

**Clippings from Proverbs 2**

**Prepared for the 3C Sunday School Class**

**Calvary Baptist Church**

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**Chapter 2 Begins on May 19, 2013**

**NOTE:** This material is exactly what the name implies. These are clippings from various sources, gathered on the run as I teach through the book. This is not intended for distribution or publication in the current form, since permissions have not been secured. The notes are provided to members of our Sunday School class, our church and students of the institutes, colleges and seminaries where I am called upon to teach. They are for personal use.

**COMMENTS ON PROVERBS 2:1-22**

- In chapter one, we saw the introduction to the Proverbs and the summary in 1:7.
- The parents plead for a hearing.
- The pack of violent fools pleads for a hearing.
- Wisdom pleads for a hearing.
- As we open chapter 2, the focus changes.
- Now the father reminds his son of the importance of SEEKING wisdom.
- In chapter one, wisdom cried aloud.
- Now, the son must seek wisdom.

**QUOTE:** Wisdom is the power to see and the inclination to choose the best and highest goal, together with the surest means of attaining it. *J.I. Packer*

**CHAPTER TWO IN A NUTSHELL:** Wisdom must be sought, like any rare treasure. When found, it will save one from vile men and seductive women. It is more valuable than gold, and it brings true happiness. *Max Anders*

**OPEN: THE CREMATION OF SAM MAGEE**

There is no end to the lengths to which people will go to find gold. In Robert W. Service's poem "The Cremation of Sam Magee," he tells the story of hardship, cold, deprivation, and loneliness experienced by Sam Magee and his partner Cap as they prospected for gold in Alaska. Sam was from Tennessee, and he hated the cold with a passion. Gold fever was the only thing that would make him endure such ongoing misery as prospecting in Alaska. Bad circumstances caught up with him, and his darkest fear was realized. He was going to freeze to death. As his partner, Cap, recounted the story:

Well, he seemed so low that I couldn't say no;

Then he says with a sort of moan:

"It's the cursed cold, and it's got right hold

Till I'm chilled clean through to the bone.

Yet 'tain't being dead – it's my awful dread  
Of the icy grave that pains;  
So I want you to swear that, foul or fair,  
You'll cremate my last remains."

So faithful partner, Cap, suffered untold hardship getting Sam's frozen corpse by dogsled to some place where he could fulfill his promise to cremate him. He finally found an old steamship half submerged in a lake. Cap pulled up some boards, built a roaring fire in the ship's boiler, and stuffed in Sam. There he walked around for a while before coming back to make sure the cremation had gone all right. He finally worked up the courage to open the door of the boiler to inspect Sam's remains.

And there sat Sam, looking cool and calm,  
In the heart of the furnace roar;  
And he wore a smile you could see a mile,  
And he said: "Please close that door.  
It's fine in here, but I greatly fear  
You'll let in the cold and storm –  
Since I left Plumtree, down in Tennessee,  
It's the first time I've been warm."

Of course, Service's poem is pure folly, but even in the elaborate spoof, we understand that the life of a prospector in Alaska's cold, gold country was a harsh life. But people thronged to the area in the hope of getting rich. They paid any reasonable price, and many times an unreasonable price, to look for gold, and more often than not, never got rich.

Solomon says that if you look for wisdom with the same commitment, dedication and intensity, you will find it. And having found it, it will be well worth the price and worth much more than gold. *Max Anders, Holman Old Testament Commentary: Proverbs*

## THE STRUCTURE OF THIS CHAPTER

**We will look at this as a whole and then use the outline as we teach.**

**QUOTE:** The Hebrew text of chapter 2 contains twenty-two lines, which is the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. However, this is not an acrostic poem in which each succeeding line begins with the next letter of the alphabet. Some scholars have recognized a different structure in which the poem is organized into six stanzas or groups of lines. The first three stanzas are marked by the Hebrew letter *aleph* (English A). This letter begins the second word ("if") of the first stanza (verses 1–4) and is the opening letter of the next two stanzas (verses 5–8 and 9–11). With verse 12 the marking letter shifts to *lamed* (English L). This letter marks the center of the chapter and is the first letter in the second half of the Hebrew alphabet. It is the opening letter of verses 12, 16, and 20, marking three stanzas that are also identified in the discourse structure of the chapter: verses 12–15, 16–19, and 20–22.

