

1Tim 24-05-01b

You can see why God mentions music so often as a part of our worship. It is the means of conveying and storing wonderful truths in our soul. And so grateful for our blessings in that regard in this fellowship.

So thank you all very much. Let's pick up our study. Now we are looking at the Word of God with a view toward parsing our current circumstances.

There's a lot going on in the world. It is sluiced into our living rooms across streaming media, the news networks, the social media. And as I mentioned on Sunday, the average person in this country is referring to their phone between 350 and 400 times a day.

And we are in the information-heavy phase of human existence. Our connections and our relationships are brokered across technology, and it has implications for our applications. How do we interact with people in our periphery, both near and far? People that we've never met may become neighbors because you interact with them on a group online, a club, or a gathering place for the exchange of opinions or support or experiences.

People have support groups that they will join to share experiences, whether it's bereavement or a particular kind of physical malady or an enthusiasm in some area of life. If you do some sort of craft or horticulture or whatever it may be. And we end up having a new kind of relationship where you may never meet someone face to face, and yet they influence your thinking and behavior and you influence theirs.

You text with people, you exchange ideas with people over Facebook and so on. And in that light, there are timeless truths that guide us. These are biblical truths.

They are divinely inspired and powerful pieces of truth. And we find them in God's word. You find them throughout the Proverbs, and you can look at the Proverbs structurally, as we have done for the first 13 or 14 chapters.

You can also look at it in a thematic or holistic way. And if you are looking for a particular kind of truth to help in terms of what should I do in this situation, pick up the Proverbs. Remember the observations we have made in the early chapters about how Proverbs works.

It is never just a surface statement. It's not just a truism. It's not just a little pithy saying or an Aesop's fable type of thing.

It's not just a stitch in time saves nine or, you know, one in the hand is worth two in the bush. It is never that. There is always a spiritual dynamic.

There is always a spiritual component and application. As we have seen in chapter 22. But as you continue, we picked up in verse nine, the one with a generous eye will be

blessed.

He gives of his bread to the poor. Notice it is a generous eye. The New Testament version of this is do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

But to do good to someone, you have to be watchful. And to have a generous spirit and to watch for opportunities to be generous and to share our bread is a wonderful opportunity and an expression of the divine nature as it is imparted to us. If we have the indwelling Christ, if we have the indwelling father, we are going to be watching for opportunities to do good that expects nothing in return.

When God sends his rain on the just and the unjust, he doesn't sit on his throne, drumming his fingers, waiting for somebody to do something with that rain. And if they don't, he's going to blight them. There is no expectation of return.

God's grace is a one-way blessing. And if we respond to his grace with appreciation and with love and with a desire to please and to serve, it is not just I'm doing this because God blessed me and I owe him. It is motivated by love and by faith and by hope, primarily by hope.

But look at verse 10 here in Proverbs 22, cast out the scoffer and contention will leave. What an important truth, both at the material realm, if you get rid of somebody who's arguing, you're not going to continue to have an argument. But in our lives, we want to distance ourselves from those that create strife and contention at the spiritual level.

If there is opposition, if there is contradiction, if there is disbelief, if there is animosity and antipathy toward God and the things of God, we are enjoined, we are exhorted to put distance between ourselves and those people. Cast out the scoffer and stress and strife and contention will leave. Strife and reproach will cease.

And in the space that that contention and strife and scoffing formerly occupied, there will be opportunity for productive looking around. Notice the contrast. Here is someone who is in need and we can productively and fruitfully share bread with them.

And this is going to yield good things, positive contact, mutual blessing. The more we allow scoffers in our midst and in our lives and taking up our time, that reduces opportunities for verse nine. We need to offload strife, reproach, contention, and scoffing.

Verse 11, he who loves purity of heart and has grace on his lips, the King will be his friend. At the material level, if you're a beneficial and positive type, you are not corruptible, you're not bribable. Those in leadership treasure, loyal, faithful companions, friends, servants, if you will.

With purity of heart and grace on one's lips, the King will be his friend. How much more

so in the spiritual realm and the King, capital K. Who values purity of heart and grace on the lips more than the Lord Jesus himself. And to be that kind of person requires curating our contact.

