

## INTRODUCTION

The Bible is a great orchestration of **points and counter points**. That is how it keeps the broad vista of truth in **balance**; and **balance is vital**. Our destination in Proverbs today is a beautiful illustration of balance. Today, we look at wisdom of the eyes and ears.

When we started in this series, it was with wisdom and the mind. It was emphasized; **no one becomes wise by accident**. Wisdom is something you have to deliberately **strive after**. Proverbs says you *have to be hungry for it, you have to cry out for it; you have to search it out*.

If we were only aware of this point, we might think wisdom is in some far off place. You have to go somewhere else to find it. Perhaps climb the mountains of Tibet or go make a vision quest in the Mojave Desert.

I remember a story of a man who began **walking the full length of the Appalachian** trail, all 2175 miles of it, to “*find himself*.” I believe it took him a year or two. ...This man walked the entire trail and **didn't find that wisdom**, so he turned around and walked all the way back. As I understand it, sadly, to no avail.

## 1. WHERE

Wisdom is a quest, but that fact alone isn't the **balanced truth**. Even though we must strive; wisdom isn't hidden away in some place, far away from us. Listen to this:

Prov 1

20. **Wisdom shouts in the streets for a hearing.**

21. **She calls out to the crowds** along **Main Street**, and to the judges in their courts, and to **everyone** in all the land:

**Wisdom is like air, it is all around us.** It is on “Main Street.” That is a very near and accessible place. It's available to everyone.

**Just exactly, where is it?** It is as close as the **Bibles** in the seat trays in front of you right now. It's as immediate as the **circumstances** in which you live.

Wisdom lies in **interpreting the consequences** of our actions, and the results of our **attitude**. Proverbs says it sits before us **in print** as **God leaves us record**. It is in the **example** of righteous people we see in the course of our days.

## DISCUSSION

**BIBLICAL TRUTH SHOWS TO SIDES TO WISDOM; YOU MUST SEARCH IT OUT, BUT YET IT IS ALL AROUND YOU: POINT OUT SOME EXAMPLES OF WISDOM YOU HAVE SEEN AROUND YOU.**

## 2. WHY

So we might ask the question, *if wisdom is so pervasive, why are so few of us truly wise? In fact, why aren't we all wiser?*

Proverbs answers this in an interesting way:

### Prov 1

29. ``For you closed your eyes to the facts...

### Prov 21

13. He who shuts his ears...

Proverbs doesn't talk in terms of opening but in shutting.

It claims that the sources of wisdom are all around us. It's by *intentionally shutting our eyes and ears* that we miss it. Proverbs implores, "**You want to be wiser? Just open your eyes! Just use your ears and listen.**"

*Well, open them to what?*

If you do a survey through Proverbs you will find something quite interesting: *It mentions opening up to only two things.*

#### *a. The first is a spiritual focus.*

Let's build on a verse we've already started:

### Prov 1

29. ``For you closed your eyes to the facts and did not choose to reverence and trust the Lord,

30. and you turned your back on me, spurning my advice.

Our eyes must open to the reality of a truly living, present, and interacting Lord. We've looked at the original meanings of the words "**reverence and trust.**" **Reverence** is *awe to the point of fearful respect*. You don't take God lightly; you don't "toy with Him." **Trust** is founded *hope and confidence*. Both these qualities **talk of relationship**; a relationship with the Lord. And through that relationship, we glean **life-giving advice**.

### Proverbs 8

1. Can't you hear the voice of wisdom? She is standing at the city gates and at every fork in the road, and at the door of every house. Listen to what she says:

4. ``Listen, men!" she calls. ``How foolish and naive you are! Let me give you understanding. O foolish ones, let me show you common sense!

6. Listen to me! For I have important information for you. Everything I say is right and true, for I hate lies and every kind of deception.

Then Proverbs mentions a second, rather curious focus.

*b.* The wise eyes and ears are open to: ***The destitute and powerless.***

**Prov 28**

**27...** a curse upon those who **close their eyes to poverty.**

**Prov 21**

**13.** He who **shuts his ears to the cries of the poor** will be ignored...

Isn't it interesting, wise ears and eyes are tuned to **two specific things**: The ***voice of the all-powerful Divine***, and the ***voice of powerless human need***. Why those two things? Proverbs tells us by revealing the ***consequences*** if we **don't** see and don't hear.

### **DISCUSSION**

**DO YOU THINK PEOPLE INTENTIONALLY SHUT THEIR EYES TO WISDOM; WHY OR WHY NOT?**

**DO YOU THINK CHRISTIANS INTENTIONALLY SHUT THEIR EYES TO WISDOM?**

**WHY DO YOU THINK PROVERBS CONCENTRATES ON THESE TWO FOCUSES?**

### **3. CONSEQUENCES**

Let's start with a deaf ear to God:

**Prov 1**

**27.** When a storm of terror surrounds you, and when you are engulfed by anguish and distress,

**28.** then I will not answer your cry for help. It will be too late though you search for me ever so anxiously.

**29.** ``For **you closed your eyes to the facts** and **did not choose to reverence and trust** the Lord,

**30.** and you turned your back on me, **spurning my advice.**

Old and New Testament speak in terms of a **window of opportunity**. When we are lazy, hard-hearted, or careless, we can ***miss the opening***. And what is truly disturbing from a human perspective is: ***None of us knows when our window will close.*** Only God knows.

