

Devotionals for the Week of February 26, 2023

Our devotional section provides additional spiritual input for helping you go further and deeper in your journey with the Lord. It is our desire, our hope, and our prayer that this devotional section will be a helpful Spiritual Life tool for you to utilize on a regular basis. Each day's devotional will typically consist of Scripture, commentary, and a prayer response. Current Devotionals can be accessed each day online at www.capecodchurch.com/devotionals or by using the Cape Cod Church App (select "Connect" on the bottom main page and then "Daily Devotional" on next page). Be sure to check Saturday and Sundays for special postings of poems, stories, etc. Printed copies from the prior week are available at the Connection Desk.

Monday – Wisdom from Proverbs – The Truly Successful Life – Becoming a Steward of Life

Evil people get rich for the moment, but the reward of the godly will last. Godly people find life; evil people find death. The Lord detests people with crooked hearts, but he delights in those with integrity. Proverbs 11:18-20

Today's thoughts from today's verses:

This is week Four of a Four-week Devotional Series entitled, "Wisdom from Proverbs." Proverbs is a book about wisdom for life. It consists of many wise sayings. We find in them the themes of Scripture expressed as practical righteousness that help us examine how we live and manage daily life in the light of divine truth. The book of Proverbs strongly proclaims that wisdom begins with the fear of Lord. The "Fear of the Lord" involves a reverence for God where we truly embrace the fact that "God is God and we are not." So, Proverbs takes the multi-faceted thing we call life and zeros in on many of its facets in terms that put God right in the center of things.

In order to gain that which the book of Proverbs has to offer, we need to be ones who are willing to put our primary focus on God and that which he communicates to us about his intentions for our lives. We hope the "Wisdom from Proverbs" Series will wonderfully contribute to your life yielding a remarkable level of practical righteous as you allow Christ to change you in a multitude of wonderful ways. This series has four weeks of Devotional material, and each week has six Devotionals (Monday through Saturday).

Week One: Start Up Wisdom. Week two: Human Relationships. Week three: Anatomy of Work. Week four: The Truly Successful Life. We begin week four: The Truly Successful Life, with the following:

Here we are in the fourth and final week of looking to the book of Proverbs for the wisdom we need for life. This week the area of life to be addressed by the book of Proverbs is "success." Our

opening passage contrasts evil people and godly people. Let's separate out what the verses say about each. This will give us a clear look at God's take on what "success" in life is and what it is not.

"Evil people get rich for the moment - evil people find death - the Lord detests people with crooked hearts."

When life is about the moment, what you can get from it is all important. When a person's focus is entirely on how to get life to serve them and how they can use it, they find death. God detests this. The one who approaches life in this way will be a person with a crooked heart and will be one whom God finds detestable. This is what "failure" in life is all about.

"The reward of the godly will last - Godly people find life - he delights in those with integrity."

For reward that lasts you have to look beyond our time here. This changes how we engage with what is here. When we are not trying to use life but serve it, we find life. The one who approaches life in this way will be a person of integrity and will be one in whom God is delighted. This is what "success" in life is all about.

The truly successful person is a steward of life and not a consumer of life. The whole dynamic of a truly successful person is that of "treatment" and not "consumption." As we go forward in our week, we will look at all this in more detail as we explore more fully God's take on "success" through the wisdom found in the Book of Proverbs.

Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:

Lord, as I live my life here in this world, I confess that I have allowed the conventional wisdom of the world to have far too great an impact on my life. I really do want to experience transformation in a full and complete way. So, here I am before you, asking that you fill my life with your presence, your purposes, and your power. Amen!

Tuesday – Wisdom from Proverbs – The Truly Successful Life – Gaining the Perspective of Eternity

Commit your actions to the Lord, and your plans will succeed. Proverb 16:3

Better to have little, with godliness, than to be rich and dishonest. Proverbs 16:8

We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps. Proverbs 16:9

Better to have little, with fear for the Lord, than to have great treasure and inner turmoil.
Proverbs 15:16

Better to live humbly with the poor than to share plunder with the proud. Proverbs 16:19

True humility and fear of the Lord lead to riches, honor, and long life. Proverbs 22:4

If you are slack, in the day of distress your strength is limited. Deliver those who are being taken away to death, and those who are staggering to slaughter, oh hold them back. If you say, “See, we did not know this,” does He not consider it who weighs the hearts? and does He not know it who keeps your soul? and will He not render to man according to his work? My son, eat honey, for it is good, yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste; know that wisdom is thus for your soul; if you find it, then there will be a future, and your hope will not be cut off. Proverbs 24:10-14 (NASB)

Today's thoughts from today's verses:

How we engage with what is here in the middle of what we call life on planet earth makes all the difference in regard to whether we are truly “successful” or not. There are “those who don’t get it” and there are “those who do get it.” For “those who don’t get it,” engaging with what is here on planet earth is all about how to get life to serve them and how they can use it. For “those who do get it,” engaging with what is here on planet earth is not about trying to use life but serving it. They are ones who are focused on being a steward of life and not a consumer of life. Herein lies the true “measure” of success.

