

# Prevailing Proverbs – Radio May 2025

## Foundation Scriptures:

Proverbs 14:12 Amplified Bible

Proverbs 16:25 Amplified Bible

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## **Section 1**

### **Prevailing Proverbs**

To live a life pleasing to our Heavenly Father, to live honouring our Lord Jesus Christ, to be led and guided by the Holy Spirit – this is the hearts desire of the vast majority of Christian people and I suspect is definitely the strong hearts desire of any Christian person who does take their Christian life seriously.

Whilst this sentiment is no doubt real in your heart and mind, sometimes we fall very short of the mark of achieving it. Praise the Lord that our post born-again, Christian lives are not measured by simply one event, but our entire Christian lives are taken into account.

Every person, without fail, every person in my view needs to memorise

2 Corinthians 5:10, Amplified Bible:

<sup>10</sup> For we must all appear *and* be revealed as we are before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive [his pay] according to what he has done in the body, whether good or evil [considering what his purpose and motive have been, and what he has achieved, been busy with, and given himself and his attention to accomplishing].

With this in mind, serving the Lord well, there are two verses in Proverbs that I have thought about a great deal:

ESV Bible

Proverbs 14:12

<sup>12</sup> There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

Proverbs 16:25

<sup>25</sup> There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

Amplified Bible

Proverbs 14:12

<sup>12</sup> There is a way which seems right to a man *and* appears straight before him, but at the end of it is the way of death.

Proverbs 16:25

<sup>25</sup> There is a way that seems right to a man *and* appears straight before him, but at the end of it is the way of death.

I've thought on these two verses for many years. They have sometimes left this niggling feeling in the back of my mind, or the pit of my stomach – sometimes creating a degree of self-doubt, however small that degree may be. Just the thought of a direction or series of sequential decisions that are creating a pathway for me, or our family, our church, our Ministry only to find out later that pathway was completely wrong or erroneous, is a very worrisome and downright scary thought. Wasted time, wasted efforts, wasted resources, possibly damaged relationships – it's just too complicated to park there and live life there.

So what's the solution...? Where do we find a proven, stable, unchanging, reliable, moral, understandable, implementable, ethical, strategic, now-acting, forward thinking, multi-generational, reputable life code upon which we can build our lives? It also has to work in any civilisation, any location, any environment, any climate and with any demographic.

Proverbs 14:12 Amplified Bible, Proverbs 16:25 Amplified Bible

I find these two verses, both terrifying and incredibly helpful, both at the same time.

In our human-ness, we may have a proclivity or perhaps a pre-disposition to think "this is all too hard – *why bother* – *why bother* to make the effort, to go the extra mile, to do the study or work, to throw ourselves into something for the good of others – only to find it was a waste of time".

Have you ever thought that – “*Why bother*”? - or is it only me? “*Why bother*”? I do believe that “why bother”, though sometimes it may be a useful tool for a more or deeper inquiry into a personal circumstance, as a point to land at and stay at, then forward momentum in that particular area of dismissiveness, is obviously lost. Quite obviously, “why bother” is not an effective medium to long term strategy for forward progress. At very best it’s possibly some kind of very short term survival mechanism.

In nearly 40 years of ministry, my experience has been that by far, ***by far***, by ***overwhelming*** numbers and percentages, the vast majority of people are decent people that, **when it comes to the daily living out of their lives**, really want to do “the right thing”. However, “the right thing” is, very often, completely subjective for **that** individual. It’s often “what they think” or “what they feel” that drives their decision, - not reliable research, correctly interpreted data, the wisdom from the counsel of suitably qualified people, or the exercise of patience, which is a weapon, that forces deception to reveal itself.

Many times, there is no standard or marker upon which they either build or evaluate their lives. That becomes problematic and individuals that do not have a well thought through, grounded, time tested moral and ethical code are often controlled by and conform to the ideologies of the time. We all know how dangerous that can be - like the famous Bob Dylan song – “*for the times they are a-changing*”! A case of building your life on shifting sands – again, not a reliable medium-to-long term strategy for genuine forward momentum, and, then ultimately forward progress.

Therefore, people find themselves often facing life’s decisions, genuinely wanting to do “the right thing” and more often than not, they end up ***hoping*** they made the right choice. Good intentions, as we all know, do not necessarily produce correct outcomes.

“The right thing”- is often a flexible and evolving viewpoint that actually may never land in the Divine absolute that is rightly called truth – depending on the persons upbringing, culture, environment – so many contributory factors as to whether or not an individual actually makes the decision to seek out Divine truth – the truth from a Holy God. This kind of truth, upon which we can successfully build a life, is recognised as coming from “The Word of Truth – the Holy Scriptures. Jesus spoke about “the knowledge of that truth will make us free” in John 8:32.

So what's the solution...? Where do we find a proven, stable, unchanging, reliable, moral, understandable, implementable, ethical, strategic, now acting but forward thinking, reputable life code upon which we can build our lives?

My suggestion is: Look no further than the book of Proverbs!

Cutting straight to the bottom line – as we move through life and engage with all that life has to offer us, as we grow, increase and develop as individuals, families, communities, cities and nations we all need – at every stage of life - a proven, stable, unchanging, reliable, moral, understandable, implementable, ethical, strategic, now-acting but forward thinking, reputable life code upon which we can build our lives.

I think we also need a real and practical, working understanding of these two verses in Proverbs:

Amplified Bible

Proverbs 14:12

<sup>12</sup> There is a way which seems right to a man *and* appears straight before him, but at the end of it is the way of death.

Proverbs 16:25

<sup>25</sup> There is a way that seems right to a man *and* appears straight before him, but at the end of it is the way of death.

Same verse, repeated – same information!

## PART 2

Many of life's pathways may have an **appearance** of being the correct path, but the end result is far, far, far from what we had anticipated. To write that off as "that's just life – you win some, you lose some" or one my dear Mum used to say "ah well dear, we all just live and learn"- I always wanted to learn first and then live, but I could never work out how to do that.

These two verses in Proverbs - Amplified Bible:

<sup>12</sup> There is a way which seems right to a man *and* appears straight before him, but at the end of it is the way of death.

<sup>25</sup> There is a way that seems right to a man *and* appears straight before him, but at the end of it is the way of death.

are a beautiful, compassionate, mercy-filled, gracious and kind Divine warning from a Holy God that would most definitely prefer us to learn and then live, not the other way around.

So lets dig into this a bit:

Amplified Bible

<sup>12</sup> There is a way which seems right to a man *and* appears straight before him, but at the end of it is the way of death.

<sup>25</sup> There is a way that seems right to a man *and* appears straight before him, but at the end of it is the way of death.

We have to also consider the explanation and positioning of the individual, regarding sin and righteousness, that Paul was discussing in Romans 6.  
Romans 6:17-21

<sup>17</sup> But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, <sup>18</sup> and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. <sup>19</sup> I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

<sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> **But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.**

Proverbs 16:25

<sup>25</sup> There is a way that seems right to a man *and* appears straight before him, **but at the end of it is the way of death.**

Let's add into the mix Proverbs 12:15:

<sup>15</sup> The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,  
but a wise man listens to advice.

Again, this idea of the individual concerned taking a pathway or a direction that **they** feel is correct, and seemingly, looking at the context of the verse, they are not open to seeking or receiving advice nor correction. However, the wise person listens to advice. In this verse, this behaviour is deemed foolish – foolish behaviour, as we all know leads to problems and is not a useful life strategy ever! Foolishness is folly. Foolishness is problematic, damaging to ourselves and others, and to be avoided at all cost.

There is obviously a connection or a correlation between sin, an individual approach based on the individual's own knowledge, experience and wisdom, the individual ignoring or shutting out of Divine instruction or input and then foolishness all contributing to someone taking an erroneous path or making wrong decisions.

Mistakes in life need to be mitigated. Let's work hard to reduce sin, let's work hard to reduce wastefulness, let's work hard to reduce loss, let's work hard to reduce mistakes, let's work hard to reduce wasted and lost time, let's work hard to reduce damaged or broken relationships.

Romans 6:

<sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> **But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.**

What is the fruit of this incorrect path – when you were a slave to sin? How was that going for you – even if life itself was seemingly ok, every person has this Divine connection to their afterlife – what happens when I die...? Coupled with the Holy Spirit who convinces people of their sin – John 16:7-11

<sup>7</sup> However, I am telling you nothing but the truth when I say it is profitable (good, expedient, advantageous) for you that I go away. Because if I do not go away, the Comforter (Counsellor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Standby) will not come to you [into close fellowship with you]; but if I go away, I will send Him to you [to be in close fellowship with you].

<sup>8</sup> And when He comes, He will convict *and* convince the world *and* bring demonstration to it about sin and about righteousness (uprightness of heart and right standing with God) and about judgment:

<sup>9</sup> About sin, because they do not believe in Me [trust in, rely on, and adhere to Me];

<sup>10</sup> About righteousness (uprightness of heart and right standing with God), because I go to My Father, and you will see Me no longer;

<sup>11</sup> About judgment, because the ruler (evil genius, prince) of this world [Satan] is judged *and* condemned *and* sentence already is passed upon him.

