

TEXT — 2:1-9

1. My son, if thou wilt receive my words,
And lay up my commandments with thee;
2. So as to incline thine ear unto wisdom,
And apply thy heart to understanding;
3. Yea if thou cry after discernment,
And lift up thy voice for understanding;
4. If thou seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hid treasures:
5. Then shalt thou understand the fear of Jehovah,
And find the knowledge of God.
6. For Jehovah giveth wisdom;
Out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding:
7. He layeth up sound wisdom for the upright;
He is a shield to them that walk in integrity;
8. That he may guard the paths of justice,
And preserve the way of his saints.
9. Then shalt thou understand righteousness and justice,
And equity, yea, every good path.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 2:1-9

1. Would you draw a distinction between "my words" and "my commandments" in v. 1?
2. What is heard by the ear must be considered in the (v. 2).
3. What words in v. 3 show earnestness in seeking knowledge?
4. How earnestly should knowledge be sought (v. 4)?
5. What knowledge should fathers especially want their sons to have (v. 5)?
6. Do the words of understanding come to man from God's mouth directly or by inspiration (v. 6)?
7. What does "integrity" mean (v. 7)?
8. What word in v. 7 goes along with "guard" and "preserve" in v. 8?
9. How different would the world be if everybody understood these things (v. 9)?

PARAPHRASE OF 2:1-9

- 1-5. Every young man who listens to me and obeys my in-

structions will be given wisdom and good sense. Yes, if you want better insight and discernment, and are searching for them as you would for lost money or hidden treasure, then wisdom will be given you and knowledge of God Himself; you will soon learn the importance of reverence for the Lord and of trusting Him.

- 6-9. For the Lord grants wisdom! His every word is a treasure of knowledge and understanding. He grants good sense to the godly--His saints. He is their shield, protecting them and guarding their pathway. He shows how to distinguish right from wrong, how to find the right decision every time.

COMMENTS ON 2:1-9

V. 1. Other chapters that begin with "My son": Chapters 3,5,6,7. We will point out the doublets as they occur in this and the following 4 verses: (1) receive my words; and (2) hide my commandments. Other passages on laying up parental instructions in one's heart: Prov. 4:21; 7:1. "The...if is conditional, and serves to introduce the series of clauses (vs. 1-4) which lay down the conditions upon which the promises depend...There is a gradation in emphasis in the various terms here used...Just as 'commandments' is stronger than 'words,' so 'hide' is stronger than 'receive'...The Divine commands...are to be hidden in safe custody in the memory, in the understanding, in the conscience, and in the heart...The psalmist expresses the same idea in Psa. 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in my heart" ("Pulpit Commentary").

V. 2. Doublet: (1) incline thine ear unto wisdom; and (2) apply thy heart to understanding. Solomon wanted his son to develop an inclination for wisdom ("incline"). Just as a ball will roll down an "incline", so if one is inclined toward wisdom will he assuredly "apply" his heart (put himself into getting understanding).

V. 3. Doublet: (1) cry after discernment; and (2) lift up thy voice for understanding. The picture in this verse is even stronger than "incline" in v. 4. Here the son is urged to "cry after", to "lift up" his voice for "discernment (the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, truth and error, wisdom and foolishness).

V. 4. The "ifs" in these first 4 verses might be thought of

as progressive as follows: if you receive and lay up my commandments (as a child); if you develop an inclination toward wisdom and develop an understanding heart (in youth); and if you cry after and seek for discernment and understanding (as an adult), v. 5 says it will be yours. "The comparison here made between the search for wisdom and the search for the hidden treasures of the earth was not unfamiliar to the Hebrew mind as it is found worked out with great beauty of detail in Job 28" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Prov. 3:14: "For the gaining of it is better than the gaining of silver, And the profit thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her" (Prov. 3:14,15).

V. 5. If the conditions of vs. 1-4 are met, then this wonderful promise will apply: the son will understand the fear of Jehovah and will find the knowledge of God. And this fear of Jehovah will then lead to even more wisdom and knowledge (Prov. 1:7).