Above is a whole set of Proverbs. Please read through them again and write down things that stand out to you. What is the one thing that resonates the most with you? Finally, identify one change you need to make in your life in regard to how to measure success?

For those who keep God out of the equation and don’t take into account what happens next after this life, maximum consumption of what this life has to offer becomes the end result they pursue. The path they take, the process they go through, and the means they use are all justifiable for achieving the end result they are after. In the end they will find out that they were wrong about “success” in life. Like those in our Proverb 24 passage, they will say, “we did not know this.” Oh, that somewhere along the way they had come to realize that “God weighs the hearts,” “he keeps your soul,” and “he will render to man according to his work.”

Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:

Lord, I thank you that you are accomplishing the great work of delivering me from myself and living merely for myself. Thank you for the perspective of eternity. I ask that you continue to bring to me wisdom for my soul so that as I continue to walk with you it will come about more than ever before that the living I do will truly line up with how you measure “success.”

Wednesday – Wisdom from Proverbs – The Truly Successful Life – Rejecting a Wealth Centered Life

Don't rob the poor just because you can or exploit the needy in court. For the Lord is their defender. He will ruin anyone who ruins them. Proverbs 22:22-23

The blessing of the Lord makes a person rich, and he adds no sorrow with it. Proverbs 10:22

The way of the Lord is a stronghold to those with integrity, but it destroys the wicked. Proverbs 10:29

Trust in your money and down you go! But the godly flourish like leaves in spring. Proverbs 11:28

Trouble chases sinners, while blessings reward the righteous. Proverbs 13:21

The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the godly will flourish. Proverbs 14:11

Today's thoughts from today's verses:

Predominant in the criteria the world uses to measure "success" is amassing "wealth." The book of Proverbs helps us see that this has been true throughout the ages. Wealth in and of itself is not the problem. The real problem is how important wealth is to us and how we go about getting it. The Apostle Paul in the New Testament made this distinction when he said, "the love of money is the root of evil (not the money itself). It is important that we guard our hearts and lives from the world's view of success and the attachment to "wealth" and wrong ways of pursuing it that follow.

Above is a whole set of Proverbs. Please read through them and write down things that stand out to you. What is the one thing that resonates the most with you? Finally, identify one change you need to make in your life in regard to "how we 'Get' wealth?"

Whatever degree of wealth is in the mix for how we prosper or succeed in life, recognizing it as coming from the Lord and receiving it as his blessing is crucial. It is when God is left out of the equation that we slip into being unduly attached to wealth and going about amassing it in ways that are contrary to God's righteous desires for us and what is truly good for us in the long run. Untold sorrow and suffering come from "not getting it right" in regard to the place "wealth" was intended to have in our lives.

Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:

Lord, I express to you that the proper role of "wealth" in my life doesn't come easy. I can't live without it and it's really tough living with it in ways that are truly righteous. I ask for your

intervention in my life to help me become one who puts you totally in the equation regarding “wealth” in my life. Here I am before you, Lord. Thank you for your blessing and provision in my life. I surrender to you. Amen!

Thursday – Wisdom from Proverbs – The Truly Successful Life – Embracing a lifestyle of Giving

Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed. People curse those who hoard their grain, but they bless the one who sells in time of need. Proverbs 11:24-26

Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine. Proverbs 3:9-10

He who despises his neighbor sins, but happy is he who is gracious to the poor He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honors Him. Proverbs 14:21, 31 (NASB)

Many will seek the favor of a generous man, and every man is a friend to him who gives gifts. Proverbs 19:6 NASB)

One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed. Proverbs 19:17 (NASB)

Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need. Proverbs 21:13

Blessed are those who are generous, because they feed the poor. Proverbs 22:9

Today's thoughts from today's verses:

It was said earlier in the week that the whole dynamic of a truly successful person is that of “treatment” and not “consumption.” What does this mean? We spoke earlier about being a “steward” of life rather than a “consumer” of life. This means that we don’t go about trying to use life but rather we go about serving it. The one who is a “consumer” of life is all caught up in “using” life. It is all about “consumption.” The one who is a “steward” of life is all caught up in “serving” life. It is all about “treatment.”