You can't maintain purity of heart and you can't maintain grace on your lips and constantly be conversing with those who are not just apathetic or indifferent. And those who can tolerate your Christian faith, but those who are opposed to it in a vocal and strident way. We can go along to get along in a lot of circumstances.

And as long as people are not actively opposing. And again, look at your news in recent days and weeks. There are people who are intolerant of those with whom they disagree to the point that they won't let them on common ground.

They won't let them go about their business. They won't let them be who they are. You look Jewish.

I'm going to prevent you from going into the library. That's hate being practiced by people who are supposedly out there to end the hate. I'm going to end the hate by practicing hate.

How does that work? But cultivating purity of heart and grace on our lips. This is a blessing before God and man. The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge, but he overthrows the words of the faithless.

The faithless, what they say is going to be demonstrated as false. Faithless and the Lord is in this. Remember in Proverbs, how you have a series of aphorisms, and then there will be a reminder that the Lord is behind this.

These are not just cause and effect in the material world. They're not laws of physics. These are laws of God.

These are things that are overseen and implemented by God himself. His power and his interest and his observation are implicated in these things being true and coming true. The lazy man says there's a lion outside.

I shall be slain in the streets. What is this? There is no lion in the streets. He's staying in his house and justifying his laziness by saying, well, bad things might happen if I actually get up and do something.

The mouth of an immoral woman is a deep pit. He who is abhorred by the Lord will fall there. Doesn't that seem like a reversal? He who falls there will be abhorred by the Lord, but it's the other way around.

God permits the immoral woman with a mouth like a deep pit. He leaves her to stick around and those that God abhors for reason and for just cause, that's going to be their

fate, their destination. God will steer the abhorrent person into this deep pit in the same way that God is going to preserve Satan in the bottomless pit for a thousand years.

And at the end of that time, release him to be the downfall and the destruction of those who have not outed themselves previously and have been chafing and abrading under the rule with the rod of iron for many centuries. They're going to think they see their savior and their deliverer, and that is going to be their outing and their identification and ultimate downfall. Verse 15, foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.

The rod of correction will drive it far from him. The Bible advocates corporal punishment for disobedience by children. If more children were corrected properly when they're young, they would not be doing things and expecting no consequences when they get older.

And again, remember there is a spiritual component. We like to think, oh, well, spanking good and leave this verse. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.

The rod of correction, this can also be the metaphorical rod of correction to rebuke, correct, and instruct children as parents and to upbraid and occasionally to be forceful verbally in that correction while children are at home is a necessary thing. There are people who think I should never speak a harsh word to a child. I should always use the carrot and never the stick, even verbally.

I shouldn't make them feel bad about themselves when they choose to do wrong. The rod of correction here is not only physical corporal punishment, which properly applied by those who have the self-discipline and the spiritual status to do it properly. You don't beat a child because you're angry.

This is a properly applied, carefully applied, measured approach to discipline, but not just physical discipline, also moral and verbal correction and rebuke by parents. This is also a rod of correction to embarrass a child for acting shamefully, to draw them up short and show them their insensitivity and their selfishness and their self-gratifying myopia, to draw them up short, to send them to their room without their supper, to take away the car keys, to ground them, to do whatever it takes to impress upon them the error of their ways. That is a rod of correction.

And most importantly, in a Christian home, to point out the spiritual implications of disobedience. You're not sinning against me, your parent. You are sinning against the Lord when you are disobedient.

And if you value any part of your salvation and your claim to the Lord Jesus as your Savior, then your disobedience has spiritual implications. Your selfishness and your lack of self-control, your failure to function properly is a spiritual problem. Not just you didn't do what I say, I'm mad at you.

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. Notice, we are born corrupt and fallen. Foolishness is bound up in our hearts from the outset.

And it has to be driven out by teaching, by training, by indoctrination, in the good sense of that word. He who oppresses the poor to increase his riches and he who gives to the rich, both will come to poverty. You can't last long in that mode.

Now look at verse 17 and following. Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise and apply your heart to my knowledge. This harks back, this is an echo and a review of Proverbs chapter two.

Incline your ear, apply your heart. Very same associations that were made in Proverbs two. My son, if you will receive my words, hide my commandments with you so that you incline your ear, so that you apply your heart.

