

Hillside Fellowship Church  
February 7, 2021  
Dave Tooker

The Way of Wisdom  
Proverbs 3:1-12

Pastor Dave: And Father, we come to celebrate that truth, that the battle belongs to you. That you fight for us and that you have given us all that we need pertaining to life and godliness. You let us know how the story ends. So this morning I pray, as we open your word, I've got nothing to offer. So again, as I empty myself, would you fill me with goodness and love and truth. That your people might be fed. That they might be fed truth. That we might be a wise people in a foolish world.

Not just so that we can lord it over them or look down on them, but that they might see that you're a good God who has moved every mountain to remove our sin, to come live in us so that you might transform us and that they might see a community in a world gone haywire. That they might see a heavenly community that truly does love one another because of the love that we have received from you.

So I pray you'd work this morning. I pray that you would meet each one of us where we are and impact our hearts in a way that will truly bring about transformation, not just information. I ask that you do this, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Well, welcome. I know we've got a good number of first-timers, visitors, like the Googes I haven't seen in decades. So glad y'all are here. If you're a first-timer, a guest with us,

I would want you to know two things. Number 1, you found yourself at Hillside Fellowship and we as a group believe that Jesus changes everything. That he begins by changing us from the inside out so we might be a people who stand out and shine as a light.

And so there's really nothing special about us except our Savior, and that's who I long for you to know today. Second, I would want you to know that my name is Dave. I'm a new creature in Christ. I'm a recovering addict and alcoholic, saved by grace. And so I've never met anybody worse than me and if Jesus can save and change me, I truly believe there's hope for everyone, everywhere.

So I'm so glad you're here and my prayer is that you'll feel welcomed by the body and encouraged by our time in the word. And so we're in the book of Proverbs. If you've got your Bibles, go ahead and open up to Proverbs. We've been looking at this -- I call it Confessions of a Recovering Fool because I've never met anybody who is as foolish as I am either. So again, as we go through, I can't claim to be a wise man. So instead, as we go through, we're just looking at Confessions of a Recovering Fool.

In that, the overarching theme that has really been laying heavy on my heart, year after year as America has continued down this path of post-modern, moral-relativism, just chaos, I've noticed that the church has lost a lot of hope. In fact, people in the church will apologize to me and say, Dave, I'm so sorry that you've gotta raise kids. Good luck with that.

[Chuckling]

I'm like, unpack that for me. Well, there's no hope. You

know, it's in the education system and it's everywhere. You just give up. I'm like, wow! Is that what we've done with the gospel? Like, just to give up like God didn't know we would be here and hasn't raised a generation who can step into that gap if we would just walk in wisdom. If they might see that in us. They're going to see foolishness in the world. Listen, an election isn't going to change this junk, yo. It's going to take decades of pouring into our kids and saying, there's foolishness out there. Watch daddy walk in wisdom.

Right, left, right, left. Don't lose hope. God's at work. So I wanted to spend the beginning of 2021 just looking at wisdom. I don't care where you're at. Wisdom can impact it, transform it and change it. So today, we're going to be in Proverbs chapter 3, verses 1 through 12. I'll read it to you and then we'll unpack it together.

In Proverbs chapter 3, God says, Solomon writes this: 1 'My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, 2 for they will purloining your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity. 3 Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, 6 in all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. 8 This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.

9 Honor the LORD with your willeth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; 10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing and your vats will brim over with new wine. 11 My son, do

not despise the LORD's discipline, and do not resent his rebuke, 12 because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in."

Now, this is non-related to the sermon, but I feel like I need to jump into it if you just give me 30 seconds. I misplaced my Bible last night. So I'm using the NIV this morning. So the King James only people, if you're offended by that, I can't help you. This is the Bible I came to Christ in. My dad gave it to me 20 years ago. So it's an NIV. So that's the change today. So I got here this morning early and looked for my Bible. It's bad when a pastor loses his Bible, amen?

[Laughter]

Like, that's a bad thing. So I grabbed this one off the shelf. But, man, I got a dog a while back.

[Laughter]

You guys ever had that? You leave your Bible on the floor? So I opened it up and it was like, man, Henry got -- I named my dog after an elder that used to give me grief.

