑白分明的。對神來說，我們所做的事情只有好或壞，沒有灰色地帶。確實有許多非信徒做了很多好事。他們捐錢並自願花時間服務他人。這些都是令人敬佩的事情。但是最終，神會審判我們的動機。祂知道我們做事的目的是為自己、他人還是為神的榮耀。

父親要兒子小心的第二類人是不道德的女人。請看第 16 節和 17 節：**16 智慧要救你脫離淫婦，就是那油嘴滑舌的外女。17 他離棄幼年的配偶，忘了神的盟約。**提到盟約，這裡暗示她是一位已婚的猶太婦女。但我們當然可以把它延伸到任何背景的女性，無論是單身或是已婚的。這位父親告訴兒子不要被她的甜言蜜語所吸引。我們的外表會給別人一個初步的印象。接下來，人們會根據我們的講話來評估我們是否真誠和值得信任。因此，一個不正經的女人會從她的講話中顯示她的動機。男人被女人吸引是很自然的事。這是神造男人的特點。那不算是罪。但是，撒旦利用這個弱點攻擊男人。我之前告訴過你，有一次聖經學院的教授提醒男同學要小心英文的三個 G：金錢、榮耀和女孩。這些是一般男人的三個弱點。電視、電影和網路上都充滿潛在的危險。一個男人如何依靠神的智慧來保持聖潔？首先，我們必須回到神對婚姻的設計。神把超出這個範圍的任何關係都定義為姦淫。有了這個基礎，男士們要警覺靠近他的女士是否有任何可疑的動機。當你感覺到試探來臨時，你要馬上向神支取力量，並轉身離開。

作為總結，讓我建議三個簡單的步驟來應對這兩類人。第一步：接收。用你的眼睛和耳朵去注意他們的言行。求神給你洞察力來看清他們的動機。第二步：回想。聖經有哪些智慧的話適用於你所面對的情況？第三步：回應。祈求神給你勇氣去做正確的事。如果我們依靠自己，我們可能會跌倒。只有當我們愛神勝過一切時，我們才能過得勝的生活。

結論 CONCLUSION

開始的時候我說過我在教會圖書館找到的一本小書。一個兒子收集了他父親的智慧之言。碰巧那本書的續集就在前一本書的下面。布朗先生繼承了他父親的習慣，也寫下了他的智慧之言。但在他出版他的作品之前，他把內容寄給他在大學的兒子。在看完之後，年輕人打電話給他父親，感謝他的分享。這種教育孩子的方式代代相傳。一般孩子們到了一定的年齡，他們會逐漸覺得父母的勸告很嘮叨。他們會回應：「爸爸，媽媽，不用再說，我知道了。」有一天，他們會意識到父母的教導真的行得通，因為爸媽從人生經歷中累積了實用的智慧。我們在神的眼中永遠是祂的孩子。我們豈不是更應該順服那一位創造我們並完全了解我們的神嗎？偶爾，我們也會有同樣的覺醒時刻：神所說的確實行得通！也許神會帶著微笑向我們說：「相信我。我能把事情搞定的。」