The very same combination 20 chapters ago. Incline your ear, hear the words of the wise, apply your heart to my knowledge. It is a pleasant thing if you keep them within you.

Let them all be fixed upon your lips. What is inside should come out in your conversation so that your trust may be in the Lord. Notice all of these sayings that seem to just be, here's how to deal with those who are in the community.

But it is all designed to reinforce trust in the Lord because he is in and through these principles. Your trust may be in the Lord. I've instructed you today, even you, this is especially you.

Take this to heart. I'm talking to you. Have I not written to you excellent things of counsels and knowledge so that I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth, that you may answer words of truth to those who send to you.

You should be able to receive and learn these things and pass them on to other receptive people. Paul is gonna say the same thing to Timothy. Preach and hold to these truths and teach them to men who can teach others also.

Speak from faith to faith in love. Do not rob the poor because he is poor. Do not oppress the afflicted at the gate for the Lord will plead their cause and plunder the soul of those who plunder them.

The judgment with which you judge others will be the judgment that is passed on you. As you treat others, you will be treated. As you forgive others, you will be forgiven.

Make no friendship with an angry man and with a furious man do not go. Well, but what if his indignation is righteous? What if he's got a worthy cause? If he's angry, if he's doing what he does in anger, make no friendship, don't go. Lest you learn his ways and

set a snare for your soul.

If you lead with anger, if you let your sense of outrage drive you, I am right, I must be right. Look how angry I am. I must be right.

Look how lit up I get over this cause and this issue. I know I'm right. I am so right that I'm angry at anybody who doesn't agree with me.

The Bible says, do not go down that road. However vicious, however spiteful, however wrong others may be, however irritating, however annoying, however disgusting things may get. Don't let opposition and observation of their wrongness and ignorance.

Don't let it turn to anger. As soon as we start getting angry, we fall under this admonition. Sometimes it's us who is the angry man.

Make no friendship, do not go. You will learn his ways and set a snare for your own soul. Do not be one of those who shakes hands in a pledge.

One of those who is surety for debts. What are you doing here? You are pledging yourself in support of someone else's cause. It's not your cause, but you're pledging.

In the immediate instance, this is co-signing someone's loan. When you don't have an interest, you're not well aware. Do not be one of those who shakes hands in a pledge.

One of those who is surety for debts. Surety for debts. Someone else is going to go into debt.

They are investing in a piece of land. They are purchasing a business. They are committing to some cause and you are going to second them in that motion, but you are not directly involved.

Caution is in order. The Bible says don't do it. Why should he be taken away? Why should he take away your bed from under you? He has bad judgment.

His business fails. His protestations turn out to be false. His expectations turn out to be dust in the mouth.

His business falls apart. He goes into bankruptcy and now your bed is taken out from under you and you weren't even involved. The idea here is if we are going to invest in a thing, then we should be a part of a thing.

This is in a way an illustration of the importance of one another love being reciprocal and only expressed when you can personally invest based on your own knowledge. You are intimately involved. You are a part of how this turns out and you believe the Lord is in it and the Lord is going to bless it for good.

If you go surety for a stranger, if you co-sign and you don't really know much about the business or what the objectives, what the foundation, what the expectation is, this is unwise and this has a spiritual component. Think about supporting ministries. If you're not intimately aware of, if you don't know the people in the ministry well, this is why the best ministry support comes for ministries that grow out of a local church directly and you know the people involved.

You're aware over time. This isn't a, wow, that sounds good. We'll support you and we will obligate ourselves in a legal way and then this fails or this comes under rebuke and it comes back to bite.

Why should he take away your bed from under you? Do not remove the ancient landmark which your fathers have set. If there is an agreement about a property boundary, if there is a well-known and respected limit, don't change it. You think about, well, let's change what marriage means.

Let's change who we're going to welcome into our church. Let's change our view about what marriage is or what a family is or what a man is or what a woman is. There are ancient landmarks that were set down not just from the word of God, but in practice.

This is what we do in practice. Can you verify a wedding ceremony from scripture? Is there a detailed layout of a way? This is what we have historically done for centuries to publicly acknowledge a man and a woman. You can change it in all kinds of ways, but there is an ancient landmark that says, the union of a man and a woman should be done publicly before the Lord in a way that others can honor and celebrate and respect.

