

52 STORIES OF THE BIBLE

by

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17. Solomon — the Wise and Foolish (Proverbs)

I. Background of Solomon's Life

Well, in the second half of the book of II Samuel, we read about the end of David's life, we read about the problems he had with his son Absalom. And then when we move into the Book of I Kings, we read about David's death and then we read about Solomon and his reign and eventual death as David's son on the throne.

A. Prayer for Wisdom

There are a lot of interesting things that happened in the story of Solomon, but probably one of the best is what happens in Chapter 3 of I Kings. Solomon loved the Lord; he sacrificed to him regularly. And one time when he was sacrificing, the Lord appeared to him in a vision and said, "Solomon, what do you want?" And in I Kings 3, verse 9, we read his answer. "Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people that I may discern between good and evil." And God heard and God answered Solomon's prayer and made him the wisest person that has ever lived. And then in a very interesting twist, God says, "Because you did not ask for wealth or for long life, I'm going to give you wealth and a long life." In fact, Solomon reigned for another forty years. We're about 970-930 B.C. on the timeline. In some ways, Solomon was the greatest of all the Israelite kings. He certainly was legendary for his wisdom and people would come from countries all around to listen to him and to hear of his wisdom, the queen of Sheba as well as others. In I Kings 4, verse 29, we read, "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure and breadth of mind, like the sand on the seashore, so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt", verse 32. He also spoke 3000 Proverbs and his songs were 1005. Solomon was legendary for his wisdom. He extended the political borders of Israel beyond that of even what his father was able to accomplish. He built the temple; he centralized worship in Jerusalem, something that had been very important. And he amassed immense wealth. So in some ways, Solomon was the greatest of the Israelite kings.

B. Dies a Fool

But Solomon, like many other people, started strong and ended weak. It's a kind of a pattern that we're seeing, isn't it? But time after time, these people start strong and then end weak. Back in I Kings 3, verse 3, this is at the beginning of his reign, "Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David, his father." He starts strong. But then very early, he marries Pharaoh's daughter, a political marriage, but something that he was told explicitly that he could not do. He must not marry the daughters of foreign kings. And then Solomon uses forced labor and heavy taxation to accomplish his conquest and his building programs. The exact kinds of problems that Samuel had warned the Israelites, "This is what a king does. If you really want a king, this is what they are going to do to you." And as you read thorough the first eleven chapters in I Kings, you see Solomon's life going downhill. And eventually, the wisest man becomes a fool in his own language, in his own terminology.

In I Kings Chapter 11, starting at verse 1, we read, “Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of pharaoh, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the people of Israel, ‘You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.’ Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines and his wives turned away his heart, for when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not truly whole to the Lord his God as was the heart of David, his father.” And the text goes on to talk about Solomon building temples to all these foreign gods. It’s interesting that really, the only thing that matters is faithfulness to the covenant. Here are all these things that Solomon had. He had wisdom, he had power, he had wealth, but in the end, they weren’t that important. What was really important was whether or not Solomon was faithful to God’s charge, whether he was faithful to the covenant. And it is on that standard and that standard alone that he is judged. And he is judged a fool at the end of Chapter 11. God tells Solomon what he’s going to do and because of Solomon’s son, he is going to tear his nation in two, the northern 10 tribes are going to be given to another kingdom, and yet because of David’s faithfulness, God will keep the two southern tribes and all Solomon’s sons and the house of Solomon to rule those two tribes. Quite a life of the world’s wisest man who died a fool.

II. Introduction to Proverbs

I’d like to use Solomon’s life as a backdrop for the Book of Proverbs. Solomon wrote 3000 proverbs, some of these, along with proverbs written by other people were collected together in a book that we call Proverbs. It’s the book right after Psalms in the middle of your Bible. And these proverbs are very interesting. I don’t know if you’ve spent much time reading them or not. But it seems that these proverbs have something to say about anything and everything. It’s amazing what you can dig up in this book and if you were preaching, you could pick your favorite proverbs, but I’m preaching, so here are my favorite proverbs. Again, there are certain themes, though, that go through. But one of the themes that Proverbs loves to talk about is laziness. Over and over and over again, Proverbs talks about the sluggard. For example, Proverbs 20, verse 4, “The sluggard does not plow in the autumn. He will seek at harvest and have nothing.” I love that picture of a lazy person going out when it was time in the Middle East to plant in the autumn, but he’s not going to go out and plant, but when it comes time for harvest, he goes out and says, “Hey, where did all the food go?” It’s this absurd picture of being a sluggard; lots to say about laziness.

