

THE WAY OF WISDOM & FOLLY ARE TWO SEPARATE PATHS

YEAR: KNEEL / FOCUS: LIVING IN WISDOM / SERIES: PROVERBS

BIG TRUTH: THE WAY OF WISDOM AND FOLLY ARE TWO SEPARATE PATHS

Proverbs 2:20; 3:6-7; 4:10-15, 26-27; 5:5-6; 8:32-36; 14:12; Matthew 7:13-14, 24-27

BIBLE VERSE: PROVERBS 14:1

“The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down.”

BIG IDEAS

- Everyone is pursuing a path.
- The pursuit of wisdom is a pursuit of God’s rule and reign over our lives.
- The pursuit of folly always looks pleasing to the eyes, mind, and heart, but it ends in death.

BIBLE PASSAGE: PROVERBS 9

KNEEL: LIVING IN WISDOM

The Kneel Year is an exploration of what it means to worship God with our all (Luke 10:26-28) and to use our influence to lead others to do the same. We know that as we pursue a life of worship, we will pursue a life of both wisdom and mission. Throughout this year we will study and pursue the wisdom of God through the book of Proverbs and the mission of God through the book of Acts, and we will learn how both of these things must inform and shape our influence as Jesus followers!

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know...

- What wisdom is.
- Why wisdom is worthy to be pursued.
- How to grow in wisdom.



Every student should feel...

- Love for God who gives all wisdom.
- Satisfied and secure in the wisdom of God.
- Responsible to use their influence to live for Jesus alone.



Every student should strive to...

- Read through the book of Proverbs one time each month.
- Memorize the Bible verse each week.
- Repent of the ways they have not pursued God and His wisdom.



Every student should want...

- To fear the Lord and keep His commandments.
- To live their lives in pursuit of true wisdom.
- To guard their heart from all impurity.

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week’s Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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BIBLE VERSE: PROVERBS 14:1

“The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down.”

Wisdom grows wiser.

“The wisest of women builds her house...”

- In this life, we have a choice to build our lives upon the foundation of Christ or to build our lives upon the foundation of the world. When we are wise, we know that the only good choice is to build our lives, our house upon Christ. To this is to base all that we do on our devotion to Him. To do this means to leverage our lives to please Him and to bring Him glory.
- When we have wisdom, we build our house, or lives in a way that makes us increase in wisdom. This is because the more we obey God, the wiser we grow. The more we grow in our knowledge of Him, the more we will grow in our ability to discern right and wrong. Our house, or life will be built upon Christ and not this world.

Wisdom not only grows wiser, but it also builds up its life.

“The wisest of women builds her house...”

- Having wisdom means growing in a knowledge of Christ. This knowledge results in spiritual maturity. This growth in wisdom produces a life that is built up and not torn down.
- A wise person grows up spiritually. He or she pursues God in way that builds up their spirituality. They do not remain spiritually immature. Instead, they mature and are sanctified. They embrace their sanctification and seek to become more and more like Christ. This building up of their life is a becoming more and more like Jesus through personal sanctification.

Folly tears its life apart, resulting in a broken house.

“...but folly with her own hands tears it down.”

- Folly is personified in this verse to represent a person who lacks wisdom and rejects God’s truth. This person lives a life that disobeys God’s commands, choosing instead to follow his or her heart and the way of this world instead of following God’s truth. This road leads to destruction.
- This life will remain broken and ruined. Folly doesn’t build up its life but instead tears it down. It cannot give eternal life and real hope. Folly is foolishness and in the end a tragedy for the person who chooses its way.