Both Old and New Testament warn: ***A person only gets so long to spurn God before that window closes.*** We only get to **run away** so long. We only get to **resist** the Holy Spirit for so long. There comes a time in God's perfect wisdom He says, "***Ok, that's enough.***" And He closes that window.

Now you and I shouldn't even presume to know when that is, for ourselves or anyone else; but in reverent fear, we need to be intensely aware; ***there is a limited time***, so you don't toy with God.

Chronicles and Kings, talk about a mind-blowing event that seemed almost common place in Ancient Israel. ***The glory of God would fill the Temple like smoke***. It was so palpable that even the priests couldn't stay in it.

Imagine if ***someone driving by the church one Sunday*** morning saw us all out in the parking lot. "Why are you folks outside?" "The presence of God is so thick in there, we had to vacate the building."

That's what happened in Israel, but then they began to ***take God lightly***. They began to ***resist what He was saying***. Then all of a sudden, even as business at the Temple went on as usual, there was no longer any presence. Instead there was "Ichabod" which means, *God's glory has left this place*.

In the New Testament Jesus warned against ***blaspheming the Holy Spirit***, which means to rage *against or resist*. It is the ***only sin in all of Scripture*** mentioned with no way back. No person can say when, only God knows when and why; but there does come a time that the ***window of opportunity***, a ***chance of real relationship*** with God; closes.

It is a fearful and foolish thing to shut our eyes and ears to God's voice. It ***carries consequences*** we can't fully comprehend in this life. -And mentioned right along with that are the consequences for ***shutting out the voice of human need***.

Proverbs gives a very practical explanation why.

The last statistics I read claimed that the ***average person these days is as little as one paycheck from being homeless***. In some cases, ***sickness*** and medical costs have come upon people so quickly, they are mired in a situation they couldn't even have imagined a month before.

***Any of us could quickly find ourselves in desperate need of the kindness from others.***

**Prov 28**

**27.** If you give to the poor, ***your needs will be supplied!*** But a curse upon those who ***close their eyes to poverty***.

**Prov 21**

**13.** He who ***shuts his ears to the cries of the poor*** will be ignored in his own time of need.

***How does that happen?***

**2 Cor**

**6.** But this I say: He who ***sows sparingly*** will also ***reap sparingly***, and he who ***sows bountifully*** will also ***reap bountifully***.

*The Old Testament sums it up in a practical way:*

**Hosea 10**

12. Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy;

## **DISCUSSION**

**CAN YOU THINK OF OTHER CONSEQUENCES IN SHUTTING OUR EYES AND EARS TO WISDOM?**

**WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL WAYS WE CAN “SOW RIGHTEOUSNESS”?**

### **4. HOW**

It is well worth the effort to live with our eyes and ears wide open to the wisdom around us. But in practical terms, *how do we do that?*

Here are *two Scripture-based routines to live* each moment of your life.

**Hebrews 3**

7. Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, *if you will hear His voice,*

*8. do not harden your hearts ...*

14. For we have *become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,*

*Look and listen with eyes and ears softened by a Spirit-led heart.* That's eyes and ears that come from a *living relationship* with Christ. You can get them no other way. And once you open them, *never close them; remain "steadfast to the end."*

**Phil 4**

8. Finally, brethren, whatever things are *true*, whatever things are *noble*, whatever things are *just*, whatever things are *pure*, whatever things are *lovely*, whatever things are of *good report*, if there is any *virtue* and if there is anything *praiseworthy* *meditate on these things.*

9. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Tune your *eyes and ears like radar* to things in life of *these qualities*; then let what you see and hear *fill your head.*

And if you do that; in this world filled with anxiety, violence, and turbulence; **God will build within you, within your mind and heart, the quality of peace.**

~Granted, it is far **easier** to **go through life with eyes shut and ears closed**. But it comes with horrific consequences.

~On the other hand, it is much **harder** to **live with eyes and ears open**. But if we have the courage, tenacity, and spirit to open them, and keep them open, **there are great rewards that cannot be bought with money**. It is not lost with age. It cannot be stolen or faked.

Right now, in this time and place; there is a **window of opportunity**; take a moment and decide; **is that what you want?** Do you want wisdom? Do you want wisdom enough to **open up and let it in?**

### **DISCUSSION**

**IF YOU WERE TO RATE THE TOP TEN PRIORITIES OF YOUR LIFE, WHERE WOULD WISDOM FALL?**

**CAN YOU THINK OF A PERSON WHO IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF KEEPING THEIR EYES AND EARS OPEN TO WISDOM AROUND THEM? IN WHAT WAY?**