

South Valley Community Church

“More In 2024!”

Key Verse: Philippians 1:9-11

“And this is my prayer, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,

So that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ,

Filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.”

April 2024: More Understanding

The Greek word of Understanding is “aisthesis” which means to, “understand, discern, comprehend completely to the point of being able to make a judgment.” What this means is that we strive to gain knowledge, to the point of understanding what is going on, and to make a judgment that is fair and covered with wisdom. In this way of looking at things, there is knowledge, followed by understanding, and covered, at last, with wisdom. The definition of “wisdom” is the application of knowledge. This month, we are going back to Proverbs to look at how we can apply God’s Word into our lives, so we gain better understanding. Each day, we will be looking at a passage found in Proverbs and then figure out (1.) what it’s saying, (2.) where we can apply it, and (3.) how we can use it to gain wisdom. There are only 30 days in April, so we will have to look at two Proverbs for a day so we can finish by the end of the month. Let’s get started:

Day 1: Proverbs 1:7: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction (or understanding).” This verse is the foundation for the whole book of Proverbs. Write out what you think the following mean:

The Fear of the Lord:

The beginning of Knowledge:

The difference between being Wise and being a fool:

How would we “despise” something or someone?

How can we know we are wise and understand things?

Day 2: Read Proverbs 2:1-4. Now look at verse 5: "Then shall you understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God." Seeking Understanding is a life-long journey. We must guard what God gives us as being more valuable than silver or hidden treasures. When we seek after God, then we gain a reverent fear of God, and we understand the knowledge of God. How can we attain this?

Day 3: Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." The heart is the center of your emotions and the place of finding God's Salvation. Write out how we can do the following:

Trust in the Lord with all my heart:

Don't lean on my own understanding:

Acknowledge God with all I do:

God will direct the way I should go:

Summarize these two verses for your life:

Day 4: Proverbs 4:23-27: "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and keep your foot from evil."

We are all different and each one of us has areas we struggle to overcome. How would you answer the following:

How can you guard your heart?

What tempts you to leave the comfort of God's Presence?

What can you do to overcome the "attitude" that comes out of your mouth?

How would you describe "perversity" and "corrupt talk"?

"Looking straight ahead" means to know where you are going and how you're going to get there spiritually. How can you work on this?

What do you think it means to, "make level paths for your feet and keep your foot from evil"?

Day 5: Proverbs 5:21: “For a man’s ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths.” There are places we go that have security cameras watching our every move. Often, we forget we are being watched. How more damaging (or delightful, depending on our actions), is the fact that God is watching us All The Time? If we would remember God’s watchful eye on a daily basis, would we do things differently? Why? Write out your thoughts:

Day 6: Proverbs 6:16-19: “there are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: (1.) haughty eyes, (2.) a lying tongue, (3.) hands that shed innocent blood, (4.) a heart that devises wicked schemes, (5.) feet that are quick to rush into evil, (6.) a false witness who pours out lies, (7.) and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers. Which of these seven things do you struggle with and how can you overcome them?

Day 7: Proverbs 7:1-3: “My son, keep my words and store up my commands within you. Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablets of your heart. Say to wisdom, ‘You are my sister,’ and call understanding your kinsman; they will you from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words.” The importance of knowing God’s Word and Wisdom is so when temptation comes your way, you can battle it successfully. Answer the following:

How important is it to know where you’re going?

Why do we guard our eyes and how does that compare with guarding God’s teachings?

Can you tape your fingers with God’s Promises? How?

Can you write God’s Promises on your heart’s tablets? How?

How can you get close to Wisdom?

How can understanding be “your relative”?

Why is this so important?

Day 8: Proverbs 8:32-36: "Now then, my sons, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the Lord. But whoever fails to find me harms himself; all who hate me love death."

This is God speaking about the importance of each of us having a personal relationship with him. Read these verses again and then describe what that relationship with God should look like:

Day 9: Proverbs 9:10-12: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life. If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer."

What does the saying, "True wisdom comes from God" mean?

What do you think it will take for you to personally find "God's Wisdom"?

Write out a definition for...

Wisdom:

Knowledge:

Understanding:

What do you think the following means: "If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer"? Concentrate on the difference between,

"...wisdom will reward you" and "...you alone will suffer":

Day 10: Proverbs 10:21-22: "The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value. The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of judgment."

