

Proverbs 23-04-05b

Let's pick up our study now in Proverbs chapter 10. We are interested in being wise and avoiding Foolishness don't want to be a fool want to be on the path of wisdom So we have seen how frequently this is mentioned in chapter 10 from verse 1 through verse 23 There are just many many verses here. We have seen verse 1 verse 5 verse 8 verse 10 verse 13 is where we pick up now The Lips of him who has understanding Wisdom is found there.

So what is our principle? What is a feature or a characteristic of wisdom, how can we look and see whether wisdom is present in our own lives? We've already looked for Gladness in personal relationships We've looked for the recognition of opportunities to exploit potential and focus on positives in our circumstance in verse 5 we've seen that we need to be humble enough to receive command to respond to exhortation in verse 8 and here in verse 14 we see that 13 and 14 actually we have wisdom reflected in speech This this is kind of a Bidirectional truth here because if we are wise that wisdom will come out in our speech We have the Psalm that says As a part of a prayer the Lord set a watch on my mouth and keep the door of my lips We have in the New Testament the reminder that the one who can bridle his tongue has tamed his whole body or vice versa But the control of the tongue is a sign of self-control in every respect This isn't of course talking about physical dexterity It is talking about Self-discipline and self-control in every different area of life whether it is what you do with your hands your walk through life and so on So here wisdom is found on the lips of him who has Understanding it's this wisdom is found on his lips so if we Monitor our conversation are we Just aiming for light subjects a little bit of humor Shallow Observations or from time to time It doesn't it doesn't have to be a constant thing. But do we have conversations where wisdom is the subject wisdom is Something that we are interested in enough to talk about it to share it and to listen to others whose lips Express wisdom when wisdom is being expressed. Are we listening? Wisdom is on the lips of those who have understanding him who has understanding That wisdom is going to be reflected in speech and it's a reminder that as we take time in the morning in the middle of the day and in the evening to take stock of how we're doing to exercise our Sabbath privilege of Dedicating a portion of our time to God in a directed purposeful and meaningful way that we Analyze what's going on in our lives in terms of conversation in terms of speech is wisdom on our lips and are we Cultivating conversation with those who have con have wisdom as a part of their conversation their speech We can talk about a wide variety of subjects, but do we put it in context I love My piano business clientele, I would say Virtually a hundred percent of them are God-fearing Bible thumping church-going verse-on-the-wall believers.

They've got hymnals on their pianos They typically have a conservative news channel on their TV in the other room and I can hear programming going on and We soon discover. I just had this experience yesterday Where I'm I'm there and the gentleman is a former

Marine and His wife called me to tune the piano and I see a Marine Corps Emblem on the wall and I asked her who's your Marine and she says he's sitting right here in the room and I I meet Roy and shake hands with him and get his experiences during the Vietnam conflict and the whole time I've been in there They've been listening to the news and I Don't like to talk politics. I don't like mixing politics with either church or business but there are times when certain topics come up that are not volatile and not disparaging individuals and and being ad hominem and and Mocking or deriding individuals, but just the state of things the issues that are Shaping the world around us day by day and it is such a comfort to have that that Key past between us that we are believers who are resting in the Lord We know that God is in charge won't it be a great day when Jesus is running the world? When there is government coming out of Jerusalem that is going to shatter the clay pots like an iron rod and It is going to be such a relief and We will appreciate What we have not had in this life in terms of righteous government and proper justice balance focus on priorities and imperatives and the things that matter and that reflect the righteousness and justice of God and Believers share that hope and share that optimism and even as we see Nefarious things happening hither and yon We smile and we say isn't it going to be a great day? That is wisdom on the lips of those who have understanding This world is not my home.