Whatever form that may take, that is an ancient landmark. It goes back to biblical examples. Jesus went to a wedding feast in Cana.

There were weddings in the Old Testament for Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And it is important to understand what is a landmark, a touchstone, a boundary, a border, and respect it when it is legitimate. Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings.

He will not stand before the unknown men. Those who recognize the value of good work are going to recognize it. Those who don't, no matter how hard you work, you won't stand, you won't be respected by those who don't understand the value of hard work.

Don't wait for their respect. Don't look for it. Don't rely on it.

The ones who count, those who are kings, those are the ones who count. And again, there's a spiritual component. When you sit down to eat with a ruler, consider carefully what is before you.

This is chapter 23. You sit down to eat with a ruler. Be careful when you look at your

plate and put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite.

If you come near to someone who is financially well off and who can potentially benefit you and you think, oh, wouldn't it be great if they would see my situation and just send or bequeath or some other way benefit me from their largesse, put a knife to your throat if you're given to appetite. Do not desire his delicacies. They are deceptive food.

If you think, well, maybe God has put me in this rich person's periphery so that their riches can benefit me and solve my problems, that's deceptive. Money is not the answer to problems. A healthy, vital, growing, and blessed relationship with God is the answer to problems.

God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. The richest person you ever come in contact with is a pauper compared to our heavenly father. And to whom are we more closely and reliably and helpfully and beneficially related? Some human in our periphery or our father in heaven? Whose favor do you wanna cultivate? Whose largesse would you like to benefit from? I will take the father in heaven every time.

And I like the conditions and the qualifications for his blessings because I have to be a spiritually healthy, genuinely good person. And that is gonna lead me down a path of righteousness for his namesake instead of I am now subject to the fickle whims and expectations. And suddenly this gift that I thought was for free has strings attached.

And now I'm sort of enslaved because my loyalty has been purchased. My fealty has been bought in the human realm. You have none of those concerns with God in heaven.

It is infinitely better by exponential elements of scale, so much better to rely on the Lord and not men. However enticing those delicacies may be, put a knife to your throat. If you're someone of human appetite, put a knife to your own throat.

Sit there at the table of sumptuous fare with that knife against your throat. And if you start looking down at those delicacies, let that knife just start to penetrate. Do not overwork to be rich.

I love this verse. I may put this verse on my refrigerator. Do not overwork to be rich.

Because of your own understanding, cease. Your own understanding is the more I work, the better off I'll be. I can work myself into a grave.

I've known firsthand people who just felt like I've got to pull myself up by my bootstraps. I value hard work. Isn't hard work a good American value? I'm going to work hard.

Well, if you overwork to establish, why would someone want to be rich? Not just for luxuries, but for security. And if you're working for security, you're working, you want to be rich enough that you have no worries financially. Do not overwork to be rich.

Because of your own understanding, you think this is the way. There is a way that seems right to a man. Cease.

Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings. Think 1929. Think 2008.

Watch what happens to your banked wealth. No matter what happens, riches will make themselves wings. They fly away like an eagle toward heaven.

Do not eat the bread of a miser, nor desire his delicacies. For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. Eat and drink, he says to you, but his heart is not with you.

The more so you have eaten, you will vomit up and you will waste all your pleasant words. If you get obsessed with the horizontal and making your way in the world by hobnobbing with those who are well off, trying to please them, trying to sort of acquire by association with those who are seeking wealth, who have obtained wealth, those who are miserly with it. Whatever you get from them, you're going to wind up throwing up.

Tastes good in the mouth. It's going to be bitter in the stomach. Not beneficial.

You'll waste your pleasant words. Do not speak in the hearing of a fool. He will despise the wisdom of your words.

Do not give what is holy to dogs. Do not cast your pearls before swine. Do not remove the ancient landmark.

Nor enter the fields of the fatherless. Their redeemer is mighty. He will plead their cause against you.

You see someone who is vulnerable. You see there's an opportunity here. And well, nobody's guarding this.

This is fairly obvious, but remember the spiritual side of this as well. Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge. Verse 13.

You see the cyclical nature. These themes return in a round-robin fashion. Do not withhold correction from a child.

