

PROVERBS

REVEALS JESUS CHRIST AS
THE PATH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS



THE GOLDEN THREAD SERIES: E-BOOKLET SEVENTEEN
LARRY M. JAYNES

The Golden Thread

Tracing Jesus through the Books of the Bible

An Anthology and Layman's Commentary of Jesus of Nazareth

Larry M. Jaynes

Proverbs

Proverbs – Reveals Jesus Christ as the Path of
Righteousness

E-Booklet seventeen of The Golden Thread Series



The Golden Thread

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Why this eBooklet is free:

We are so glad that you chose to download this eBooklet as our gift to you. Jesus taught us in Acts 20:35, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and we aspire to follow our Lord's teaching. The Apostle Paul also understood this concept, "What is my reward then {for preaching and giving the gospel away freely}? *Verily* that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge" (I Corinthians 9:18). Paul came to realize that to serve the Word *without charge* was both a blessing to those who received the Word and to himself personally because he understood that God Himself is the reward, "I *am* thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1, and see Hebrews 11:6). When you have God in your life as your *exceeding great reward*, then being *with God* you will have everything you need to begin enjoying the more than abundant life. Our prayer for you is that you come to know experientially that "with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27).

Enjoy, and God Bless You!

Scripture Notes:

Number one:

The verses quoted in this book are either from the King James Version of the Bible, or the Amplified Bible — Expanded Edition. When explicatory additions are used by the author in any of the Scripture verses they are enclosed in {braces}. Any other (parentheses) and/or [brackets] found in the Scriptures in this book have already been inserted by the Bible translators.

Example:

John 3:16 (The Amplified Bible):**

For God so greatly loved and dearly praised the world {the people in the world} that He [even] gave up His only begotten (unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him {God's Son, who is Jesus Christ} shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life.

Number two:

All Hebrew and Greek words quoted in this book are transliterated into English, and will be typed in *italics*.

Example:

The verb “loved” in John 3:16 (above) is the Greek word *agapaō* and indicates God's love applied.

Number three:

In the Bible the words *son of God* and *sons of God* is an all-inclusive biblical language and includes men and women, boys and girls, young and old.

Example:

Romans 8:14 (The Amplified Bible):**

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Preamble

"All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." Jesus Christ

Have you ever asked yourself, What is the subject of the Bible? If we were to pose this question to any number of people, responses would be numerous. But what if we could honestly find one single thread of truth in the Bible that would satisfy the question and prove the subject beyond any doubt? We would benefit immensely by having the clearest understanding of God's opened will when reading His Scriptures. The Golden Thread answers this question; Jesus Christ is that one thread, and thus, he is the illustrated subject and theme through both the Old and New Testaments.

This Golden Thread Bible study series can be briefly summarized with three verses of Scripture, two of which are found in the first chapter of the Gospel of John, *"And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,"* and *"we have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth."* The third verse is found in the seventh chapter of the Book of Hebrews, *"Wherefore he {Jesus} is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."*

When comparing these three verses, it is evident that Jesus is, first, according to the Bible itself, the incarnate Word of God; secondly, Jesus is the living subject and focal point of all that the Prophets wrote, and thirdly, Jesus is unquestionably the only way to, not only salvation, but to God Himself. Consequently bypassing Jesus in one's search into the Bible is the main reason that so many people do not understand the heart of the Scriptures. Jesus of Nazareth confessed, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me."* When a man or a woman can come to know Jesus as he is, this is when coming to know the Father and His way, His love, and His truth is assured by Jesus!

So the questions that one must ask and answer when looking for God the Father is: "Have we followed Jesus along his *way*, have we discovered that he is the *truth*, and have we received the *life* that he himself is?" These questions are brought to light and then answered from beginning to end in this series as we follow Jesus through every Book in the Bible, commencing in Genesis, so that you will be able to say with believing confidence, "I have found him, of whom Moses {who wrote the Book of Genesis} in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth."

Preface:

“THE truth of the Lord’s coming runs like a golden thread from Genesis to Revelation. It is not a new doctrine, but an old truth . . . May we see how full the Scripture is of it, and how it runs like a golden thread.” William G. Carr / June 1894

Our intent in this series is to find and then highlight Scripture and follow its woven course through the Bible concerning Jesus Christ, noticing how these Scriptures relate to the whole of the Golden Thread who is Jesus Christ, thereby uncovering the inherent knitted tapestry of Christ that is displayed throughout God’s Word.

Our aim through this approach is in the pursuit of the thread that holds the living Word together, for then the larger mural of the life of Christ and what he has accomplished for humanity is brought clearly into focus.

In the course of this series as we pass through all of the books of the Bible, we will highlight a theme from each book, such as this study in the Book of Genesis. Our focal point will be to emphasize the singular aspect of Jesus Christ as the Promised Seed. Indeed, there are hundreds of thousands of subjects in Genesis and all of them do relate to Christ in various meaningful ways. However, our endeavor is to “figuratively” point a telescope at a single thread and bring this into a clear focus. Then we will hold a microscope over that particular focused concept to clearly view a detail of our wonderful Savior. With this approach, we will actually be magnifying, one by one, biblical concepts, concepts that were previously unclear or totally unrealized, and these will be cataloged for you throughout this series.

As an example, in Genesis we will begin following the thread of the Promised Seed who is Jesus Christ, searching for wherever the path itself leads and thereon we will be guided into both the Gospels and the New Testament; this research method will be followed through from Genesis to Revelation.

Learning about Jesus Christ from only the Gospels can greatly confine and blur one's complete vision of him. Often the Gospels give a summation of the life of Jesus, whereas the why and the purpose and the reason for God sending His Son are largely offered to us in extraordinary details throughout the Old Testament Scriptures and further ahead in the New Testament Scriptures. If we were to only look at the Gospels in a search for Jesus Christ, we may end up drawing conclusions devoid of all the contributing factors and perhaps only understanding about half of the story of his life's purpose as it relates to you — personally.

In The Golden Thread series, we will bring out new insight regarding Jesus by viewing him through both the Old and New Testaments to see the purpose, the prophecies, and the reason why God sent His Son into the world, and then a more palpable representation of him comes into the spotlight to enlighten our day-to-day walks with God which is our goal as believing Christians.

Honestly now, consider this with me; Would it benefit you and me if I framed only a small part of a great masterpiece and still call it a priceless work of art? Oh, let us say for illustration, what if I framed only one square inch of Vincent van Gogh's "Sunflowers" masterpiece, viewing only a piece of one sunflower and some of the background, and placed this up on my wall? How would any of the guests in my home recognize what I had framed? Could you honestly enjoy and appreciate the scope and beauty of the whole artwork with ninety-five percent of the master's brushstrokes missing? How could that inspire a connection to his masterwork, and to the brilliance of the artist himself?

In The Golden Thread, we view Jesus of Nazareth through the entire Bible (a widescreen version), rather than viewing him from just the Gospels because the Gospels are only a part of the whole portrait of our Redeemer, and then we present to you a most clear and enlarged illustration of him that will enlighten you with opened windows allowing in the fresh air and light to reveal hidden truths that reflect upon his heart and purpose that connects you — to him.

Our endeavor will be to discover for ourselves the comfort provided by *The Comforter* as we come to know the Son of God who will truly link our searching thoughts together with those of — our Creator.

The inlayed thread-mark of Christ has no end, for he is woven contiguously back and forth through the fibrous pages of Holy Writ, ever rejuvenating the human heart with revelations and godly insights. Thus, the revelation of Jesus Christ being the Golden Thread starts at the borders of prophecy as he forms cords of a safety net that secures man's entrance into eternity. As we proceed through the books of the Bible, we will be examining within the Scriptures its inherent story showcased within to discover and enjoy the embrace of the living Christ.

The Golden Thread is written as a layman's commentary to guide the reader through the accomplishments of Jesus of Nazareth for the redemption of searching men and women.

Jesus is the principle figure, holding every fragment of the Scripture together in perfect harmony, for he is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:24). Thus, without him there is no spiritual power or wisdom that may be truly gained in regards to heavenly ordained truths that are imparted to believers through understanding the complete Christ of Scripture.

As we discover the Redeemer in the Scriptures, he then reveals true hope and joy within our souls and gives soothing relief from confusion and uncertainty regarding the individual believer's ultimate destiny.

The Golden Thread is not written to cater to any particular set of religious beliefs, but rather crosses religious boundaries and preset dogmas in the exploration to enlighten searching souls with the Bible's inherent narrative of our Savior.

This series highlights the Bible with understandable passages to augment biblical perimeters of thought and provide avenues into Christ's life to portray what he accomplished for the salvation of the world.

The Golden Thread presents Jesus Christ as a true and totally complete Savior and allows his-story to come alive within the heart of one's understanding.

Our goal through the Scriptures is to equip the reader with the keys to make a spiritual connection with the living Christ and the God of heaven and creation.

With the Just One as our guide, we will also find him to be our open Door, and through him we discover heavenly love, peace, joy, grace, and hope as is revealed throughout the Scriptures.

"The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth" Acts 22:14

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Jesus Christ

Proverbs

Reveals Jesus Christ as the Path of Righteousness

The Book of Proverbs has thirty-one chapters with over 560 separate proverbs. Many people read Proverbs on months that have 31 days, a chapter per day. In Proverbs, we find the wisdom of God who is Jesus Christ and he reveals the passageway to the Father of Lights. When we discover Jesus Christ in Proverbs, he lights our pathway through life and begins revealing himself as our Path of Righteousness, leading directly to our heavenly Father, and to His motivating wisdom.