I'm just passing through and There is a great day coming and we rest in the comfort and the confidence that God gives us We have some obstacles to negotiate we have challenges to meet and face in this life But it all works together for good and it is all designed to prepare us for service and function in uncountable Centuries to come this momentary light affliction is working for us an eternal weight of glory This ought to come out in our conversation even in a casual glancing Contact with fellow believers is Wisdom on our lips Can we appreciate and enjoy and thank God for the wisdom that comes from the lips of fellow believers? We can think about this This is a point of application if you go for days and days and you don't have a meaningful Conversation about things that count that reflects wisdom from the scripture hope and joy and confidence from the scripture You can't say well, you know, I'm gonna try to say something hopeful. I'm gonna find I'm gonna find an aphorism I'm gonna get a thing I can Put it as an air freshener on my rearview mirror and remind myself to be you know, don't worry be happy don't worry be happy is a I Don't know Rastafarian song or something that Bobby McFerrin saying that well, I don't know if he's thinking about the Bible or not, but I know what the Bible says about Gladness in interpersonal relationships between believers and Wisdom passing back and forth on our lips and I checked for that that needs to be happening. And if it's not Where why is the wisdom not in my conversation? Well, what is the verse say wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding maybe and I need to spend more time Not just hearing the Word of God, but reflecting on it and coming to understand it not just in a Forensic sense or an abstract sense or a theoretical sense or an ephemeral sense, but in a practical pragmatic application sense If I have understanding I'm gonna find myself in conversations where we're talking about wisdom

with fellow believers And it's it's a gut check.

It's a dashboard light. How am I doing in terms of? Metabolizing my doctrine as they used to say, right? It needs to be cycling through the system and turning into something that produces fruit Don't want to be the fig tree all leaves and no fruit doesn't matter if it's the season Is this the season for you know Christian joy and outreach and oh, it's a mighty revival And there's converts and baptisms and this is not that season But we're a special tree and when the Lord Jesus comes to us, let's have some figs What are those figs? Gladness in our relationships wisdom in our conversations Joy and peace and patience and the other attributes that come as a part of the fruit of the Spirit So this is what I'm talking about as we think about these verses It's like dr. Criswell says the Word of God is a fire and a hammer and It ought to flame and it ought to live in our hearts and in our lives If you don't have flames and hammer strokes in your life We've got to get back to the wisdom.

This is a fruit and a product of active wisdom in our lives He that hears these words of mine and do with them is like a man who builds his house on the rock storms come Rains, we had pea-sized hail and heavy rain and high winds last night. My house is still here It's built on concrete foundation If they had built it on the clay that was here before they poured those footings we'd be Broadcasting from the pond. We would have slid all the way down the hill on the clay into the End of the South Pond there, but we're on a solid footing literally So that's what we need to look for in our own lives.

That is verse 13 verse 14 wise People store up knowledge. Oh I guess in order for it to be on my lips. I need to have a reservoir of it that I've already thought about That is ready to be shared ready to be mutually appreciated in conversation You can't kind of think of it as you're talking.

It's been stored up It's been treasured up. It is the fruit of prayer reflection meditation previous conversations comparing scripture with scripture Cultivating the ministry of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth to bring to our minds what we have learned in a time of application the request We can ask God like the old song says make me a blessing And remember my dad from the time I could recognize a tune and understand English make me a blessing. Oh Lord today Make me a blessing Well, there is a way to be prepared to be a blessing in the lives of others and it is to store up wisdom So that when it comes out of our mouth, it makes sense.

This would be helpful That's first 14 Look at verse 17 the rich man's wealth is his strong city. I'm sorry That's 15 he who keeps instruction is in the way of life But he who refuses correction goes astray you say well, I don't see wisdom and foolishness there. Look again he who keeps instruction What did we hear earlier about the wise that he receives commands? This is a synonym The Wonderful thing about Proverbs is it's not mechanical.

It's not wrote. It's not repetitious Every time you see these gems turned in the light you have different refraction. You have different reflection you have these rainbow colors splashing along the wall as it turns in the light of God's glory and Here the wise who receives commands is going to keep instruction You get the command and you guard it you keep it you treasure it you value it and what happens This is the way of life.

What is a way? Jesus said I am the way Lord, we don't know where you're going John 14 5. How can we know the way I? Am the way Remember the emphasis we saw Sunday morning Jesus is responding to Thomas's Ignorant comment and and Unfortunate question Jesus has just spent three verses explaining where he's going. We don't know where you're going Just told you how can we know the way I am the way you're looking at the way I? Am also the truth and I am also the life way truth and life here You have the truth of God coming in the form of instruction in the form of wisdom and just like John 14 6 This is the way of life It doesn't get any clearer. You could imagine Jesus thinking about this very proverb when he responds to Thomas I am the way I am the truth and I am the life the instruction is the truth In our age and with the full revelation of the New Testament and the Holy Spirit We have the way and we have the life this is going to result in a Christlike attitude Proper focus Ignoring that which is peripheral ephemeral distracting and focusing on that which counts So that's verse 17 he who Keeps treasures guards instruction values it takes it on board sometimes it is hard for us to take Correction or a command to do something different.