I remember personally – before I made Jesus my Lord, I often found myself thinking about God and hell and if someone like me could actually make it to heaven – I thought about these things periodically – the Holy Spirit was always with me, fulfilling His Ministry whether I was aware of that or not!

Romans 6:

<sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> **But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.**

What is the fruit of this incorrect path – when you were a slave to sin?

However, **the opposite of all of this sin life**, is really God's intention – Christ is made unto us Wisdom – God does not want us to function unwisely or poorly in the world He created.

### **PART 3**

Amplified Bible

Proverbs 14:12

<sup>12</sup> There is a way which seems right to a man *and* appears straight before him, but at the end of it is the way of death.

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Same verse, repeated – same information!

Romans 6:

<sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> **But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.**

What is the fruit, or the outcome of, this incorrect, unrighteous path – when you were a slave to sin? The ultimate outcome is spiritual death – eternal separation from a holy God.

Leading up to that ultimate end is the deception of living what the person thinks is a good life – not a genuine Christian life, but a good life in their eyes, and perhaps even to some of the cultural or societal standards – I’ve heard people say “I’m a cultural Christian”. That’s not going to work when you stand before a Holy God, based on Paul’s breakdown of Roman’s chapters 4, 5 and 6.

However, **the opposite of all of this sin life**, is really God’s intention – Christ is made unto us Wisdom – God does not want us to function unwisely or poorly in the world He created.

Sin and mistakes in life need to be mitigated. Let’s work hard to increase in righteousness, Let’s work hard to increase stewardship, Let’s work hard to increase productivity, Let’s work hard to maximise and leverage time, Let’s work hard to improve and strengthen relationships – this list just goes on – it’s our life’s quest for “not my will be done but yours be done Lord Jesus”!

Jesus Himself said in Luke 6:46-49

<sup>46</sup> “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? <sup>47</sup> Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: <sup>48</sup> he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. <sup>49</sup> But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

Those that choose to ignore the Lord’s instruction – those that choose to ignore the absolute truths of the Holy Scriptures – those that choose their own way instead of a Divinely instructed way, ultimately will come to ruin – either in this life or the next. Galatians 6:7 – we cannot mock or ignore God and escape that unscathed.



<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived *and* deluded *and* misled; God will not allow Himself to be sneered at (scorned, disdained, or mocked by mere pretensions or professions, or by His precepts being set aside.) [He inevitably deludes himself who attempts to delude God.] For whatever a man sows, that *and* that only is what he will reap.

So what's the solution...? Where do we find a proven, stable, unchanging, reliable, moral, understandable, implementable, ethical, strategic, now-acting, forward thinking, multi-generational, reputable life code upon which we can build our lives? It also has to work in any civilisation, any location, any environment any climate and with any demographic.

My suggestion is: Look no further than the book of Proverbs!

There are 66 books of the Bible – 39 Old Testament and 27 New Testament. Proverbs is only one of them – however for a strategically aligned, collective variety of topic or subject related, pre-packaged, Divine Wisdom that provides the workable solutions, which enable us to live a mistake-reducing or problem-mitigating life – the Book of Proverbs is amongst the easiest from which to learn and apply these life truths – to learn and **then** live.

I believe that one of the most important key ingredients in living and producing a God-approved life is to thoroughly learn, apply and live by the book of Proverbs. It is our daily wisdom – straight from Heaven.

The Book of Proverbs must prevail in our lives. I'll say that again - The Book of Proverbs must prevail in our lives

To prevail means:

**Vocabulary.com** - Prevail means to successfully persuade someone of something.

The wisdom in Proverbs must successfully persuade us in life's correct directions, whilst at the same time, safeguarding us from life's incorrect directions. How do we arrive at a "direction"? Through a decision... therefore let's make decisions that agree with the Wisdom from Proverbs and not challenge and inhibit that flow of wisdom in our lives.

**Cambridge Dictionary – to prevail** - to get control or influence

The wisdom in Proverbs must successfully control or influence our decision making.

**Merriam Webster Dictionary – to prevail** – to gain ascendancy through strength or superiority: To TRIUMPH...

The wisdom in Proverbs must successfully gain ascendancy and triumph over our own wisdom, to triumph over our societal or culturally recognised wisdom that is contrary to God's Wisdom as laid out in scripture..

The Divine Wisdom from the Book of Proverbs must prevail in our daily lived out lives, to persuade us, to control us – particularly our emotions, anger, behaviour and decisions, to influence us and to eventually gain ascendancy and triumph over our own levels of wisdom.

That's why this series is called Prevailing Proverbs.

As I said before, Proverbs is only one book out of 66 books in the Bible – however, it's an incredible place to start if we want simple daily food for daily Divine Wisdom.

#### **Part 4**

Let's look into the first seven verses of Proverbs chapter one, which I think is a bit of an introduction for us and lays down some of the reasons for daily impartations of wisdom in order to create powerful, incremental progress thus enabling a life to be successfully managed and not just cured – Wisdom in preference to miracles – I'll say that again – I'm totally convinced Wisdom is to be preferred than miracles, when it comes to successful daily living and enjoying the awesome power of incremental progress.

Our lives are to be purposefully and successfully managed, not cured.

The wisdom from Proverbs must prevail in our lives.

In some 40 years of ministry involvement, working very closely with many, many people's lives across that time, I believe – now this is my personal view – from my experience people only have seven, 7, questions that ever come up across their life:

Who, Which, What, Where, When, Why and How – in all of the circumstances and situations that we encounter whilst we are here, living life on the earth, every one of the circumstances or situations will fit inside one or more, of these questions. I believe Proverbs provides us with a starting point for us to eventually answer every one of these questions, when it comes to our lives.

Let's purposefully live lives that are managed instead of lives that are constantly in need of repairing!

How can Wisdom's instruction fill up the innermost and outermost regions of my heart and mind, so my life is purposefully managed and therefore not in need of constant repair that emanates from non-scripturally aligned decisions?

We must always remember that truth is truth. Truth is not changed by time, seasons, climate, culture or by societal, cultural or individual subjectiveness. How anyone feels or even what anyone believes does not change truth.

For our lives to go well, truth must prevail. God's truth is foundational reality for the whole of life, whoever we are and wherever we live and work. God's truth is the pathway to take which leads to life, blessing, favour from God and man, wealth and well-being.

The book of Proverbs explains, encourages, reveals and definitely illuminates the pathway to life and blessing and at the same time protects us from the often multitude of ways into discouragement, destruction, delusion and death.

One key thought, and truth, is that which you focus on has you mastered. When you focus and look at something, you are not focused on something else. My daughter just turned down an enormously high paying job so she could stay at University and finish her degree. When you turn right, you have eliminated turning left!

I realise I'm labouring this point but I look around and see a western society that is crying out for God's Divine Wisdom to flow, provide correct and realistic solutions and to get society back on the correct pathway. I certainly do not understand how an individual's subjective interpretation of something can override truth. For example, I simply do not understand, how there is seemingly the possibility of an infinite number of genders. That, I just do not understand.

So, I ask again, how can Wisdom's instruction fill up the innermost and outermost regions of my heart and mind, so my life is purposefully managed and therefore not in need of constant repair that emanates from non-scripturally aligned decisions?

Let's now dig deeper into these first seven verses of Proverbs 1 and get a feel for the theme of Proverbs.

Proverbs 1:7 Amplified Bible:

<sup>1</sup> The proverbs (truths obscurely expressed, maxims, and parables) of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:

Allow the power of that that sink down deep into your heart and mind. Let's build our lives on specific truths and Divine instruction given to men that truly were so powerfully living and engaged with the coalface of life – both Divinely chosen leaders in their own right!

Think about this verse this way: *"The proverbs" - the specific truths and Divine instruction that God gave to a second-generation covenant man.*

Remember, 1 Kings 4:29-30 (AMP) - <sup>29</sup> And God gave Solomon exceptionally much wisdom and understanding, and breadth of mind like the sand of the seashore.

<sup>30</sup> Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the people of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt.

Also remember 1 Samuel 13:14 and Acts 13:22 – where David is referred to by God as "a man after God's own heart".

Solomon grew up in David's household – he was constantly exposed to first-hand life experiences of living with a "man after God's own heart" – knowing that it was his Dad that killed Goliath and saved all of Israel.

That's why I say: ***specific truths and Divine instruction that God gave to a second-generation covenant man.***

Allow the power of that that sink down deep into your heart and mind. Let's build our lives on specific truths and Divine instruction given to men that truly were so powerfully living and engaged with the coalface of life – both Divinely chosen leaders in their own right!

## Part 5

“King”- that tells me the greater the authority, the greater the level of wisdom needed to function successfully at that level of authority.

“of Israel”- Everyone is responsible for some thing or someone. You probably are not in charge of a nation – however, at the very least you are responsible for yourself, but chances are, you have a husband or wife, perhaps children, maybe some friends and close relationships, maybe even a business with customers, perhaps a job with an employer and work colleagues – you may be 10 years old and at school, but you still are responsible for something, even just your school books and getting to the classes when the bell goes.