The Book of Proverbs contains so much more than simple common sense knowledge and daily calendar quotations, for the Book of Proverbs reveals the way to Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life. When we come to him in Proverbs, he is recognized as the light of the world and in him we will be further enlightened with his true spiritual wisdom and be directed onto the pathway of God's righteousness.

Some question the validity of proverbial wisdom because many of the so-called religious and philosophical calendar quotes will often contradict themselves. Such as: "two's company and three's a crowd," yet "the more the merrier," or "you can't teach an old dog new tricks" yet "live and learn," or "nothing ventured, nothing gained" yet "it is better to be safe than sorry." The list goes on and on, so this is why some question the truisms of proverbial wisdom.

However, none of the above quotations are parts of the biblical Proverbs, but rather are manmade and may or may not be true words of wisdom, or only fit into one niche, whereas God's Proverbs are perfect in every respect — Always.

Many times there are biblical quotations “said” to be true proverbs and are often posted on refrigerator magnets and on coffee mugs and on doormats, yet they are taken from other Books of the Bible, and though they are statements of truth (when quoted correctly), they are not necessarily true proverbs. For illustration, one so-called word of wisdom that I see misquoted a lot is, “and the truth shall set you free.” I will guarantee you that the truth never “set” anyone free. That statement is an empty platitude based on absolutely nothing biblical. If they were trying for a Bible verse it would read as follows, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make {not “set”} you free”; this quotation is from John 8:32. The word “set” implies the letting go of something, while “make” implies the holding onto something with effort, and that something is Jesus Christ; he has given us the ability to hold onto him (Philippians 4:13), and this endeavor is what makes one free.

Verse 32 begins with the word *and*, and in the preceding verse Jesus said “If you continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; and {AND then} ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,” and Jesus is “the truth” (John 14:6).

Only by continuing with Christ and his words does one become made free, but not “set free” to simply wander off aimlessly without our Savior, but made free to choose to become his disciple, and freely able to follow him to our heavenly Father. That is the truth, and this is what makes one truly free! “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36), and apart from Jesus one is distant from the truth that genuinely makes one free. Galatians 5:1 reads that, “Christ hath made {not “set”} us free,” because it took a lot of work on his part, for with him we are made free, allowing us to unreservedly walk with him to his heavenly Father on our Path of Righteousness.

God’s Proverbs are unchangeable and eternal. They will inspire anyone from any walk of life, nationality, race, religion, or geographical location, in all situations, and at all times.

Proverbs 1:5-7:

-5: A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels {direction as well as guidance from the many teachings from the Book of Proverbs}:

-6: To understand a proverb, and the interpretation {the idea or point presented in a proverb are}; the words of the wise, and {contain} their dark {or *figurative*} sayings.

-7: The fear {respect} of {or *from*} the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools {or people who do not respect the Word of God — will} despise {His} wisdom and instruction {from Proverbs, and consequently are set free to wander aimlessly}.

Proverbs are divinely given rules and standards that help govern men and women who adhere to them on the Path of Righteousness. They give aid to help inspire those who harbor a deep loving respect for the LORD, and are willing to receive His paramount respect in return, and thus men and women will have the keys to begin a wonderful journey through life with God in Christ.

Proverbs provides enthusiastic youthfulness for the mature and wisdom for the youth.

Proverbs 2:1-6:

-1: MY son, if thou wilt receive my words {the words of Proverbs}, and hide my commandments with thee {for *commandments* See the Book of Ecclesiastics, in this series};

-2: So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, *and* apply thine heart to understanding;

-3: Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, *and* liftest up thy voice for understanding; {in prayer, James 1:5 says, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God."}

-4: If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures;

-5: Then shalt thou {truly} understand the fear {the reverent respect} of {and *from*} the LORD, and {the result is, you will} find the knowledge of God.

-6: For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding.

There are three conditions given in verses 1, 3, and 4, each beginning with the word *if*, and only *if* these conditions are met will one truly understand the *fear* {respect} *of the LORD*. The further we look into God's Word, the more we will discover His own respect for us — this comes to a man or a woman as they begin believing that through Christ, God respects us completely. When one truly *finds the knowledge of God*, he will be led to God through Christ who is the "wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:24), for in Christ are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). Christ is inseparable from God's Word, for the Scriptures are the inclusive revelations of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:12).

Proverbs offers encouragement and provides many spiritual principles to directly uplift and help people confidently walk with God. One of my personal favorites in Proverbs is "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17), and this is my inspiration and theme for writing this series. Proverbs provides encouragement to the believer so that he may walk before others with dignity and confidence.

Often proverbs demonstrate comparisons between two parallels or two opposites to drive a definite point home, as in "Where no wood is, *there* the fire goeth out: so where *there is* no talebearer {behind the back – tattler}, the strife ceaseth {two parallels}" (Proverbs 26:20), and "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn {two opposites}" (Proverbs 29:2).

The Book of Proverbs also counsel the believer to watch out for the pitfalls, stumbling blocks, and enticements that this world lays out to catch the believer off guard which ultimately will lead away from the Path of Righteousness.

Proverbs 2:7-22:

-7: He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: *he is* a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

-8: He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

-9: Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; *yea*, every good path.

-10: When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;

-11: Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:

-12: To deliver thee from the way of the evil *man*, from the man that speaketh forward {perverse} things;

-13: Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness;

-14: Who rejoice to do evil, *and* delight in the frowardness of the wicked;

-15: Whose ways *are* crooked, and *they* froward {are devious} in their paths:

-16: To deliver thee from the strange woman {or strange loves that are ungodly and takes one away from God and His Word, See I John 2:15, below}, *even* from the stranger *which* flattereth with her words;

-17: Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

-18: For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead {i.e., no life along her paths}.

-19: None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.

-20: That thou mayest walk in the way of good *men*, and keep the paths of the righteous.

-21: For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.

-22: But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

I John 2:15:

Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Proverbs encourages the children of God to stay on target by inspiring clear, level-headed thinking. Jesus is the way (John 14:6), and as we travel with him, he breathes spiritual knowledge and direction into our understanding to help us stand fearlessly on the path that leads to a peaceable life.

Proverbs 18:10:

The name of the LORD *is* a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it {without being hindered}, and is safe.

The name of the LORD represents everything that the LORD's name stands for, such as His strength, His relationship with man, and His power that gives the believer a refuge. The LORD is our *strong tower*, leading us into our elevated position with Him in the tower of His strength. The word *safe* means to be set up on high, for this is where the righteous safely abide with God in Christ (Ephesians 2:6).

We have been given the righteousness of God through the completed work of the righteous one, Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:9:

And {that I may} be found in him {*in Christ*}, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law {via the works of the flesh}, but that which is {free, and without works} through the faith {believing *faith*} of Christ {given to men and women — it is}, the righteousness which is of God by {Christ's own} faith:

Once our lives were lost, being “without Christ . . . having no hope, and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12), but now in Christ Jesus we have been (thankfully and gratefully) found. Believers have hope, Christ, and God, and the “believing faith of Jesus Christ,” which has given us God's very own righteousness (Romans 10:9–10).

On the path of our God-given righteousness, we can come to know Him as our strong tower of strength. The more we recognize Christ in the Scriptures the greater our God-given righteousness will shine in our hearts.

Proverbs 12:28:

In the way of righteousness *is* life {*life* eternal}; and *in* the pathway *thereof there is* no death.

In the way of righteousness is life, because with the righteousness of God we can know that we have received eternal life. In the *pathway* of righteousness “*there is no death*,” this means that we, being righteous, will receive a future immortality and know the certainty of this even in the present tense. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead {or has died}, yet shall he live {again in resurrection}” (John 11:25).

Today we have the absolute guaranteed promise of receiving our complete redemption, our total immortality, and our heavenly home in the eternity of love to live forever with God, and with our Lord and Savior (Ephesians 1:13-14, Romans 8:23), for we have thankfully found the Path of Righteousness through Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 4:14-15, 18, and 26:

-14: Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil *men*.

-15: Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away {go another way}.

-18: But the path of the just *is* as the shining light {the dawning of day — ever continuing to be brighter}, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

-26: Ponder {deeply consider} the path of thy feet {*feet* represent our standing with God}, and let all thy ways be established {by following Jesus Christ who reveals the way to our God}.

The perfect day means the brightest time of the day when the sun seems to pause still in the sky above as it reaches the highest point on the meridian around noontime. What an excellent illustration of our elevated position on our *pathway* as it leads us into the light, for we are the children of light and of God.

The Book of Proverbs can be likened to being a personal barometer because it contains hundreds of personal indicators that help the believer to visualize his or her personal and spiritual growth in practical living, and gives us ways and means to improvement with clearly marked parameters. Once a believer begins to take in a Proverb and is inspired by that Proverb's unique personality (every separate Proverb has its own disposition), he or she will begin emulating its inherent instruction as he or she becomes the personification of its incarnate truth(s). A Proverb once placed in the heart helps us critique our personal disposition through individual situations that come up in our life. A Proverb can point out when we are walking with the Lord on the Path of Righteousness as well as when we are off base and are being ill-inspired with the wrong concept in mind, and then stimulate us with the correct thoughts as well as revealing the correct actions to take to get ourselves back into fellowship.

I believe that there are Proverbs specific for every situation that could possibly confront us in everyday living, and finding the correct Proverb to be applied at any given moment is the joyous challenge that will last a lifetime. There are Proverbs from giving to receiving, from acceptance of reproof and correction to offering reproof and correction, from being charitable to proper reception of charity, from turning the other cheek to standing your ground, from when to speak up and when to keep silent, and much, much more. Most always there are several Proverbs for any situation under the sun which can be applied in one's personal life-living.