It is in our relationships with other people that these two dynamics have their greatest impact. The one who is caught up in consumption views other people either as a means to use or an obstacle to be removed. The one who is caught up in “treatment” views other people in terms of serving them, caring for them, and blessing them. So, a simple question to ask is: How do I treat

other people? This leads us to another important question: Am I a “getting” or “giving” kind of person?

Above is a whole set of Proverbs. Please read through them and write down things that stand out to you. What is the one thing that resonates the most with you? Finally, identify one change you need to make in your life in regard to “how we ‘Give’?”

God is extremely generous toward us. God cares about us and treats us very well. He has blessed us with blessings untold. As recipients of God’s blessings, we are called to be agents of blessing in the lives of other people. Truly “successful” people do not “use” other people, but rather “give themselves away” for the sake of other people.

Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:

Lord, your calling in my life is a high one and surely is beyond me. I guess that is the key, “getting beyond me.” Help me forsake my selfish ways that have led to my “using” other people. Deliver me from valuing “wealth” more than my relationship with you and the people you have put in my life. I come to you in worship and surrender. Your will be done in my life. Amen!

Friday – Wisdom from Proverbs – The Truly Successful Life – Helping Others to Connect with God

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise wins souls. Proverbs 11:30 (NASB)

Today's thoughts from today's verses:

Yesterday we said that truly “successful” people do not “use” other people, but rather “give themselves away” for the sake of other people. Today we are going to explore further the impact a genuinely “giving” person’s life has on the people around them. The above Proverb will help us with this.

The person who “gets it right” is a righteous person. The person who is righteous bears fruit. The person who bears fruit is a tree of life to other people. The person who is a tree of life to other people wins souls. And finally, the one who wins souls is wise. When we decide to be a “giving” person who lives to bless the lives of other people, we bless them in many ways. However, the greatest blessing we can be to other people is for us to be instrumental in the winning of their souls.

Through our vertical connection with God fruit comes forth from our lives. When this happens the people around us see God at work in us and through us. As our lives bless other people in our horizontal connections with them, they are drawn to us and to God. When our vertical connection with God is what it needs to be, we will have horizontal connections with others that win them to the Lord (their own vertical connection).

Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:

Lord, I want my life to bless other people. Please work in and through my life in ways that bring others to you. Show me more fully how to “give myself away” for the sake of other people. Continue to deliver me from the selfish pursuit of merely living for myself. May my transformation from “getter” to “giver” have a great impact on the people in my life that helps win them to you. Amen!

Saturday – Wisdom from Proverbs – The Truly Successful Life – Believing in the Victory of God’s Wisdom

The fear of the Lord prolongs life The hope of the righteous is gladness The way of the Lord is a stronghold to the upright The righteous will never be shaken The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable.
Proverbs 10:27A, 28A, 29A, 30A, 31A, 32A (NASB)

Today's thoughts from today's verses:

Today we conclude our week and our series on wisdom from the book of Proverbs. The truth put before us has been very demanding and serious in its presentation. That flavor can leave us feeling a little beat up and overwhelmed with how much we need to work on and how far we have to go. So, to wrap things up we are going to put our emphasis on the positive side of things.

Many of the Proverbs were a contrast between the positive (righteous) and negative (wicked) sides of things. At points during the series, we spoke about those who “get it” and those “who don’t get it.” Be encouraged today. You are one who “gets it.” God is at work in your life, and he is wonderfully transforming you into all he desires you to become. And the book of Proverbs has had a role in the great work he is doing in you and through you.

So, for today we have taken Proverbs 10:27-32 and extracted the positive side of the six Proverbs the passage contains. Read through them without thinking of them as demands. Let them be a pronouncement of who you are today as you go forward from here in becoming all the God has in mind for you. He is at work doing great things in your life and he will continue to do so in your journey of living fully for him. The victory of God’s Wisdom in your life is forever real.

Today's prayer response from today's thoughts:

Lord, thank you for our series on Proverbs. I choose to believe that the positive side of these Proverbs is a pronouncement of who I am because of my relationship with you. I believe in grace and the prospect of a life of becoming all that you desire for me. Lord, make me more confident than ever before that you are at work and that you will faithfully continue your transforming work throughout all the days of my life. Amen!