When comparing the difference between "the righteous" and "the wicked," what observations can you make from these verses?

How can we make sure we are a part of “the righteous” instead of “the wicked”?

Day 11: Proverbs 11:11-14: “Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed. A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbor, but a man of understanding holds his tongue. A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret. For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure.”

Answer the following:

How valuable is the blessing of the upright?

How detrimental is the mouth of the wicked?

How important is it to guard your mouth?

According to these verses, how important is guidance and advisors?

Day 12: Proverbs 12:1-3: “Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid. A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but the Lord condemns a crafty man. A man cannot be established through wickedness, but the righteous cannot be uprooted.”

How do discipline and knowledge go together?

How do lack of correction and stupidity go together?

How can one obtain favor from God?

What establishes a person in life?

What conclusions can you draw from these verses?

Day 13: Proverbs 13:10-12: “Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow. Hope deferred make the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.”

How do humility and wisdom go together?

How do honesty and patience go together?

Why is it that waiting is more important than instantaneous?

Why does a peaceful life go hand in hand with living for God?

Day 14: Proverbs 14:8-10: "The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is deception. Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright. Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can share its joy."

What is the importance of considering all angles before acting?

How does foolishness lead to deception? Why is this?

Why is it important to make restitution to those you have hurt? How does this work?

We have been told to, "guard our hearts." What do these verses tell us about how important our hearts are?

Day 15: Proverbs 15:13-16: "A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit. The discerning heart seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly. All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast. Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil."

How many types of "hearts" are mentioned here? What are they and how do they work?

What is a way we can get over a "crushed spirit"?

How can we overcome being "oppressed"? Give examples.

How important is having the "fear of the Lord"? Explain.

Day 16: Proverbs 16:1-4, 9: "To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the reply of the tongue. All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the Lord. Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed. The Lord works out everything for his own ends—even the wicked for a day of disaster. In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps."

God is very involved in the ways of mankind. In these verses, "the Lord" is mentioned five times. What is "the Lord" doing?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Day 17: Proverbs 17:26-28: "It is not good to punish an innocent man, or to flog officials for their integrity. A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered. Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue."

These verses are talking about being careful in judgment, judging actions and not character, and being even-tempered...

How do we make sure we don't punish the innocent?

What is a good motto for restraining our words? (Both in the number of words and the words we use)

What happens to each of us when we get angry? How does anger cloud our vision? How can we overcome this temptation?

How can you keep people from seeing your foolish ideas?

Day 18: Proverbs 18:20-22: "From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips, he is satisfied. The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord."

These verses are talking about the importance of the words coming out of our mouths: It's very important for the wise to love life and not death!

What "Fruit" comes out of your mouth?

What is your "word-harvest" like?

How can you speak "life" into things instead of "death"? What does, "what you love is what you will eat"?

How can a wife know she is "good" and a "favor from the Lord"?

Day 19: Proverbs 19:2-3: "It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way. A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord."

When is having zeal not a good thing? How can we make sure our zeal is good?

What is the importance of taking responsibility for your own actions and your results?

Why is it we tend to blame God for things in life caused by our folly?

How can we overcome mistakes? How does accountability fit into overcoming?

Day 20: Proverbs 20:9-12: "Who can say, 'I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin'? Differing weights and differing measures—the Lord detests them both. Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right. Ears that hear and eyes that see—the Lord has made them both."

Honesty, Integrity, and Submission are the keys to these verses.

Are any of us able to say we are without sin, and really mean it?

How does Honesty and Integrity fit into all our actions?

Why do you think God hates it when we make differing judgments of differing people depending on who they are?

How can we correct how children behave in a teachable manner? Why is this important?

Why is it important we remember that the Lord is the One who made "ears that hear and eyes that see"?

Do we need to adjust how we hear and how we see?

Day 21: Proverbs 21:30-31: "There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the Lord. The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord."

If nothing can "succeed against the Lord," why do we fight Him so hard?

How big is God? How powerful is God? How majestic is God?

How can we Praise God More? How do Actions fit into Praise?

Planning is Good but maybe Praising is Better. How does this work?