Point being every person is responsible for something or someone – OWN THAT! Seriously own the fact that you are responsible for some thing or some one OR BOTH! Approach that responsibility with the awe and respect that it deserves – it’s an incremental Divine appointment – we see in Psalm 75:6-7 – responsibility is authorised and bestowed by God -

Psalm 75:6-7 - <sup>6</sup> For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up, <sup>7</sup> but it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another.

Incremental increases in responsibility start to occur at a very young age and how we respond to all of that is well and truly watched by God Himself.

Proverbs 1:7 Amplified Bible:

<sup>1</sup> The proverbs (truths obscurely expressed, maxims, and parables) of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:

<sup>2</sup> That people may know skilful *and* godly Wisdom and instruction, discern *and* comprehend the words of understanding (knowledge, meaning wisdom) *and* insight,

So that PEOPLE – not the rich, not the political world of national leaders, not the poor, not the nationals, not the immigrants, not black people, not white people, not males, not female – absolutely unbiased racially, societally and culturally – NOT any one specific group - but PEOPLE OVERALL – the Lord has opened this up to ALL OF HUMANITY – God does not want anyone to miss out on accessing His Divinely, lovingly and graciously provided Wisdom.

The word ‘know’ in the Hebrew is the primitive root word “yada”. It means to know in every possible way you can think of such as: acknowledge, acquainted

with, advise, answer, appoint, to know and be known, to have knowledge, be learned, be skilful, to discern, to cause to discern, to discover – the list goes on and on – in fact in my particular concordance there were over 60 definitions and examples.

God wants ALL PEOPLE to absolutely be so thoroughly acquainted with and intimately know His wisdom that we know AND understand His Wisdom better than we know and understand ourselves.

BUT WHY – why does God want this for us all and why would He provide complete access, seemingly unrestricted access to His Divine Wisdom – Verse 3 - so we can:

*<sup>3</sup> Receive instruction in wise dealing and the discipline of wise thoughtfulness, righteousness, justice, and integrity,*

Let's look at the list:

Firstly, to *receive* - to learn and continue to learn – how you receive determines your path of becoming.

*instruction in wise dealing* –to grow in life and relational skills that God approves of!

*The discipline of* – just the fact of having to discipline oneself to a particular pathway is a shock to some people. Often people want to simply do what they want, not be subject to discipline in any way to any thing that they simply don't like.

I'm reminded of a discipline one of our daughters had when she was a University student, doing her degree. Regarding all of the abundance of social life on the university campus and in the university culture, she always said that "nothing good happens after midnight" and always made sure she was at home in her own bed, by herself long before midnight came. Why – because she had a reason to NOT party. Her reasons for learning far, far, far outweighed her reasons for levity.

If our reasons for receiving and embracing discipline become clear enough then the discipline is more and more welcomed and it becomes an effective tool for continual progress.

The first discipline we need to become aware of in this list in Proverbs is *wise thoughtfulness*. *Wise thoughtfulness* can be thought of as intellectual and relational intelligence. How good would it be to be able to accurately discern peoples intentions, motives and agendas. Imagine becoming expert at that and only handling people with wisdom, grace and thoughtfulness – reminds me of

Colossians 4:5-6:

<sup>5</sup> Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. <sup>6</sup> Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Powerful wisdom when it comes to dealing with others, especially those outside of the Kingdom of God.

<sup>3</sup> *Receive instruction in wise dealing and the discipline of wise thoughtfulness, righteousness, justice, and integrity,*

To receive lifelong instruction in moral and ethical behaviour. I say 'life-long' as solid Biblical moral and ethical behaviour tends to become rooted deep inside someone and its no longer what they have learned and believe but who it is that they have actually become. Belief and behaviour do go together.

(Ps Joe has a very helpful and practically detailed study into James Chapter 1 entitled Genuine Faith, Good Works that delves into the most important, active relationship between belief and behaviour – look at [www.livingsuccess.org](http://www.livingsuccess.org))

Make it a priority that these four things become your discipline – *the discipline of wise thoughtfulness, righteousness, justice, and integrity,*

<sup>4</sup> *That prudence may be given to the simple, and knowledge, discretion, and discernment to the youth—*

I'm super interested in the reference to youth here – Wouldn't it be great to put an old head on young shoulders, as the saying goes. Thinking about the successes we've had in our Church and Ministry over the decades, the earlier we taught children the Word of God the better off they seem to have been.

## Part 6

<sup>4</sup> *That prudence may be given to the simple, and knowledge, discretion, and discernment to the youth—*

Once again, God's Wisdom opened up to all of society but in particular the focus is to be on those that necessarily don't flow in the Wisdom of God easily. People have different levels of learning, however no one should be left behind when it comes to the Wisdom of God.

It's obviously incredibly advantageous to learn prudence, knowledge, discretion and discernment at an early age – the earlier the better.

Speaking with Pastor Lynda, my wife, about learning - Lynda is a schoolteacher of some renown, her career spanning just on 4 decades, a leader in EDI (Explicit Direct Instruction), and an Instructional Coach as well –

some of the advantages of focused learning at an early age are:

Brain Development: Evidently the first few years of life are crucial for brain development. It seems a significant portion of brain development can and does occur before a child enters kindergarten. Lynda is very focused on early learning programs and especially making them stimulating. She tells me that Educational Research shows that stimulating experiences that can positively impact cognitive development, including language, memory, and problem-solving skills, help set the child up for potentially a lifetime of positive outcomes from learning – in short individuals are significantly better off the earlier they start to systematically learn. Sounds right to me – pretty easy to accept all of that.

Some other advantages for early focused learning are:

- Social and Emotional Growth
- Independence and Confidence
- Academic Readiness at an earlier age.
- Positive Impact on Society
- Long-Term Success
- Stronger Foundations for Lifelong Learning – I really like this one as it ties in so well with verse 6

*<sup>6</sup> That people may understand a proverb and a figure of speech or an enigma with its interpretation, and the words of the wise and their dark sayings or riddles.*

**There's a real probing inference there – and that's for all people – the young, the naïve, the wise. A Divinely inspired inquisitiveness into the wisdom of how life is supposed to really work, from God's perspective.**



<sup>5</sup> The wise also will hear and increase in learning, and the person of understanding will acquire skill *and* attain to sound counsel [so that he may be able to steer his course rightly]—

<sup>5</sup> *The wise also will hear...* - what you hear helps create what you feel. Faith comes by hearing and hearing of the Word of God. Romans 10:17.  
The opposite is also correct – fear comes (or is allowed entry) by not hearing and not hearing the Word of God.

What you hear affects what you feel –  
What you hear affects what you believe –  
Who and what you have believed, have got you thus far whereas who and what you investigate, trust and act upon takes you into your future.  
What you hear and receive is the thing that you will become.

*...and the person of understanding will acquire skill and attain to sound counsel [so that he may be able to steer his course rightly]—*

How good is that – as we go down this wisdom, knowledge, discipline pathway we increase! We acquire skill and we gravitate towards extraordinary people. Make a habit of pursuing greatness – this is important because influence affect affluence. Increase also comes through association.

<sup>5</sup> *The wise also will hear and increase in learning, and the person of understanding will acquire skill and attain to sound counsel [so that he may be able to steer his course rightly]—*

One of the most wonderful aspects of the Book of Proverbs, one of the most powerful things to learn from the Book of Proverbs is our desperate need to **stay teachable. I cannot emphasise this enough and this idea of remaining teachable is echoed right throughout the entire book.**

Why is this so important – because whilst you remain teachable you remain reachable. I heard Dr Mike Murdock say that and I never forgot it.

Irrespective of how far along the Wisdom journey we are, our readiness and willingness to stay teachable is critical for our future success.

<sup>6</sup> *That people may understand a proverb and a figure of speech or an enigma with its interpretation, and the words of the wise and their dark sayings or riddles.*

As I said before **There's a real probing inference there – and that's for all people – the young, the naïve, the wise. A Divinely inspired inquisitiveness into the wisdom of how life is supposed to really work, from God's perspective.**

*and the words of the wise and their dark sayings or riddles.*

Nothing is ever as it first appears – we have got to dig around inside life to find the gold of life – why – because evil is loose on the planet and God doesn't hide things from us He hides things FOR us.

Investigation precedes increase.

Research precedes revelation...

I learned from Genesis chapter 1:

Creativity will birth things but it is routine that maintains things:

- Creativity is the search for options, so
- Discovery is the locating of options, then
- Concentration is the elimination of options, and
- Focus is the development of options, but
- Action is the use of options with
- Stewardship being the protector of options.

<sup>7</sup> The reverent *and* worshipful fear of the Lord is the beginning *and* the principal *and* choice part of knowledge [its starting point and its essence]; but fools despise skilful *and* godly Wisdom, instruction, *and* discipline.

Reverence and worshipful fear of the Lord, combining together create the first attitude and approach - the beginning, the principal and the choice part of knowledge – it's starting point and its essence.

