

## Proverbs 3:13-35

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Sunday, February 21, 2010

### *Introduction*

Last week we examined verses 1-12 of chapter 3. Today, with the Lord's help, we will examine the rest of the chapter. We can break the passage down into several parts:

- vv. 13-18 An Ode to Wisdom (a Poem in praise of wisdom)
- vv. 19-20 What the Lord has Accomplished through Wisdom
- vv. 21-26 The Security of Wisdom
- vv. 27-28 Do not sin against your neighbor by neglect (by a failure to do good)
- vv. 29-30 Do not sin against your neighbor by positive evil
- vv. 31-35 The Lord's attitude toward the wicked

### *An Ode to Wisdom (vv. 13-18)*

- 13 Blessed is the one who finds wisdom,  
and the one who gets understanding,
- 14 for the gain from her is better than gain from silver  
and her profit better than gold.
- 15 She is more precious than jewels,  
and nothing you desire can compare with her.

*Blessed [happy] is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding (v. 13)*

There are some people whom we look at and about whom we say, “*That* is a fortunate man. That man must be a happy man. He has a good life.” We often say such things about people who are extremely wealthy, and we dream about what it must be like to be them, or at least to possess the wealth they possess. Or perhaps it’s a certain level of professional success they enjoy in terms of being recognized as an accomplished athlete, or musician, or academic, or businessman, or statesman, etc. Whatever it is, we all have an idea of “the good life” — some measure of success, some criteria we use to say that a person is fortunate. His success (in whatever way we measure it) is something to be envied, something to be hoped for for ourselves. Often it is in terms of material prosperity.

But Solomon says that it is the one who finds wisdom and gains understanding who is really to be considered fortunate. He is the one who is blessed. Why? Because *the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit is better than gold (v. 14)*

One gains a great deal by gaining great wealth, but one gains even more by gaining wisdom. The gain from wisdom is *better* than gain from silver and gold. Wisdom is far more advantageous than silver and gold.

Wealth is diminished with use. In order for wealth to be useful to you, you have to give it away. You have to give it in exchange for something else. Wealth is diminished with use; wisdom, on the other hand, is increased. The more you use it, the wiser you become.

Wisdom provides a comfort and a consolation that riches can never buy. Wealth is no comfort when by your own folly you have ruined all the most important relationships in your life. Just ask Tiger Woods. Last year his net worth was estimated to be \$800 million. But by his foolish and wicked behavior he has alienated the affections of his wife and children, not to mention millions of once adoring fans, so that now he is the butt of jokes on sports blogs and late night TV and around office water-coolers.

Because I have called and you refused to listen,  
    have stretched out my hand  
    and [you have not] heeded,  
because you have ignored all my counsel  
    and would have none of my reproof,  
I also will laugh at your calamity;  
    I will mock when terror strikes you (1:24-26)

Because [you] hated knowledge  
    and did not choose the fear of the LORD,  
would have none of my counsel  
    and despised all my reproof,  
therefore [you] shall eat the fruit of [your] way,  
    and have [your] fill of [your] own devices (1:29-31)

Tiger is reaping the bitter fruit of his folly. He's lost his wife and children. He's lost his good name, his squeaky clean, look up to him as a hero image. And he's lost quite a number of very lucrative

endorsements, too, as sponsors are dropping him right and left. His remaining wealth must be a very small comfort indeed.

Wealth is a very small comfort when you are on your death bed filled with remorse over a life filled with sin and folly.

The gain from *wisdom* is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. A life wisely lived, is a life filled with comfort, joy, and peace.

- 16 Long life is in her right hand;  
in her left hand are riches and honor.
- 17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness,  
and all her paths are peace.
- 18 She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her;  
those who hold her fast are called blessed.

*What the Lord has Accomplished through Wisdom (vv. 19-20)*

*The Security of Wisdom (vv. 21-26)*

*Do not sin against your neighbor by neglect (vv. 27-28)*

*Do not sin against your neighbor by positive evil (vv. 29-30)*

*The Lord's attitude toward the wicked (vv. 31-35)*