Proverbs has lots to say about tranquility. I don’t know how many times I heard growing up, Proverbs 14:30, “Now Billy,” my mom would say to me. I always knew I was in trouble when I was William or Billy. “Now Billy, a tranquil heart gives life to the flesh.” I was a rather hyper child. “Can’t you just calm down, Bill? A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.” The other one I heard a lot was Proverbs 15:1. “A soft answer, Billy, turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” Lots to say about tranquility.

There’s a lot to say about wealth as well, especially ill-gained wealth. But for example, Proverbs 17:1, “Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with

strife." The thing that's interesting about Proverbs is that they're practical in their application of wisdom, but they are so much deeper than that. That's one of the things that I've really seen this week that they're not just, "here's how you do this and here's how you do that." But there are deep fundamental abiding truths behind so many of these things. 17:1 is an issue of values clarification, isn't it? What's more important to you, to have a lot of money and strife, or have a little and peace and quiet? The underlying truth is that the peace and quiet is more valuable. Lots to say about wealth. 19:17, "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord and he will repay him for his deeds." That's an amazing Proverb because it goes deep into the heart of stewardship, doesn't it? The idea that what we have is God's and we are responsible to him for how we use it. And when we take the Lord's wealth and give it to the poor, we are in fact, giving it back to the Lord and he will repay us for it. I mean, deep truths along with practical wisdom. Much to say about wealth.

It also has much to say about proverbs. My favorite proverb along these lines is Proverbs 5, starting at verse 18, "Rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Be intoxicated always in her love." I like that. I read this to Robin this week and she said, "Oh great, now I'm a deer, I'm a doe." "Ah, but a lovely one, a graceful one, my dear." Lot to say about a good wife. And it actually has quite a bit to say about not a good wife as well and I need to point out that the context of Proverbs is a father teaching his son, and so what's good for the goose is good for the gander on this stuff. I wish there were more things about lousy husbands, there's not much of that. But for example, in Proverbs 21:9, "It is better to live in the corner of a housetop than in a house shared with a quarrelsome wife." Go check out the living Bible's translation of that when you get home. It's rather creative and interesting. Lot to say about that. But it also has an awful lot to say about adultery. It has a lot to say about sexual fidelity. Perhaps the strongest passage of all is in Proverbs Chapter 5. And part of me wants to skip these things, but if I'm going to be true to Proverbs, I can't, because it's one of the dominating themes in Proverbs. Proverbs 5, starting in verse 3, "For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey." A forbidden woman is not just a prostitute. The forbidden woman is the woman on the pornographic website or on the pornographic magazine. The forbidden woman is the sexually active high school student and the sexually active college student. I think the adulterous woman, the forbidden woman is even what goes on in junior high school of the flirting and the constant pushing of physical and emotional barriers that we have. Proverbs says, "The lips of a forbidden woman," and let's be fair, a forbidden man, "drip honey. And her speech is smoother than oil. But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps follow the path to Sheol (to hell)." One of the most fundamental, underlying themes that weaves its way all the way through Proverbs is in their language, the fool only looks at the short term. And I have to say it in their language because my mom taught me to never call anyone a fool. But Solomon calls them a fool, so in this context I have to. The fool looks only at the short term. And the wise person looks long. Fundamental theme all the way through the Book of Proverbs. And the fool looks at this forbidden woman and sees the lips dripping honey and the speech that is smoother than oil and says, "There's no consequences. There's nothing long term, it's only short term." Such a major theme in the book of Proverbs. But of all the Proverbs and of all the themes, the most important is probably Proverbs 1, verse 7. Please turn there. Solomon starts the book with this proverb and it is out of this proverb that all the rest of the book comes.