This is our starting point – not how much we already know, not our pre-conceived ideas of what God is like or who God is. Our very first starting point is development of the idea and truth that He is God and I am not. He is God and you and I are not! He is omnipotent and you and I are not. He is holy and you and I are on the road of holiness – trying to become more and more holy as we go.

Our starting point for learning, receiving and growing in wisdom and knowledge, is a clear understanding of who God is and who we are.

Once we approach our lifetime of learning from this initial perspective, then are we better positioned to truly digest and own that which we subsequently learn and understand.

Reverence before revelation.

Worship before wisdom.

<sup>7</sup> The reverent *and* worshipful fear of the Lord is the beginning *and* the principal *and* choice part of knowledge [its starting point and its essence]; but fools despise skilful *and* godly Wisdom, instruction, *and* discipline.

Wisdom and knowledge remain forever linked together in proverbs – they are both referred to often, together in context. A moral, ethical and honest life before a holy God is a life of reverence worship and humility. Submission to the Lord – the use of Lord, not God – is a foundational requirement in a successfully lived spiritual life that is being lived out in His creation, amongst our fellow created beings, who are made in His image and His likeness.

Knowledge seems to focus on correct understandings of life, the world, people, relationships, finances amongst many other things. Some of those other things we'll get into in this study.

Just a taste for you: Wisdom, words, wealth, warnings, women, worry, wine, work, wastefulness and winter.

Wisdom on the other hand, seems to focus on acquiring the skill to apply and appropriate that knowledge correctly. There is definitely skill required in the application of the knowledge that Proverbs gives us – have you ever said the correct thing but said it in the incorrect manner?

Have you ever done the correct thing, but delivered it in the incorrect manner?

Wisdom is the correct application of that knowledge. Yes, there is a learning curve involved and yes we are more than positioned to be able to navigate that curve – in fact, the earlier we start the better off we, our families, our workplaces, our communities and ultimately our nations are.

But fools despise wisdom and instruction – fools are dangerous people and the damage from fools can be catastrophic. I know this first hand – I have buried two nephews because of foolish decisions.

Only a fool drives a motor vehicle drunk. That may sound harsh but ask any mother or father of a child killed by a drunk driver. This I know a little about – one of my nephews was killed by a drunk driver. The damage from fools can be catastrophic.

*<sup>7</sup> The reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord is the beginning and the principal and choice part of knowledge [its starting point and its essence]; but fools despise skilful and godly Wisdom, instruction, and discipline.*

This verse sets the scene for the ongoing discussions and the ongoing comparisons between wisdom and folly.

The pathways of wisdom, righteousness, knowledge and the worshipful fear of the Lord is compared against the alternative pathways of evil, folly, scoffing and disobedience.

## **Part 7**

There so much contained within the Book of Proverbs it can be a little difficult to decide which way to try and study it – hence I’ve taken the approach regarding God’s Wisdom, to prevail, in our lives – hence Prevailing Proverbs – pretty simple.

To prevail means:

**Vocabulary.com** - Prevail means to successfully persuade someone of something.

The wisdom in Proverbs must successfully persuade us in life’s correct directions, whilst at the same time, safeguarding us from life’s incorrect directions. How do we arrive at a “direction”? Through a decision... therefore let’s make decisions that agree with the Wisdom from Proverbs and not challenge and inhibit that flow of wisdom in our lives.

**Cambridge Dictionary – to prevail** - to get control or influence

The wisdom in Proverbs must successfully control or influence our decision making.

**Merriam Webster Dictionary – to prevail** – to gain ascendancy through strength or superiority: To TRIUMPH...

The wisdom in Proverbs must successfully gain ascendancy and triumph over our own wisdom, to triumph over our societal or culturally recognised wisdom that is contrary to God's Wisdom as laid out in scripture..

The Divine Wisdom from the Book of Proverbs must prevail in our daily lived out lives, to persuade us, to control us – particularly our emotions, anger, behaviour and decisions, to influence us and to eventually gain ascendancy and triumph over our own levels of wisdom.

As we go through life, as we live life, to be directed, warned, guided, instructed, corrected, steered, admonished, encouraged, driven, motivated, disciplined – all in a considerate, thoughtful and clear and direct way that builds faith, trust and confidence not only in the life direction we find ourselves on, but also in the Lord Himself, who's wisdom it all is - when we actually do obey the Scriptures in Proverbs, making that instruction the one we put first place.

Which then leads us to the very obvious point from all of that – yes it's so great to – lets go through the list again:

be directed, warned, guided, instructed, corrected, steered, admonished, encouraged, driven, motivated, disciplined – all in a considerate, thoughtful and clear and direct way that builds faith, trust and confidence not only in the life direction we find ourselves on, but also in the Lord Himself, Who's Wisdom it all is - when we actually do obey the Scriptures in Proverbs, making that instruction, the one we put first place...

And then to receive all of the incredible benefits of correct decision making – at worst, improved and better decision making...

Absolutely all of this is wonderful – thanks Joe I hear you say – but how do I actually do it all?

What a great question – with such a simple answer:

**Make the decision to prioritise time to read, study and learn the Book of Proverbs. Yes, discipline and sacrifice are involved – the same as they are with any significant movement in a forward or beneficial direction.**

We simply cannot enact something that we don't know – I hear people say "you have to obey the Word of God brother – do what the scriptures say"

- That's all good and lovely but we have to KNOW what the scriptures say first in order to do them...

Jesus Himself gave us an actual formula for this aspect of our learning:

Luke 6:47

<sup>47</sup> Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like:

It's three simple steps:

- 1) Come to Jesus – the best way - is accept Him as Lord and Saviour – He's the One who paid the price for your sin. How else do we come to Jesus – quality time set aside to read his Word, study our Bibles and pray regarding that which we have just read.
- 2) Hears My Words – what does that look like for us – obviously reading our Bibles daily. Have your Bible on your device, your phone or tablet or iPad – we need to be able to listen as well – there are plenty of very good quality “read the Bible aloud” uploads available on various platforms – youtube, spotify – whatever your preferred platforms are. Deliberately focus on driving away the distraction from social media and replacing that with Bible listening-time.  
The focus is the hearing of God's Word – not wishy, washy sermons – quality, proven Bible teachers sermons are fine but stay away from those messages that stroke ego and pat your feeling. Good quality Bible messages minister to your spirit, not just your mind – its heart and head connection.  
Attend a quality, reputable Church, join a connect group, fellowship with other Christian people – its all part and parcel of coming and hearing...
- 3) And then we do that which we have learned - and that so much easier said, than done, as all knowledge is layered. It all takes time but the starting point is to create the time to learn, read and study your Bible, once Jesus is Lord. Jesus Himself said in Luke 6:46: <sup>46</sup> “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?

Everyone has the time to focus on specific spiritual growth – I guarantee you are already using up your 24 hours each day – the difference is what those hours are dedicated to doing for you. Re-direct some of your already allocated time.

Which raises another question – How exactly do you spend your time? I mean exactly – do you know where every hour goes? What adjustments do you need to make to become more efficient?

I'll give you a really simple example of creating efficiency:

My wife, Pastor Lynda has a very important role – which requires her to spend significant amounts of time on the phone at the beginning and end of each day, as she connects with necessary people around Australia each day.

She also has a 45 minute commute to and from work each day.

So to make that trip more efficient we just upgraded the audio electronics system in her car so she now has a crystal clear telephone function available to her, in her car. All hands free, all totally legal and voice controlled.

Lynda has now picked up some 90 minutes each day in work productivity just re-purposing activity inside the allocated drive time.

We must constantly strive to become more efficient – and the few hundred dollars spent is easily recouped inside her hourly rate. 45 minutes each way – 90 minutes a day - that's 7.5 hours a week EXTRA – virtually a whole extra day has been created just with a simple phone and stereo upgrade.

May I suggest you treat each hour of your day like an employee and require each hour to produce something for you. That's very important, the more conscious of time we become, the more efficient, productive and ultimately skilful we become. How we use our 168 hours each week is absolutely critical and what can even be more important is to be totally conscious of exactly how we DID use our 168 hours last week.

Time: Frankly time is the most precious thing we have. Please be so totally conscious of whether you are spending time or investing time. Time is the most precious gift and possession that God has given humans in the natural world. It's using up our time we worship Jesus, honour the Holy Spirit, reverence father God, pray, read our Bibles, work, play, develop relationships, love, laugh and live. Moments matter!

Time is the underwriting currency of the earth – time underwrites everything you have and do in the earth - God didn't give you money – He gave you time which you exchanged for money as you go to work. God didn't give you friends, He gave you time that you invested in people and created friendships.

You invest time strategically and wisely and create the future that you want or you spend time less wisely and create the present that you want. Why is time spent on the present often a less wise choice – because once you spend it it's gone – however if your activities are future focused then at some point you'll be able to leverage that time.

Paul said a fascinating thing in Ephesians 5:15,16:

Amplified Bible:

<sup>15</sup> Look carefully then how you walk! Live purposefully *and* worthily *and* accurately, not as the unwise *and* witless, but as wise (sensible, intelligent people),

<sup>16</sup> Making the very most of the time [buying up each opportunity], because the days are evil.