If you beat him with a rod, he will not die. If you embarrass him, you're not going to ruin his self-esteem. Human beings have got plenty of self-esteem to go around.

You beat him with a rod, he will not die. You will beat him with a rod and deliver his soul from Sheol. There is the need for correction.

Now, we do not randomly beat someone down. We don't insult them and genuinely feed an inferiority complex. You're no good.

You can't do anything right. When are you ever going to learn? Taught you everything I know. You're still dumber than a post.

That was one of my dads. Once I thought about that a little bit, I realized what a self-deprecation it actually is to say. But there are ways that you can genuinely harm a child by feeding inferiority, by genuinely causing them to believe that they can't do anything right and so on.

But there is proper and healthy correction. And you will deliver them from destruction when you point out properly misbehavior, poor judgment, bad choices. You don't have to do this at the expense of the child's sense of self-worth.

But where does worth come from? We are worthy not because we are intrinsically lovable or gifted or talented. We are valuable to the extent that God values us. And to cultivate and encourage relationship with God is to cultivate and create value.

And if we are redeemed by the priceless blood of Christ, how valuable are we? Our value is in our redemption. Our value is in our association through Christ with God the Father. That is our value.

And that is the self-esteem that is properly encouraged and properly cultivated in a Christian home. My son, if your heart is wise, my heart will rejoice. Indeed, I myself, yes, my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak right things.

Notice association with divine truth, divine wisdom, divine perspective. This gratifies the heart of human parents. And at the spiritual level, this is God speaking.

Imagine God the Father, my son, my daughter. If your heart is wise, my heart, God's heart will rejoice. Indeed, I myself, yes, my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak right things.

Where do these right things come from? This is the book that contains them and communicates them. That's why Proverbs is such a wonderful treasury. Notice, here's our attitude toward those who are outside.

Do not let your heart envy sinners. Be zealous for the fear of the Lord all the day. Surely there is a hereafter and your hope will not be cut off.

Those who say they didn't have any expectation of resurrection and a future kingdom, just don't read the scriptures. What does it say? Surely there is a hereafter. There is an afterlife.

There is a coming kingdom and existence with God. So don't let your heart envy sinners. Envy, the same verb governs both of these clauses.

Do not let your heart be zealous in emulating sinners. Be zealous for the fear of the Lord

all the day. Certainly, most surely there is a hereafter and your hope will not be cut off.

Concentrate on the fulfillment of hope by the power of God. Hear my son and be wise. Guide your heart in the way.

Do not mix with winebibbers or with gluttonous eaters of meat. This is a material truth, but it is put for any sort of horizontal zeal and preoccupation. There are people who are very invested in their hobby.

Or in their community, or in their associations fighting a disease, or whatever else it may be. Not that there's anything wrong with that, quote unquote, but if your zeal overwhelms you, if it defines you instead of your Christian faith, instead of your relationship with God, if this now becomes what people think of when they think of you, it is excess. It is a good thing taken to an extreme.

There's nothing wrong with wine and there's nothing wrong with food. It is when you take good things past a moderation point and it becomes an extreme. It doesn't say don't drink wine but be filled with the spirit.

It says do not be drunk with wine wherein is excess. Any good thing taken to excess becomes sinful and harmful. So do not mix with those who take wine to an extreme.

With those who take food to an extreme. Or their food choices to an extreme. Hi there, I'm Sam.

Hi there, I'm fill in the blank here. I'm a vegan. I'm a vegetarian.

Really? You're going to lead with this? This is your identity? This is what you're proud of? This is where you base your righteousness? Well, I can't countenance the taking of the life of an animal. So I eat, you know, squashed soybeans and seaweed and stuff that has to be scraped off rocks all over the world. And I can only do it in this age of global commerce.

I could never survive. I would die of malnutrition if it wasn't for supplements and soy harvested by sweatshop level wages of workers and vast acres of soybean fields that animals have been cleared out of and slaughtered so that you could grow your soybeans and say you're a vegan. Don't get me started.

For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, verse 21, and drowsiness will clothe a man with rags. Investment in these things robs you of genuine vitality, genuine energy, genuine strength. And you will come to spiritual poverty.

You will come to intellectual poverty. You will come to social poverty. You will be the prodigal at the trough if you let these things define you.