If you want to be wise, if you want to be really smart, then your search for wisdom starts with the fear of the Lord. That's the starting point. That's the source out of which all other wisdom will flow. Now, when we talk about fear of the Lord, it's easy to misunderstand what the phrase means. On one hand, it doesn't mean to be scared, unless of course you are living in sin and I'd be scared of judgment, too. But that's not really what fear of the Lord is about. And fear of the Lord can't be watered down to something like being polite, on the other side. But fear of the Lord is something in the middle and we use phrases like "reverential awe", or "worshipful respect". But in reverential awe or worshipful respect and how we relate to God, that is the beginning of wisdom. That's where it all stems from.

Back in Exodus 14, a rather powerful picture is painted to help us understand what fear of the Lord is. Do you ever put yourself in the shoes of people in the Bible and ever wonder what it's like? I hope that we get to relive the whole Bible in heaven, because I want to go through the Red Sea and I want to see the waters part and check out if there's fish in there. It's one of things I really want to do. But put yourself in their shoes. They've been captive to the Egyptians. God in his might sends ten horrible plagues and releases you, you take off, a million and a half of you, you come to the Red Sea, your leader holds out his staff, the waters part, you go across and here comes the enemy. You watch the waters collapse on them and kill them. And at that moment in time, how do you think about God? That's fear of the Lord. Exodus 14, verse 31. Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and they believed in the Lord. That's what fear of the Lord is, reverential awe, worshipful respect, how you would feel watching God split the Red Sea apart and then watching God collapse the Red Sea back on the enemies. That, how you respond, is fear of the Lord. And fear of the Lord is where wisdom starts. It's at the center of everything. If I could say it another way, I'd say it this way. If you search for wisdom, you find God. That's what Proverbs 1:7 is saying. If you search for wisdom, you will find God because true wisdom starts with knowing who God is. Look at Proverbs 1, please, starting at verse 1, "My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments to you, making you attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding. Yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search it as for hidden treasures." Wouldn't it be incredible if we did that? Wouldn't it be incredible if this church would be known as people who are passionate about the pursuit of God's wisdom, "seeking it like silver, searching it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God?" The starting point for wisdom is fear of the Lord. And fear of the Lord starts with knowing who God is, understanding who he is. And then once you know who God is then you just automatically understand that he and he alone is the only source of true wisdom. Look at the next verse, verse 6, "For the Lord gives wisdom, from his mouth come knowledge and understanding." This is what James is saying in Chapter 1, that if you lack wisdom, pray and the Lord will give you wisdom. The starting point of wisdom is understanding the fear of the Lord, understanding who he is and that which is true, and that which is right, and that which is wise comes from him. Yeah, I know that sometimes a blind squirrel can get a nut every once in a while, right? Every once in a while people may come up with something that's true. But the source of true wisdom and the source of that which is always wise, is God. That's what Proverbs 1:7 is all about. If you hear anything else this morning, please hear this. God knows best. That's what Proverbs is all about. God's ways are true, God's ways are right and God our

Father knows best. That's what underlies all of Proverbs, because this is his wisdom. And so the starting point is to understand that he is right and therefore, his wisdom is true.

III. Two Kinds of People in this World

There are two kinds of people in this world. I like to try to break things down to their simplest components sometimes; I find it helpful. Two kinds of people in this world: there are those who believe that God is right and those who believe that God is wrong. That's one way to look at it. Either you believe that God knows what he's talking about and he's wise, or you don't think that God knows what he's talking about and in fact, he's a fool. Two kinds of people in this world and Proverbs has strong language for these two kinds of people.