Therefore, think through ways of how to structure your activities and your day so you make best use of that available time. We all want our lives to constantly and incrementally improve – let's say we are 1% better each week, just overall – our own growth as an individual, shouldering our cross and moving forward in the Lord.

Continual and increasingly correct management of our time is the key factor in this – it helps underwrite all of our forward momentum.

**Remember – this is so important – doing what you have never done before, produces for you what you have never had before. I'll say that again:**

***doing what you have never done before, produces for you what you have never had before.***

**Getting back to Proverbs –**

**Here's a really good idea to help you learn proverbs – find an easily read translation – something like an ESV – and copy it out long hand – not typed, but handwritten. Not only is that an incredible discipline but it helps with the understanding that's ultimately gets birthed in your heart and mind as well.**

You might say – Joe that's crazy, write out the book of Proverbs – yeah it may be... but what a way to learn!

Hand-write out the book of Proverbs - dedicate 1 hour a day to it and see how you are at the end of 31 Chapters!



## **Section 2**

### **Prevailing Proverbs – Words**

#### **Part 1**

How are you going with handwriting out the book of Proverbs? Well, aside from the knowledge and information gained from the exercise, you certainly are demonstrating to the Lord that you are taking your spiritual learning very seriously and are certainly willing to attempt quite different, even left field thinking, approaches and learning methods.

Good on you! Keep handwriting out the chapters of Proverbs and just see where you are in 31 Chapters time.

So, just a different approach of very basic and simple thought to help you digest Proverbs more quickly and get that Wisdom prevailing in your life.

Now, let's look at a few topics or categories inside the Book of Proverbs.

There's many ways we can break this up – Family, Business, Spiritual, Raising Children or Parenting, Wisdom itself, Foolishness – the list goes on and on...

I'm taking a slightly different approach and have gone through the Book of Proverbs and categorised 12 different areas, which are all easily found as you read through. This list of 12 categories is by no means exhaustive – not at all – it's simply a different and maybe even fun way of stepping back and looking at this collective Wisdom in an entirely different way.

Whichever way we learn Proverbs – that doesn't really matter – the important point is that we DO learn Proverbs and preferably, learn it off by heart, committing the entire book to memory.

My 12 categories for this exercise and study are:

Words, Wisdom, Wealth, Warnings, Women, Worry, Wine, Work, Wastefulness, Winter, Wake Up-Calls and Way-of Life.

These are in no particular order – It's just the way I recorded them in my notebook.

Yes, they all start with W and looking back across 60+ years of life and nearly 40 years of Ministry, how much better my life would have been if I'd been able to really and genuinely master at least 6 of the 12 categories!

Well,

Let's dive into them – Starting with the first one in my list of 12:

WORDS –

We are just going to go through Proverbs, chapter by chapter, focusing in on a few more of the obvious verses, topic by topic, and raise a point or two regarding each one.

Proverbs 4:24 (Amp) - <sup>24</sup> Put away from you false *and* dishonest speech, and wilful *and* contrary talk put far from you.

False, dishonest speech and deliberate conflicting, opposing and antagonistic speech puts an individual on the incorrect pathway or, on an antagonistic pathway concerning spiritual things and spiritual truths. Remember Truth is truth and false, dishonest speech contaminates the purity and intent of that conversation. Bad speech muddies pure communication – it's a contaminant.

Proverbs 5:2 (Amp) - <sup>2</sup> That you may exercise proper discrimination *and* discretion and your lips may guard *and* keep knowledge *and* the wise answer [to temptation].

Do not allow anything to come past your lips that is inconsistent with or contrary to the direction and instruction of Scripture. Do not allow anything to come out of your lips that is inconsistent with or contrary to who you are in Christ Jesus. Don't be tempted to speak otherwise – temptation comes from the Tempter – even Jesus was tempted to use words for short term, hedonistic, worldly gain. Jesus replied to that temptation with "It is written..." - Matthew chapter 4.

Part of your role and responsibility as a co-labourer together with God, who is bringing God's Divine Wisdom and solution package into your friends circle and your greater circle of influence, is to guard that knowledge by exercising proper discretion. Work hard to know when to speak and often more importantly, when to stay silent.

Jesus Himself spoke to people as they were able to hear it, as they were able to hear, comprehend and understand. – Mark 4:33.

Proverbs 10:19-21 (Amp) - <sup>19</sup> In a multitude of words transgression is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is prudent.

<sup>20</sup> The tongues of those who are upright *and* in right standing with God are as choice silver; the minds of those who are wicked *and* out of harmony with God are of little value.

<sup>21</sup> The lips of the [uncompromisingly] righteous feed *and* guide many, but fools die for want of understanding *and* heart.

These three verses powerfully highlight the difference between a plethora of foolish, wasted talk, of little value versus wise, considered, on-topic speech that honours Jesus and obviously pleases God.

This is really interesting – verse 20 discusses *value*.

Choice silver is VALUABLE. The mind and heart of the wicked, that are completely out of step with God, no doubt even opposing God, are of little value. Scripture is very clear – it's not the person themselves that doesn't have any value. It's what is in their heart and mind that has little value to God. The person is valuable but the rubbish and the sin and the wickedness inside the wicked persons heart and mind, has no value or appeal to God – that content is not something he's after.

Their opinion is irrelevant, so don't be controlled by their opinion. Certainly, listen out of politeness, but don't be controlled by their view or opinion. Why would you ever go to worldly people for advice regarding spiritual matters. Pray that through for your own life please – discern from whom and where does the Lord want you to receive advice regarding SPIRITUAL matters. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that life itself is a spiritual matter – and every aspect of life, because every aspect of life is covered very clearly within the pages of our Bibles.

Verse 21: <sup>21</sup> The lips of the [uncompromisingly] righteous feed *and* guide many, but fools die for want of understanding *and* heart.

Quality, considered, uncompromising, righteous speech produces and guides. Unrighteous speech from fools causes want, shortage, mental torment and in context with the previous sentence on feeding – then the flip side is hunger and death from shortage. Is this physical death – it could lead to that, given enough foolishness – but its certainly the slow death from want or shortage of

understanding and heart – now that’s a tragedy. They don’t have the understanding for the solutions. They don’t have the heart to see it through to the other side.

The Bible says a lot about people’s hearts failing them – whether it’s through fear, being overwhelmed by circumstances – perhaps even literal heart attacks – there is a whole lot of information about people’s hearts failing them for a multitude of different reasons.

For whatever the reason – it’s not a workable mid to long-term strategy. And it all connected to WORDS. It’s all connected to the words we speak – or the words we DON’T speak.

## **Prevailing Proverbs – Words**

### **Part 2**

Proverbs 12:18 (AMP) - <sup>18</sup> There are those who speak rashly, like the piercing of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

There are some people whose normal way of life is to speak in a manner that is aggressive and painful to others. Their rash words are so hurtful it’s like being repeatedly stabbed – that’s vicious, cruel, hurtful, painful and very damaging to others. They mock, they deride, they belittle, they accuse, they insult, they ridicule, they insult and they condemn.

This is completely opposite to soothing words that heal. Just think for a moment about healing – the pain lessens, the wounds heal, comfort and rest closely follow, you feel safe again, maybe even protected.

The tongue of the wise brings all of this to bear, in on the situation. Those who speak rashly are completely, absolutely, totally opposite to those wise ones that speak healing – they speak healing because they live healing – they live reconciliation, they live forgiveness, they live thoughtfulness and consideration. They live conscious of, and working hard, to live a life that honours Jesus. They live with an attitude of gratitude.

Words matter. More than we ever really do realise.

Proverbs 15:1-4 (AMP) - A soft answer turns away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger.

Words that are carefully, wisely and thoughtfully selected deflect anger and calm situations down. The opposite of that is grievous words that literally stir up strife, stir up anger and stir up trouble. Which side of this discussion will you

choose – what do you want to be known as: someone who brings calm or someone who stir up anger? We all have this type of choice every day. We must teach the differences of these two opposites, these two positions, to our children.

<sup>2</sup> The tongue of the wise utters knowledge rightly, but the mouth of the [self-confident] fool pours out folly.

Once again, we have the stark contrast of the two opposites. The wise is identified by the correctly spoken and correctly communicated knowledge. The fool is identified by self confidence and ultimately arrogance that just pours out of their mouth. Which side of this discussion will you choose – what do you want to be known as: someone who correctly speaks knowledge or to be known as a fool that blabs out folly – what's folly: foolishness, silliness, idiocy, irrationality, stupidity – this is not a good list!

Let's work hard to be known for speaking knowledge and wisdom. Hence our need for Proverbs to prevail in our lives.

Why is this so important – well an enormous number of reasons, but one really important one is this: <sup>3</sup> The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch upon the evil and the good.

Be very conscious of this! Yes, there are a multitude of reason why we need to speak wisdom, learn God's knowledge and behave appropriately – but this is a huge reason right here in verse 3! The Lord knows the hearts, speech and actions of everyone. He is not pleased with those that behave in an unrighteous and foolish way, that are NOT trying hard to change.