We may show the relationship between the stanzas in the chapter as follows:

**PART ONE: VERSES 1 – 11 (The Aleph Stanzas, The first letter of the Hebrew Alphabet)**

**STANZA ONE**

Call to follow the teacher's advice and seek wisdom (verses 1–4),

**STANZA TWO**

which will result in knowing God (verse 5),

because it is the Lord who gives wisdom (verses 6–8).

**STANZA THREE**

It will also result in growth in understanding, and protection (verses 9–11):

**PART TWO: VERSES 12 – 22 (The Lamed Stanzas, The first letter of the second half of the Hebrew Alphabet, thus marking the middle point of this chapter)**

**STANZA ONE**

being saved from wicked people (verses 12–15),

**STANZA TWO**

being saved from immoral women (verses 16–19),

**STANZA THREE**

and leading to the reward for right living (verses 20–22).

This chapter seems to have a special introductory function since its themes are later taken up as the subjects of separate discourses. Reyburn, W. D., & Fry, E. M. (2000). *A Handbook on Proverbs*. UBS Handbook Series (52). New York: United Bible Societies.

**Proverbs 2:1-11 (KJV)** 1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, *and* apply thine heart to understanding; 3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, *and* liftest up thy voice for understanding; 4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures; 5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. 6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding. 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: *he is* a buckler to them that walk uprightly. 8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. 9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; *yea*, every good path. 10 When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; 11 Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee:

## TEACHING NOTES ON 2:1-11

### PART ONE: VERSES 1 – 11 (The Aleph Stanzas, The first letter of the Hebrew Alphabet)

#### STANZA ONE

##### CALL TO FOLLOW THE TEACHER'S ADVICE AND SEEK WISDOM (VERSES 1-4),

**Proverbs 2:1-11 (KJV)** 1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; 2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, *and* apply thine heart to understanding; 3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, *and* liftest up thy voice for understanding; 4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as *for* hid treasures;

- In this section, we find three conditions for gaining wisdom.
- They are marked by the word “if.”

1. **Pay Attention!** – “If thou wilt receive my words.”

- We must move from casual hearing to active listening.

**QUOTE:** Are you a good listener? To show up in church sleepy or distracted shows a disrespectful attitude towards God and his Word. The fool sleeps and daydreams in church. His lackadaisical attitude towards the Word of God contributes to the hardening of his heart ([Heb. 2:1](#); [3:15](#)). Would you like to be more attentive? Prepare to hear God’s Word by reviewing the text to be covered and then getting a good rest the night before. Take notes during the sermon so you will retain what you heard. *Opening Up Proverbs*

2. **Ask for it!** – “If thou criest after knowledge”

- The word study here is most revealing.
- It is “a loud, insistent plea for help, like the desperate cry of a man begging for deliverance.” Anders

**Psalms 4:1** Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me *when I was* in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

**Mark 10:46-48 (KJV)** 46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. 47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, *Jesus, thou* Son of David, have mercy on me. 48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on me. 3.

3. **Search for it!** – “If thou seekest her as silver”

- Like a man on a quest for hidden treasure.
- We must actively seek wisdom.

- We will find it in the company of wise people.
- We will find it in the Book of wisdom.
- We will find it in the books of wise men and women.
- Radio, television, books, internet and, most of all, in church!

## STANZA TWO

### WHICH WILL RESULT IN KNOWING GOD (VERSE 5),

**Proverbs 2:5** Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

- Meeting God's conditions will cause us to find that which we seek.
- Two promises here for those who meet the three conditions:
- First, we will Gain God! (5-8)
- We will understand the fear of God. (2:5; cf. 1:7)
- Second, we will Gain God's Wisdom. (9-11 upcoming)

The fear of the LORD and the knowledge of God, two classic Old Testament descriptions of true devotion, are linked in Proverbs 1:7.