Listen to your father who begot you and do not despise your mother when she is old. Buy

the truth and do not sell it. Hoard it.

Hoard the truth. Buy it and don't sell it. Accumulate it and don't let any of it go.

Wisdom and instruction and understanding. The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice and he who begets a wise child will delight in him. Let your father and your mother be glad and let her who bore you rejoice.

My son, give me your heart and let your eyes observe my ways. A harlot is a deep pit. Notice how we have cycled back around to what was in the first part.

The woman whose mouth is a deep pit. Let your eyes observe my ways. A harlot is a deep pit and a seductress is a narrow well.

She also lies in wait as for a victim and increases the unfaithful among men. There is a seductive, attractive way and it does not last. It turns to ashes in the mouth.

Who has woe, sorrow, contentions, complaints, wounds without cause, redness of eyes. Those who linger long at the wine. Those who go in search of mixed wine.

Stimulation, pleasures, distraction. Do not look at the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly. Eve looked at the fruit and saw that it was desirable to make her wise and it was beautiful to look upon.

Don't do that. At the last, it bites like a serpent, stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things.

Your heart will utter perverse things. You look around at the perversity and the strangeness that's going on in the world today. Where did it start? These earlier verses, 29 through 31.

You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea. In the physical sense, anybody who's ever gotten too drunk and the room starts spinning and you're trying to lay still and the room is moving, you're like one who lays down in the sea. Don't ask me how I know this.

And like one who lies at the top of the mast. You're lying down in the crow's nest and you're being swirled all four points of the compass by the wind. It is not pleasant and yet you cannot escape it.

They have struck me but I was not hurt because I'm insensible. I'm numb. People get high on crack cocaine and they get enraged and attack someone.

They can shoot them full of bullets and they don't feel it and they keep coming despite mortal wounds because of the insensibility conferred by these things. Think what happens in the spiritual realm. If you get enamored and drunk with a cause, if you are

stimulated by it and you've got hail fellow well met, you've got a crowd of drunks along with you, you're gonna be insensible to the genuine proddings of the Holy Spirit.

The genuine truth that comes from God's word. You're insensible to it. It's like those whose conscience is seared with an iron.

They've struck me but I was not hurt. They have beaten me but I did not feel it. The instruction and the rebuke and the correction of God's word are unfelt.

They don't penetrate. Even God's correction doesn't make a difference because you have drunk this wine voluntarily because it tasted good and you're in the company of other people who love it and who share your enthusiasm for it. That's why he says to not mix with winebibbers back in verse 20 or the gluttonous eaters of meat.

These things happen in groups. There's a community and it's a mutual admiration society. It's an echo chamber and you become insensible to correction.

When shall I awake that I may seek another? All I wanna do if I do wake up is just get back into it for more. Well, you can go on in chapter 24 but there is so much material in the word of God that pertains to this. Read the Proverbs.

God pays attention to how we love and we will be judged accordingly. So it's good to know how to do it. You study for a test so you can pass the test.

Just read the Proverbs. It doesn't require exegetical skill. There are some of them that are kind of a puzzle in English.

Skip those. Go to the ones that are clear. Put a knife to your throat if you're around the rich.

Don't look for your prosperity in and from this world. Be rich toward God. Lay up treasure in heaven.

And that guides the investment we make or lack of investment we make in causes, in support for issues and so on. Be careful. Put a knife to your throat in what you say as well as whether you indulge an appetite.

We love to wade into a fray and show people how right our cause is. Put a knife to your throat. Be cautious and careful.

Don't look for approbation and approval in the eyes of people. Concentrate on spiritual truth, spiritual growth. The observation that God makes.

God will reward the righteous in His way. I will take His reward over any reward in this world, acceptance, remuneration, whatever, anytime. The eternal is always more beneficial than that which is ephemeral and temporary.

And we find it in the Word of God. Well, let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You that You have given us such explicit guidance.

The light that shines on our path is bright and constant. We pray that as we reflect on what we see in Your Word, the Holy Spirit will illuminate our thoughts and enable us to see where we can improve in our dedication, in our consistency, in our moderation, in our self-control, so that we can truly be reflectors of Your light and Your glory and not try to achieve our own. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.