Day 22: Proverbs 22:9-12: "A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor. Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are

ended. He who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious will have the king for his friend. The eyes of the Lord keep watch over knowledge, but he frustrates the words of the unfaithful.”

How are we blessed when we share with those in need?

If we bring discord into a situation, what does that say about our relationships with God?

How important is it to be pure and gracious? How does this work? How can we improve on this?

Ephesians 4:29 says, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Put this all together and what do you get? Write out a prayer for confession asking God’s forgiveness to help you change.

Day 23: Proverbs 23:17-18: “Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the Lord. There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off.”

What are some ways we can envy sinners?

What can we do to keep us from envying them?

One key is to remember the Hope we have in God! How can this help us overcome jealousy?

Day 24: Proverbs 24:9-12: “The schemes of folly are sin, and men detest a mocker. If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength! Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, ‘But we know nothing about this,’ does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?”

The key to godly strength is to be honest and open about saving others from destruction.

We must be wise and not fools. If we mock others, we are sinning. How can we be wise in stressful situations?

We must be wise in times of trouble. How can we build up our strength for troubled times? How can we persevere?

What do these verses say about God knowing everything that is going on? How should this make us live? How can we improve?

Day 25: Proverbs 25:21-22: "If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you."

("Heaping burning coals on someone's head" is an act of service by both the one putting the coals into a pan and the one taking the pan throughout the village to help people start fires in the early morning so they can feed their families. When we are kind to our enemies, they will come to serve the community out of thankfulness.)

What did you think "heaping burning coals on their heads" meant?

Does helping your enemy in their times of trouble always work where they will serve?

What is the Lord telling us to do when those we struggle with have needs?

Day 26: Proverbs 26:12: "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him."

False Wisdom is worse than someone stumbling as a fool.

When we think we are smart, what usually ends up happening to us?

What is "false wisdom"?

How deep does "false wisdom" go?

What does this say about someone who has acted like a fool for a while?

Day 27: Proverbs 27:14, 17, 19, 21: "If a man loudly blesses his neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse." "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." "As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man." "The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives."

Proverbs has moved into a series of very short sayings that "pack a punch". Let's look at these morsels...

When can a blessing be seen as a curse? What does this say about "timing"?

How can the interactions between people sharpen them? What are some “givens” so this sharpening can take place?

How can a heart reflect what a person really is? How can we tell what is real and what is fake?

How can compliments ruin a person? What should we be careful of when it comes to receiving praise? How can we be thankful and not stumble when receiving flattery?

Day 28: Proverbs 28:12-14: “When the righteous triumph, there is great elation; but when the wicked rise to power, men go into hiding. He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. Blessed is the man who always fears the Lord, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.”

When the righteous triumph, the righteous will be happy but when wickedness rises the righteous hide.

What determines who the “righteous” are? In our culture today, how is “righteousness” established? Where is God in all of this?

Why is it important to confess and turn from sin?

How can someone who sins find mercy?

When are we blessed? What happens when we harden our hearts toward God? Is there repentance and forgiveness?

Day 29: Proverbs 29:7-11: “The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern. Mockers stir up a city, but wise men turn away anger. If a wise man goes to court with a fool, the fool rages and scoffs, and there is no peace. Bloodthirsty men hate a man of integrity and seek to kill the upright. A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.”

The contrast of righteousness and unrighteousness are discussed in these verses. Ask yourself where you fit in the following...

How concerned are we for the justice of the poor?

How concerned are we for the peace of the city?

How controlled are our personalities on issues of justice that affect us?

Are we truly enemies of “people of hate” or are we “people of hate”?

Day 30: Proverbs 30:5-6: "Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar."

Revelation 22:18-21: "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen.

Compare these two passages from the Bible—one is Old Testament, and the other is New Testament.

What are we told not to do in both?

Why are we told not to do these things?

What are the penalties for doing what we are told not to do?

Revelation adds a promise, what is it?

What should our response to God's promise be?

Day 31: Proverbs 31:10-12: "A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life." Proverbs 31:30-31: "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate."

Men... How valuable is your wife? Does she know it?

Does your wife know you have full confidence in her?

Can you come up with a plan, so she experiences honor and value?

Women... Do you spend more time on your inward beauty as you do your outward looks?

Do you realize that outward beauty fades, but inward beauty always grows?

Do you appreciate the Gifts God has Given You?