V. 6. If one seeks for wisdom according to vs. 1-4, then God will give it to him. Involved in this quest is to acknowledge God as the source of all wisdom and to go to Him for it: "If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (Jas. 1:5). This is what Solomon did ("Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil"—I Kings 3:9), and God gave it to him ("Behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee"—I Kings 3:12). In our section Solomon is merely teaching his son from his own experience.

V. 7. God gives wisdom as well as other blessings to the upright: "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psa. 84:11). As to God's being a shield to those who walk in integrity, Prov. 20:5 says, "He is a shield unto them that take refuge in him." "God is Himself a buckler or shield...This aspect of God's direct protecting power is met with in other parts of Scripture: Gen. 15:1; Psa. 33:20; Psa. 84:11; Psa. 89:18; Psa. 144:2" ("Pulpit Commentary").

V. 8. Yes, Jehovah guards the "paths of justice". Is it not remarkable that even though men themselves do not always do what is right that the old basics of what is right and wrong still

survive (such as love, kindness, truth-telling, the wrongness of killing, stealing, etc.)? He not only guards the paths of justice but particularly preserves the way of those who walk in those paths: "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous" (I Pet. 3:12); "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber...Jehovah is thy keeper...Jehovah will keep thee from all evil; He will keep thy soul. Jehovah will keep thy going out and thy coming in" (Psa. 121:3-8); "He will keep the foot of his holy ones" (I Sam. 2:9). Note that even God's Old Testament people were called "saints", which means "holy ones".

V. 9. Here are things that every person should understand and not be confused about. If one so applies himself to get wisdom, God will bless him with it, and that will include an understanding of these basic things.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 2:1-9

1. What other chapters begin with "my son" (v. 1)?
2. How many of these opening verses contain doublets (v. 1)?
3. Comment upon "incline" and "apply" in v. 2.
4. Comment on the stronger words used in v. 3 than those used in v. 2.
5. Comment on the possible progressiveness of the "ifs" in vs. 1-4.
6. What great promise is found in v. 5?
7. How did Solomon himself get wisdom (v. 6)?
8. God gives wisdom to what group in v. 7?
9. Comment on God guarding the "paths of justice" (v. 8).
10. What will one understand if God blesses him with wisdom (v. 9)?

TEXT — 2:10-22

10. For wisdom shall enter into thy heart,
And knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy soul;
11. Discretion shall watch over thee;
Understanding shall keep thee:
12. To deliver thee from the way of evil,
From the men that speak perverse things;
13. Who forsake the paths of uprightness,
To walk in the ways of darkness;

14. Who rejoice to do evil,
And delight in the perverseness of evil;
15. Who are crooked in their ways,
And wayward in their paths:
16. To deliver thee from the strange woman,
Even from the foreigner that flattereth with her words;
17. That forsaketh the friend of her youth,
And forgetteth the covenant of her God:
18. For her house inclineth unto death,
And her paths unto the dead;
19. None that go unto her return again,
Neither do they attain unto 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 land,
And the treacherous shall be rooted out of it.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 2:10-22

1. Knowledge should be (v. 10).
2. What is "discretion" (v. 11)?
3. Does true knowledge trust all persons indiscriminately (v. 12)?
4. What double sin were they guilty of (v. 13)?
5. What about their rejoicing (v. 14)?
6. Why do we speak of dishonest people as "crooked" (v. 15)?
7. Young men should be strongly warned to watch out for dishonest men and women (vs. 12,16).
8. What "covenant" (v. 17)?
9. Why mention her "house" (v. 18)?
10. They don't "return" in what sense (v. 19)?
11. What kind of men avoid such women (v. 20)?
12. What are the parallel words in v. 21?
13. What are the parallel words in v. 22?

PARAPHRASE OF 2:10-22

- 10-15. For wisdom and truth will enter the very center of your being, filling your life with joy. You will be given the sense to stay away from evil men who want you to

be their partners in crime--men who turn from God's ways to walk down dark and evil paths, and exult in doing wrong, for they thoroughly enjoy their sins. Everything they do is crooked and wrong.

16-19. Only wisdom from the Lord can save a man from the flattery of prostitutes; these girls have abandoned their husbands and flouted the laws of God. Their houses lie along the road to death and hell. The men who enter them are doomed. None of these men will ever be the same again.