Would our behaviour change if we were genuinely, consciously aware that we were being watched continually, every second of every day!! Please do commit Proverbs 15:3 to memory.

<sup>4</sup> A gentle tongue [with its healing power] is a tree of life, but wilful contrariness in it (some versions of this verse read 'perverseness' - wilful perverseness ) breaks down the spirit.

This is a fascinating verse – a gentle tongue brings healing – but don't use a gentle tongue as a cover for a perverse intent, breaking someone's spirit. When someone loses confidence deeply, when their morale is broken down, that's a serious state they are in. Don't use what I call "cunning kindness" as a method of breaking someone's spirit.

Remember, we are to be people that bring hope, encouragement, strength, integrity and love in on the scene – not devious means that satisfy our own agenda's or needs.

This is serious - Words matter, so does intent!

Proverbs 15:7 (AMP) - 7 The lips of the wise disperse knowledge [sifting it as chaff from the grain]; not so the minds and hearts of the self-confident and foolish.

Again, the contrast is highlighted between how the wise use words and how the self-confident and foolish use words. Not only do we need to be watchful and careful about what we say but we also need to be watchful and careful regarding who it is that we listen to.

Wise people use their words in a thoughtful, filtering and sifting or scrutinising way. The foolish not so – therefore they use words in a thoughtless, probably flooding, outpouring, glancing and oblique way.

Some people just talk far too much - and in all that talk there will be sin, for sure!

Proverbs 15:23 (AMP) - <sup>23</sup> A man has joy in making an apt answer, and a word spoken at the right moment—how good it is!

One of the ways we increase the joy in our lives is through carefully choosing our words BEFORE we speak. Managing an apt answer and also perfect timing when speaking is not only important as an appropriate or fitting response but possibly even more important if this occurs when providing instruction or counsel to someone. My wife, Ps Lynda is an instructional coach in the education field and she is a master at timing apt responses especially when mentoring her students or other teachers. Correct timing in speech is vital.

## **Prevailing Proverbs – Words**

### **Part 3**

Proverbs 16:24 (AMP) - <sup>24</sup> Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the mind and healing to the body.

Look at some honeycomb images on the internet. See how intricate and perfect they are; the way they all interlink, crafted to intertwine and the structure of the honeycomb stack is surprisingly strong. Honeycomb is a mass of hexagonal prismatic cells – a structural engineers or an architects dream... the genius of God released through nature.

As a child growing up in New Zealand we had honey most mornings on our toast at breakfast. There were beehives on the farm and the beekeepers kept us stocked in free honey. I'll always remember how rich and sweet and smooth and beautiful it was – every day! The healing properties of honey are still being discovered – there are many uses for honey in traditional medicine and there is an ever-increasing array of applications for honey in modern medicine as well.

Yet God tells us that pleasant words are like that – sweet to the mind and healing to the body - **pleasant words are like that – sweet to the mind and healing to the body. Pleasant words are gracious words** - Be someone that shares pleasant and gracious words graciously and become involved in helping other people heal, both mentally and physically. Assisting the well-being of others is a great thing to be a part of. Be involved in that, **on purpose**, by speaking pleasant words.

Proverbs 17:27, 28 (AMP) - <sup>27</sup> He who has knowledge spares (ESV: restrains) his words, and a man of understanding has a cool spirit. <sup>28</sup> Even a fool when he holds his peace is considered wise; when he closes his lips he is esteemed a man of understanding.

The ability to either speak sparingly or even restrain your words puts you in a different class or category of people – Scripture describes people that exercise this discipline as someone “who possesses knowledge”. That’s NOT a small thing – to be regarded by the spiritual world, the heavenly world that created the earthly world as “someone with knowledge” is not insignificant.

How many times does God have to tell us to shut our mouths, speak a lot less, use words sparingly and wisely, crafting our sentences thoughtfully... are we getting the message?

Proverbs 18:4 (AMP) - <sup>4</sup> The words of a [discreet and wise] man’s **(or woman’s)** mouth are like deep waters [plenteous and difficult to fathom], and the fountain of skilful *and* godly Wisdom is like a gushing stream [sparkling, fresh, pure, and life-giving].

Isn't this a tremendous verse to aspire to!? To be known as discreet and wise, a person of depth, difficult to gauge and measure – no pushover for the marketplace of life around you that just wants to trample over everyone! Such a verse to aspire to!

Proverbs 18:5, 8 (AMP) - <sup>5</sup>To respect the person of the wicked *and* be partial to him, so as to deprive the [consistently] righteous of justice, is not good. <sup>8</sup>The words of a whisperer *or* talebearer are as dainty morsels; they go down into the innermost parts of the body.

This is really interesting – there's a lot of talk about now regarding ideologies and DEI – diversity, equity and inclusion - people hammer out lawsuits over being offended by free speech, so much of today's world is now subjectively governed instead of remaining logically objective - there's a lot being said about hate speech – all of these things are very complex topics but these two verses raise some interesting ideas such as any kind of a legal system is really going to struggle in a setting or a culture that is dominated by gossiping, talebearing, innuendo and lying. When all of this catches hold, people want to continue to snack on it and consume it all, like dainty morsels.

Trying to live a healthy life eating only dainty morsels will not work. A judicial system, a legal system that tolerates tale bearing, innuendo and lying is destined to malfunction. It's all going to break down at some point. Just as an example - There's been a massive amount of talk over the last few years about the weaponisation of the DOJ in America. I really don't know much at all about any of that but - Wow – watching some of the interactions amongst the politicians and the legal fraternity - is really scary stuff!

Again – words - with the incorrect agenda or intent. So damaging!

## **Prevailing Proverbs – Words**

### **Part 4**

Proverbs 18:2—21 (AMP) - <sup>20</sup>A man's [moral] self shall be filled with the fruit of his mouth; and with the consequence of his words he must be satisfied [whether good or evil].

<sup>21</sup>Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they who indulge in it shall eat the fruit of it [for death or life].

**Indulge in what...? SPEAKING! Our words are carriers of either death or life. Remember fruit takes time to grow so you won't see the TRUE, DEVELOPED OUTCOMES of that which you have said until much later!**

These are very rich, very powerful and very worrisome verses:

- We need to declare the blessings of God instead of complaining about the curses.



- How you handle your words determines how you handle your life, therefore how you handle words determines how you live!
- Our tongues either produce death or life. What are you producing out of your own mouth – out of everything that you speak, every word you say, what's the percentage of death, what's the percentage of life
- Never allow anything in your mouth that you don't want in your future.
- Your words carry consequences – never blame someone else for something you said.
- You will live in tomorrow what you have been saying today.

Proverbs 21:23 (AMP) - <sup>23</sup> He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from troubles.

Not only earthly troubles, in our day-to-day lives but also please be aware of what Jesus said in Matthew 12:36 (AMP) – “<sup>36</sup> But I tell you, on the day of judgment men will have to give account for every idle (inoperative, nonworking) word they speak.”

Please memorise these two verses...

Proverbs 25:11 (AMP) - <sup>11</sup> A word fitly spoken *and* in due season is like apples of gold in settings of silver.

This verse reminds me of Proverbs 15:23 (AMP) - <sup>23</sup> A man has joy in making an apt answer, and a word spoken at the right moment—how good it is!

*‘Spoken at the right moment, in due season’...apples of gold, golden apples – golden apples appear in various legends across many different ages and cultures. This reinforces the Biblical narrative of the absolute pricelessness of perfectly correct words at the perfectly correct time.*

So powerful that the Biblical text has had fables and heroic stories created from it.

That also makes me wonder if perfectly correct words, delivered in the perfectly correct gracious way, at the perfectly correct time are as rare as apples of solid gold!

Food for thought isn't it - very important we understand the ramifications of our Words.

Proverbs 26:4, 5 (AMP) - <sup>4</sup> Answer not a [self-confident] fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him.

<sup>5</sup> Answer a [self-confident] fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes *and* conceit.

These two verses appear to contradict each other. Let me read to you a really good explanation I located in my ESV Study Bible – a great Bible indeed...

The study note reads this way:

*These verses are especially striking in that they appear to contradict each other. To answer a fool according to his folly – verse 5 – is to keep replying to his remarks in order to show up his folly.*

*Verse 4 gives the general policy (answer not a fool) because you will end up like him yourself as he responds to your reply with further folly – the interchange will have no end.*

*Verse 5 gives the exception (answer a fool) because sometimes he or others may think to their own harm that he cannot be answered.*

That was from the ESV Study Bible.

Yet again – fools and their words – don't get drawn into their conversations nor way of thinking.

## **Prevailing Proverbs – Words**

### **Part 5**

Proverbs 31:26 (AMP) – <sup>26</sup> She opens her mouth in skilful and godly Wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness [giving counsel and instruction].

There is so much to be said about this verse and most certainly this chapter that discusses who we all know as the Proverbs 31 Woman.