THE WAY OF WISDOM AND FOLLY ARE TWO SEPARATE PATHS

BIG IDEA #1: EVERYONE IS PURSUING A PATH.¹

[THIS]

In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus teaches that we are all on one of two paths. We are either pursuing the path of life or death. We all begin on the path that leads to death when we are born because we are all born with a sin nature. This sin nature leads us to reject God and turn away from Him. Instead of choosing to obey Him, we choose instead to follow our hearts and the way of this world. This keeps us on the path of destruction, or the broad way. As we grow and mature, we begin pursuing a path. We continue to pursue the path of death though we think we are pursuing the path of life. We seek the things of the world because they bring us satisfaction for a while, but this satisfaction does not last. We walk this path until we experience saving faith. When we are drawn by God's Spirit and our eyes are opened to God's truth, we change paths and no longer walk on the broad path.

[THEREFORE]

What are some things about the broad path that you have found enticing? How do these things tempt you to pursue that path rather than follow Christ?

The things of the world are enticing to us because they please our flesh nature. Ephesians 2:3 reminds us that these desires are what were natural to us but should no longer feel nature to us. Matthew 7:14 also reminds us that we should reject this temptation to follow this broad, easy way of life and follow Jesus instead.

[THIS]

After we experience saving faith, we still pursue a path. Our lives are spent in pursuit of something or someone. For those who know Christ, they should be spent in pursuit of Him. This means that all other pursuits are kept in the proper place—they are not placed higher than a pursuit of God. Proverbs 2:20 tells us that the path that pursues God is the path that walks in the way of the good and keeps to the path of the righteous. Even when we have a relationship with God, we are tempted to pursue the wrong things. Proverbs 3:6-7 reminds us that we must acknowledge God in everything and not think ourselves wise. We will think we know the right way, but our way will lead to folly and a pursuit of the wrong thing. We must submit to God and follow Him in everything to remain steady.

[THEREFORE]

How has a consistent study of God's Word and prayer helped you to pursue Christ consistently?

When we consistently pursue Christ, we find Him. Jeremiah 29:13, Psalm 9:10, and Psalm 119:2 show us that those who seek God find Him. Not only do they find Him, but they grow in their knowledge and understanding of Him. This keeps them on the path of life.

How can our daily lives distract us and keep us from even thinking about the path we're on?

Proverbs 8:33 reminds us to hear instruction and to not neglect it. It's easy to become caught up in daily life and forget to study and grow in our relationship with God. When we do this, we are neglecting the instruction that God is giving us. This will lead to our downfall. We must continue to pursue Christ consistently.

1. Matthew 7:13: Every person is on one of two paths: the path to life or the path to death.

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BIG IDEA #2: THE PURSUIT OF WISDOM IS A PURSUIT OF GOD'S RULE AND REIGN OVER OUR LIVES.²

[THIS]

Submitting our lives to someone else is challenging and difficult. We are born desiring to fulfill our fleshly desires, and we do not like having someone rule over us. From the beginning, submitting to God's commands has been a challenge for mankind, but it is the only way to please Him. The wise person knows that the only way to life is to submit to God's rule over his or her life. Not only does the wise person submit to this rule, but he or she pursues God's rule over their lives. They desire it and seek to situate their lives in a way that God is ruling over their lives. This means that they belong to a local body of believers, so they can submit to elders who lead them and guide them. It means that they are living life with fellow believers so they can have accountability in their lives. These things are non-negotiable for them. This is what it looks like to pursue God's rule in their lives. Wisdom seeks this type of life and desires it above any other type of life. Wisdom does not reject this type of life. It embraces it and pursues it.

[THEREFORE]

How does pride and worldliness keep us from pursuing God's rule over our lives?

2 Timothy 2:4 reminds us that those who desire to please God do not entangle themselves in the things of the world, or worldliness. Those who desire to pursue God's rule over their lives submit themselves to Him and set aside their pride or suffer the consequences as Proverbs 16:18 and 29:23 teach us.