A. The Wise

On the one hand, you have the wise. That's what Solomon calls us. And the wise person believes that God's ways are always true. The wise person believes that God's ways are always true, that his ways are always best despite what friends say, despite what the in-crowd says, despite the latest psychological fad, despite what your hormones are telling you, despite what a young person's desire for independence is telling him, despite the deceptive, short-term possible benefits of sin, despite all those things. And all those things are fighting God aren't they? Despite those things the wise person says, "You know what? I believe that God is right. I believe that he is wise." And the wise person that believes that God is always right is then very teachable, isn't he? You look at that passage that we read in Chapter 2 in the middle. "If you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures," if you're teachable, if you really want to learn, if you want to be wise, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and you will find the knowledge of God. That a person who is wise is teachable, even if that means learning difficult lessons in difficult circumstances, because the teachable person is open even when he is being disciplined. One of the better-known proverbs is in Proverbs Chapter 3, verses 11 and 12. "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline or be weary of his reproof. For the Lord reproves him who he loves as the father the son in whom he delights." How many times, parents, have we said to our children, "This hurts me more than you."? And they go, "Yeah, right!" "Oh, no, I'm doing this because I love you." "Yeah, right!" That's exactly what our heavenly Father, parents, is doing to us. That when we sin, when we choose the wrong path, we are disciplined, and the wise person, even in the midst of discipline, understands that they are learning, and they want to learn because they want to be wise, because they believe with all their heart that wisdom starts with the fear of God and he is the source of what is true. A wise person believes that God is right. A wise person is teachable in all circumstances and a wise person believes that righteousness, that doing things God's way, is always rewarded in the long term. I said this earlier that there is a contrast in Proverbs between short-term and long-term thinking. Those are my words. Solomon doesn't use them. But it's the idea that a wise person doesn't look just at the immediate, but the wise person understands that there are consequences and there's life after this decision. And the wise person can look down the road and say, "You know what? God will reward righteousness. God will reward those who do what is right." And one of the really neat things that happens, and any of you who have been Christians for a longer period of time know this, that you kind of

start when you're young as a Christian and you don't see any rewards up front, do you? That everything is long-term. "Why can't I say this?" "Well, it's the right thing to do." And then you realize on down the road, "You know what? It is better if I watch my mouth. It is better if I don't let any unwholesome talk come out of my mouth." But what happens is that what was long-term becomes shorter term, doesn't it? And you start seeing more and more quickly that God's ways are the best ways and so that, even in times of discipline when God is disciplining us, when we are suffering the consequences of our actions, we can even see in them, yes, God's ways are the best ways. That, according to Proverbs, is what makes up a wise person. God's ways are best. They are, therefore, teachable and they understand that in the long-term, and often in the short-term, that God rewards righteousness.

Now I don't think that at any time early, anytime soon, they're going to be making trading cards for the really wise people among us. I doubt that they'll ever name any shoes after really wise people. I had some good suggestions after the first hour: "Air Teresa", and "Solomon Soles". I don't think those are ever going to catch on because the world doesn't care about God's wisdom and it's not going to reward God's wisdom. But nonetheless, God's wisdom is true and it is always right. That's the wise person in Proverbs. This is the only time I get to use a word that my mother said I can't use.

B. Fools

There are also fools in this world. That's what Solomon calls people. Fools are those that don't listen to God. Fools are those who think that their friends know better. If we could just step back and just look at this we would say, "This is just ridiculous." This is not trite and it's not meant to be disrespectful, but this whole week all I've been able to think of is this great celestial wrestling match and we walk into the arena and the announcer goes, "In this corner, GOD! God has already lived forever. He's made everything. He knows everything. And he can bench anything he wants. And then in this corner is your high school friend. He's not even through adolescence yet. The only thing he can make is a mess. And I'm not sure he knows anything; he sure can't pass history class. And the most that he can bench is a joint." I mean, when you think about it, high school students, you know exactly what I'm talking about. "In this corner is God and in this corner are your friends in the world and the question is: Who is right? The fool says, "I'm going to go with the skinny guy in the corner." And I don't mean to make light of it, but when you step back and look at it, that's how foolish this whole thing is. And what happens is when you and I make foolish decisions and when you and I go down the path of evil and the path of fools, what happens? We get ensnared, don't we? One of the most powerful proverbs is Proverbs 5, verse 22, "The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him and he is held fast in the cords of his sin." Isn't that true? Isn't it true that whether it's a lie or something else and you get going down the fool's paradise (they call it fool's paradise for a reason because it's not a paradise), and we make decisions and we go down toward fool's paradise and sin wraps its tentacles around us and its desire is to squeeze every ounce of life and breath out of our bodies and fools get ensnared. They are not teachable, but they get ensnared by sin. And whereas the wise person is looking long-term, the fool only looks at the short-term. It's the fool who says there are no consequences. It's the fool who says, "I'm going to take the easy road." It's the fool who says, "The only thing I care about is instant gratification. I don't even think there will be consequences. I'm not interested." One of the most basic underlying

themes in all of Proverbs, “the wise looks long and the fool looks short as if there’s no tomorrow.”