[Laughter]

Henry -- oh, don't tell me you've never done that, y'all. Anyway, Henry got it. So this Bible is a little janky. But it was interesting. I hadn't picked it up in 20 years. I picked it up and my dad wrote me a note from the Proverbs in the Bible. So it was a great way to start the morning, just praying, Lord, would you allow that truth, "be wise my son and bring honor to my heart?"

All of that, it's like, why is Dave using the NIV? It's because I lost my Bible. It's a tough morning. Let's jump in. Big picture. Again, just big picture. If you were to read straight through the Bible, one of the profound truths about your God that you would walk away with is this; that God is patient. Profoundly patient. 2 Peter 3 says, he's not slow about his promises, as some count slowness. He's actually really patient towards us. And that's good news.

But the problem with patience is, if you're going to proclaim you're patient, that patience has to be tested. So God, his patience is being exposed for all to see as he's been patient with fools like me and you, if the shoe fits, for a long time.

Now, here's the small theological picture. Because of sin's entrance into the world, you and I have grown up in a world of impatience. We're not patient. We don't like to wait for anything. We're a whole bunch of Veruca Salts. You ever seen Willy Wonka the original? Gene Wilder, 1971? Veruca Salt is a picture of America. It's perfect. Daddy, I want it and I want it now!

Wisdom can never be gained in a hurry. You wonder, what's wrong with America? Well, we're a bunch of fools because we want it and we're willing to sacrifice the future for what we want right now. Now there's good news. God's patient. He grows us in wisdom. We're impatient. We want what we want and we want it now. But because we're impatient, we can't grow in wisdom.

Here's the beauty. The Bible calls it The Gospel. Outlines it from Genesis to Revelation, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of man, co-equal with the Father and the Spirit from all eternity, humbled himself, wrapped himself in

humanity, came and grew in wisdom, stature and favor with God and man. He lived a life without sin that you couldn't live. He nailed the dismount. Mary Lou Retton that junk. Perfect!

He died a sacrificial substitutionary death in your place, for your sin. He who knew no sin became sin for you. He was buried and he did something that had never been done. He rose again so that by his victory, he might give you eternal life. We call it salvation. I'm totally for that. Here's my problem. For the last three or four decades, the church has focused on salvation and missed the rest of the story.

Are you saved? Are you saved? Are you saved? And I hope everybody comes to put their faith in Jesus Christ. That's the beginning of the story, yo. Your story does not end. I went to church and I got saved and now I do whatever I want. Remember, if we are looking at wisdom, wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord, admitting that there is a pattern to this world. Aerodynamics, thrust, drag, lift, weight, gravity. There's a pattern to everything in this world relationally, emotionally, spiritually.

If you choose to function outside of that pattern, you will crash. You will! You can blame me. You can blame your spouse. You can blame your -- you'll crash because you're functioning outside of the pattern. So if wisdom begins with admitting that there's a pattern and being competent, proficient at aligning your life with reality, if you do that, you'll fly. You'll start to be transformed. But it doesn't stop with salvation. God's patient. He loves to be patient.

This whole process called sanctification is huge, where he slowly, day by day, decision by decision, begins to transform

and mold me into the image of his Son. With that, we see, wisdom is aligning your life with reality as reality really is. The fool will always seek to align reality with himself. Anybody ever been invited into somebody else's fantasy? It's crazy making, isn't it? Don't want to tell you how it's everyone else's fault. That's a fool. They're not looking in the mirror saying, what am I in control of, what can I change?

The fool will always try and change people out there in reality to fit himself. The wise man, the wise woman says, how do I align my life and myself with the truth? And so, Jesus made it very clear. I know some of you are still discouraged. I see that in your eyes. I see it on your faces. Dave, I don't know. I don't think we can ever take our nation back. Even our phraseology is interesting. When did it become yours? The government resides on Jesus' shoulder, if I read the Bible right. Not yours.

You've lost hope. I want to be very upfront with you. Jesus made it super duper clear. I'm sending you out like sheep in the midst of wolves.

[Laughter]

He didn't mince words, did he? I mean, let's own this junk. I'm sending you out like sheep. Sheep have how many defenses? Nothing. They can just cute you to death. Like, baa. They got nothing. Nobody has nightmares about sheeps. We count them to go to sleep. But I'm sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be shrewd. [Different language.] It's an interesting word. Often translated prudent or wise. Be shrewd as serpents and harmless or innocent as doves.