As an example: we have already read Proverbs 27:17, "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." So we can ask ourselves, "Well how is this verse to be used as my personal barometer?" First recall Proverbs 2:1-6 that we read earlier which contained the three "ifs" concluding with this one, "If thou seekest her {Wisdom} as silver, and

searchest for her as *for hid treasures*" and then we find that when biblical wisdom is sought with the mindset of a treasure hunt, then godly promises are granted to the seeker and "Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God." Oh, what a precious and inestimable find!

Proverbs 8:17:

I love them that love me {*me* is God's wisdom, See context of whole chapter}; and those that seek me {wisdom} early shall find me {wisdom}.

Matthew 7:7-8:

-7: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

-8: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

James 1:5:

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

You see, when you or I actually reach out of self to bless another with the Word, then you or I personally receive the blessing as well, that is iron sharpening iron. You and/or I get sharpened in the process, meaning that one gets keener, more alert, or built up, becoming ever more ready to build up our friend(s). Do you see the benefit in speaking and/or doing something to bless a friend? It all comes back to you and/or to me. This of course can work either positively or negatively depending whether or not one wants to sharpen or dull a friend, "He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity" (Proverbs 22:8), and positively "for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7)!

We can enjoy the good reaping when sharpening a friend: "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart" (Ephesians 6:6), and not with lip service "but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:19). There is nothing wrong with being a blessing to others, in truth — it pays! I do not mean to just give flattery for flattery's

sake, “A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet” (Proverbs 29:5), but we can offer genuine compliments when they are called for, and we are inspired to do so. I know that when these blessings come my way I am always thankful, and I respond in kind. “Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it” (Proverbs 3:27).

By practicing kind acts and being courteous or generous in our compliments we may bring to light someone’s inner qualities that are worth pointing out and we receive manifold for our thoughtfulness. Not only that, but our friend(s) will in turn cherish genuine praise and most always will react positively, shine even more, and try to be more worthy of the compliment to the point that we will experience the greatness and reality of *a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend* because both can then give and receive the benefit.

“My son, eat thou honey, because *it is* good; and the honeycomb, *which is* sweet to thy taste: So *shall* the knowledge of wisdom *be* unto thy soul: when thou hast found *it*, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off” (Proverbs 24:13–14). Your *reward* and *expectation* shall be a *sweet* treasure, as *sweet* as *honey*, and always will give one dividends that will last for years and years because sharpening the countenance of a friend builds lifelong habits that will bely your friend to you and to the others you may be inspired to reach out to even beyond your circle of friends. And if, perchance, the person you have blessed does not respond — God will (Mark 9:41). It is only after the action is taken, not before, (“blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed”— John 20:29). *Then shalt thou understand the fear* {awe and respect} *of* {or rather, from} *the LORD, and find the knowledge of God!*

Psalms 45:1:

My heart is inditing {pulsating on, overflowing with} a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made {my own} touching the king {David’s Savior and King, Christ the Lord}: my tongue *is* {like} the pen of a ready writer {to speak of biblical blessings, such as saying, “God loves you, and Jesus gave his life for you!”}.

Job said, “I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage {hold back, restrain} *your grief*” (Job 16:5). Job’s intent was for speaking to bless his friends, and if at any time they would have a cause to grieve over a loss he was already prepared to step in the gap and offer his support. Job was already primed to speak words that would strengthen his friends because he had practiced this throughout his lifetime. He must have held verses and concepts such as Proverbs 24:14 in his heart, “*If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small,*” and he needed great strength to overcome the situations that came up in his life or in the lives of his acquaintances, like we studied from the Book of Job in this series. “Pleasant words *are as* an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones” (Proverbs 16:24). “There is {or There are people} that speaketh like the piercings of a sword {i.e., such as Job’s three friends once spoke to him}: but the tongue of the wise *is* health” (Proverbs 12:18). Speaking words that give aid and comfort is a healthy, lifelong adventure that supplies *health to the bones* — to both the recipient and the presenter!

Years ago I followed a program to read through the whole Bible in one year, but at the end of that year I was only grateful that the year was over because the task of reaching the goal became tedious and the bane of my existence. When I finally finished, I found that I really did not retain much of anything, had even more questions, and certainly was not equipped with words to comfort another. One thing I did realize is that I experienced very little quality time with God. The next time I read the whole Bible it took me twenty-eight and a half years but I did not find it tedious or burdensome because each day I spent much more time contemplating and asking God direct questions. I really learned so much more the second time around because I read with the purpose of learning about my Savior and my heavenly Father. I read with a real purpose in mind and found a treasure (Matthew 6:33) and I gained so much more than I could have ever imagined (Ephesians 3:20). You see, I began walking with my Savior and Him Who said, “*I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*” (Genesis 15:1), and I can attest “*that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*” (Hebrews 11:6), not just for a year but for a lifetime.

I have realized that when studying the individual Proverbs instead of whole chapters for one's own personal growth, that the search has already begun for the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that will be deposited into one's account and that can be withdrawn as needed.

Another example along the same lines of speaking up is found in Proverbs 18:13, where we read, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth *it*, it is folly and shame unto him." Oh, I was such an offender of this *folly* because I was (often, unknown to me because it was second nature) a know-it-all. I used to finish other people's sentences all of the time, however, because of learning that the Proverbs are personal barometers for one's character, over the years this verse has shown me how much I have personally grown in this area. Now when I slip and speak out of turn this very Proverb comes back to mind, often in time for me to apologize for "opening mouth and inserting foot." Then I recall, "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: *and* he that shutteth his lips *is esteemed* a man of understanding" (Proverbs 17:28).

Most of the time when I finish someone's sentence as though I already knew what he or she was beginning to say, on average I was, and still am only correct about once out of every hundred attempts. Countless times in the past I have insulted the person I interrupted, and by doing so I have lowered my own credibility before the person I interrupted. Thankfully, because of the Proverbs in God's Word I have enjoyed a personal detector into my own life and inner psych that has helped me to become a better, Christ-like person, and him I study so that when I do answer someone I pray to at least offer words that Jesus might say to bless others. "The heart of the righteous studieth {through time and meditation} to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things" (Proverbs 15:28).

It is important to note that the Book of Proverbs is not written for the instruction or guidance for the wicked or unbeliever. It is a believer's learning tool, guide, and compass.

~AND~

Never, never ever are the Proverbs to be used to compare oneself with others (such as the *wicked* in Proverbs 15:28, above); the thought process alone can place one on the path of becoming a Pharisee, “Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy” (Luke 12:1). This is a great life-lesson to learn, “if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness” (Matthew 6:23). *Hypocrisy* is the Greek word *hypokrisis* and means the acting of a stage performer. *Hypocrisy* is, simply put, a stage craft to give off a false impression of what is or should be acceptable (i.e., political correctness) which is a pretender’s illusion of genuine feelings to win over the listener(s) to their way of thinking. A great actor can make you laugh, cry, or scream even though the actual storyline is made up.

Pharisees would say and do almost anything to achieve their goals regardless of whom they hurt or who gets in their way or in what they would say once they sell out to act their storylines. Jesus said to some of the Pharisees “ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves” (Matthew 23:15).

Jesus gives us a great representation of Pharisaical thinking and acting.

Matthew 12:18-19:

-18: For John came neither eating nor drinking {saying John was a teetotaler}, and they say, He hath a devil.

-19: The Son of man {Jesus himself} came eating and drinking {the exact opposite of John’s actions}, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber {saying Jesus was a drunk}, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

Oh what an act! They accused John the Baptist of being too good to be true. “Who can trust a man that will not take a drink? Yes indeed, he must be possessed of the Devil!” However, forgetting their initial logic about John they also defamed Jesus because he drank wine, “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8). That is what hypocrisy is, hypocrisy will inspire one to say and do almost anything to be considered squeaky clean,

even if it means contradicting themselves over and again in the same breath. That is the kind of wisdom that justifies her children which were made in the image of Pharisees who produce their *twofold more the child of hell than* themselves. This is why political correctness (PC) is getting worse and worse around the whole world to this very day.

You know the Pharisees read their Bibles all of the time, including the Book of Proverbs but they only saw the evil and the bad in people they knew by focusing on the negative side of life. They believed the worst in mankind (excluding themselves and their followers) and projected their tainted concepts onto the masses. As a direct result, when the “greater than Solomon” (Luke 11:31) who is Jesus Christ arrived and began living a biblically principled lifestyle the Pharisees wanted to kill him, and eventually they had a large part in doing just that. They were the most religious people on earth, defenders and protectors of their Divinely-given religion, but they were blinded to the truths within it when Jesus arrived to bless them, even though their religion foretold of him for centuries, and whom they read about in anticipation every blessed Sabbath day of their entire lives. They even had a program to read through the entire Old Testament out loud every three years in the Temple and local Synagogues to make sure everyone was on the same page they were.

Acts 13:27-30:

-27: For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers {which would include Pharisees}, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*.

-28: And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

-29: And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre.

-30: But God raised him from the dead:

The Proverbs are written not to condemn you, me, or anyone else, but to help God’s children find their way to living with the wisdom that is only found in the truth of God’s words, that you can then place in your heart. “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the

joy and rejoicing of mine heart” (Jeremiah 15:16). Proverbs were not written just so we can find fault in others but to help God’s children stay in check, to better ourselves in life, every day living for the glory of God and for the honor of our Lord and Savior.