A couple of examples, and I’m going to be rather explicit because the Bible is explicit and for me not to be explicit is not to be true to the text. God’s over here in his corner and he is saying, “Bill, whatever is true, whatever is lovely, whatever is honorable, (Philippians 4) dwell on these things. Think about these. These are the things that should consume your mind. That’s wise. I made you. I put you together. I know what happens when you mess up. Don’t do that other stuff. Whatever is pure and lovely and honorable, think on these things.” And the skinny little kid in the other corner goes, “Let’s go to a dirty movie. There’s a new R-rated movie. It’s only a little bit of swearing.” Oh, so I’m going to listen to my God’s name drug through the trash heap of this world only a couple of times. That makes it okay. God says, “Bill, if it’s not pure and lovely and honorable and lovely, it’s not good for you. It’s going to damage you. There are going to be consequences.” Skinny little kid says, “Oh come on.” What are you going to do? Who are you going to believe?

I remember the first R-rated movie I ever went to. One of the few R-rated movies I went to. I was young. Not an excuse but my best friend wanted to go to a movie and I didn’t bother to check what it was at first. Big mistake. And there are images that are burned in my memory that will never, ever, ever leave. I have begged the Lord, “God, I’m sorry. I repented; I didn’t know what I was doing. I wasn’t careful. I made a stupid, foolish decision. Can’t you please get these images out of my head?” And for me, God’s answer is, “My grace is sufficient for you. Little thorn in the flesh will do you good, Bill.” And so I have this battle, this memory that I wish would be removed and I don’t believe in my case it’s going to be removed until I get to heaven. See, I made a stupid decision; I made a foolish decision. I said, “There’s not going to be any long-term consequences, it’s my best friend. Certainly he wouldn’t take me to a bad movie. And he took me to a filthy, rotten, sexually explicit movie. And I’m paying the consequences for it. See, it’s the fool who says there are no consequences. It’s the wise person who looks long-term. God’s over here and he says, “I created you, Bill, for one woman. Not two women, not three women, not men. I created Adam and Eve, I created you to have one spouse and I created you to keep your heart, and I created you to keep your body for your spouse. It’s the greatest gift you can give her.” Skinny little kid in the corner says, “Ah, come on. Let’s fool around. It’s no big deal, what are you, a prude?!” God says, “Bill, I created you for Robin. Watch it! Be careful, there are consequences!” “Oh, there are no consequences. Well, gonorrhoea, syphilis, AIDS, the murder of your firstborn child in abortion. But other than that, there are no consequences.” And you’re sitting here and you’re saying, “Who do I believe? Do I believe that person whose lips drip honey whose speech is as smooth as oil? Or do I believe my Lord and God? That’s the question of Proverbs, isn’t it? And unfortunately so many people become fools and it starts young. Don’t be surprised. The stories I hear are just amazing at how young this kind of thing starts. But it is out there and the person who says there are no consequences to sexual immorality does not understand that even when you are forgiven, and praise the Lord for forgiveness, there are also consequences. I don’t know if you’ve noticed that, but in many places in the Old Testament sin is forgiven, but there are still consequences. Have you seen that? Sometimes God removes the consequences, sometimes he doesn’t. David and Bathsheba were forgiven of their sin and the baby dies. There are consequences. And so you look at the situation and you would say,

“Don’t be a fool, Bill.” And they would say, “Be a fool, Bill! There are no consequences.” Yes, there is a consequence because then, when you finally do meet your Robin, then you only have part of a heart to give her and all that you have are some used body parts. And they lied and they were wrong. That’s the message of Proverbs. Don’t be a fool and think short-term. There are always consequences to sin, especially sexual sin. Especially that.

