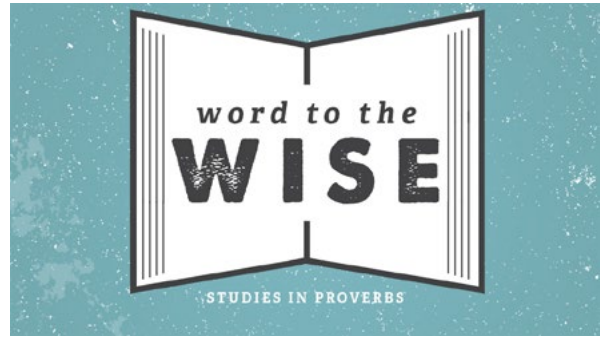


beyond^{the}weekend

For the sermon on August 23-24, 2014
"The Bucket List"



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 adable.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 Proverbs 30.7-9 | Honesty

Jeff Manion, senior teaching pastor, focused our attention on the two requests of Agur in his Proverbs 30 prayer; the prayer of a man who deeply desired to remain spiritually focused. The first of the two is honesty: "Keep falsehood and lies far from me..." (Proverbs 30.8a). Agur hungers for honesty in every aspect of his life and here begs God for his help.

Every relationship relies on trust to hold it together: your spouse, children, employee/employer, business relationships, and neighbors. When you discover someone has lied to you, trust has been eroded and significant damage has been done. Deceit destroys everything it touches.

Today, after you read Proverbs 25, look forward to your week ahead and those conversations where you'll be tempted to lie: a "promise" to a customer, withholding information from your spouse, or deceiving your parents about an evening activity. Before you enter these situations, take a moment and pray Agur's prayer, "Lord, keep falsehood and lies far from me," and rely on God's Spirit to give you the strength to live honestly.

Day 2 Proverbs 30.7-9 | Simplicity

After beginning with a request for honesty, Agur concludes his prayer by requesting financial simplicity, "...give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread" (Proverbs 30.8b). Desiring to land somewhere in the "moderate middle," Agur asks only for what is essential to meet his day-to-day needs: not too much (at the risk of forgetting the goodness of God) and not too little (at the risk of becoming a thief).

The risk for most of us, although certainly not all, is to continually drift from God as our bank accounts grow and our possessions increase: "There's nothing to eat" (with full pantries and refrigerators) and "I've got nothing to wear" (with no room in the closet for one more thing). We have so much more than what we "need."

In addition to reading Proverbs 26, spend significant time in prayer simply being thankful for God's financial blessings in your life (however large or small you may perceive them to be). Use your thankfulness to say "No" to one purchase—of something you don't need—this week.

Day 3 Deuteronomy 8.10-18 | Forgetfulness

"The blessing of wealth does not spontaneously result in growing devotion to God. In fact, the gravitational pull seems to be in the opposite direction," Jeff Manion, *Satisfied*, p.184. This "gravitational pull" away from God in times of prosperity is not new. Thousands of years before the time of Jesus, God warned the Israelites against such a situation when they enjoyed his blessings: "When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. *Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God*" (Deuteronomy 8.10-11).

Review the trajectory of your life over the past several years, especially if your income, possessions, and status have continued to grow. If your review shows you pulling away from God, even subtly, confess that before him. Talk to a trusted, mature believer about changes you can make to alter this trajectory. **Also, continue your reading of Proverbs by reading chapter 27.**

Day 4 Revelation 3.14-22 | Erosion

Wealth can erode our faith, both individually and collectively as a church. It's the situation Jesus addressed in Laodicea when he said, "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked" (Revelation 3.17). This church was financially set, but spiritually bankrupt.

We, too, can have a false sense of security if we believe our *material* wealth means we're *spiritually* wealthy. The two are not connected and we're on dangerous ground if that's what we think. **Today, in addition to reading Proverbs 28**, follow Jesus' command to the Laodicean church, "So be earnest and repent" (Revelation 3.19). Repent of those attitudes and actions where you've connected your wealth to your spirituality.

Day 5 Jeremiah 17.9-10 | Heart

While Agur's desire was to live in harmony with God, and was the basis of his prayer (Proverbs 30.7-9), he knew there was one significant obstacle in his path: his heart. He knew his heart and what he was capable of doing. It wasn't good. He would have agreed with the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it" (Jeremiah 17.9)?

Only the saving grace of Jesus can "cure" our sinful hearts. He's the only one who can. Remind yourself of God's glorious grace by listening to Elevation Worship's "Grace So Glorious" (search youtube.com). **Continue your reading of Proverbs by reading chapter 29** and selecting one proverb for your life today.

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