

PROVERBS: A PRACTICAL USER MANUAL ON DISCOVERING GOD'S WILL (HOW TO PLEASE THE LORD)

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Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.

But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psa 1:1.

IT IS GOD'S PLAN TO BLESS THE BELIEVER IN THIS WORLD. ALTHOUGH THIS DOES NOT EXCLUDE DIFFICULTY, EVEN TRAGEDY, THROUGH IT ALL THE HAND OF GOD IS IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER. AS SHOWN IN PSALM 1, THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BELIEVER IS TO AVOID THE COUNSEL OF THE WICKED. TO AVOID ASSOCIATION WITH MOCKERS - THOSE WHO REJECT THE COUNSEL OF GOD. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO SAY ONE BELIEVES IN CHRIST OR TO HAVE THE CORRECT VOCABULARY OF A BELIEVER - IT IS MANDATORY FOR BELIEVERS TO LIVE A PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIFE - A LIFE THAT REFLECTS THE CHARACTER AND WISDOM OF GOD - JESUS SAID "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matthew 5:48 IN SAYING THIS JESUS HAS COMMANDED ALL BELIEVERS TO BE LIKE THEIR HEAVENLY FATHER - NOT SINLESS IN THAT SENSE BUT TO EMULATE THE MORAL CHARACTER OF GOD - BE CHRIST-LIKE. THIS INCLUDES ESPECIALLY AREAS IN OUR EVERY-DAY LIVES.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIANCE ON GOD'S WORD IN EVERYDAY MATTERS

You will say, "How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors. I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly." Prov 5:12-14 (NIV)

HOW MANY TIMES HAS THE AVERAGE BELIEVER GOTTEN HIMSELF INTO A JAM IN EVERYDAY MATTERS AND WONDERED "HOW IN THE WORLD COULD THIS HAVE HAPPENED TO ME?" FREQUENTLY THE PROBLEM IS THAT LEFT TO OUR OWN "SMARTS" WE WILL "MESS UP" AND SOMETIMES RATHER BADLY. THESE MESSSES CAN RANGE FROM RUN-A-WAY DEBT TO A FAILED MARRIAGE TO AN OFFSPRING WHO HAS GOTTEN HIMSELF INTO SERIOUS TROUBLE WITH THE LAW. JUST BECAUSE WE ARE BELIEVERS IN THE LORD DOESN'T EXCLUDE US FROM BAD JUDGMENTS, OR FAILED FAMILY BECAUSE OF NEGLECT OF IMPORTANT BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES.

THE PRACTICALITY OF PROVERBS IN EVERYDAY MATTERS

Proverbs 1:1-3

The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: ²To know wisdom and instruction, To discern the sayings of understanding, ³To receive instruction in wise behavior, Righteousness, justice and equity; (NAS)

PROVERBS WAS WRITTEN BY ONE OF HISTORY'S WISEST MEN - HE DID NOT ALWAYS FOLLOW HIS WISDOM - BUT HIS WISDOM IS UNDISPUTED. SOLOMON WROTE PROVERBS AFTER HE MADE ALL HIS MISTAKES. I SUPPOSE YOU COULD CALL HIS BOOK ONE OF HINDSIGHT EXCEPT THAT HE WAS GUIDED BY THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THIS GIVES THIS BOOK A BACKGROUND OF EXPERIENCE IN BOTH THE GOOD AND BAD DETAILS OF LIFE BUT WITH THE INFALLIBLE, EXCELLENT WISDOM FROM THE MIND OF GOD, HIMSELF.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS CAN BE APPROACHED AS A USER MANUAL FOR BOTH THE YOUNG (PERHAPS ONE WITH YOUTHFUL ARROGANCE) AND THE MATURE BELIEVER ALIKE

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FOR SOUND INSTRUCTION ON HOW TO LIVE IN THIS WORLD IN SUCH A WAY THAT HE IS FULLY PREPARED TO DISCOVER GOD'S WILL FOR HIS LIFE *WITHOUT THE ENCUMBRANCES OF A MESSED UP LIFE.*

**THE DEBILITATING EFFECT ON A CHRISTIAN'S TESTIMONY WHO IS
WEIGHED DOWN WITH PERSONAL PROBLEMS**

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, Hebrews 12:1

THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF DISCUSSION OF WHO THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES MIGHT BE - THAT IS NOT SCOPE OF THIS STUDY TONIGHT. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT WE ALL ARE RUNNING A RACE (GET THE WORD PICTURE?) AND IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US NOT TO "BREAK TRAINING."