She's a remarkable lady that really does focus on life, who focuses on productivity, who focuses on her role as a wife and mother – she prepares for new seasons, she thinks ahead and she gets on with it. She doesn't waste time and she doesn't gossip – her open mouth releases skilful and godly wisdom. This is really important as nearly 40 years of ministry has shown me that many women don't see themselves as integral individuals that powerfully assist with not only steering and guiding society but also helping drive society forward in a way and manner that men don't.

Words reveal who you are...

My experience of many women is they have an acute sense for “that which is not right”. They have this discerning ability for danger, or fraudsters and such-like. I wish I’d listened to my wife a lot more – she told me repeatedly “I don’t trust that person” and ultimately we lost our first home. She was all over it, I wasn’t.

However – one point that I do want to make here is that the skilful and Godly wisdom is in this woman’s mouth whereas scripture so often speaks about the Wisdom of God in the mouths of men.

Access to the wisdom of God applies equally to both men and women. No where do we see in scripture where women are less intelligent than men – that is never said and is definitely not true anyway.

So, ladies, don’t ever think you are not an integral part of steering and guiding society, NEVER let anyone tell you that you are not as smart as men – I’ve heard that wrapped up in the supposed context of why the Apostle Paul said for women to be silent in Church. Such nonsense!

Women not being as smart as men is complete nonsense and must not be listened to.

The wisdom of God is available to ANYONE that wants to learn it, be taught, instructed and corrected in God’s Divine Truth, who is prepared and humble enough to be a life-long learner, putting God’s Word first – initially by effectively managing their own habits, time and priorities.

Read the life of the Proverbs 31 Woman – how incredible and effective is she at managing habits, time and priorities!

We’ve now glanced at a few verses in Proverbs regarding Words – let’s now briefly look at tying this topic off with a few other very relevant scriptures, starting with:

Matthew 12:22-31 – The Pharisees has just attacked Jesus for the healing of the demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute, whom Jesus had healed. They accused Jesus of being in cahoots with the devil.

Jesus’ reply is absolutely staggering – lets pick this up in Matthew 12: 33-37 (AMP)

<sup>33</sup> Either make the tree sound (healthy and good), and its fruit sound (healthy and good), or make the tree rotten (diseased and bad), and its fruit rotten

(diseased and bad); for the tree is known *and* recognized *and* judged by its fruit.

**Verse 33 – The tree is known by its fruit – remember Proverbs 18 tells us that the fruit is produced predominantly by words.**

**Looking at this topic of Words from this perspective as the fruit of our mouths - what's the fruit of your life or the fruit of your mouth? What is your lifestyle and your track record - do you speak more of God's words than your own words?**

<sup>34</sup> You offspring of vipers! How can you speak good things when you are evil (wicked)? For out of the fullness (the overflow, the superabundance) of the heart the mouth speaks. **What is in our hearts comes out of our mouths. Obviously their hearts were full of evil. He called them out on that. Our words are the outward evidence of the inward condition of our hearts.**

<sup>35</sup> The good man from his inner good treasure flings forth good things, and the evil man out of his inner evil storehouse flings forth evil things.

<sup>36</sup> But I tell you, on the day of judgment men will have to give account for every idle (inoperative, nonworking) word they speak. **An account of their words NOT actions!!**

<sup>37</sup> For by your words you will be justified *and* acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned *and* sentenced. **By your WORDS, not actions!!**

Let's look at Luke 6:45 (AMP) - <sup>45</sup> The upright (honourable, intrinsically good) man out of the good treasure [stored] in his heart produces what is upright (honourable and intrinsically good), and the evil man out of the evil storehouse brings forth that which is depraved (wicked and intrinsically evil); for out of the abundance (overflow) of the heart his mouth speaks.

**Our mouths deliver to the outside what our hearts contain on the inside.**

**How do we change what's in our hearts – look at Psalm 119:11 (ESV) –**  
I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

**KJV** - Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Memorise Proverbs, read your Bible daily – get God's Word down into your heart at all costs.

Words matter, conversation matters - We are going to give an account for every idle, inoperative non-working word that has come out of our mouths!

Ephesians 4: 29-31 (AMP) - <sup>29</sup> Do not let unwholesome [foul, profane, worthless, vulgar] words ever come out of your mouth, but only such *speech* as is good for building up others, according to the need *and* the occasion, so that it will be a blessing to those who hear [you speak] (**– JA – never forget that the spirit world is hearing you speak, Jesus is listening to every Word you say**)  
- <sup>30</sup> And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God [but seek to please Him], by whom you were sealed *and* marked [branded as God's own] for the day of redemption [the final deliverance from the consequences of sin]. <sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour [perpetual animosity, resentment, strife, fault-finding] and slander be put away from you, along with every kind of malice [all spitefulness, verbal abuse, malevolence]. <sup>32</sup> Be kind *and* helpful to one another, tender-hearted [compassionate, understanding], forgiving one another [readily and freely], just as God in Christ also forgave you.

Speak good things otherwise you stand a grave chance of grieving the Holy Spirit – that is serious!

Evil speaking must be stopped and put away from us – far away – the further the better, for our own well-being and safety and the well-being and safety of others. We substitute bad speech for good speech, that builds people up.

James 3:5-8 (AMP)

<sup>5</sup> In the same sense, the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See [by comparison] how great a forest is set on fire by a small spark! <sup>6</sup> And the tongue is [in a sense] a fire, the *very* world of injustice *and* unrighteousness; the tongue is set among our members as that which contaminates the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life [the cycle of man's existence], and is itself set on fire by hell (Gehenna). <sup>7</sup> For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and sea creatures, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. <sup>8</sup> But no one can tame the *human* tongue; it is a restless evil [undisciplined, unstable], full of deadly poison.

This is so incredibly powerful and deserves a really detailed study – which I'll do at some stage.

Just a couple of points though:

This incredibly metaphor - Our tongues produce small sparks that start forest fires. Try and spot the initial spark that created the forest fire! It's gone but you are left in the midst of this deadly destructive blaze – so quickly out of control –

why – because of sparky words – bitter, angry, resentful, spiteful, fault-finding, abusive, slanderous malevolent words. Wow!! So scary!!! You can see why we will give an account for every idle word!

Verse 6 – the cycle of man's existence – the up's and down of life are created by and perpetuated by wrong words!

Let's look at 1 Peter 3:10 (AMP) - <sup>10</sup> For, "the one who wants to enjoy life and see good days (good whether apparent or not), must keep his tongue free from evil and his lips from speaking guile (treachery and deceit)".

Obedience to God in daily speech is the pathway to God's blessings – consequently, disobedience to God in daily speech is the pathway to God's discipline.

This is a quote from initially Psalm 34:12-16 and wonderfully sums up the importance of using words correctly – but correctly from God's perspective and not ours!

So, keep handwriting out the book of proverbs – even if its just 10 verses a day. Lets get God's Wisdom prevailing in our lives.

## Section 3

### Prevailing Proverbs – Wisdom

#### Part 1

I've been considering this topic for decades, trying to understand wisdom – there is so much said about Wisdom in scripture. Trying to explain the Wisdom of God is SO incredibly difficult – it doesn't matter from where we start regarding God's Wisdom, as we investigate and study the Scriptures, we always completely land back there, going full circle. It's very likely the Wisdom of God was made available to us to completely underwrite our lives here on the earth, especially our born-again lives as sin and evil have been loosed and released onto and into the planet.

It's a little like the love of God – God is not just lovely and loving, the Word of God, Jesus, He's not just lovely and loving - He is love. The same with Wisdom. Please, work with me in my human attempt to describe the Wisdom of God.

Wisdom is an integral part of God being God. God has seemingly infinite Wisdom. Jesus was wisdom in the flesh yet Proverbs speaks of Wisdom in the feminine but also as something we can easily grow in – and we have direct access to in Corinthians 1:30 (AMP):

<sup>30</sup> But it is from Him that you have your life in Christ Jesus, Whom God made our Wisdom from God, [revealed to us a knowledge of the divine plan of salvation previously hidden, manifesting itself as] our Righteousness [thus making us upright and putting us in right standing with God], and our Consecration [making us pure and holy], and our Redemption [providing our ransom from eternal penalty for sin].

If we were wise we would simply accept with gratitude and deep humility those six life-changing gifts from God:

- 1) A new life in Christ Jesus with all of the opportunity that offers,
- 2) Wisdom from God Himself – the ability to make wise, correct, accurate short, medium and long-term decisions,
- 3) The gift of Salvation itself – the re-introduction of choice - no one has to be separated from God, in hell for eternity, - to choose to go there is really unwise – once the choice had been made clear, only a complete fool would do that. My heart breaks for those people that move away

from God...Parents! Pray for your children and your loved ones every day, every day!!

- 4) Our position of righteousness – being in right relationship with a Holy God, upright and in right-standing with Him,
- 5) Our consecration – making us pure and holy so we can shed ourselves of the sins of the flesh and natural world, living above the evil that's in this world and,
- 6) Our redemption – we had been kidnapped and held captive because of Adams transgression but Jesus paid our ransom and also paid the costs and debt associated with all of our sinning.

Please commit 1 Corinthians 1:30 in the Amplified Bible to memory – it's one that continually changes your life, the deeper it goes into your spirit.