Everyone needs improvement, and the Proverbs help supplement that venture, “For a just *man* falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief” (Proverbs 24:16). Have we ever fallen into *mischief*, have we ever sinned, or were we always and forever just? “If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (I John 1:10), “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin” (Proverbs 20:9, and See John 8:7). Thankfully, what we also have is forgiveness (I John 1:9), enough so that we can, over and again, rise back up and walk on the Path of Righteousness. This is what Proverbs promises you and me, giving us seven-to-one odds that we can improve our personal walks with God. “For the good that I would I do not {oh, but I wanted to do *good*}: but the evil which I would not, that I do {but I did not want to do *evil*}}” (Romans 7:19), as is often the real case in life; still the living Word is our eternal pacifier. The only perfect person was Jesus. We as human beings are subject to error (Hebrews 12:1-2); however, we in Christ can ride along on his coattails while we learn to better ourselves along our way to that perfect day — when Christ returns to take us home to stay!

Proverbial advice: When you are reading the Book of Proverbs, look for a Proverb that jumps off the page, one that inspires you, and then study it like a treasure hunt as you polish it up by perhaps writing it down and looking at it through the day. You were inspired to notice the verse(s) for a reason, think about what is imparted, work those ideas in your heart, look for more verses in the Bible that will relate to “your” particular Proverb(s) and before too long you will begin enjoying its intrinsic value, value that will be worth more than anything to you because it will continue to reward and inspire you a lifetime.

Proverbs 3:13-18:

-13: Happy *is* the man *that* findeth wisdom, and the man *that* getteth understanding.

-14: For the merchandise of it *is* better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

-15: She *is* more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

-16: Length of days *is* in her right hand; *and* in her left hand riches and honour.

-17: Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness, and all her paths *are* peace.

-18: She *is* a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy *is every one* that retaineth her.

I have many Proverbs that I think of as my personal rewards for the diligent work that I have put into them because I have given my own time in learning about them, and they have in return brought me closer to God, Who is my “exceeding great reward” (Genesis 15:1). “The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness {which is an honest work} *shall be* a sure reward” (Proverbs 11:18). We need not tell anyone that we have found a treasure because once we start living off it other people that we touch through our lives will be enjoying them through our personal actions in living them in our everyday life.

“Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge” (Proverbs 23:12). Proverbs are like guidelines rather than laws, not written to condemn but to encourage you to do more good than not (like you can read in Ecclesiastes below), more than you possibly thought you were capable of, and thanks to the specific Proverbs that you and I have purposely placed in our hearts we become more than conquerors.

Ecclesiastes 7:15–20:

-15: All *things* have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just *man* that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked *man* that longeth *his life* in his wickedness.

-16: Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself?

-17: Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?

-18: *It is* good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth {respects} God shall come forth of them all.

-19: Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty *men* which are in the city.

-20: For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Proverbs inspires one from within to become a better person incrementally, day by day, which brings lasting change without, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he {or *so he becomes*}” (Proverbs 23:7). No, we will not feel like we have arrived after bringing a Proverb into our hearts and developing it in practical living because there is always more to learn and grow thereby, but with a Proverb in mind we can become a changed man or women of God with intestinal fortitude equipped with practical tools to actually reach out of ourselves to lend a helping hand to our fellow man, and then to become the recipient of the blessing of giving.

We cannot change people by reading Proverbs and/or by finding the fault in them but rather by living the principles recorded in Proverbs to the best of our ability. We first change the image of us rather than our outlook on others, and allow truth to be our inner treasure. Are there Pharisees today? Oh, indeed, but let us be concerned about our own personal walks with God and leave them be and instead endeavor to not judge our friends and other people we may know about, and simply live for the LORD our God and endeavor to be more like our wonderful Savior as we enjoy the principles we learn from God’s Word. “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things {Proverbs are filled with these same sentiments}” (Romans 2:1).

Even though many Proverbs illustrate the untoward behaviors of both the ill-informed and the knowledgeable, they are never to be used as accusative attacks against others, but more of a reflective tool so that we can honestly acknowledge that we are not exemplifying traits such as the wicked, evil, foolish, slothful, etcetera that a Proverb may be revealing. Often, when we are honest, we can see ourselves on the negative side of the

ledger and come to realize that we desire to be on the other side, the side of the respectful, the good, the righteous, the studious, etcetera that a Proverb may be revealing and leading us towards, and then, work to change until we do — with God's help.

I Corinthians 10:13:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

Let us look at two verses of Scripture from Proverbs that have very much perplexed some Bible students.

Proverbs 26:4-5:

-4: Answer {*anah*} not a fool according to his folly {*ivveleth*}, lest thou also be like unto him.

-5: Answer {*anah*} a fool according to his folly {*ivveleth*}, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

First notice that on the surface in these Proverbs it appears that the two verses seem to contradict each other because verse 4 seems to be stating that we should NOT answer a *fool*, while verse 5 gives the opposite impression and tells us TO answer a *fool*.

So what is the *answer*? Verse 4 explains that we cannot reason with a *fool* without stooping down to his level, while verse 5 explains the reason why and how to *answer* a fool's question. You see, if we *answer* him *according to his folly* he will instinctively believe that we think as he does (foolishly). The Proverb is hypothetical, filled with overflowing truths and concepts to utilize in our daily living for the Lord with the correct mindset. "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness" (Proverbs 15:2). If a *fool* was to ask you a stupid question and you give an *answer* he will think that you are on his level which will further motivate him to begin talking down to you in the future, and he will feel justified in his own *conceit* (concepts, silly or wrongful ideas). "It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom"

(Proverbs 10:23), and we are to, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without" (Colossians 4:5).

The word *answer* in the Hebrew Text is *anah* and it means to answer or to respond, but to respond to counterbalance *his folly*. The four English words *according to his folly* come from only one Hebrew word *ivveleth* meaning foolishness, as in "the foolishness of fools *is folly*" (Proverbs 14:24). To examine, let us say someone says to you, "This is a rotten day," and if you are caught off guard you may respond with a nod in the affirmative or *answer* him with a similar agreement; that is: *thou also be like unto him*, when you could have said something along the lines of the following, "This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalms 118:24), which is not answering him *according to his folly* but according to truth, and believe me, that day will cause you to both *rejoice* and be *glad* for speaking and acknowledging the truth that God made this day for you rather than perhaps begin having a rotten day yourself.

As a practical example, say you are at work and someone suggests to you, "Let's start our first break ten minutes early," but all he really wanted to do is add that time to his original fifteen-minute break, thereby turning fifteen minutes into twenty-five (who knows, perhaps he really wants to stretch the break to even more time). If you go along with his suggestion, he then has a partner and you both would be stealing ten minutes each from the employer, and if you did, then the verse warns *lest thou also be like unto him*. So, to answer (which you are encouraged to do in verse 4) you could say "No thanks, I still have some work to finish up before my break." This one sentence prevents him from being *wise in his own conceit*. Of course you could say, "He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster" (Proverbs 18:9), but then you will probably destroy any future chance to bless him if he was ever ready to receive God's Word from you and accept his Savior. Answering with the right words is answering *not a fool according to his folly* but answering with wisdom, which can lead the conversation and situation to a different outcome of your own choosing (at the allotted break time) that has no *folly* involved. This is answering *a fool according to his folly* without the fool realizing that the situation has completely changed in your favor and is the right thing to say and do,

“Forsake the foolish, and live {abundantly}; and go in the way of understanding” (Proverbs 9:6).

One can both benefit from and enjoy both verses while working along in your day because you will be doubling your rewards. First, is that you will be working for the boss and getting paid for an honest day’s work (Ephesians 6:5–8). Secondly, you will be following biblical instruction (Proverbs 26:4–5), which will now pay you in eternal dividends, and perhaps inspire your coworker to at least work up until his break as he will have no one to conspire with, and perhaps he will feel that he has earned his pay like you chose to do.

There are more than a thousand and one different instances where this one Proverb can be used to help you live and enjoy the more than abundant life, especially when someone tries to take you down another path than the one you are walking on, one that just may lead one down the path of the wicked.

Proverbs 4:14–17:

-14: Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil *men*.

-15: Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

-16: For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause *some* to fall.

-17: For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

I Peter 3:15:

But sanctify {set aside some room for} the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear {respect, for both God and the person(s) to whom you are speaking}:

The Bible is perfect and entire right down to its smallest jots and tittles. What we have in the example above is a situation very similar to the questions the Pharisees and the Herodians proposed to Jesus in the Gospels

when they came tempting him, along with his answer that put the fools to flight.

Matthew 22:15-22:

-15: Then went the Pharisees {a religious group of pious persuasions}, and took counsel how they might entangle him {Jesus} in *his* talk.

-16: And they sent out unto him their disciples {disciplined hypocrites} with the Herodians {an irreligious group of political persuasions}, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any *man*: for thou regardest not the person of men. {Meaning he was not a respecter of persons. Oh how they were buttering him up with flowery accolades, implying that he was equally fair when critiquing different parties or peoples such as the rich or poor or religious or secular.}

-17: Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? {They proposed two questions of opposites, knowing full well that if Jesus said that they should give to God, then the Pharisees would have been at least (outwardly) pleased, but if he said that they should give to Caesar by paying taxes, then the Herodians would have been at least (outwardly) pleased, but either way one group could go after him for either being pro-God or pro-government.}

-18: But Jesus perceived their wickedness {See where their motives emanate from — *wickedness*. Political correctness (PC), and religious correctness (RC) were working together to only one end, to expose Jesus as a fraud.}, and {Jesus} said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites {actors, mere performers, pretenders, counterfeiters residing over the house of Israel}?