[THIS]

The wise person also pursues God's reign over his or her life. The difference between God's rule and reign is to have God reign over your life is to recognize and acknowledge Him as your King. This means you know and see Him as the supreme authority over your life. Not only do you submit to His rule over you, but you see Him as the rightful ruler of your life. When we see Him as our King, we are acting in wisdom because we see Him as He truly is—the one true King. Wisdom doesn't just acknowledge that He is King, but she also pursues Him as King. A pursuit of Christ as King is a pursuit of knowing Him and being like Him. It is a centering of our lives around Him and a dying to ourselves. When something is King of our lives, we give everything we have to it. When Christ is King of our lives, we give our entire lives to Him. We give up our dreams and desires in order to pursue Him and to make Him famous in all the world.

[THEREFORE]

What is the difference in acknowledging Jesus as King and pursuing His reign over your life?

We can acknowledge that Jesus is King and not pursue His reign over our lives. When we pursue His reign, we seek His kingdom first as Matthew 6:33 teaches us and we desire to see Him receive honor and glory as He deserves.

How can you pursue Jesus' reign over your life this week?

1 Chronicles 16:11, Psalm 63:1, and Deuteronomy 4:29 tell us that those who diligently seek God find Him. If we consistently and diligently seek Jesus' reign over our lives with our whole hearts, we will achieve it. When we desire to make Him ruler and Lord of our lives, it will happen.

2. James 4:7: The wise person knows that the only way to live is in submission to God's rule and to seek His reign over them.

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BIG IDEA #3: THE PURSUIT OF FOLLY ALWAYS LOOKS PLEASING TO THE EYES, MIND, AND HEART, BUT IT ENDS IN DEATH.³

[THIS]

1 John 2:16 shows us that the flesh is pleasing to our eyes, mind, and heart. The sin we are tempted to do isn't ugly to us naturally. Instead, it can be things that make us feel good, seem good to us, and look good to us. Sin is pleasing to our eyes, and it can bring us temporary joy. It can even seem logical and like the right thing to do in the moment. Folly blinds us and leads us down a very destructive path. Our sin natures lead us so far away from God and His truth that we often can't even discern the right path. This pursuit of folly leads us to death and destruction. We will think that an attitude is right because our hearts tell us it is. We will feel justified, and our minds will convince that we are thinking logically, but in the end, we are being led astray if we are not following God's truth. We will believe that we are on the right path because it will feel good to us and right, but we will actually be on the wrong path, heading to death and destruction, blinded by our sin nature.

[THEREFORE]

How have you mistakenly thought you were on the right path when you were actually following folly?

Proverbs 28:26 and 15:21 teach us that those who follow the way of folly lack wisdom. Typically, a person who is following his or her own mind is a person who is following folly. We cannot trust ourselves. We must turn to God and trust His Word and commands.

[THIS]

It is tempting to believe that following the path of folly comes with minor consequences, but the consequence is death. God is a good and gracious God who is slow to anger. Because of God's goodness, we do not always feel the consequences of our sin right away. What we can know for certain is that when we follow the path of folly, we are on the path of death and if we do not turn from it, we will follow its course to the end and that will result in eternal death. We can be certain that following folly means eternal separation from God because we cannot live as we please in this life and expect to inherit eternal life in the next. We cannot deny God's rule and reign over our lives in this life and expect to enjoy the benefits of His eternal Kingdom in the next. It is then that we reject the foolishness of folly and turn to God and His wisdom. Wisdom knows that folly seems like a fun time, but in the end leads to death. It rejects the momentary pleasure and chooses instead the eternal joy.

[THEREFORE]

Read 2 Corinthians 4:17-18. Why is it challenging to choose eternal joy over momentary pleasure sometimes?

When Paul wrote about his own affliction and referred to them as momentary, they were not small afflictions. For us, the promise of immediate satisfaction is easier and simpler than the steadiness required for eternal joy. Folly tempts us to believe that eternal joy isn't really attainable, but the gospel tells us that Jesus has already purchased it for us.

Read Proverbs 4:10-15. How can you ensure that you do not follow the path of folly?

Heeding the instruction of God by knowing and obeying His Word is how we stay off of the path of folly.

3. Matthew 7:13-14: *The broad and easy path leads to death and destruction always.*