At the intersection of shrewd and innocent is wisdom. At the intersection of grace and truth is wisdom. And I want to outline for you today how to get it. Go ahead. I took way too long on the intro. Pull up -- I'm going to start in verse 6, if you don't mind. It's my sermon. I'm tired. So I'm just going to, because I can.

[Laughter]

No, I'm going to show you wisdom can never be gained in a hurry. Wisdom is both a path and a process. And I'll prove it to you from the scriptures. It's a path, not a porthole. It's not a point you arrive at. Wisdom is a path. You're either on a path of foolishness where you're making foolish decisions and becoming more of a fool, or you're on a path of wisdom. I'll show it to you. Chapter 3, verse 6.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your . . .

Member: ... [indistinct] ...

Pastor Dave: Use your outdoor, Texan voices. It's cold up here. I feel like I'm alone. Long night. Tired. He will make your . . .

Congregation: Paths.

Pastor Dave: Paths straight. I can show you this and spend the next 20 minutes looking at 110 different times where this life is explained to us as a path. Psalm 23. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lay down in green

pastures. He leads me beside still water. He restores my soul. He guides me in the . . . path.

Psalm 16:11. You shall make known to me the . . . path of life and in your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

There's a bunch of them. Life is portrayed as a path. Now here's why we don't like that in America. Because remember, we're impatient. God's patient. Our vacations growing up used to be hiking the Rogue River Trail. 50 miles. As a 7-year-old. And dad would outline the path. There was a little, narrow path and he would say, today we're going to go eight miles. And he'd say, we're going to do it one step at a time.

Here's my problem with paths, and maybe your problem too. Paths are boring, monotonous, repetitious, mundane regular. You know how you make it through 10 miles in a day? Right, left. Then guess what you do after that? Repeat. Right, left. Totally boring. Here's a truth you don't want to know that's absolutely true. Most of life is boring and mundane and monotonous. You get up and you brush your teeth. Does that bother anybody? You've brushed them 79,000 times before. Do I really need to do this again? Yes.

See, the path that your on matters. Here's why. Let me explain it to you and why American will never reach a point of wisdom. American wants a method, a manual, a methodology to make wise decisions. They don't want to *be* wise. They want a method to make wise decisions. So I'll have some of you call me. Dave, I don't know what job to take. I don't know who to marry. I don't know what to do. I tried the flip and stab method. Anybody? Honestly?

God, I don't know what to do. I'm going to go to your word because it's holy. Show me.

[Laughter]

You laugh like you haven't done it. I love that about you. Shame will do that. We'll pull you out of that. Lord, I want a method to make a wise decision. I don't know what job to take. I don't know what to do. I've flipped and stabbed. Judas went and hanged himself.

[Laughter]

God must be having a bad day. That's a methodology to try and make a decision. You see, and we'll use all kinds of different methodologies to try and make wise decisions. On this path, let me tell you the truth. Every single day, you're making thousands of decisions. Those decisions, every single one of them, marks your soul. It marks your character. Every shortcut you take, every little lie, everything. Every time I see a sunrise or a sunset and my heart isn't overwhelmed with gratitude at beauty, my character is marked.

You see, every day in ever decision, every mundane thing marks your character. That, those decisions, begin to mark and make your direction for your life. And that direction, over any given 10, 20, 30 year period of time, will mark your destination. Your path matters. It's not just about how do I make a wise decision. It's about the path you're on. Are you becoming the kind of person who knows how to make wise decisions? You don't believe me? This matters so much, y'all.

Some of you have called me and said, Dave, I just can't believe in a God that would send people to hell. And most of us have thought that at some point. Because in America, that's what was preached. It was bad news. Repent or you're going to hell! And we kind of characterized God as this great being who as soon as you died, jumps out and says, aha! Got you! You didn't make the right decision. Right? Because in America, we live by resumes. It's our big decisions. It's that big day.

We don't think about the thousand little decisions that marked our character, that set our direction, that sets our destination. But for those of you who've called, I generally ask you, unpack that for me. Tell me more. Well, Dave, hells in the Bible. Well, yes, it is. Have you read the Bible is my next question, which I typically get some foolishness and some nonsense. Well, of course I have. I know a penny saved is a penny earned.