IT'S IMPORTANT HERE THAT WE NOTE THAT THE WRITER OF HEBREWS IS DISCLOSING TWO PROBLEMS IN RUNNING THE RACE THAT WE CALL THE CHRISTIAN LIFE - "EVERY WEIGHT" AND SINS THAT BESET US - THAT IS, SINS THAT SEEM TO CAUSE US TO CROSS OVER THE LANE - SWERVING WHICH COULD DISQUALIFY US. THE WEIGHT IN THIS WORD PICTURE CAUSES US TO LOSE THE RACE - THE SWERVING SIN DISQUALIFIES US. BOTH ARE TO BE AVOIDED.

HOW MANY YOUNG CHRISTIAN MEN HAVE MISSED OUT IN AN EFFECTIVE MINISTRY FOR THE LORD BECAUSE OF THE WEIGHT OF A FAILING MARRIAGE OR CHILDREN WHO ARE A CONSTANT PROBLEM. THEN THERE IS THE WEIGHT OF BADLY MANAGED FINANCES - THE POSSIBILITIES OF WEIGHTS ARE MANY. THE SOLUTION TO AVOIDING THESE WEIGHTS CAN BE FOUND IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS - OUR USER MANUAL ON THE PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIFE.

IN THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS, LORD WILLING, THE SCOPE AND APPROACH OF PROVERBS IS GOING TO BE FROM SUCH A VIEWPOINT. THERE WILL MOST LIKELY BE A LOT OF "MEDDLING" BUT IN THE WORDS OF SOLOMON; **Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.** Prov 27:6 SOLOMON'S INSTRUCTIONS ARE GOING TO "WOUND" BUT TAKEN AS A BENEFICIAL WHIPPING FROM A LOVING FATHER WE CAN RECEIVE BLESSINGS BEYOND OUR IMAGINATION.

TO ILLUSTRATE THE "WEIGHTS" THAT HINDER THE BELIEVER, THE APOSTLE PETER STRONGLY URGES THE CHRISTIAN HUSBAND TO LIVE WITH HIS WIFE IN INTIMACY AND TO GIVE HER HONOR, AS HE WOULD TO A PRECIOUS TEMPLE VESSEL *LEST HIS PRAYERS BE HINDERED*¹. LIKEWISE THE WIVES ARE TO GIVE HONOR TO THEIR HUSBANDS IN SUBMISSION². **THE HOW-TO OF THESE COMMANDS CAN BE FOUND IN OUR PRACTICAL USER MANUAL - SOLOMON'S BOOK OF PROVERBS.**

OUR PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIFE HAS A DIRECT IMPACT ON OUR TESTIMONY - BOTH WITHIN THE FAMILY AND ESPECIALLY IN THE WORLD. FOR EXAMPLE, A MAN WHO DOESN'T PROVIDE FOR HIS FAMILY IS WORSE THAN AN UNBELIEVER³. OUR USER MANUAL GIVES EXCELLENT INSTRUCTION ON THIS MATTER.

¹ | PETER 3:7

² | PETER 3:1-6

³ If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 TIM 5:8)

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**POSITIVE INSTRUCTION ON DISCOVERING GOD'S
PLAN (WILL) FOR OUR LIVES.**

OUR INSTRUCTION MANUAL IS NOT JUST AN INSTRUCTION BOOK ON THE AVOIDANCE OF A MESSED UP LIFE. THERE ARE "SECTIONS" THAT COVER THE HOW OF BLESSINGS IN MARRIAGE, BUSINESS, PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS - YOU SEE, IT IS MORE IMPORTANT FOR THE BELIEVER TO SEIZE THE BLESSING OF GOD'S PLAN THEN FOR HIM TO RECOVER FROM PROBLEMS THAT HE HAS BROUGHT ON HIMSELF THROUGH HIS OWN DOINGS.

and find out what pleases the Lord. Eph 5:10

THIS COMMAND IS NOT ONLY OUR DUTY AS "CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT" BUT IS OUR KEY TO LIVING THE PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIFE - WE *WILL* BENEFIT FROM DISCOVERING HIS PLAN - IT IS NOT AN OPTION, IT IS A PREREQUISITE TO A FULFILLED LIFE. THE CHRISTIAN WHO IGNORES GOD'S PLAN IS A MISERABLE, ANGRY CHRISTIAN WHO HAS CLOSED DOWN HIS OPTIONS FOR AN JOYFUL, EFFECTIVE MINISTRY FOR THE LORD.

...Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.
ROM 12:2b

IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT GOD WOULD NOT COMMAND US TO DISCOVER HIS PLAN, HIS WILL AND THEN LEAVE US TO OUR OWN INADEQUATE DEVICES. PROVERBS CAN BE SUCH A "TOOL" - A "GUIDEBOOK" IN THE HANDS OF THE CHRISTIAN - TO TEST AND APPROVE TO OUR OWN SATISFACTION THAT WE ARE IN THE CENTER OF HIS WILL.