20-22. Follow the steps of the godly instead, and stay on the right path, for only good men enjoy life to the full; evil men lose the good things they might have had; and they themselves shall be destroyed.

COMMENTS ON 2:10-22

V. 10. "Shall enter" in the sense of permanent residence in the heart" ("Pulpit Commentary"). Col. 3:15 uses the same figure of speech concerning the Word of Christ and our hearts: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." "Dwell" in this verse means to "make a home for". The heart that has made wisdom its permanent inhabitant will be a soul blessed with pleasantness and satisfaction.

V. 11. When blessed with wisdom, "discretion" will be there to guard what we say, what we do, the policies we adopt, etc., and "understanding" will be there to keep us from small embarrassments and costly mistakes. Prov. 6:22 similarly says, "When thou wakest, it shall lead thee; When thou sleepest, it shall watch over thee."

V. 12. Wisdom will keep one from taking up with evil men (this verse) and with evil women (v. 16). The word "deliver" suggests that evil men are out to snare such young men into their plots and ways. The "perverse" speech of evil men is pointed out. There is a certain speech that goes with evil men—usually coarse words, vulgar words, irreverent words.

V. 13. Some of those now evil were once on the right road, for they forsook the "paths of uprightness". Probably as children they were taught the right way. Oh, how many drift from their childhood teachings into the "ways of darkness" (sin)! Those who walk in evil ways always try to get others to fall as they have, but how foolish to listen to them!

V. 14. The wicked become perverted: instead of grieving over evil, they rejoice in doing it. "It is as sport to a fool to do wickedness" (Prov. 10:23); "When thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest" (Jer. 11:15); "Who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they that practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them" (Rom. 1:32). We are forbidden to desire evil: "Abhor that which is evil" (Rom. 12:&); "Love not the world...the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain-glory of life" (I John 2:15,16).

V. 15. Instead of walking a straight and right course, they are further described as "crooked", and instead of staying on the right way, they are said to be "wayward" in their paths. Psa. 125:5 speaks of those who "turn aside unto their crooked ways". It is from this crookedness and waywardness that true wisdom will deliver a young man.

V. 16. A "strange" woman means one who is not his wife; she is a "foreigner" to him because she is not related to him in marriage. This is a warning against loose, lascivious living that ends in sexual misbehavior. Several chapters (or extended sections) are devoted to warning against such involvements (here; 5:1-23; 6:23-25; 7:4-27; 9:13-18). Our verse warns of her enticing words ("flattereth with her words"). Other verses do the same: "The lips of a strange woman drop honey, And her mouth is smoother than oil" (Prov. 5:3); "To keep thee from the evil woman, From the flattery of the foreigner's tongue" (Prov. 6:24); "With her much fair speech she causeth him to yield; with the flattering of her lips she forceth him along" (Prov. 7:21).

V. 17. Such a woman was once married, but she has forsaken her husband (here called "the friend of her youth"). What a poor one to get mixed up with! She is not only untrue to man (her husband), but she "forgetteth the covenant of her God" (God's covenant or law forbids her to leave her husband and live as she is living). But her actions show that she doesn't care what God says!

V. 18. Her "house" is referred to because this is where she "operates" her dirty business. Other passages on immorality and death: "Her feet go down to death; Her steps take hold on Sheol" (Prov. 5:5); "Her house is the way to Sheol, Going down to the chambers of death" (Prov. 7:27). The results are a bold contrast to her enticing promises: "As for him that is

void of understanding, she saith to him, stolen waters are sweet, And bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; that her guests are in the depths of Sheol" (Prov. 9:16-18).

V. 19. "The difficulty which they who give themselves up to the indulgence of lust and passion encounter in extricating themselves makes the statement...an almost universal truth...It is as difficult to bring back a libidinous person to chastity as a dead man to life. This passage led some...to declare that the sin of adultery was unpardonable. Fornication was classed by the scholastic divines among the seven deadly sins" ("Pulpit Commentary").

V. 20. The "good men" of this verse are to be contrasted with the evil men of v. 12, and their good lives with the evil men who indulge with evil women.