[Laughter]

Psst. That's not in the Bible. And so as we unpack it, I get to tell them, do you know that if you actually read the Bible, all 1196 pages and sought to understand it, you would understand all of us were going to hell and God is the only one who loved us and sent his son to provide a way out. But do you know that some people, because of the decisions they make on this path, the path that you're on. You're on a path today. And these decisions you make mark your character.

And if you do that over and over and over long enough, guess what? Even when you're confronted with hope and help and healing and a life, a message of grace, a message

of peace, even when you're confronted with it, your heart can be so black that you're reject it. It's not that God is sitting there kicking people into hell. If you've never dealt with an addict, you don't get this. You know, as a recovering meth head, I had buddies come to me and say, Dave, you're dying. You're like down to 90 pounds. You're dying. We want to help you. We love you.

You know what I told them, because I had made so many decisions that had marked the character of my heart? Get out! Even when confronted with help and life, I chose darkness and death. This is what sin does. People who go to hell want to be there, because heaven would be their hell. So if you're read the Bible, you'll see your decisions have determined the path that you're on. Wisdom is a path. It's not a porthole. Right, left, right, left.

Where is your character lacking today? I don't ask that to shame you. I ask you that because I love you. And wherever that character is lacking, it's marking your soul. Is it bitterness? Is it anger? Is it contempt? Is it lies? Is it lust? C.S. Lewis said there's something of hell in all of us, that if it's allowed to grow will become hell over any given period of time. The good news is this. God is so gracious, he put U-turns everywhere. We call it repentance. God's a lot like Texas in this way.

[Chuckling]

No, honestly. When you're driving home, count how many U-turns are on this mug. On 281. It was like TX-dot knew that Dave Tooker was going to work here. They put a turnaround a hundred feet down the road. Because they were like, Dave's going to forget his Bible. He's going to

need to turn around. Then they put one 1/4 mile after that. Dave's going to forget his phone, his wallet. He'll have to turn around again.

God is gracious. He puts U-turns. Today is one of those U-turns. If you're on that path of foolishness, your character is being marked, come to him today and say, I'm so sorry. Would you forgive me and meet me in that. He'll give you wisdom and put you on a path of life.

Now, with that -- sorry, Lee. I'm going to go late. It's 8 minutes left. I don't know how that happened.

[Chuckling.]

I blame you.

[Laughter.]

Watch this. I'm going to walk you through quickly five things. You asked, how do I get on that path? How do I grow in wisdom? How do I grow in discernment, prudence and understanding? In this passage, he's going to give us five ways. You've gotta know your terrain. You've gotta know your God. You've gotta know yourself. You've gotta know your friends and you gotta know the tools that God uses.

Jump in to verse 1 and 2. Let me show you. You've gotta know your terrain. If you don't know this, you're going to be all jacked up. Watch this. 1 "My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, 2 for they [my teaching and commandment] will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity."

He uses the word for Torah. The law. Teaching. Instruction. He says, be careful, be incredibly initiative about what you put in your heart. Know your terrain. In the military, situational awareness. Know what's around you. You happen to live in the kingdom of darkness ruled by the prince of the power of the air, who is a liar, a murderer, a deceiver and father of all lies. Whenever he speaks, he speaks of his nature and he speaks lies. You're surrounded with lies. You're surrounded with foolishness and many of you freely let it in. Day in and day out.

In fact, if the data is correct, it's the first thing you put into your mind. If it's my conservative friends and it's Fox News or if it's my liberal friends and it's CNN, MSNBC or if it's just the normal run of the mill, it's Twitter, it's Instagram, it's Facebook, you are getting a steady diet of anxiety, panic, fear, stress, worry and lies. And you don't even know it! And you fight over it. My data is true! No, my data is true! No, my data is real data. No, my data is scientific data.

We don't even know what that means anymore and you're being spoon fed it and you love it and you come in and talk to me and you're like, I'm freaking out! I took a programming class once. It only took once.

[Chuckling]

Have you ever taken one? Not for me. It's for some cats. It's not for me. Right? If this than this. 1s and 0s. Anyway, I made it through. I was doing this thing where the dude was supposed to ski down the mountain. Halfway down the mountain, you would think he got shocked. This little 0x1 guy was like [shaking.] And I told the professor, something is wrong with my computer. He said, no. It's the programming.