### BECAUSE IT IS THE LORD WHO GIVES WISDOM (VERSES 6–8).

**Proverbs 2:6-8** For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding. 7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: *he is* a buckler to them that walk uprightly. 8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

- God is the giver of wisdom. (2:6-8)
- It is not just a shrewdness or cleverness.
- It is linked to HOLINESS. (NOTE: For the "righteous," to them that "walk uprightly" and "saints.")

**James 1:5** If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

**But note ...**

**QUOTE:** Some people read verses like James 1:5 ('But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him') and imagine that God simply zaps us with the quality of wisdom when we ask him. Proverbs explains that God grants wisdom by means of a process. In order to gain this treasure, you must exert effort in digging deep for it. *Opening Up Proverbs*

### STANZA THREE

**IT WILL ALSO RESULT IN GROWTH IN UNDERSTANDING, AND PROTECTION (VERSES 9–11):**

**Proverbs 2:9–11** Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, And equity; *yea*, every good path. <sup>10</sup> When wisdom entereth into thine heart, And knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; <sup>11</sup> Discretion shall preserve thee, Understanding shall keep thee:

#### COMMENTS ON VERSE 9

- God’s wisdom will give an heightened awareness of what is right and what is wrong.
- “Righteousness” – God’s standard of right and wrong.
- “Judgment” – The ability to discern, discriminate. To see what is right and choose it!
- Equity – Or, fairness. The word means straight, or upright. Not tilted.
- The “good path” is chosen, the bad path is avoided.

#### COMMENTS ON VERSE 10

- Wisdom is an acquired taste.

**ILLUS:** Acquired tastes. Coffee, blue cheese, turnip greens, peppers. What others?

- It may taste funny at first.
- God’s way is so against human nature that His way may seem strange at first.
- Yet, in time, we see the benefit and grow to love finding God’s way and doing things God’s way.
- Wisdom enters our heart, and knowledge becomes pleasant to our soul!

#### COMMENTS ON VERSE 11

- Wisdom will bring “discretion.”
- This is a word (*mezimmah*) that means planning. It is sometimes used in a negative sense to mean scheming.
- In context, wisdom will guide our plans, what we will do and what we will not, and how we will do those things that we have chosen to do.
- Wisdom will bring “understanding.”
- That is skill.

**Exodus 36:1** Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the Lord put wisdom and **understanding** to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded.

- Wise men in my life have taught me the importance of discernment and understanding.
- DISCERNMENT – Choosing your battles. “Not a hill to die on.”
- UNDERSTANDING – The skill to know what to do and how to do it.

**APPLY:** One of the greatest frustrations in ministry is those who do not understand the implications of their actions. They have a “surface” solution with a half-baked plan and want me to approve it. They want permission to clean out the stall, unaware of the skunk that resides there. Learn to catch your pastor’s eye! He spends all week thinking and praying and working with the people. He knows things that no one else knows. Don’t always demand a reason.

- On a final note, verse 11 is the perfect tie-in to the next section (2:12-22).
- Wisdom gives discretion and understanding which will preserve and keep thee.
- But from what?
- NEXT LESSON: From the evil men and the wild women!

**PART TWO: VERSES 12 – 22 (The Lamed Stanzas, The first letter of the second half of the Hebrew Alphabet, thus marking the middle point of this chapter)**

**STANZA ONE**

**BEING SAVED FROM WICKED PEOPLE (VERSES 12–15),**

**Proverbs 2:12-15 (KJV)**

<sup>12</sup> To deliver thee from the way of the evil *man*, from the man that speaketh froward things; <sup>13</sup> Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness; <sup>14</sup> Who rejoice to do evil, *and* delight in the frowardness of the wicked; <sup>15</sup> Whose ways *are* crooked, and *they* froward in their paths:

**QUOTE: [Opening Up Proverbs]** When teens get into trouble with the law, you will often hear their parents say, ‘My kid is a good kid. He just got in with a bad crowd.’ We have already seen in [1:8–19](#) the warning about the harm that peer pressure can do to a young person. Those who are wise learn to recognize and stay away from evil characters and their wayward paths. John Bunyan’s classic, *Pilgrim’s Progress*, describes dangerous characters such as Talkative, Mr Worldly Wiseman, Mr Money-love, and Mr Hold-the-world. It is hard to spend much time with such men and yet emerge unscathed.