V. 21. In contrast with "death" resulting from the indulgent life, this verse speaks of the good men getting to live on. Psa. 37 stresses this blessing of godliness: Those that wait for Jehovah, they shall inherit the land" (v. 9); "The meek shall inherit the land" (v. 11); "Such as are blessed of him shall inherit the land" (v. 22); "The righteous shall inherit the land, And dwell therein for ever" (v. 29).

V. 22. The doom of the wicked is again mentioned. This fact is also stressed in Psa. 37: "They shall soon be cut down like the grass" (v. 2); "Evil-doers shall be cut off" (v. 9); "Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be" (v. 10); "The arms of the wicked shall be broken" (v. 17); "The wicked shall perish, And the enemies of Jehovah shall be as the fat of lambs: They shall consume; in smoke shall they consume away" :v. 20); "They that are cursed of him shall be cut off" (v. 22); "The seed of the wicked shall be cut off" (v. 28); "I have seen the wicked in great power, And spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil. But one passed by, and, lo, he was not: Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found" (vs. 35,36); "As for the transgressors, they shall be destroyed together: The end of the wicked shall be cut off" (v. 38).

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 2:10-22

1. What does "shall enter" in v. 10 signify about wisdom?
2. From what will discretion and understanding keep us (v. 11)?

3. Comment on the perverse speech of evil men (v. 12).
4. Are there wicked men who once walked in the paths of uprightness (v. 13)? When?
5. How perverted do the wicked become (v. 14)?
6. "Crooked" is the opposite of what way to walk (v. 15)?
7. Comment on the wicked woman's use of words to ensnare men (v. 16).
8. To what two parties is such a woman untrue (v. 17)?
9. What other passages besides v. 18 say that her house leads to death?
10. What does v. 19 say about the difficulty involved in freeing oneself from such behavior once that he has begun it?
11. Who are the "good men" of v. 20?
12. What chapter has much to say about the long life of the righteous (v. 21)?
13. What chapter has much to say about the short life of the wicked (v. 22)?

FOOLS ARE KNOWN BY THEIR SPEECH

Listen to 15:14: "The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of the fools feedeth on foolishness." If you need any commentary on this verse, just go down to the corner store or to the garage or to the barber shop—just anywhere that men with time on their hands gather—and listen to them for ten minutes, and you will well understand the statement, "The mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness". The chances are, you will not hear one thing that will build you up or do you any good, but will hear a lot of vocal drivel that depicts nothing but shallowness of thought, and such will go on all day long!

Another vocal mark of a fool is that he tells everything he knows. 29:11 says, "A fool uttereth all his mind." He will freely talk concerning his financial matters or his business dealings. He will not hesitate to tell you how much money he has or how much he made or how much he sold his car for. For some reason, he wants everyone to know everything about him, so he tells everything he knows.

But, not only does he talk about his own things—he talks about everybody else's things too. And this gets him into

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trouble. 18:7 says, "A fool's mouth is his destruction."

Furthermore, a fool weaves into his conversation all the rude words, all the vulgar words, and all the latest delinquents' expressions. His speech is marked by all kinds of grammatical errors. Nothing of good literature is ever upon his tongue. No statement from the pen of David or from the pens of the great secular writers ever is upon his lips. In short, 17:7 says, "Excellent speech becometh not a fool."

"TEACHING PARENTS"

Proverbs shows us parents who teach and warn their children. "My son," the writer says, "if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." And then he goes on to forewarn his son of the way they will approach him to get him to go with them. But, the father adds, "Walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path" (1:10-15).

There was ever the instruction to trust in God. "My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion: so shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken" (3:21-26).

The writer tells his son, "I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live" (4:3,4), and the writer was turning around and doing the same thing to his son—teaching him.

Some fathers do little more than bring the children into the world and bring the money home for their livelihood. Proverbs shows that a father is to be teacher too, not expecting the mother to do all the talking and all the rearing of the children. On the other hand, the woman is to be a teacher also: "Forsake not the law of thy mother" (1:8). She doesn't always wait till Dad comes home from work to tend to the disobedience of the children. She is strict with them also.