-19: Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

-20: And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription?

-21: They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

-22: When they had heard *these words*, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

In the Texts the Pharisees from a religious perspective were asking Jesus in essence: “It is not lawful for us Judeans to pay tribute to Caesar who is an unbelieving Gentile —is it?” While the Herodians from a secular perspective were asking Jesus the exact opposite question: “It is not lawful for Roman subjects to pay tribute to the Temple and your religion —is it?” In Mark’s Gospel we can read both questions, “Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give” (Mark 14–15)? They believed Jesus was now stuck in a vice and had to choose only one answer but —did he? Jesus answered both questions which dumfounded both groups, and he did this with a one-sentence answer, *Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s*.

Jesus changed the whole situation and put to silence the wisdom of fools without any confrontation whatsoever by simply walking with wisdom, “For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (I Peter 2:15).

They could not “entangle him in *his* talk,” as they were hoping. They were anticipating that Jesus would have agreed with only one side of their two opposite questions. They were attempting to lead Jesus to only one conclusion and equally lean against the other. There is nothing wrong with paying your taxes or giving for godly purposes, which was his basic conclusion. Jesus took the wind out of their sails and removed the cause for any debate and ended their trickery, and so they *left him, and went their way*, probably feeling like fools, even though they were supposedly the smartest people on earth.

Proverbs instructs us how to be better people and how to help inspire those around us in our sphere of influence rather than to be judges over the faults of others. This is the jewel within the Book of Proverbs that we may mine out and enjoy with the benefit of being very pleasing to the LORD, and those around us just may also desire to be with us and perhaps emulate us as well. “When a man’s ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Proverbs 16:7).

“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise” (II Corinthians 10:12), and the individual Proverbs are written to give us absolute wisdom that stands the test of both time and everyday life situations.

Proverbs 15:23:

A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word *spoken* in due season, how good *is it*.

Proverbs 15:1:

A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

Proverbs 24:26:

Every man shall kiss {adore, cherish} *his* lips that giveth a right answer {he or she admires a truth-bearer who speaks loving advice and counsel with the reference to God’s words, unless they have set their heart on rejecting Him}.

Proverbs 27:9:

Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so *doth* the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel.

Proverbs 12:15:

The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel *is* wise.

The more we walk with God, the brighter our future is realized. This is our Path of Righteousness, and is the way that Jesus said we should follow him, “Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the {path} way, which leadeth unto life {and Jesus is the *life*,— John 14:6}, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:14).

For one example, in the time of Noah, he and his family of eight souls out of the world's populous were the *few there be that find it*, and they had a safe passageway into a new life as we also have guaranteed us in Christ by knowing him as our Path of Righteousness.

John 8:12:

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life {*shall have the light*, which promotes and sustains spiritual growth in one's *life*}.

When we look to Christ Jesus, he begins leading the way for us to follow through the straight gate to his wisdom. Jesus is the way to the Father of lights, and along our way, Jesus reveals himself as our Path of Righteousness that leads all the way up to God and is revealed to us through the proverbial wisdom from the Book of Proverbs.

Bonus Chapter

Looking Unto Jesus

(Note: All bonus chapters relate to the subject of *The Golden Thread*)

Hebrews 12:1-2:

-1: WHEREFORE seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

-2: Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is {now} set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The *great cloud of witnesses* is the Old Testament believers talked about in Hebrews chapter 11. The witness of these believers was their faith, their positive believing faith and inner hope and conviction in the coming of Jesus Christ which even today is recognized when reading the Bible. In retrospect, from the Old Testament Scriptures, we today are still *compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses* who left us vividly written examples about how they looked to Jesus in their time, to inspire the people of this current age of grace to reach forward to Jesus.

The race that is set before us is to look to Jesus just like the Old Testament believers practiced. Their past examples encourage us to daily look to Jesus, for in him and with him is continued access to God our heavenly Father and His merciful grace. Jesus taught that when we pray, we are to offer our prayers up to God in the name of Jesus Christ (John 14:13-14). This further helps us place him at the forefront of our daily thinking, just as we are always in his daily thoughts, and through our prayers he is in ours.

Today we can look to Jesus Christ and rely on his believing faith, knowing that he is *the author and finisher* of our own believing faith. The word *author*

means princely leader, the first and foremost. The word *finisher* means to bring to full maturity, to the completion of where our believing faith will ultimately take us – to God – to eternity. Thus, the *author and finisher* of our believing faith is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the first and the last, the alpha and the omega, infusing his own believing faith to enhance our personal believing faith in him who gave his all in all for you and me. Jesus is the *finisher*, completing and perfecting our believing faith which enables us to believe in God, through believing His Word.

Ephesians 2:8 records, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that {faith is} not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God.” This verse is not referring to a man or woman’s personal faith, and is why the Epistle says, *that not of yourselves*, but rather it is *the gift of God*. Then, to what faith is God referring? He is referring to the faith of Jesus Christ; this is our gift to begin enjoying our Christian life on the Path of Righteousness.

The main difference between man’s faith and the faith of Jesus is that human faith can only rise up to believe in that which is seen. In stark contrast, the faith of Jesus Christ is given so men and women can rise all the way up to believe in that which is not physically seen, yet is spiritually real – such as salvation.

In truth, man needs Jesus to fulfill his own faith, as we read in Hebrews 12:2 “Jesus {is} the author and finisher of our faith.” Having Jesus’ own faith, we become enabled to perceive the spiritual realities of God. Christ’s faith is given to every believer at the moment of salvation, for “God hath dealt to every man {every believer} the measure of faith (Romans 12:3).

We can genuinely and honestly receive the actual *gift of God*, which is our salvation, without any works on our part because of the faith salvation imparts. Another reason why Ephesians 2:8 reads, *and that not of yourselves* is because we did nothing whatsoever to earn salvation, nor can we do anything to lose our salvation – that is why it is such a precious gift. Salvation is something God through Christ made available to us and is freely given. God’s grace, His divine favor of love, is manifested to us through His gift of salvation.

With Jesus' own faith, he literally becomes our spiritual window to the Creator; that is certainly much greater than going it alone, with so-called "blind faith." Jesus' own faith helps us perceive God in the genuine light that His Word reflects. Rather than God remaining an unknown entity or enigma Who is out there someplace just out of our reach, Christ and his faith helps those who are trying to find their way to the Creator Who dwells through all eternity.

We all receive gifts at certain times of the year, on our birthdays, Christmas, and other special occasions. Yet of all the gifts we have ever received, nothing will be as everlasting as *the gift of God*. *The gift of God* is our salvation, given freely on account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

A gift is never worked for, earned, or even necessarily deserved. Gifts are simply given to bless and make one happy. Many of the gifts that we have received as early as last year are already gone, used up, or spent, but the gift of God is eternal. God's gift is given to men and women by His divine grace, which is unmerited and unearned, yet eternally present, and we can gratefully accept it and daily appreciate its fulfillment.

Ephesians 2:9:

{And this gift is given} Not of works, lest any man should boast.

In the sight of God, no one is more saved than another for we believed unto God's own righteousness (Romans 10:9-10), which gives complete salvation along with total access into His grace and family (Romans 5:2, and Ephesians 2:19). If salvation could be obtained by *works*, then logic commands that one could give more or pray more or be a better citizen or Christian than his neighbor is, and he could *boast* on the *works* performed, thinking this would give him an edge toward his salvation.

However, if works were the way to get into heaven, then God's grace (freely given) would become totally worthless and most of us would never make it on through to heaven.

Thankfully, salvation is not based on our *works*, but as the Scriptures reveal, salvation is by God's grace because Christ has already done the

work and paid the full price in order that we may sincerely believe to receive. We receive our salvation on account of a friend, on your friend, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

This is the friend we read about in Proverbs "there is a friend *that* sticketh closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24), and he indeed laid down his life for each and every one of us. I do believe that if you or I were the only person to believe, then this close friend would still have laid down his life so that you or I may walk on the Path of Righteousness with our Savior!

Indispensable completeness of our believing faith is what we may expect to receive by simply *looking unto Jesus*, rather than only looking to our own abilities (or lack thereof), or our own strength (or lack thereof), in the hopes of receiving spirituality and blessings from God. With the believing faith of Christ, men and women truly have avenues into an abundance of promises recorded in God's Word.

When studying, for instance, the life of King David from the Books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, or from the Psalms, we find how he looked forward to the coming of his Redeemer, and we can aspire to his examples. We can read about David who was just a man, a man who tried to walk with God to the best of his abilities.

We can also see how David failed when he did not look to Jesus, but more important is that we can see him succeed whenever he was looking ahead to the Savior, the hope of his life. When and where David looked to Jesus, David had believing in God's Word, and then he became a great recorded *witness* for us to still read about centuries later.

King David also wrote about the hope of Christ's coming throughout the Book of Psalms. When teaching about the resurrection of Christ on the day of Pentecost in the Book of Acts chapter 2, the Apostle Peter refers back to David as a witness of Christ. Peter says of David that he always had Jesus Christ in the forefront of his thinking and writing as a great example for Peter and all believers.

Acts 2:25-26:

-25: For David speaketh concerning him {recorded in the 16th Psalm}, I foresaw the Lord {Jesus Christ} always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

-26: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

What gave David this inner joy, continued hope, and a glad tongue was having a personal understanding of his Lord and Savior, inspiring David to speak and write of him, being moved by God's inspiration (II Peter 1:21).