Garbage in, garbage out. It was the phrase he liked to use over and over and over. Garbage in, garbage out.

Let me tell you this. Most of us are putting garbage in every day. We don't know our terrain. We're not situationally aware. And that's why we're freaking out, losing our heads and marching down a path of foolishness, acting like every Facebook post is gospel. It's ridiculous. This is why Jesus said, Father, sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. It's the light that we have. And it will bring peace and calm to your anxiety, panic, fear, stress and worry. Because Jesus ends up -- I read the whole story -- he wins big. Really big.

That's why I wake up most days in a good mood. Now, watch this.

[Chuckling]

Most days. Today was hard. I won't go into that because I only got four minutes left. We've got know your terrain. Now watch this. Next one. Verse 3 and 4. Not only do you need to know your terrain, you've got to know your God. If you're going to be wise and align yourself with reality as reality really is, I think we would all agree, you've got to align with God as God really is. Not a make believe God. Not, here's what I think God is like. I don't care what you think God is like and I hope you don't care what I think God is like.

That's why he's given us this Bible that say, this *is* what God is like. Watch what he says. 3 "Let love and faithfulness . . . " Now if I had time to break this down in the Hebrew, I would show that these words, love and faithfulness, are used exclusively towards God. He is love and he is faithful. 3 "Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around

your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man."

Not only do you need to be situationally aware of the anxiety, panic, fear, stress and worry that's seeking to be pumped into your life to move you to do something or vote some way they want you to vote, you've got to know your God. What God is truly like. What he's really like. I want to tell you what he's truly and really like. God is love. And he loves you. Profoundly, Hillside. He lets me know about it. He puts it on my heart to love you because he so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son to die for you. And God demonstrates or shows his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

And he's faithful. He will never leave you and never forsake you. You're safe in him. You see, without this -- I call it industrial strength love of God. I didn't get very many "Hmms" on that.

[Chuckling]

I grew up in a house of boys. Three boys to be exact. We shared one shower. Guess how many clogged drains we had? Zero. We have no hair.

[Chuckling]

It's a trick question. None. Ever. So when I got married, . . .

[Chuckling]

Don't jump ahead in the story. And this isn't on Brooke. I got

married and then had two daughters. There's a lot of hair up in my house. And they share a bathroom. And so when Brooke told me, the drain is clogged, I said, how did that happen? Our house is broken.

[Laughter]

I grew up never having a clogged drain. So being a dude, being a man, I said, I'll fix it. Y'all, I went in there . . .

[Laughter]

. . . and I barely made it through last time.

[Laughter.]

I'm so sorry. I unscrewed the [coughs] . . . I can't [cough, gag.] What I pulled out looked like Chewbacca's cousin with a lot of conditioner. And it was big.

[Laughter]

Big. I couldn't be there. I couldn't touch it. I can't. I decided I can change diapers. I can't do that whatever that is, ladies. I am sorry. I am sorry. So I went down to Home Depot and I got some drain cleaner. I poured Draino down there and Draino couldn't do it. So I went and got some hot, foaming stuff. Couldn't do it. I think that conditioner was so pressurized in that hair. I had to go get industrial strength drain cleaner to chew through that stuff. And I have found, our hearts get so clogged with the anxiety, panic, fear, stress and worry and the lies of the accuser who accuses us before the Father night and day, that our drains are clogged.

We don't believe the love and faithfulness of God. In fact, if I had each one of you for a few minutes, I bet you would tell me, I'm pretty sure God doesn't like me. I'm pretty sure God's disgusted with me. Dave, where my mind goes, what I wrestle with, what I struggle with, my story, my abuse, my hurt, my pain. No, I don't think God loves me. Unless you know the industrial strength love and faithfulness of God, you won't be able to walk into the truth.

Friends, he has a love for you that's never stopping, never giving up, never quitting, relentless to the ends of the universe, sacrificing all that he has and all that he is to forgive you and love you, and to unclog that drain. What do you think you have done that is greater than the never stopping, never ending, never giving up love and faithfulness of God? What I want to give to you today is the industrial strength love of God. He has spared no end to love you. He has spared nothing to come be with you.