We're at rest and we need to be moving We're new moving and we need to be at rest and we have inertia we resist change commands create a change But we have inertia. It's a good old law of physics We need to overcome that resistance and treasure instruction That is the way of life How do you know something's alive? What's the definition of life you get into these? Biogenesis debates with atheists and Those who think that life came from non-life and it's just a chemical process and they say well, what is life? One of the manifestations of something that is alive is it changes Not all things that change are alive, but all things that are alive change It is one of the processes of life that there is change generally growth generally metabolism respiration reproduction Features of life and when you find them in combination you say that thing is alive You find a Cactus that you didn't treat properly and it doesn't change other than maybe Shrinking and shriveling. It's probably not alive you find brown withered Branches and leaves and they don't change anymore Probably not alive I speak from experience So change so we need to be willing to change we need to seek change and cultivate change and overcome our Inertia where that change is necessary.

This is a feature of wisdom. Look how much we have learned about wisdom You can say wisdom. Well, what is it? Look at all of the things we've learned and we've just gone through about half a dozen verses in Proverbs chapter 10 It is a rich Treasure field I read Oh a few weeks ago these Arkansas things where you pay, you know \$15 you get to go trove for diamonds or something and that the stuff's been over and over and over and

they've been people there for Decades going through there and they find little t9c chip diamonds and all that somebody found this ginormous like six carat diamond over there in Arkansas on one of those \$15 tickets and They got to keep it.

They paid for the ticket and they found that diamond and it's theirs and it's valuable You never know what you're gonna find until you look in the treasure field go where diamonds are found seek where Where the treasure is look for the bumps in the road if it's a difficult verse. Wow, that's one to focus on Don't jump over and say what's too hard? It's the reason it's a bump in the road. Look for it.

So you have this in verse 17 Guard that that's the way of life. That's the way of growth and change and production and fruit and Preparation for the eternal future, which is eternal what? life eternal life and Because it is life guess what there's going to be in the eternal future change We are going to grow we are going to have new opportunities. God has new projects new experiments new Universes new worlds new things that he is going to do I is not seen here is not heard those words apply to the things that we cannot yet understand in the eternal future But we can get ready for it and be those that get chosen To participate and to be involved as Faithful servants you've been faithful in that which is least You'll be faithful also in that which is much you've been faithful in a few things I will make you ruler over many things.

What are those many things? I can't wait to find out But what I know is if I'm going to be chosen to be faithful over many things I need to have this wisdom and that means I need to see growth and Progress in my own life here, and if I feel stagnant I Need to find a source of wisdom if my current source isn't working if you're not getting it at grace and truth And it's not stimulating and motivating and encouraging and instructional and beneficial Find somewhere it is because there is no other source of life There is no other manna from heaven except the Word of God find somebody that communicates it in a way that is meaningful and helpful and latch on to it and Take as much on board as you can, but you've got to push through it's not going to be pre digested It's not going to be astronaut food paste from a tube squirted into your face You got to get your knife and fork you got to saw you got to chew got to digest To get the benefit So verse 19 is our next one in the multitude of words sin is not lacking. Oh my goodness Look at the internet today As there are a multitude of words in social media is sin lacking in a multitude of words Sooner or later. It's just like a multitude of people you put that many old sin natures together.