The Old Testament Scriptures continue giving us joy, hope, and a glad tongue, the same joys that David and Peter knew when reading or speaking the Word of God because they knew Christ's heart and had placed their allegiance, fidelity, and future hope in him. Peter uses the witness of David to introduce Christ who is our entrance into God's family.

Acts 4:11-12:

-11: This {Jesus Christ} is the stone which was set at nought {rejected} of you builders {Peter is addressing Israel}, which {or rather who, Jesus} is become the head of the corner {of the spiritual church and family of God}.

-12: Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Jesus took our sins and shortcomings to his cross in order to present you and me to God as those who are now saved. When we look to Jesus with a believing heart in expectation to receive, we will find the true spiritual presence and presents that God gives.

God now sets this daily joy before us at the table of life, and all the Word requests is for us to believe to receive, and it is our joy to enjoy by looking to Jesus, our friend, the author and finisher of our faith.

A Second Bonus Chapter

God's Merciful Grace!

(Note: This Bible study was first posted on our website on Thursday, June 21, 2001 as part of our Seasons of Grace series, which we posted quarterly at the beginning of each new season.)

One day we received an e-mail from a woman wanting to know what our thoughts were regarding two religious denominations. I wrote her back and explained that as a Christian, I always endeavor to look at believers from God's point of view, as God always looks at the heart, and He always loves us (John 3:16). I try to see the best in people and I am very happy to know that people love God, rather than worrying about where someone may fellowship around God's love, mercy, and grace.

Romans 12:9 encourages us to "Let love be without dissimulation {or without discrimination}." The next day she e-mailed back and stated that I was perfectly correct, then for about three pages she explained the evils of those two denominations, and warned me about how devilish and sinful they were (in her opinion). We have not been given the privilege from God to be dispensing condemnation or His wrath (Romans 12:19). She became a judge over other people and wanted to hold onto her anger about other churches and people simply because they did not go to her church or believe and practice her denominational doctrines.

We should be so blessed that God called us individually to His gracious Word, and be happy for all of God's children. Jesus said in the Gospel of John 10:16 "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." It is futile to worry about what other people may think or believe; as someone once said, "a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." In other words, it is next to impossible to change someone's mind when they believe in a certain way — right or wrong.

We would be much better off being concerned and content that we ourselves walk with God and that He has mercy and grace on our souls rather than worrying and being negative about what other people may or may not believe. We Christians could be much kinder, happier, and gentler, Christ-like people if we were more concerned about ourselves rather than worrying about what our Christian neighbors might practice or think (Galatians 6:10). Besides, what other people practice and think is honestly between them and God, and we really do not know for certain what people think in the heart of their hearts as stated in I Corinthians 2:11.

I Corinthians 2:11:

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save {except} the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Only God knows for sure what is in the heart of man “for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee” (I Chronicles 28:9).

Romans 2:1 reads, “THEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.” This verse is quite expressive in reflecting that one’s judgments will always and ultimately return back to those who assume to sit as judges over other people (not in the laws of the land, but in spiritual issues of the heart).

Matthew 12:36-37:

-36: But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

-37: For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

God’s merciful grace can be discovered and enjoyed anywhere by anyone because wherever you are, so is God, and where other Christians are, so is God because He dwells in believers without discrimination. Recognizing this is acknowledging the immensity of God’s merciful grace upon our

own lives because we have not always walked perfectly with God and followed His will completely. Yet God still loves us and He has loved and forgiven us for our faults just as His loving grace and forgiveness is upon others who love and walk with Him to the best of their abilities.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:1 “JUDGE not, that ye be not judged.” This is the instruction from our Savior, and he always spoke for God: “For I {Jesus} have given unto them the words which thou {God} gavest me; and they have received *them*” (John 17:8). So the question is: Have we received the words of God, have we believed them, are we judged or are we not judged? If we judge not, then the promise of God is that we are not judged. Let us follow Jesus’ teaching of God’s words about judgment in Matthew.

Matthew 7:1-5:

-1: JUDGE not, that ye be not judged.

-2: For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete {measure out}, it shall be measured to you again {“for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” — Galatians 6:7}.

-3: And why beholdest thou the mote {a tiny splinter of wood} that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

-4: Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

-5: Thou {would be a} hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.

The *beam* and the *mote* are literally the same things with this one huge exception: the *beam* is like having a figurative “telephone pole” stuck in one’s eye causing one to not have good vision (nor comprehension in terms of judging others), as opposed to a fragment, a small *mote* that may be in someone else’s eye.

Just to judge for judgment sake and being critical of others is as Jesus said, hypocritical, and the same judgments will always return back to the giver. Jesus is teaching us that it is quite easy to find fault with others, especially

when other's faults are the same as our own (Romans 2:21-22). One of the great lessons in this teaching by Jesus is that as we get healed in our lives from our own faults when we are not judgmental, then we become truly able to, first forgive, and then help another walk with God without judging each other.

Proverbs 26:20:

Where no wood is {such as the *beam* or the *mote*}, *there* the fire goeth out: so where *there is* no talebearer (to murmur, whisper, backbite, slander), the strife ceaseth.

In the context of Jesus' teaching, the lesson shows us that judging others is having a beam in our own eyes, but when one stops judging, then he or she will become healed from that temptation to judge. Ultimately then one can begin to help others out of this same temptation of nitpicking away at people they may love or acquaintances or even others they may not even know personally, whether they are living in or out of their spheres of influence. Judging is always detrimental, for *with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again*.

Psalms 15:1-3:

- 1: LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
- 2: He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in {or from out of} his heart.
- 3: *He that* backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

As we become conquerors over our own shortcomings, such as being judgmental, then with God's help we may show fellow believers the true graces that God has bestowed upon us can also become theirs. This is when we "clearly see" God's merciful grace upon our own lives when our focus is to bless and help our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Romans 12:18, and 14:19:

- 18: If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

-14: Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and the things wherewith one may edify {build up} another.

God sees the motive behind thoughts and actions and He looks at His children with unconditional love and not on the underlying doctrines of establishments to judge one group better than He would another. No one group can stake claim to having a corner on all the truth; I do not know it all and neither does anyone else. It is when people think they know it all that they end up shutting all the doors of true outreach and forgiveness, for they will begin to imagine that everybody else is wrong except for themselves. The same thing happened to the Apostles back in the Gospels: "And John answered and said {to Jesus}, Master, we {the Apostles} saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us" (Luke 9:49).

The Apostles shunned someone who was not following their religious practices, so Jesus further instructs them to "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us" (Luke 9:50). Sure, not every place teaches everything accurately and more than likely, some will teach things that you or I do not agree with. If someone loves God and is fellowshiping with other likeminded Christian believers, then praise the LORD, because He is blessed and so are they.

I have no doubt that most Christian people are motivated and inspired by God's Word, love, and grace, and to think evil or less of others is a waste of time. If they are teaching God's Word and the people are blessed to receive it; then praise God for their efforts (Philippians 1:15-18); Paul wrote, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (II Corinthians 13:8). In other words "the Word of God is not bound" (II Timothy 2:9) because God's Word is always liberating and will always build up the believers with grace when it is planted in the fertile ground of the human heart.

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). God is all love and His Word encourages us to be followers of Him with and in His love, and not allow

the temptation in our minds of judging others who also love God and who are, according to Jesus, “for us.”

Ephesians 5:1-2:

-1: BE ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

-2: And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.

If we are blessed in our place of worship, then praise God for our ministers, teachers, and fellow believers. However, if we are being beaten down over and over again with condemnation and hell fire, and if they are teaching us to dislike other believers from other places, then perhaps we should look for a better place to fellowship.

I do believe that there are wonderful ministers, teachers, and preachers living in almost every community who would love nothing better than to teach you the Scriptures, who are inspired by God to encourage, strengthen, and build up their congregation in love. If we need to move on for spiritual nourishment, we can be thankful that our former place of worship helped to propel us into searching for a better way, especially when we find it, and our lives become ever more blessed for God’s grace and mercy in our lives.

Philippians 1:15-18:

-15: Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

-16: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: {Paul was in jail for preaching — no freedom of speech for a man of God back then!}

-17: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel.

-18: What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

I enjoy reading verse 18 above, from the Amplified Bible ** “But what does it matter, so long as either way, whether in pretense [for personal ends] or in all honesty [for the furtherance of the Truth], Christ is being proclaimed? And in that I [now] rejoice, yes, and I shall rejoice [hereafter] also.” Paul’s teaching is that regardless of who preaches Christ there is cause to *rejoice*, yea to rejoice repeatedly, for he *will rejoice* as we also can *rejoice*. When *Christ is preached*, then people receive the Word of God, and the Word can make people free. God’s graceful Word will bless and strengthen people regardless of people’s motivations for preaching (though most preachers and teachers have only godly intentions). God’s Word will always profit (II Timothy 3:16) and give blessings to the recipient, for this is how God designed His gracious Word!

Isaiah 55:11:

So shall my word {God’s Word} be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void {useless}, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

God’s gracious Word encourages us to always look to Jesus rather than to look on man because the more we look at people, the more we will see error, the sin nature, and imperfection. However, the more we look to Jesus, the more perfect we will become and as we gain his perspective and incentive, we can learn to love believers to a much greater dimension. I Peter 4:8 encourages, “above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.”

Hebrews 12:2a (Amplified):**

Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, who is the Leader and the Source of our faith [giving the first incentive for our belief] and is also its Finisher [bringing it to maturity and perfection]. . .