You can recognize these men by ...

- 1) **THEIR SPEECH** (‘perverse things’, v. [12b](#)),
- 2) **THEIR BEHAVIOUR** (‘who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness ... whose paths are crooked’, vv. [13](#), [15a](#)),
- 3) and **THEIR DESIRES/TASTES** (‘who delight in doing evil and rejoice in the perversity of evil’, v. [14](#)).

They are deceitful and can appear very smooth (v. [15b](#)). They are completely without moral illumination ([John 3:19–20](#)), and their path leads to the City of Destruction.

**John 3:19-20** And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

The wise person will be repulsed by their values, their characters, and their lifestyles and will stay far away from them ([1 Cor. 15:33](#)).

**1 Corinthians 15:33** Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

## STANZA TWO

**BEING SAVED FROM IMMORAL WOMEN (VERSES 16–19),**

**Proverbs 2:16-19** To deliver thee from the strange woman, *even* from the stranger *which* flattereth with her words; <sup>17</sup> Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. <sup>18</sup> For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. <sup>19</sup> None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.

**QUOTE: [Opening Up Proverbs]** Here our author raises the subject of sexual temptation, which is a major concern in the book of Proverbs and one to which we will devote an entire chapter. Sexual sin is a rampant problem, not only in the world, but even among professing Christians who fall into lust, fornication, and adultery. The man caught in the grip of sexual sin asks, ‘Why can’t I gain victory over lust?’ Our author summarizes in a few short verses how wisdom can set you free from lust. The key is that you must see the immoral woman (or man) as God sees her (or him). Such truth is life-transforming.

**1. You need to be aware of her methods** (v. [16b](#)). Proverbs never hides the fact that sin can be appealing. The Strange Woman is seductive, offering charm, outward beauty, and sensual pleasures. She knows every trick in the book. She is a flatterer. She is confident she can wrap the naive young man around her little finger. He doesn’t realize she is spreading a net for his feet ([29:5](#)).

**Proverbs 29:5** A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.

**2. You need to recognize her true character** (vv. [16a](#), [17](#)). Wouldn’t it be nice if a man could put on a pair of glasses that would make immoral and immodest women look hideously ugly? Proverbs offers you such spiritual spectacles. Wisdom enables you to look beyond the Strange Woman’s outward beauty and seductiveness to see the ugliness of her character. By wisdom you will be repulsed by her. She is called the ‘strange woman’ (v. [16a](#)) because she is a stranger who doesn’t belong. She is not the wife with whom you have a covenant relationship but rather an outsider who threatens your family and your life. She is also a quitter, one who ‘leaves the companion of her youth’ (v. [17a](#)). She wasn’t faithful to her first husband, and she won’t be true to you. She doesn’t form lasting allegiances to anyone. The same is true for the adulterous man. When a man leaves his wife for his secretary, why is the secretary shocked when, five years later, he leaves her for someone else? Ultimately, the Strange Woman’s disloyalty is towards God (v. [17b](#)), whose covenant she ‘forgets’ (deliberately ignores). Every marriage is a covenant made before God, who hates divorce ([Mal. 2:14](#); [Matt. 19:6b](#)).

**Malachi 2:14** Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet *is* she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

**Matthew 19:6** Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

A covenant commitment made before God means nothing to the adulteress because she does not fear God. Sadly, this link between spiritual fidelity and the fear of God reminds us of Solomon, whose attraction to 'strange' (foreign and idolatrous) women led to his spiritual unfaithfulness to God ([1 Kings 11:1-8](#)).