Bind that love and faithfulness around your neck. Write it on the tablet of your heart. Because if not, you'll never see the third step. You'll never see it. Watch the third step. Here. 5 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Third point. If you want to grow in wisdom and understanding, you have to know yourself. Socrates said this. The unexamined life is not worth living. It's a huge part of AA and NA. Knowing your weaknesses, your faults, your flaws, your failures, your shortcomings. I've got to know where I fall into a ditch over and over. I've got to.

You see, we live in a world where we all try and act strong.

And I'm so sorry for that. It's why it's a great honor to get up and say, I'm the weakest person I know. I truly am the weakest person I've ever met. Oftentimes, my first thought is how do I numb the pain in the morning. I know not everybody shares that struggle. I do. And so we grow up thinking I need to project strength. The truth is, we begin to hide our weaknesses from each other. And the scariest part is, we can be, the Bible says, self-deceived.

Do you realize that? You can lie to yourself? And actually believe that lie. I don't have a problem. No, I'm not broken. They're broken. I learned this lesson. It was 8th grade. Mom and dad were here earlier. I asked them if they remember ever getting called in for cheating. They did. And it was for me. I was in remedial math. I couldn't pass any math class. It was pretty boring stuff, honestly. I don't know how anybody is an accountant. Ever. Sorry. I'm looking at math teachers now. Chris, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Genuinely sorry.

[Chuckling.]

English is boring. Ah, there's an English teacher. Subjects are awesome. Doesn't matter. I was cheating. Anybody else cheat? Thank you. Okay. We got a couple. That's great. But I wasn't really cheating. You see, the math teacher said, okay, grade your own papers.

[Laughter]

Well, when you're grading your own paper, you naturally give yourself a lot of grace, amen?

[Chuckling]

Can I just get an amen? In fact, I found that I gave myself a lot of grace and understanding because I know what I meant.

[Chuckling]

The answer's 12. I meant 12. So I wrote 8. It's close. So I would give myself grace. Do you know we give ourselves a lot of grace where we naturally judge others? Happens all the time to me. I was so mad at this gal this week. She's coming. No turn signal. All of a sudden, she turns in and I have to wait for a whole nother round of cars to come. Idiot! Forgive me if that was anybody here. What an idiot! And I'm judging them as I'm holding my coffee with no turn signal on prepared to turn right.

[Laughter]

Grace for me. I'm texting and drinking coffee! I can't use my turn signal. Judgment for you, idiot. Use your -- see? We naturally -- here's the question. Are you open and honest? Who gets to speak into your life? Who gets to speak into your life? Who knows your weaknesses, your faults, your flaws, your repeated struggles? Who gets to speak into your life? You see, the fool is always an individualist. You'll never grow in wisdom being an individualist. The fool will always say, nobody gets to speak into my life. They're all idiots. Nobody uses their turn signals.

Only people who do everything perfect can speak into -- the fool will either say, nobody gets to speak into their life and they'll lean on their own understanding, or everybody gets to speak into my life and then they're ruined. Because they've

got all these voices. The wise man realizes, it can't be nobody and it can't be everybody, but it does need to be somebody. I've got to have somebody that knows my brokenness, my flaws, my weakness so that they can speak truth so I can end up on the path of righteousness, not on the path of foolishness.

Watch what comes next. Not only do you need to know your train, not only do you need to know your God and know yourself, you've got to know your friends. Watch where he goes here. I'll take verse 1 and 11. Just for the sake of time, just jump up to 1. Notice he says, "my son?" He's going to say that 55 times in Proverbs. Now go to verse 11, because it kind of sandwiches the whole thing. "My son, . . . "

Again, you've got to know your friends. Who do you allow to speak into your life? You've got to have somebody. It can't be nobody. Or else you'll be wise in your own eyes and you're going to be a fool heading for destruction. It's got to be somebody. Jump to the end. You've gotta know the tools that God uses. Watch this. This is very, very disconcerting. I'm going to go 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. I want you to see the shift he walks through here.

My ears are about to fall off. So if I look like a vampire, it's just I'm -- air blockage. Watch this. This shift that's about to happen is going to blow your mind. He's going to go from very good to very bad. Or what we perceive to be very bad. Let me read it to you. If you're not wise in your own understanding and in your own eyes, you fear the Lord, shun evil, 8 "This will bring health to your body . . . " Is that good or bad?