An honest concern and question for some people is: Which Church, or which group of people are truly the ones that God blesses? For some people the answer is obviously clear, the one they belong to! This is true;

however, all believers have received an unconditional and eternal salvation in the sense that God Himself always looks at the heart rather than at the denomination or group we might belong to, "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7).

God is love (I John 4:8, 16), and according to His Word anyone who is saved belongs to Him for eternity because God is no respecter of persons or groups. Anyone, anywhere, and under any circumstance can become saved and become a member of His household. We are members of the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:27), and we may fellowship around God's healing Word with whomever we desire.

God is our Father and He is blessed when we are blessed; He is never upset simply because we go somewhere to learn more about Him Who counsels and comforts us in our deepest spiritual thoughts. God loves us unconditionally right where we are, and He never thinks ill of us for fellowshiping with His children and wanting to know more about Him: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jeremiah 29:11). When believers are receiving spiritual nourishment at their place of worship, then who am I to say that they are wrong, devilish, or whatever? Nobody, that's who!

I John 2:9-11:

-9: He that saith he is in the light, and hateth {disdains, dislikes} his brother {in Christ}, is in darkness even until now.

-10: He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

-11: But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

God has given to His children tremendous light and understanding through knowing His gracious Word and the only thing that will turn the light off (spiritually speaking) is to dislike fellow believers, our brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we will spend eternity. The Bible records

that we are to, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5), and Jesus always loved people, he is all love, and he is our daily example.

Acts 2:47:

{The believers were} Praising God, and having favour with all the people {How many? All the people!}, And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Who adds to the Church of God? God! God brings people to Himself; He draws us to Him through Christ who is the mediator between God and men (I Timothy 2:5). God is the searcher of all hearts (I Chronicles 28:9; Psalms 139:1; and Romans 8:27), and God never makes mistakes; His calling us to Himself is by His grace, and this alone should humble our hearts just to know that we were allowed into His household (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Romans 11:29:

For the gifts {of God’s graces} and calling of God are without repentance.

The gifts we receive from God are always by His grace (including our eternal life, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8) and our calling by God is *without repentance*, meaning that He never takes it back. Our God will never be sorry for calling you nor confess or even imagine for one second that He has made a mistake in calling you because He is perfect and His calling to you is by, with, and through His grace and mercy.

John 10:28-29:

-28: And I {Jesus} give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

-29: My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father’s hand.

We have a wonderful section of Scripture from the Gospel of Luke expressing a vivid mind picture of how to look on others, showing us Jesus’ perspective for perceiving other people who walk with God.

Luke 18:9-14:

-9: And he {Jesus} spake this parable unto certain {people} which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

-10: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican {a tax collector}.

-11: The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

-12: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

-13: And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven {a custom to show humility and reverence for God}, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

-14: I {Jesus} tell you, this man {the publican} went down to his house justified rather than the other {the Pharisee}: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The Pharisee practiced “good works” of tithing, giving, and fasting — believing that by his own works he was saved, that his works made him a great believer; however, let us notice what he did not do. He refused to humble himself before God, he believed that his way of religion made him a better man than the humble tax collector; he literally separated himself out from the entire human race, believing in his heart that he was better than other men. He never recognized that he himself was a sinner, unlike the publican who knew it was only by God’s grace and mercy that he could be justified.

The word *merciful* in the publican’s prayer in Luke 18:13 in the Greek Text is the word for “reconciliation” as in Hebrews 2:17. The tax collector was earnestly praying to be reconciled back to God (he obviously knew that he was a sinner and that he needed God in his life), while the Pharisee believed in himself that he was already reconciled above and more than other men.

The Pharisee was more concerned about the condition of others than of his true condition; he was convinced that he was saving himself by all of his works, yet Ephesians 2:8-9 reads: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." However, only the publican went home *justified*, and the word *justified* literally means, "just-as-if-I'd never sinned." By being humble before our God, our God-given justification can be thankfully received and enjoyed within our hearts. Jesus, in the verses from Luke above, sums up a wonderful Proverb for us:

Proverbs 28:14 (Amplified*):

Blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) is the man who reverently and worshipfully fears {respects} [the Lord] at all times [regardless of circumstances], but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.

The publican fits into the first category of a blessed man, while the Pharisee will inevitably run into trouble for hardening his heart against other people. Sure, there will be times in life when we are down, when we do not walk in the light, when we have fear and condemnation because of the sin nature. Yet when we do come back to God, back to the throne of God's wonderful grace like the publican did, then we can enjoy blessed verses of healing Scripture demonstrating God's loving comfort to us that will always build us back up and strengthen our lives so that we may continue walking for God.

Psalms 34:18 (Amplified*):

The Lord is close to those who are of a broken heart and saves such as are crushed with sorrow for sin and are humbly and thoroughly penitent {sorry}.

James 4:10:

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Our loving heavenly Father always sees our heart, and when our heart condemns us because we are out of fellowship, and we then realize it and become thoroughly penitent, God will forgive — ALWAYS! The greatest blessings in life come to the believer when he can control his thoughts and actions (see James chapter 3) to be a blessing to his fellow man — especially those who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:10 (Amplified):**

So then, as occasion and opportunity open up to us, let us do good [morally] to all people [not only being useful or profitable to them, but also doing what is for their spiritual good and advantage]. Be mindful to be a blessing, especially to those of the household of faith [those who belong to God's family with you, the believers].

Enjoy your message because today is The Season for God's Merciful Grace.

I John 1:5-9:

-5: This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

-6: If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

-7: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

-8: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

-9: If we confess our sins {to God}, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

A Third Bonus Chapter

A Virtuous Woman

A virtuous woman enjoys believing trust in God which is the crowning complement of all her virtues; her “price is far above rubies!”

Her virtues are a crown recognized by her God, her Savior, and a joyous example to all the children of God!

Her virtues are not innate, they are learned, worked for, and practiced, and are the result of her labor of love for her God and the household of faith!

The Bible tells us how wonderful a virtuous woman really is; her witness is the true story of her gentle, Christ-like lifestyle as she lives His-story!

In Proverbs 31:10–31 we read the qualities of a virtuous woman!

50 qualities of her virtues are as follows:

She is **1-** *strong*, **2-** *invaluable* (verse 10); **3-** *trustworthy*, **4-** *sufficient in all things* (verse 11); **5-** *pure character*, **6-** *a blessing to her husband*, **7-** *accommodating* (verse 12); **8-** *ingenious*, **9-** *industrious* (verse 13); **10-** *proficient*, **11-** *displays genuine compassion* (verse 14); **12-** *well-behaved*, **13-** *obliging*, **14-** *considerate to her family/household members* (verse 15); **15-** *versatile*, **16-** *beneficial* (verse 16); **17-** *robust in mind and body* (verse 17); **18-** *knows her worth*, **19-** *efficient*, **20-** *watchful*, (verse 18); **21-** *thrifty/frugal*, **22-** *skillful* (verse 19); **23-** *charitable*, **24-** *merciful* (verse 20); **25-** *fearless/courageous*, **26-** *believes for family abundance* (verse 21); **27-** *a well-organized housekeeper*, **28-** *dresses tasteful*, **29-** (verse 22); **30-** *an honor to her husband*, **31-** *courteously popular*, (verse 23); **32-** *dependable/industrious*, **33-** *proficient*, (verse 24); **34-** *respectful*, **35-** *optimistic*, **36-** *hopeful*, (verse 25); **37-** *wise*, **38-** *discreet*, **39-** *kindhearted* (verse 26); **40-** *practical*, **41-** *energetic*, **42-** *earnest stewardship of family resources* (verse 27); **43-** *deserving of receiving respect from her children*, **44-**

deserving of receiving awe respect from her husband, (verse 28); 45- has mastered godly virtues, 46, an honorable example to other women of God, (verse 29); 47- God fearing/respecting, 48- praiseworthy lifestyle (verse 30); 49- her kindness is returned and rewarded back to her, 50- she is praised for her pure, virtuous actions (verse 31).

A virtuous woman radiates the qualities of Christ within, who is “the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price*” (I Peter 3:4). “A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband” (Proverbs 12:4). These qualities are worthy of the price that is far above rubies!

Below is an Extended, Alternation Structure¹; compare corresponding Roman letters A. with *italic A.*, on down to E. with *italic E.*

Proverbs 31:10–31, Title: The Model Women.

A. | verses 10–12, Her Husband.

B. | verses 13–19, Her occupation.

C. | verse 20, Her character. Bounty.

D. | verse 21, Her household.

E. | verse 22, Herself. Without.

A. | verse 23, Her Husband.

B. | verses 24–25, Her occupation.

C. | verse 26, Her character. Wisdom.

D. | verses 27–28, Her household.

E. | verses 29–31, Herself. Within.

¹ (Structures are found from Genesis 1:1 and all that way through the Bible to Revelation 22:21. For much more on Structures, their types and purposes, see our study on **Geneses**, in the Introduction, Chapter Eight: **Structures – The Fingerprints of God.**)

Proverbs 31:10–31 (King James Version):

10: Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price *is* far above rubies.

11: The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

12: She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.
13: She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.
14: She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.
15: She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.
16: She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
17: She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.
18: She perceiveth that her merchandise *is* good: her candle goeth not out by night.
19: She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.
20: She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
21: She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household *are* clothed with scarlet.
22: She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing *is* silk and purple.
23: Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.
24: She maketh fine linen, and selleth *it*; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
25: Strength and honour *are* her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.
26: She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue *is* the law of kindness.
27: She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.
28: Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband *also*, and he praiseth her.
29: Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.
30: Favour *is* deceitful, and beauty *is* vain: *but* a woman *that* feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.
31: Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

Proverbs 31:10-31 (Amplified*):

10: A capable, intelligent, *and* virtuous woman - who is he who can find her? She is far more precious than jewels *and* her value is far above rubies *or* pearls.