Praise the Lord for forgiveness. We are forgiven sinners, amen? But there are consequences that usually have to be paid. I was talking to a friend of mine, I won’t identify him, and I don’t want to embarrass him. A Junior high school teacher was telling me about some of the discipline problems he was having in schools last year. This is completely outside of the realm of my experience. I had no idea that these kinds of things happen in seventh and eighth grade. He was telling of kids doing self-destructive things and I was saying, “Don’t these kids understand that if you keep doing stupid things, if you keep doing foolish things, that there are consequences? Don’t they understand that there’s a generational thing here and you have to break it and you have to concentrate, you have to get through high school, you kind of have to get your act together, you probably need to go on to get some additional schooling, that if they don’t get focused on the future, they’ll never.....” And my friend started to laugh at me. He’s not looking at me. He says, “Bill, these people don’t even look forward to dinner. They don’t even know what’s happening at dinner. No, all that they know is where their next foot maybe steps.” They’re fools, they’re fools because they think that there’s no tomorrow, that there are no consequences and they refuse to look down the road and to see where it’s taking them.

Two kinds of people in this world. There are wise people and there are fools. And the question of Proverbs is very straight up. Do you believe that God knows best? Are you wise or are you a fool? Perhaps the best known Proverb of all, aside from maybe, “O sluggard, consider the ant” is in Proverbs Chapter 3, verses 5 and 6, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don’t lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.” Trust the Lord. Don’t lean on yourself. Don’t lean on that skinny little preadolescent person in the corner, but trust in the Lord. Lean on the Lord and acknowledge him that from day in and day, out when you are faced with situations say, “Yes, God, I will acknowledge you. You are right. I believe that you’re right.” And when you and I trust in the Lord and when we follow his word, then he will make straight our paths. It all comes down to faith. So many times in these Old Testament passages, the conclusion is faith. Do you believe that the Lord knows best? Will you trust in God? I don’t think there’s much more that pleases God than a person, perhaps even a young person who turns his or her back on the world and says, “By faith, God, I believe that your ways are best.” And that’s hard, isn’t it? And it gets harder with every generation, and I’ve only been able to see a couple. But it gets harder with every generation because when you turn your back on the world and you say, “I’m not going to do the foolish thing. I’m going to do God’s thing,” the world fights you when you make that decision. But do you know what? You have the Holy Spirit in your corner and he will fight for you. When you turn your back on the world, the world will ridicule you. But guess what? God delights in you. And when you say, “I’m going to follow God’s wisdom” the world will not accept you. And I know especially for you in high school, that’s one of the scariest things, isn’t it, of not being accepted and how important that is in our development, I understand that. But the

world will not accept you when you turn your back on it. But guess what? God will accept you and when you and I stand before his throne, he will look at me or he'll look at Jake and he'll say, "Jake, well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Master." Now I don't know about you, but that's the group that I want to be accepted by. And I know it's hard. I was a teenager once a long time ago. And it's hard, but I would much rather have the Holy Spirit fighting for me, I would much rather have God delighting in me, and I would much rather know that he is going to accept me and hold me in his arms and say, "Well done, you did the right thing, Bill." Wisdom is as wisdom does, right? Solomon, the wisest man in the world died a fool. Why? Because he knew the proverbs, but he didn't do them. And so with that as background I leave you this morning. Please, don't just decide that God knows what he is talking about. Don't just think intellectually, "Yeah that's right. God's ways are right." But wisdom is as wisdom does and wisdom means I will obey, that I will be faithful to my covenant God, and out of my relationship with him and my love for him will flow joyful obedience as I thumb my nose at the world and I look to God and I say, "You made me, You know me. You know what makes me tick. You know what's going to happen if I do something wrong. I want your way. It only makes sense." Wisdom is as wisdom does. Let's not be wise people who die as fools.

Let's pray: Father, it is so easy because we are weak and because sin is always crouching at the door, it is so easy to say, "Oh, God, I don't think you know what you're talking about. I want to do what Freddy wants to do. I want to do what Susie wants to do." Father, these are battles that you know that I fight. I suspect everyone in this room fights in one way or another. But, Father, we want to be, by the power of your Spirit, a people who are wise, a people who acknowledge that wisdom starts with you and from you comes that which is true. And, Father, when we're faced with those every day decisions, whether they have to do with adultery, or laziness or whatever, we pray, Father, that you will convict our hearts and minds and empower us in the Spirit so that we don't act as fools, but that we act as wise men and women, boys and girls, in acknowledging that you and you alone are the source of all wisdom. And we want to follow you. In Jesus' name, Amen.