You're going to get critical mass You're going to have explosions the mob mentality in the multitude of words sin is not lacking Remember the the old quote and it's often massacred Me think it's the lady doth protest too much a Lot of verbiage a 45-minute press conference to explain why you did a thing Sin is not lacking if you're in the right you can say this is the law. This is what I'm doing Goodbye In the multitude of words sin is not lacking but he who restrains his lips is wise The combination of lips mouth and

Wisdom is woven through here It's interesting to go through and circle all of the references to lips all the references to mouths I've done that in my copy I'm not going to share it with you tonight because we are looking at wise and foolish at this point, but notice in The very next verse the tongue of the righteous choice silver the heart of the wicked is Little worth little value dark. It doesn't even say worth it says the heart of the wicked is little little heart little t9c beating thing in there not much circulation so He who restrains his lips is wise do I have discipline when it comes to conversation? Do I have the discipline to not necessarily tell everything? I know say everything that pops into my head if wisdom is present in my life, there is going to be discipline and purpose and care in my Conversations so that I do not inadvertently wound so that I do not verterly wound So that I am not Unrestrained and undisciplined and making cutting and caustic remarks That are hurtful Discipline in what we say wisdom ought to be found on my lips not not cursing and hurt That is verse 19 look at verse 21 and these are things that I can analyze myself for and I can look at my Associations and if there are associations where the opposite is happening Maybe I need to cut back on the opportunities for those conversations to take place Because I wind up being party to the opposite of wisdom I wind up being a party to and a sponsor of and a co-conspirator with foolishness and unrighteousness Verse 21 the lips of the righteous feed many Wow If you think about the Bible and you think about feeding many what's the very first thing that comes into your head? 5,000 right Jesus fed many With just a little bit because in God's hands a Little bit five loaves and two fishes fed 5,000 men and their families no telling how many actual people got fed 5,000 men plus dependents with just a little bit a little bit of wisdom goes a long way the Disciplined wise Speech of those who have understanding Can go a long way What you say? God can use to Have a multiplying effect You point something out to someone they might point it out to somebody else who points it out to somebody else who? Mentions it in a group or their Sunday school class or their family gathering and an observation a helpful Reminder about what scripture says and encouragement something hopeful something uplifting something wise that partakes of gladness of careful consideration Something we've thought about that's been beneficial to us that we've prayed over Can feed many The lips of the righteous feed many but fools die for lack of wisdom lack of wisdom kills fools and There's an element of choice here We've seen it in the first nine chapters, right? The young man is out there listening to the call of lady wisdom and listening to the call of the crafty harlot There is a choice and there are people who ignore wisdom to their own personal destruction And there's nothing you can do about it The wisdom can be on your lips there are many who can be fed But there are also those who will die Because they don't avail themselves of that wisdom and you can't push it You can't bottle it and force it down their throats.

You can't can it and ship it to them and say eat What's in this can? We can speak it We can be truthful we can be Helpful we can be joyful We can be disciplined and restrained and when we see that the Swine as it were are turning and leaving we don't throw the pearls wait But wait, these are pearls They will turn and tear you to pieces and then they

will die what happened to the swine that ran over the cliff Did they live or did they die? They died So so much to think about and we've just taken one little thread that we're tracing through chapter 10 I've got Seven other threads written down here. This is only one but we've thought about it now for close to an hour and a half and Believe me it bears fruit. This is what God the Holy Spirit can use to change our Mood to change our attitude to change our priorities to shift our goals To inform our values to shine light on the inside of our souls Just take one thread follow it through and take the time to chew on it the time to make personal Application of it.

It is life changing. It is the power of God unto salvation This is why Paul says I'm not ashamed of the good news of Jesus Christ it is the power of God for deliverance it's never been an age where we need to deliverance more than we do right now deliverance from the sway and the ubiquity of evil We need deliverance This is what God provides us verse 23 To do evil is like sport to a fool but a man of understanding possesses wisdom It's one thing to understand a thing it's something else to Possess it and to keep it keep it fresh keep it alive Don't lose it. Have you ever learned how to do a thing? I've given you I've mentioned this several times It made such an impression on me my grandmother Dorothy Was we were on a car trip and this is back in the late 1960s and she was I just mentioned this to my same piano customer that I was talking about earlier that has a husband who's a Marine Because she while she was waiting for me to finish doing the piano She was I don't know knitting or crocheting or whatever you call that were used needles and yarn and you make a thing And I think there's a technical distinction that I don't know But on the car trip, my grandmother Dorothy was knitting these bandages they needed special bandages made out of special yarn for guys that got burned like napalm burns or other kinds of Explosion, you know heat related injuries in Vietnam and you can't use standard gauze They needed special Bandages that would stretch but not put undue pressure on these burn wounds and she and her lady circle Made these and sent them to Vietnam and they were used they were crying out for more And so she was knitting one of these on the car trip What a great thing to do in the back seat and I asked her what she was doing She told me and she said you could do this and so she gave me some of the yarn on a couple of needles and said, you know knit one purl two or whatever it Was and I knew it at that time and I did several inches of it on the car trip And it was it was an amazing thing and I got to know my grandmother a little bit I didn't know her that well because she lived in a different state We didn't visit that often, but I really appreciated that that she and these other ladies were thoughtful enough to do what they could Can you imagine a little? Grandma, she she couldn't walk.