11: The heart of her husband trusts in her confidently *and* relies on and believes in her securely, so that he has no lack of [honest] gain or need of [dishonest] spoil.

12: She comforts, encourages, *and* does him only good as long as there is life within her.

13: She seeks out wool and flax and works with willing hands [to develop it].

14: She is like the merchant ships loaded with foodstuffs; she brings her household's food from a far [country].

15: She rises while it is yet night and gets [spiritual] food for her household and assigns her maids their tasks.

16: She considers a [new] field before she buys *or* accepts it [expanding prudently and not courting neglect of her present duties by assuming other duties]; with her savings [of time and strength] she plants fruitful vines in her vineyard.

17: She girds herself with strength [spiritual, mental, and physical fitness for her God-given task] and makes her arms strong *and* firm.

18: She tastes *and* sees that her gain from work [with and for God] is good; her lamp goes not out, but it burns on continually through the night [of trouble, privation, or sorrow, warning away fear, doubt, and distrust].

19: She lays her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

20: She opens her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her filled hands to the needy [whether in body, mind, or spirit].

21: She fears not the snow for her family, for all her household are doubly clothed in scarlet.

22: She makes for herself coverlets, cushions, *and* rugs of tapestry. Her clothing is of linen, pure *and* fine, and of purple [such as that of which the clothing of the priests and the hallowed cloths of the temple were made].

23: Her husband is known in the [city's] gates, when he sits among the elders of the land.

24: She makes fine linen garments *and* leads others to buy them; she delivers to the merchants girdles [or sashes that free one up for service].

25: Strength and dignity are her clothing *and* her position is strong and secure; she rejoices over the future [the latter day or time to come, knowing that she and her family are in readiness for it]!

26: She opens her mouth in skillful and godly Wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness [giving counsel and instruction].

27: She looks well to how things go in her household, and the bread of idleness (gossip, discontent, and self-pity) she will not eat.

28: Her children rise up and call her blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied); and her husband boasts of *and* praises her, [saying],

29: Many daughters have done virtuously, nobly, *and* well [with the strength of character that is steadfast in goodness], but you excel them all.

30: Charm *and* grace are deceptive, and beauty is vain [because it is not lasting], but a woman who reverently *and* worshipfully fears the Lord, she shall be praised!

31: Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates [of the city]!

Proverbs 23:23:

Buy {to acquire, to obtain, not by purchasing with money, but by study and personal merit, desire, and performance} the truth, and sell *it* not {SELL IT NOT, and}; *also* {acquire in the same way} wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

Reference Table:

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The Embryo of The Golden Thread Series

Between the dates of November 13, 2000 and January 8, 2001 we posted the first of fifty-eight short Bible Bytes illustrating Jesus Christ as The Golden Thread on our website, biblebyte.org. Every day we posted another instalment until we went through all the books of the Bible. Below is the Byte we posted about Proverbs on Wednesday, November 29, 2000, and for nostalgia and preservation of the original, the Byte appears just as it was posted without any additional edits or corrections. We had such an enormous response from our readers at that time so that we were encouraged to begin the groundwork for the complete study of The Golden Thread series. We have used our original Bytes for our pattern and guide to make the fuller text of the series for you to enjoy.

Proverbs – Revealing Our Path of Righteousness

The Book of Proverbs has thirty-one chapters with over 560 proverbs. Many people read proverbs on months that have 31 days, a chapter per day. In Proverbs we can find Jesus Christ as “the wisdom of God,” for he is our “path” (to God) and the “light” lighting our pathway to the Father. When we discover Jesus Christ in Proverbs as him who lights our path, he begins revealing himself as our Path of Righteousness to the right hand of God. Rather than simply finding common sense knowledge, when Jesus Christ comes to light in Proverbs, then true spiritual wisdom will appear and direct our path having the righteousness of God.

Proverbs 18:10 – The name of the LORD *is* a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it {without being hindered}, and is safe.

“The name of the LORD” represents everything that God’s name stands for, such as His strength and power, which gives the believer a refuge. The Lord is our “strong tower,” which is our elevated position with Him in the tower of His strength. The word “safe” means to be set up on high, for this is where the righteous safely thrive with God in Christ. We have been given the righteousness of God through the completed work of the righteous one, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:9 – And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Once our lives were lost, but now in Christ Jesus we have been (thankfully and gratefully) found. The believing faith of Jesus Christ has given us God's very own righteousness. On the path of our God-given righteousness we can come to know Him as our strong tower of strength. The more we recognize Christ in the Scriptures, the greater our God-given righteousness will shine in our hearts.

Proverbs 12:28 – In the way of righteousness *is* life; and *in* the pathway *thereof there is* no death.

“In the way of righteousness *is* life,” because with the righteousness of God we can know that we have received eternal life. In the pathway of righteousness “*there is* no death,” means that we being righteous will receive a future immortality. Today we have the absolute guaranteed promise of receiving our complete redemption, our total immortality, and our heavenly home in eternity to live forever with God, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 8:23).

Proverbs 4: 14-15; 18; and 26:

- 14: Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil *men*.
- 15: Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.
- 18: But the path of the just *is* as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.
- 26: Ponder the path of thy feet {“feet” represent our standing with God}, and let all thy ways be established {by following Jesus Christ who reveals the way to our God}.

“The perfect day” means the brightest time of the day when the sun seems to pause still in the sky above as it reaches the highest point on the meridian around noontime, this is the example of our elevated position in the light of our being the children of God. The more we walk with God, the brighter our future is realized. This is our Path of Righteousness, and is the way that Jesus said we should follow him: “Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:14). For example, in the time of Noah, he and his family out of the world populous were the “few there be that find it.” When we look to Christ Jesus, he begins leading us through the gate of the straight way, for he is the way, the truth, and the life to the Father of lights, and along our way Jesus reveals our Path of Righteousness.

The Golden Thread - Chapter Titles

The Old Testament:

1. Genesis - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Promised Seed
2. Exodus - Reveals Jesus Christ as the True Passover
3. Leviticus - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Offering and the High Priest
4. Numbers - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Bright and Morning Star
5. Deuteronomy - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Prophet
6. Joshua - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Captain of Salvation
7. Judges - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Wonderful Secret
8. Ruth - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Redeemer
9. First and Second Samuel - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Deliverer
10. First and Second Kings - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Still Small Voice
11. First and Second Chronicles - Reveals Jesus Christ as the King's Son, and Eternal Answer
12. Ezra - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Spiritual Revival
13. Nehemiah - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Heavenly Pardon
14. Esther - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Good Day
15. Job - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Arbitrator
16. Psalms - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Song in the Night
17. Proverbs - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Path of Righteousness
18. Ecclesiastes - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Wholeness of Man
19. The Song of Solomon - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Beloved
20. Isaiah - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Refuge from the Storms of Life
21. Jeremiah - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Righteous One
22. Lamentations - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Hope
23. Ezekiel - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Covenant of Peace
24. Daniel - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Power and Wisdom of God
25. Hosea - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Ransom
26. Joel - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Heavenly Standing
27. Amos - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Sure Salvation
28. Obadiah - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Day of Deliverance
29. Jonah - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Sign of Resurrection
30. Micah - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Breaker and the Spiritual Strength
31. Nahum - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Stronghold
32. Habakkuk - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Joy in God
33. Zephaniah - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Eternal Rest
34. Haggai - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Desire of all Nations
35. Zechariah - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Total Forgiveness
36. Malachi - Reveals Jesus Christ as the Messenger of the Covenant and a Delight

The Gospels:

37. The Gospel of Matthew – Reveals Jesus Christ as the Shepherd King
“A righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper”
38. The Gospel of Mark – Reveals Jesus Christ as the Servant
“I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH”
39. The Gospel of Luke – Reveals Jesus Christ as the Man
“Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH”
40. The Gospel of John – Reveals Jesus Christ as the Son of God
“In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious”

Parchments of Transition

(Treaties from the Beloved Physician to “YOU” the Beloved of God):

41. The Book of Acts – Reveals **Our** Timeless Spiritual Love in Christ
An upward calling – reaching, appreciating, and enjoying the mystery of God in Christ in you!

The New Testament:

42. Romans – Reveals **Our** Justification in Christ
43. First and Second Corinthians – Reveals **Our** Sufficiency in Christ
44. Galatians – Reveals **Our** Liberty in Christ
45. Ephesians – Reveals **Our** Standing in Christ
46. Philippians – Reveals **Our** Joy in Christ
47. Colossians – Reveals **Our** Completeness in Christ
48. Thessalonians – Reveals **Our** Comfort of Hope in Christ
49. First and Second Timothy – Reveals **Our** Faithful Witness in Christ
50. Titus – Reveals **Our** Promise of Eternal Life in Christ
52. Philemon – Reveals **Our** Forgiving Love for the Individual in Christ
53. Hebrews – Reveals **Our** Substitute for Sin in Christ
54. James – Reveals **Our** Believing Faith in Christ
55. First and Second Peter – Reveals **Our** Pastoral Stewardship of Grace in Christ
56. First, Second, and Third John – Reveals **Our** Fellowship in Christ
57. Jude – Reveals **Our** unCommon Salvation in Christ
58. Revelation – Reveals the Revelation of Jesus Christ and **Our** Destiny in Christ