With regard to the Wisdom of God – there are four particular passages in Scripture that really impact me a great deal – I've been trying to gather understanding of these four passages for many years. I think if we really did truly understand the power, the unfathomable depth, the influence, the transforming potential, the staggering infrastructure and support network available to a person that understood this – we see glimpses of that in the life of Solomon – then as a people genuinely trying to manage life in an effective and holy way before a Holy God, not only would we be staggeringly more successful (but successful from God's perspective, not just our own), staggeringly more successful at life itself, but evangelism would be changed forever in the way that the unsaved would flock to us – as we lift up Jesus Christ – the Wisdom of God personified – all people would be drawn to Him – John 12:32 - <sup>32</sup> And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

Let's look at these four scripture passages that are so enormous, incredibly impactful and far-reaching into every area of life – spiritual life, natural life, economic life, family life (married life, parenting life), environmental life, political and geopolitical life, technological life, pharmaceutical and medicinal life, - the list is virtually inexhaustible. Every aspect of human **earthly existence** is able to be completely transformed into the initial sentiment that was prevalent at the of Time of Creation where God looked at everything and said it was "good", then He looked at humankind as said they were "very good".

I'm completely convinced that the Wisdom of God can completely thwart, counteract and rectify every result of sin that's in the earth today – what God did in Jesus when He raised Him from the dead was far greater than what satan



did in Adam when Adam sinned. We Believers can turn around the results of sin with God's Wisdom.

The first one of my four passages of scripture is pretty obvious when you raise the topic of Wisdom:

Proverbs 4:5-11 (AMP) - <sup>5</sup> Get skilful *and* godly Wisdom, get understanding (discernment, comprehension, and interpretation); do not forget and do not turn back from the words of my mouth.

<sup>6</sup> Forsake not [Wisdom], and she will keep, defend, *and* protect you; love her, and she will guard you.

<sup>7</sup> The beginning of Wisdom is: get Wisdom (skilful and godly Wisdom)! [For skilful *and* godly Wisdom is the principal thing.] And with all you have gotten, get understanding (discernment, comprehension, and interpretation).

<sup>8</sup> Prize Wisdom highly *and* exalt her, and she will exalt *and* promote you; she will bring you to honour when you embrace her.

<sup>9</sup> She shall give to your head a wreath of gracefulness; a crown of beauty *and* glory will she deliver to you.

<sup>10</sup> Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of your life shall be many.

<sup>11</sup> I have taught you in the way of skilful *and* godly Wisdom [which is comprehensive insight into the ways and purposes of God]; I have led you in paths of uprightness.

Let's dig around in this a little:

Proverbs 4:5-11 (AMP) - <sup>5</sup> Get skilful *and* godly Wisdom, get understanding (discernment, comprehension, and interpretation); do not forget and do not turn back from the words of my mouth.

"Get" – Strong's Concordance - H7069 – Hebrew: qana – to get, to procure, to buy and /or causatively get the owner to sell, to provoke to jealousy, to recover, to possess, to redeem. These are some of the meanings of this word "get" in the Hebrew text.

To me, this is a focused and deliberate attempt, act or series of acts to **gain possession** even if necessary through the purchase itself of whatever it is that is being targeted. Make obtaining this your focus until you have obtained it! That becomes your life focus – because we see in verse 7 that this product or thing that you are instructed to possess is the "principal thing". The NIV Bible states, "Wisdom is supreme".

Proverbs 5b (AMP) - do not forget and do not turn back from the words of my mouth.

I'm intrigued by this – the instruction is so crystal clear – do not forget what God says and instructs and do not turn back from what God says and instructs, either through forgetfulness, laziness, disagreement with it or simply not accepting what God has said about you, particularly in the New Testament with the In Him, In Whom and In Christ Scriptures.

I'm totally serious about this – I hear so much about us being “broken vessels”, or “we are just clay vessels for the Lord”. Is that just an excuse for not trying very hard to change, not trying very hard to become more holy, simply a way of excusing bad speech and bad behaviour and trying to get away with it – read 1 Peter 1:12 through to 2 Peter 2:5 in the Amplified Bible – an incredible instruction on holiness, speech and behaviour that we need to be developing in our lives – no excuses!

Getting back to the broken or clay vessels – You make sure you apply the New Testament to Jeremiah 18 and see what the New Testament has to say about

- 1) the impurities in the clay (us being the clay – look at that in Romans Chapters 5 and 6) and
- 2) how the New Testament clay is moulded and changed by the potter – Jesus and the Holy Spirit! I really struggle with the Born-Again Church of Jesus Christ as the “broken vessels” angle.

With regard to being “just a clay vessel for the Lord” let's look at that. I suspect those with a sin consciousness get that from 2 Timothy 2 – but let's read it in its entirety – 2 Timothy 2:19-22 (AMP):

<sup>19</sup> But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.”

<sup>20</sup> Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honourable use, some for dishonourable.

<sup>21</sup> Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonourable, he will be a vessel for honourable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.

<sup>22</sup> So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

To me the offer is there – you can be potentially a dishonourable mud pot or work hard to try and become an honourable golden vessel. Verse 22 tells you where to start: <sup>22</sup> So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Proverbs 5b (AMP) - do not forget and do not turn back from the words of my mouth.

This was one of the keys to Solomon's success – 1 Chronicles 28:7 (AMP) –  
<sup>7</sup> I will establish his kingdom forever if he loyally *and* continuously obeys My commandments and My ordinances, as he does today.

ESV reads this way: <sup>7</sup> I will establish his kingdom forever if he continues strong in keeping my commandments and my rules, as he is today.'

So, we pursue Wisdom – obtain, procure, buy, possess – whatever we have to do to get Wisdom and then develop obedience, discipline and commitment to putting God's Wisdom into practice – keeping the commandments as a lifestyle not an occasional practice.

Proverbs 4:6

<sup>6</sup> Forsake not [Wisdom], and she will keep, defend, *and* protect you; love her, and she will guard you.

I think two of the kicker words in this verse are no doubt "Forsake not".

"Forsake" in the Hebrew is word H5800 in my Strongs Concordance – "azab" – meaning to loosen, to relinquish, to permit due to the fact it was loosened, to fail, to forsake, to leave destitute, to leave off, to refuse.

That's a very serious collection of words - add to that NOT – it becomes very apparent that we must NOT do this – we must not refuse, loosen, relinquish, wisdom – why – because "she will keep, defend, *and* protect you; love her, and she will guard you". Now that's a very good short to medium term benefit or list of benefits and an incredibly good long-term strategy. To live a life whereby you are defended, protected and guarded!

<sup>7</sup> The beginning of Wisdom is: get Wisdom (skilful and godly Wisdom)! [For skilful *and* godly Wisdom is the principal thing.] And with all you have gotten, get understanding (discernment, comprehension, and interpretation).

This is a fascinating verse and lays out so very clearly our life's pathway forward, in a way that God not only instructs and approves of, but also has already mandated, established and authorised the pre-existing blessings for.

Again: "Get" – Strongs Concordance - H7069 – Hebrew: qana – to get, to procure, to buy and /or causatively get the owner to sell, to provoke to jealousy, to recover, to possess, to redeem. These are some of the meanings of this word "get" in the Hebrew text.

We have to get this Wisdom – it is the principal thing – "Principal" in the Hebrew – Strongs Concordance H7225 – "re sit" - the first in place, time, order or rank. Specifically a firstfruit – beginning, chief, chiefest, first, firstfruits, first part, first time, principal thing.

This is a comprehensive list and should reinforce to us that seeking out, learning, applying and handing down this vital instruction to future generations that this Divine Wisdom, from God Himself, needs to be the absolute priority of our lives here on earth.

How different would our own lives had been, if our parents had systematically taught us this concept, belief and model from say 3 years old – everyday until we, as the child demonstrated our own disciplines to this, through routine and habit, whereby we ourselves took on the responsibility of furthering the development and implementation of God's Wisdom into our own lives?

Did Mary do this with Jesus? What remarkable insight and understanding did He have of spiritual things at age 12? He astonished the Teachers of the Law at that time – read that in Luke 2:41-52.

<sup>7</sup> The beginning of Wisdom is: get Wisdom (skilful and godly Wisdom)! [For skilful *and* godly Wisdom is the principal thing.] And with all you have gotten, get understanding (discernment, comprehension, and interpretation).

Once we have solidified our life into the constant habit of daily acquiring and possessing of God's Wisdom – then comes the understanding part and the best way to "understand" is to apply.

<sup>8</sup> Prize Wisdom highly *and* exalt her, and she will exalt *and* promote you; she will bring you to honour when you embrace her.

<sup>9</sup> She shall give to your head a wreath of gracefulness; a crown of beauty *and* glory will she deliver to you.

<sup>10</sup> Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of your life shall be many.

<sup>11</sup> I have taught you in the way of skilful *and* godly Wisdom [which is comprehensive insight into the ways and purposes of God]; I have led you in paths of uprightness.

Let's start by defining, or at least trying to define what **Divine** Wisdom is.