

Wisdom's Ways

(Chap. 2)

In chapter 2, Solomon urges his son to walk in the ways of wisdom. The first four verses give the conditions for receiving the knowledge of God; a person must be earnest and sincere in seeking it with all his heart. The rest of the chapter promises that wisdom and discernment will be given. The 22 verses correspond to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

2:1 First, the **son** is urged to take to heart his father's teaching and **treasure** up his **commands**. The proverbs were intended to be treasured up "**within you**," or memorized.

2:2 There must be an open **ear** and an open **heart** or mind. The son must be an attentive listener, not a compulsive talker. He is not told to talk out his problems, as in much of modern counseling; rather he should listen to the wise advice of others.

2:3, 4 If he really means business, let him **cry out for discernment**, and send out an appeal for **understanding**. Seriousness of purpose is of primary importance. It is a law of life that we get what we go after.

What we need is the same kind of drive that men have in mining for **silver** or in searching for **hidden treasures**. The tragedy is that too often men show more zeal in acquiring material wealth than spiritual riches.

2:5 But those who seek inevitably **find**. Those who are anxious to come into a right relationship with the Lord and to really know **God** are never disappointed. That is why one of the early church fathers said that the man who seeks God has already found Him. Christ reveals the Father to all who believe on Him. To know Christ is to know God.

2:6 After we have been saved through faith in Christ, we are then in a position to learn divine **wisdom** from the **LORD**. He teaches us how to think straight, how to evaluate, how to discern truth and error, and how to develop divine insight.

2:7 He provides rich stores of **sound wisdom for the upright**, and a special **shield** of protection for **those who walk** in integrity.

2:8 He **guards the paths of** those who live clean, moral lives. **His saints** escape the pain and bitterness that sin leaves in its trail. "Safe and sound the chosen friends of God come and go".

2:9 This verse parallels verse 5. Both begin with "**Then**" and list the benefits of seriously seeking the knowledge of God.

The person who keenly desires to know and do God's will learns how to behave righteously, to act fairly, to conduct himself honestly—in short, to choose the right way **and every good path**.

2:10 The reason this happens is that **wisdom** takes control of one's mind or **heart**, and the **knowledge** of what is right becomes **pleasant** rather than distasteful. To the true believer, God's commands are not irksome. Christ's yoke is easy and His burden is light.

2:11 Discretion, or the ability to make wise decisions, saves a person from many a “bad trip.” Sound judgment delivers us from involvement with wicked men. None of us realizes the extent to which we are daily preserved from spiritual, moral, and physical perils. The Christian enjoys a well-guarded life, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2:12 We are saved from the partnership of **evil men** (12–15) and from the embrace of the loose *woman* (16–19).

First we are saved from the world of ungodly men who misrepresent facts and distort the truth. Their speech is utterly untrustworthy.

2:13–15 These are men **who leave** the well-lighted streets of **uprightness** to slink in the dark alleys of crime and crookedness.

They take savage pleasure in **doing evil** and **delight in** the way their sin turns everything topsy-turvy.

They follow **crooked** routes and **their** behavior is sly and **devious**.

2:16 Wisdom saves not only from the company of men like these but also from the clutches of the **immoral woman**. We may understand this woman as a literal prostitute or we may see her as a figure of false religion or of the ungodly world.

Her method is flattery: “You aren’t appreciated at home as you should be. You are so handsome, so talented. You have so much to offer. You need love and sympathetic understanding, and I’m the one to give it to you.”

2:17 She is unfaithful to **the companion of her youth**, that is, her husband. She **forgets the covenant of her God**, that is, the marriage vows that she made before God. Or “the covenant of her God” may refer to the Ten Commandments and specifically to the seventh commandment, which forbids adultery.

2:18 The first clause of verse 18 may be translated “**For her house leads down to death**” or “she sinketh down unto death, which is her house”. The parallel second clause of the verse seems to support the NKJV translation. Putting them together, the thought is: **her house leads down to death**, and therefore those who enter it are sliding toward the grave. Her **paths lead to the dead**, and therefore those who follow her will soon be in the realm of departed spirits. Since everybody will die someday, death must be more here than the common lot of all mortals; it must mean moral death leading to eternal death.

2:19 Once a man is ensnared by her, it is almost impossible to escape. The verse actually seems to rule out any hope of a comeback at all. But many statements in the Bible must be understood as general rules, to which there may be a few exceptions. That is the point here. Once a man is initiated into her secrets, it is extremely hard to **regain** the right road.

2:20 Link verse 20 with verse 11. Wisdom preserves not only from evil men and the strange woman, but, on the positive side, it encourages companionship with those who are worthwhile and upright.

2:21, 22 Under the Law of Moses, men of integrity — **the upright** and **the blameless** — were rewarded with a secure place **in the land** of Canaan. When we come over to the New Testament, these material blessings in earthly places give way to spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. But the fact remains that righteousness and decency are rewarded in this life as well as in the life to come.

It is equally true that **the wicked will be cut off from the** land of blessing. There is no lasting inheritance there for the treacherous.