That's good. We want to be healthy, don't we? That's good.

I like that. ". . . and nourishment to your bones." We want to be nourished. That's good. 9 "honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; 10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."

Good or bad? Good. Mo' money. Amen? Yeah. We should just stop there. That's awesome. I itch your back God, you itch mine. I do what you want, you give me what I want. This, in biology, is mutually symbiotic. This is a good relationship. You give me what I want, I give you what you want. We're both happy and we can go on with it.

Watch what comes next. 11 "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline,?" Hah. Who likes discipline? Wait. It gets worse. ". . . do not resent his rebuke, . . ." He's going rebuke me? I want to get back to the overflowing with wine. Can we get some of that? My barns overflowing. Let's stay there. ". . . resent his rebuke, 12 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in."

I call this the Disneyland Principle. Many of us, our expectations were way off when we became Christians. Our life was jacked up. Our life was messed up. We were like, God, I will surrender to you. I will give you my life. You give me good kids. God, I'll give you my life. You give me abundance. I'll give you my life. You give me peace, pleasure, joy, happiness. We've got a whole bunch of things we list, don't we? We got a whole bunch of stuff.

And many preachers get up and say, give your life to Jesus and everything will be better. Which is semi-true. But it misses the whole life part. Sheeps and wolves. Remember? The whole life part. So we come with the

expectation that if I give my life to Jesus, everything will be better. I call it the Disneyland Principle. How many of you have ever been to Disneyland? Good. A whole bunch. I just connected with 80%. This is awesome.

I've been multiple times. When I was 7. When I was 9. You know, I don't remember one ride from Disneyland? None. You know what I remember? These signs. Besides the mouse. It was like, you're too short. That's why I still don't like Mickey Mouse. But I think they changed that now, because all X-ers hate Mickey Mouse. It's like, he was the one that said, no. Besides that, you know what I remember? These little signs that said 1.5 hours from this point.

You might as well of told me to buy a grave site right there. As a 5-year-old? An hour and a half? See, my expectation was of delight and I got discipline. My expectation was of pleasure and I got pain. I still have to work through my resentments with Disneyland.

[Chuckling]

Doesn't matter. I still have issues with Disneyland. Most pastors don't share the whole truth. When you come to Jesus, guess what? He's going to lovingly discipline you because he wants you to grow. He's going to lovingly walk you through and help you align your life with reality. It's like orthodontics. It hurts. Now, he's gentle. He's slow. He's kind. He's gracious. But he's going to straighten that mug out. He does the same thing in our lives.

You see, if you came to Jesus and said, I just want delight and he gave difficulty, you're going to be frustrated. Probably going to throw in the towel. The reality is he's

going to discipline you. It says, in fact, as the Father, the son he delights in. Because he wants us to grow in wisdom. He's going to discipline you. He's going to discipline me, because he wants you to grow in wisdom.

A fool in his folly, like a dog returns to his vomit, he'll keep going back to it. God is going to love you and graciously discipline you because he doesn't want you to be a fool. He wants you to be wise. I know that doesn't land well with some of you and I want you to know, you're free to make decisions. You really are. Don't hear me saying, I hate you, you're horrible. I'm saying, you're free to make decisions. You're not free to make the consequences.

Those consequences are there to discipline you. And if you're running into a brick wall, you're one of my addict buddies, my food addict, porn addict, alcoholics and you're running into that wall over and over, yeah, you're free to make decisions. You're not free to make the consequences. Those consequences are there to discipline you so that you might take those steps in repentance to step onto the path of wisdom.

Now, the truth is, many of us don't want wisdom. We just want pleasure. We just want joy. I want you to know this, and I'll land the plane with this. I've only got -- well, I'm 12 minutes over. I'm so sorry. I'll own that. That's my fault. Not yours.

You will never, ever, ever have wisdom, even if you get to know your terrain, know your God, know yourself. Even if you get to know your friends and know the tools that God uses, you'll never know wisdom apart from Jesus Christ on the cross. You'll never know. 1 Corinthians chapter 1. You'll

never know wisdom apart from Christ on the cross. You see, you'll always be running from pain or running from discipline.