Well, she'd had a childhood Encounter with polio and and had a severe limp, but she was making a contribution to the troops in the Vietnam War and I Learned how to do that I cannot do it now and I'm sorry to say that I have not retained that Knowledge that skill that understanding. So now if I needed to I could not do it I would have to go back and try to learn it all over again. We do not want to lose our understanding How do you keep

from doing it? If I had made a bandage a week ever since then if I'd done a bit one a month if I'd done a couple a year I would still know how to do that because I would return to that understanding and I would Work it.

I would make it go. I would refresh it in my mind This is why review and rehearsal and conversation with other believers that brings up truths So we might not have thought about in a while is a way to refresh and to possess our understanding That's what it tells us in verse 23 entertainment is is To go do evil for sport that's that's what the wicked does a fool does evil for sport. I Can watch evil I can listen to evil I can rant about evil.

I can listen to other people rant about evil and That's entertainment. There's people who love to be in the amen corner while somebody is is You know Making evil the issue But a man of understanding Possesses wisdom Keep it fresh. Keep it as a possession.

If you lose your wisdom, you don't have it anymore You don't possess it. I love to to dig out one of my old notebooks and just read took copious notes back in the day and I keep them back there by the bedside table and every once while I just pull one out from when I was a midshipman or when I was a young Marine and I just crack it open to a page and start reading my notes and trying to see how much I can remember from that series or that lesson or what that particular pastor was teaching at the time and What my understanding of it was then what my understanding of it is now and just bring it back draw it back and and I took copious notes about the Greek because this pastor gave the Greek and Would tell you that this was an aggressive Arist in there this was a heiress passive participle and the action of the heiress participle precedes the action so many things that I learned and I see these things in My notes and I bring it back up and it sparks fresh Reminder and and fresh insight and I think wow, this is just like what I'm studying in Matthew right now Look at the similarity of construction. Look at the similarity of principle or doctrine or promise in this long ago study if we want to possess our Wisdom we've got to Keep a grip on it.

Bring it back to mind because it's like an escalator if you stand still Down she goes Well, those are just the verses on wisdom You can go back on your own and I encourage you to do this and look at the flip side because in those same verses You almost always have the contrast of what it is to be foolish look at the characteristic of Foolishness and of the fool and then I look at myself Am I doing this? Is there an example of this in my recent activity my recent? exercise of my goals values and priorities my stewardship of time my Implementation of my energy and and my resources. Am I could somebody apply this to me and say, you know that right there? I Need to cut that out. I need to get out of the foolish mode and get into the wise mode This is life changing life changing change which expresses and cultivates and supports Eternal life the eternal life that God has given us through Christ is fed the manna from heaven Nourishes that spiritual life.

This is how to get those meals You got to serve yourself get the fork get the plate get the

food and fork that in there and Get it in where it will do some good This we have to do individually That prepares us to do it collectively speak the truth to one another in love have it on our lips and in our conversation but There's some preparation required Well Next time we are going to trace another theme that weaves through chapter 10 and We'll see it when we get there, but we will close here in a word of prayer father, thank you for the wonderful unfolding manifest exponentially Beneficial truth that is contained on every page of the scriptures in every part of your word When the Lord Jesus said that we live by every word that proceeds from your mouth We begin to see the full expression of it as we unpack these truths and see their Pertinence in our own thinking in our own conversations in our own Walk in life. We pray that as we Seek your will and seek your truth in our own lives that God the Holy Spirit will shine a light on our path Help us to stay on the narrow road that leads through the straight gate of life and in so doing we will represent the Lord Jesus more effectively more fully in this life and be prepared for service and function in the life Which is to come we pray it in Jesus name. Amen