

The Key to Life

Wise Up, Proverbs 1:1-7

Introduction

- **Godly wisdom... is the key to life.**

- I heard a podcast conversation this week with David Kinneman, the president of the George Barna Group, a firm that has conducted over a million interviews in the past 30 years while studying the role of faith in America. In it, Kinneman explains that the screen revolution has moved the focal point of authority for many people from external to internal. This means people feel freer to disagree with the things they learn because they think they discovered that information on their own by looking it up on Wikipedia or Google.
- In today's terms, wisdom comes from 1 of 3 places:
 - Wisdom from within (personal experiences & insight)
 - Wisdom comes from the web (online experts & self-published news)
 - Wisdom comes from God's Word (inspired & preserved by God).

- One of the best places to find wisdom in the Bible is the book of Proverbs.

- **Today we start our summer sermon series in the book of Proverbs called "Wise Up."**

- We'll study select passages together in the book of Proverbs in hopes of gaining Godly wisdom and applying it to our lives.
- Today, we'll look at Prov. 1:1-7 which serves as an introduction to the book.
- **Godly wisdom is the key to life**, so how can you use Prov. to access that wisdom?
- I want to share 4 things from this passage that will help you grasp the nature of Godly wisdom and increase the desire for it in your life.
- *Read Proverbs 1:1-7 and pray.*

Body

I. Proverbs are pint-sized portions of Godly wisdom (v. 1).

- A. The book of Prov. contains short, pithy sayings & poems.
- B. They are like a shot of espresso compared to a regular cup of coffee. They contain a concentrated dose of reality to help the listener or reader see things for how they really are vs. how they appear.
- C. The proverbs here were written by Solomon, Hezekiah, Agur & Lemuel during Israel's golden age – and have stood the test of time.
- D. The 1st half of the book has a fatherly tone, while the 2nd half is kingly.
 1. That's because the Bible holds fathers responsible for training their children (Dt. 4:9-11).
 2. Fathers were also the ones who passed their professional skills.

II. Proverbs help unlock the mysteries of life (v. 2-3, 6).

- A. Most of us have a set of keys with them this morning. Car keys, house keys, work keys - whatever. The right key makes all the difference, but if you lose that key – that's a big bummer.

- B. They help unlock the mental mysteries of life.

1. Proverbs provide wisdom, instruction, & understanding.
2. Old Testament figures loved riddles and puzzles (Jg. 14:12ff)

- C. They help unlock the moral mysteries of life.

1. Prov. describe what it looks like to live w/ righteousness, & justice.
2. There is a spotlight on an old struggle: racism & police brutality is wrong - so is rioting & looting. How do you speak out against discrimination w/ respect for the law & those who enforce it?

III. Proverbs are for the innocent, inexperienced, & impressionable (v. 5).

- A. They are for the young and naive who don't know any better.
- B. They are for the young & unsophisticated who have a lot to learn.
- C. They are for humble who are open to wise counsel & instruction.
- D. Instead of acting like they know it all, some professional athletes crave good coaching. Steph Curry is a standout basketball player. One of his coaches said, "He's the most educable player I've ever known—both in terms of his willingness to listen and in his ability to absorb & execute."

IV. Proverbs pave the way to Godly wisdom (v. 7).

- A. I know some of you were discouraged from exercising this week by a black bear sighting on Ashland Hill, which is a shame. The view from the hiking trails on Ashland Hill really is amazing. You can see hills in Ohio, the bridges, Central Park, and KDMC and how it all fits together.
- B. **The pursuit of wisdom is a path and the payoff is seeing things as God sees them.**
 1. Verse 7 is repeated again in 9:10 & 15:33 for emphasis.
 2. The pursuit of wisdom starts with reverence & realization.
- C. **Those who pursue wisdom should be prepared for opposition.**
 1. This is a theme that continues throughout Proverbs as well.
 2. Don't be distracted by those who refuse to climb with you.

Conclusion

- **Godly wisdom is the key to life**, but far too often Godly wisdom falls into the gap between knowing & doing the right thing like a key dropped into a storm drain. That happened, not to me, but to a customer at the EB store I worked at in college. She walked out the store, fumbled for her car keys, & dropped them into storm drain right next to curb. She burst back into the store asking for help & another employee & I did what we could to help her.
- Here are three lessons I learned from that encounter
 - Don't wait – the keys may not be there forever.
 - Don't do it alone – learn from others & lean on them whenever possible.
 - Do whatever it takes – a little hard work now is better than lots of hard work later.
- JC made Godly wisdom accessible to all by blazing the path of God. He's wisdom in action. You couldn't do better than to follow His example and receive His instruction.