Let me tell you this. Wisdom never avoids suffering. It always transforms it into more wisdom. Wisdom does not mean that you're going to get out of difficulty, pain and suffering. It does mean that Jesus will use it to transform suffering into more wisdom. And if you apply that to your life, you will begin to see wisdom in your life.

Let me explain it to you this way. That didn't seem clear. Jesus Christ, God on earth, did not avoid suffering. He went to the cross and took on suffering. He didn't avoid difficulty. He went to the cross and took it on. In taking it on, what did he say on the cross? Father, for-- what tender words. Father, forgive them. He didn't avoid suffering. What did he do with it? He transformed it into even greater wisdom and as you take the cross of Christ into your heart and into your relationships and as you're suffering in relationships and you take the cross of Christ and realize, wisdom transforms suffering into more wisdom.

As you take the cross into all your relationships, you'll begin to see wisdom pour out of your life. Because you'll begin to forgive. You'll begin to let bitterness, anger, frustration; you'll begin to fix your eyes on the all together wise one. His name is Jesus Christ. And what you fix your eyes on, what you focus on, is what will form you. And if you take this into your heart and take this into your head, it will change what your hands do and you will become one who is on the path of wisdom.

Let's pray and enjoy communion together.

Father, God, thank you so much that as you looked at me in my foolishness and folly and looked at us in our foolishness and folly, you didn't just turn your back on us. But that you sent your Son. And Jesus, thank you for your industrial strength, never stopping, never giving up, never quitting love when you could've easily turned your back on me. You instead went to the cross to die for me that you might rescue me and redeem me from that path of foolishness.

So I pray now, through your Spirit, as we celebrate that work, Jesus, that you did on the cross with that industrial strength love and faithfulness, melt our hearts and open those drains to receive that love that you demonstrated for us on the cross. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Lee: Well, good morning. My name is Lee and I have the privilege of serving as one of your elders on your elder team. Today, we celebrate communion and as we begin, I want to invite everyone with a saving faith in Jesus Christ to participate with us. Whether a member, a visitor, first-timer, regular attender, we all sit at God's table together. So please participate with us.

You were given some elements when you came in. There's a seal on the top and then the wafer. And then another seal and then the juice. If you didn't get one, just raise your hand and our ushers will bring one to you now.

As I began to prep for communion this month of February, I was reminded that this is the month of Valentine's Day. Of candy, of cards, of chocolates and flowers. And guys, if you just had a little heart palpitation, it isn't today. You have one more week. But now your loved one is sitting next to you knowing you've been reminded. So you better come through

next Sunday.

Valentine's Day is a time when we're reminded about the love of someone special to us. Someone that we might occasionally forget. Someone for whom our passions and our feelings may be expressed a little less often than we would like. So we set aside a day each year to remember the ones that we love and to celebrate them.

Well, communion has a far deeper but similar purpose. To remind us to celebrate the one we love and to pause and reflect on his mercies and his grace and his death on a cross. For me, communion can be a time when I sit there and remember my sins and I feel remorse for how ungrateful I've become. Or it can be a time of deep sadness where I reflect on what my Savior had to do on the cross because of me.

But today, I would ask us not to just focus on our sins or just focus on his sacrifice, but to focus on the reason that he did it. As Dave said earlier. Jesus loves us deeply. And as hard as it is for some of us to understand and as much as you might not be able to believe it, Jesus loves you. Every one of you no matter how bad you think you are, no matter how good you think you are. Jesus loves you just where you sit.

He knows you intimately and he adores you fully. And knowing you and understanding you and being aware of every sin, he took the cup and the bread and he said, for you, my body will be broken and my blood will be spilt. Dave mentioned this verse earlier. Romans 5:8 says, but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. And John 15:13 says, greater love has no man than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

Now that is love. Not expressed with candy or hearts or flowers. And we are called to love sacrificially, not just our special Valentine, but all of mankind. Just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. So as we take the elements, let's focus on Christ's love for us. And as we remember his love, let's also remember his calling for us to love others. Let's take a brief moment and reflect on the love of Jesus.



1 Corinthians 11:23 says this. The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread. And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper, he took the cup saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this whenever you do it in remembrance of me. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Amen.

[End]