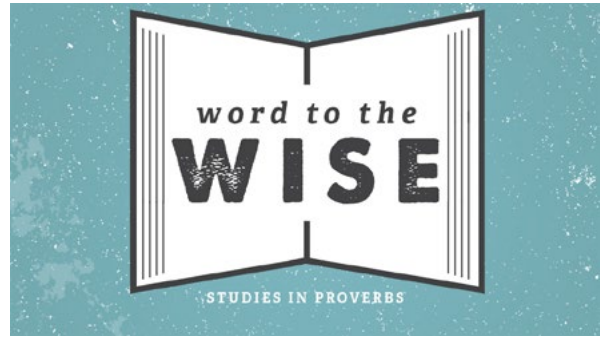


beyond^{the}weekend

For the sermon on July 26-27, 2014
"Slow and Steady"



Welcome to *Beyond the Weekend*! The experiences below are designed to connect with the weekend message. Take 20-30 minutes each day and enjoy your pursuit of God! *Beyond the Weekend* is also available via daily e-mails. To sign up, go to adabible.org/btw.

During July and August, we are traveling through the book of Proverbs. We are reading one chapter a day for two months, thus reading Proverbs twice this summer. Enjoy!

Day 1 Matthew 6.9-13 | Kingdom

While the concept of a political "kingdom"—ruled by a monarch—may not be familiar to us, kingdoms *do* exist in our culture. Much like a political monarch, each of us has our own small kingdoms we manage by: gaining wealth and power, maintaining our public image, agonizing over our small patch of real estate, and providing for those under our care.

While working hard and providing for our families is good and commendable, whenever we make that (or anything) our life's obsession, we have a problem. We've become more preoccupied with *our* kingdom than *God's* kingdom. Jesus instructs his followers to pray for his kingdom, not ours (Matthew 6.9-13); a kingdom characterized by love, mercy, forgiveness, humility and trust. He may give us comfort and wealth, but it's not guaranteed.

When we pray, "your kingdom come, your will be done," we're not praying for a geo-political movement. Rather, we're proclaiming God's power over our life (v. 10). Even though God's kingdom isn't about our wealth and comfort, we still ask him for daily provisions. When we ask, according to his will, we can trust him to give because he is a good king (v. 11). **Today in addition to reading Proverbs 28**, pray the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6.9-13 as you humbly depend upon his daily provision.

Day 2 Proverbs 21.25-26 | Generosity

We live in a world of overconsumption. Consider how much stuff we own (but don't use) and the amount of stuff we buy (but can't afford). Despite not having space or money, many of us continue to buy as we bury ourselves in debt and spend all we have on ourselves. There's a word for this: greed.

We find the heart of a greedy person in Proverbs 21.25-26. He's called "the sluggard," and he wants a big payoff with little to no effort. He's lazy, dissatisfied and disinterested in generous living. This sounds familiar because it describes many of us: surrounding ourselves with the best stuff, never content with what we have, and reluctant to share. We think: "the more I keep to myself, the more I can get." We fail to realize how this mentality destroys us (v. 25). Generosity, on the other hand, is a path to life and righteousness (v. 26). It doesn't earn us favor with God, but it is a part of following Jesus.

Today in addition to reading Proverbs 29, consider how you've been a "sluggard," ask for God's forgiveness, and find a way to be generous. One way to do this is to financially support one of Ada's "Local Ministry Partners." To learn more about these organizations, and find one that aligns with your interests, go to adabible.org/connect/missions/local/.

Day 3 Proverbs 13.11 | Diligence

Proverbs warns us that wealth gained quickly will fade away just as quickly. Consider the number of people who've destroyed their lives after running into quick, *easy*, cash (lottery winners, for example). On the other hand, consider how much more stable life is when we diligently and honestly work for our money.

"Easy money" can corrupt us and make us lazy and selfish people. This isn't who God wants us to be. He wants us to be diligent and generous. **Today in addition to reading Proverbs 30**, identify an area of your finances requiring honest discipline. Develop and implement a plan to be diligent, and pray for God's help to honor him in this area.

Day 4 Titus 2.11-12 | Desires

Because many desires we feel are good, they can draw us *closer* to God. However, good desires can become twisted by sin and now have the power to lead us *away* from God.

A first-century church was in this danger. Good desires were being corrupted and were drawing people away from Jesus. Paul encouraged his protégé Titus to steer his people away from this and say "no" to sinful desires. **Today in addition to reading Proverbs 31**, consider what desires are drawing you away from God. Repent and trust the power of God's Spirit to help you be obedient to the life Christ calls you to live.

Day 5 Deuteronomy 26.15 | Sacrifice

In ancient Israel, being in a relationship with God involved sacrifice. As he blessed the people with abundance and with his presence, he asked they be—above all—devoted to him and to consistently give him a portion of their livelihood to express their devotion.

Like Israel, Christ followers have received the greatest treasure of all: a relationship with God. We have a story to tell about his work in our lives and a reason to be generous. **Today in addition to reading Proverbs 1**, write or journal about what God has done in your life and consider how you might show your gratitude for his abundant blessing.

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