

The Christian walk is not merely the process of studying theology or mastering various categories of doctrine. Nor is it adopting a certain "approved" lifestyle. The Christian walk is first hearing the word of the Gospel and believing on the name of the Lord. The sinner is then placed in right relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and becomes a child of God - Christ's disciple. For the rest of his life the child of God lives his life empowered by the Holy Spirit in obedience to the word of God as it is imparted to him through teachers or from studying God's word by himself. It is this relationship with the Lord and the word of God that defines his life.

For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," **made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.** ⁷ **But we have this treasure in jars of clay** to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 2 Cor 4:5.

Last week we learned that we need Wisdom to "succeed" in life. We also saw in the remarkable eighth chapter of Proverbs the preexistent Christ stripping away the personification of wisdom to reveal himself;

Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; ³¹ Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and ***my delights were with the sons of men.*** ³² Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. ³³ Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. ³⁴ Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. ³⁵ For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. ³⁶ But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death. Prov 8:30-36.

The important point to remember is that Jesus Christ is the crux - he is our wisdom.¹ Please allow me to refer directly to Jesus Christ, himself tonight, though our passages in Proverbs use the personified "Wisdom."

Blessed Is He That Finds Christ! (Prov. 3:13-18)

Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, Prov 3:13

¹ 1 Cor. 1:30

Proverbs 3:13. "**Blessed** is the man who finds Wisdom..." This condition of being "blessed" is a that is maintained by God himself - "how enviable is a man who finds wisdom." This relationship between God and man is an everyday occurrence. A good picture of this is the life of Job. I have said this many times and will probably say it many times more - succeeding in life is not a matter of how clever we are but whether or not we keep walking in step with the Preceptive Will of God. The illustration of the man building his house on sand should not be lost here.² The man who achieves this blessed state is one who has found Christ and is living every day seeking a constant intake of his Word and obeying it as circumstances present themselves. It is an enviable condition that a sinner has been saved - that he has Christ, that Wisdom resides in his heart.

Taking Jesus Christ and his Wisdom into your heart results in a lifetime of blessing from God.

"For Wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul." Prov 2:10

A little digression if I might. This is a wonderful picture of a young person finding a lifetime companion - Jesus Christ and his Word. The picture here is that of a bridegroom carrying his bride over the threshold of his house thus initiating a lifetime of joy and prosperity. If we read the context we find that this is the culmination of an intense desire and search crying out for insight and understanding.³ The result is the Fear of God and the blessing is described in three areas of our lives:

- God "banks" wisdom in the righteous.
- God becomes a shield - refers to the thick hide of a crocodile - for those who *walk* in integrity (opposite of duplicity).
- God guards the course of the just (NIV) and protects (NIV) - literally builds a hedge of thorns around the pathway of his faithful ones.⁴

These are the blessings of a relationship with the Lord and obedience to his Word. Now back to our text in chapter 3.

"Blessed is the man who finds wisdom..." The Jews have a tradition during the Passover where they take the unleavened (matzah) bread, break it and hide it around the house. Then the children are invited to search the house for these precious pieces. What a wonderful picture of "finding" Christ! This is the word used in Prov. 3:13 "find."

² Luke 6:47-49 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: [48] He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. [49] But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

³ Verse 3, 4, NIV.

⁴ NIV.

To find Christ is by infinite magnitudes of order greater than winning the "megabucks."

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 2 Cor. 4:7

The Value of Christ And His Wisdom

for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold.¹⁵ She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. Prov 3:14.

Prov. 3:14, 15. Solomon goes on to use a word picture of the market place. The Holy Spirit will stop at nothing to illustrate the value of a right relationship with Jesus Christ. In this personification of wisdom, two important aspects of the business world are used; profit and interest gain. ^{Prov 3:15} **"for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns [interest] than gold."** A right relationship and the resultant intake and application of God's word in the believer's life is of great profit to him. I cannot overemphasize this point that there is infinite return in "interest" from a lifetime of investment in a relationship with Christ and obeying his Word. The alternative is a life of ruin.⁵

Verse 15. The engine of the business world is the demand of a product. Where there is no demand there is no point in producing a given product. Jewels are different than regular products, there is a timeless, intrinsic value to jewels. Christ's wisdom is of infinite, intrinsic value. This is the meaning of "precious" - of intrinsic value.

Let's look at the word "desire" for a moment. The basic root means to have a feeling of great favor, or delight towards someone or something. The implication is that Jesus Christ and his wisdom brings great delight, favor to the believer's mind. This is the attitude the believer should have toward Christ. Nothing in this world can produce the satisfaction that Jesus brings. The song writer expresses it so well;

Hallelujah! I have found Him Whom my soul so long has craved!
Jesus satisfies my longings; Through His blood I now am saved!

**Jesus Christ and His Wisdom Is Sufficient
In Every Circumstance in Life.**

Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Prov 3:16.

We have already seen that long life refers to a fulfilled life, not a life that is long in terms of years, the same is true for the second half of this promise - God is not suggesting a prosperity gospel, rather the riches here are tied in with the full life of a believer who is rightly related to Jesus Christ and has his wisdom in his heart. Jesus himself said; **"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."** Matthew 6:33.

Our treasure is to be in heaven;

⁵ Prov 3:25; 5:14; 10:8

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: ²⁰ But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: ²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Matthew 6:19-21.

While we are here on earth we have the promise of Proverbs 3:16; there is an interesting contrast between the right and the left hand. The root for the right hand means toward the south, or the sunny side. The right hand of God is associated with his power. Jesus Christ is seated on the right hand of God.

In the root word, the left is toward the north or the dark side and can infer evil or darkness. It is used in Ecclesiastes 10:2 to depict evil or folly "**A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart is at his left.**"

Application: no matter what the circumstances in life are, Christ and his wisdom are sufficient for a full and rich life.

Completely Secure and at Rest in Jesus.

Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace.
¹⁸ **She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed.** Prov 3:17.

Pleasant means an idyllic state - one of a pleasant, gracious, ideal life. **Tree of life** seems to be an expression of constant refreshment and resuscitation; see the following passages - **Gen. 2:9; Prov. 13:12; 15:4; Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14.** A right relationship with Jesus and a daily intake of his word provides security, a well-being that the world cannot give - there's more.

There are two action verbs that depict the importance of the believer's decision to possess "wisdom." **Embrace** (*NIV*) means to seize in a forceful way - it has the sense of an initiated action. **Lay hold** (*NIV*) means that once wisdom is seized, to grasp securely in a long-term sense.

Finally, the word **blessed** means to be envied by all those around him for his enviable state - his good fortune.

The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks. ⁴⁶ **"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"** Luke 6:45.

The reference here is the wisdom of God. I have, however, seen in Proverbs the mutual inclusion of the person of Christ with his wisdom. It is not a simple matter of becoming well-versed in God's word, or following the advise of Proverbs in a literal, check-list manner (make that legalistic). **It is a matter of having a right relationship with Christ, listening to his words and obeying them.**