Young people should realize that a person who would be disloyal to God by engaging in sexual immorality before marriage cannot be trusted to be faithful after marriage. Men should recognize that a woman who displays her body for all to see is being unfaithful to God by offering what should belong to a husband to anyone who is willing to look (or pay). This is not a woman who will be an asset, one whom you can trust with your name and reputation in the community. You can't bring a woman like this home to your mother. Nor do you want her raising your children. Those who are wise have their 'glasses' on and are repulsed by 'strange women' who mock God's design for sexuality.

**3. You need to realize where she will lead you** (vv. [18-19](#), [22](#)). My dear wife is in a never-ending battle with gophers that dig up our back garden. She puts out gopher bait, which consists of grain containing tasteless poison. Her expectation is that the gophers will see the tasty corn, consume it, and die. In the same way, the loose woman appears attractive. In reality, she is *afemme fatale* (deadly woman). If you take the bait, you will die. Our author paints a vivid picture similar to a scene from a horror movie: 'Her house sinks down to death' (v. [18a](#)).

The Sirens of Greek mythology appeared as beautiful women who used irresistible music to seduce unwitting sailors to turn towards their island. Then their ships would crash on hidden reefs, and the Sirens would eat them. I have counselled many men who have destroyed their families and ruined their personal lives through immorality. Most deceived themselves, thinking, 'I can have a little fun and my wife will never have to know.' They thought they could deviate from God's path and quickly return. Proverbs warns, 'None who go to her return again, nor do they reach the paths of life' (v. [19](#)). God judges sexual sin (v. [22](#); [Heb. 13:4](#)).

**Proverbs 2:22** But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

**Hebrews 13:4** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

You will never gain when you defy the Lord. Sexual sin is especially heinous because marital faithfulness is a picture of our covenant faithfulness to God ([Ezek. 23:35](#); [James 4:4](#)).

**Ezekiel 23:35** Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast forgotten me, and cast me behind thy back, therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy whoredoms.

**James 4:4** Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the

world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

**4. When you see the adulteress as she really is, she is no longer a threat to you.**

The man who struggles with lust shouldn't merely pray for deliverance, hoping that God will zap away all his sinful desires: the key to sexual purity is having the wisdom to see the immoral woman as God sees her. Putting on the glasses of wisdom will help you to recognize the Sirens before it is too late, whether you see them at the beach, on the Internet, on television, or in the marketplace. You will be repulsed as you realize their true character and the consequences of being seduced by them.

**STANZA THREE**

**AND LEADING TO THE REWARD FOR RIGHT LIVING (VERSES 20–22).**

**Proverbs 2:20-22** That thou mayest walk in the way of good *men*, and keep the paths of the righteous.<sup>21</sup> For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.<sup>22</sup> But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

**QUOTE:** By wisdom you will have good companions, as opposed to evil men and strange women (v. [20a](#)). By wisdom you will walk in righteousness (v. [20b](#)). The result will be security in God's kingdom (v. [21](#); see also [Ps. 37:29](#); [Matt. 5:5](#)). *Opening Up Proverbs*

**CONCLUSION**

**Christ offers true joy and happiness**

Greek mythology describes how Odysseus and his men were able to get past the island of the Sirens. The men put beeswax in their ears so they wouldn't hear the Sirens' song, and Odysseus had himself bound to the mast so that he couldn't jump overboard to join the Sirens. Some people try to resist temptation in the same way. There was one other adventurer who escaped the Sirens. Orpheus played more beautiful music that drowned out the Siren song, enabling Jason's ship to slip by their island. Proverbs reveals the true nature of the immoral woman and the consequences of being seduced by her. Proverbs also takes a positive approach to purity. Lady Wisdom, who is a personification of Christ, is more beautiful and sings a sweeter song than Madame Folly. With her a man can find true joy and fulfillment. Seek Christ, in whom are the treasures of wisdom ([Col. 2:3](#); [Prov. 2:4](#)). He is the path to life ([John 14:6](#); [Prov. 2:20](#)). In him you will find safety and security. *Opening Up Proverbs*