

Spiritual Fitness — Do I Make Wise Choices?

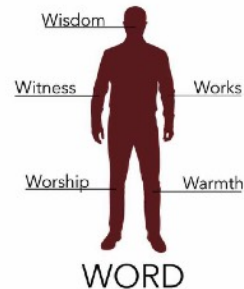
February 12, 2023

Good morning CrossWinds! My name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. At CrossWinds, we are about “Reaching People With Jesus.” We are committed to sharing the good news of Jesus with those who don’t know what Jesus has done for them. There are many ways CrossWinds carries out that mission. One of the ways some of you are reaching people with Jesus is through foster parenting. There are a few families on both of our campuses that opened up their homes to take in foster children. That way children in a difficult situation can be part of a stable home and hear about the love of Jesus. Foster families, thank you for being part of carrying out the mission of reaching people with Jesus.

This morning, we continue our series on spiritual fitness. This is the last week of the series. Next week begin 2 Samuel. I loved 1 Samuel. I am looking forward to 2 Samuel.

For those of you new, our series on spiritual health is a series where we are looking at the Bible to find what a healthy Christian life looks like. After this series, Pastor Jordan and I will develop some material from this series that we will teach at CrossWinds on a regular basis to continually remind us what a healthy Christian life looks like and to encourage all of us to live that way.

What Does A Healthy Christian Look Like?



In this series, we have talked about six W's that healthy Christians have in their life. These are six qualities of a healthy Christian, that all begin with the letter W.

Since repetition is the mother of all learning, at the beginning of each message in this series, we are taking a few minutes to review these words and what they mean. Let's do that this morning.

Word — A healthy Christian knows God through the applied word of God under the direction and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

As Christians, we want to be in the Bible not just on Sunday mornings but on our own during the week. When we read the Bible, the Holy Spirit takes the Bible and applies it to our life. God uses His word to create and sustain our relationship with God. Healthy Christians do not content themselves with only opening the Bible for a few minutes in church on Sunday but read the Bible on their own during the week, preferably every day. Without the Bible regularly in our life, it is easy to drift away from following God in our life.

Worship — A healthy Christian manifests a lifestyle of worship and prayer based on close daily communion with God.

In the second week of this series, we looked at prayer and worship. We learned that prayer in a healthy Christian's life is like breathing for human life. It is something we do all the time. We may pray out loud or in our hearts. We may pray with friends and alone. We talk to God in prayer in the good times of life and in the hard times of life.

We also looked at worship. Worship is not something Christians do on Sundays. For healthy Christians, worship is a way of life. We worship God by honoring God in the choices we make every day of the week..

Warmth — A healthy Christian engages in meaningful life-on-life relationships that reflect the love of God and leave people impacted and changed.

By warmth, we are not talking about temperature warmth but relational warmth. Warmth is how Christians treat one another. We learned that healthy Christians are known for the way they love one another in the church. The church is to be a relationally warm place. The church is a place where Christians are known for their love for one another. People in the world are drawn into the church by the way Christians love one another in the church.

Witness — A healthy Christian lives under the commission of Christ to win and grow disciples, integrating outreach into all aspects of life.

This means healthy Christians tell others about Jesus and what Jesus has done for them. Even if we are ridiculed or laughed at for talking about Jesus, that is to be expected. A little suffering when we talk about Jesus does not make a healthy Christian hide Jesus.

Works — A healthy Christian builds up the body of Christ through their spiritual gifts and passions.

We looked at this last week. Healthy Christians know God gives every Christian at least one area of their life where the Holy Spirit strengthens them and enables them to be a great help to other Christians in the church. Healthy Christians do not sit in church but they look for ways they can serve others with

their gifts in the church. When healthy Christians are using their gifts to serve others in the church, everyone in the church becomes more like Jesus.

Wisdom — A healthy Christian manages their skills, money, and time putting them under the Lordship of Jesus.

Today, we are looking at the topic of wisdom, which is the last point of what it means to be a healthy Christian. This is an incredibly important topic. So many people look at life and use one lens. The only question they ask is, “Is this a sinful choice?” If something is not a sinful choice, they consider it an acceptable choice. The Bible tells us we need to use a second lens. We need not just ask if a choice is sinful. We need to ask if a choice is wise or foolish. There are plenty of choices we can make in life that is not overtly sinful, but they are foolish. They are unwise. They will lead to disaster.

If you are familiar with the Bible, you know there is an entire book of the Bible dedicated to making wise choices. It is the book of Proverbs. Most of what we talk about this morning will come from the book of Proverbs.

Let’s begin by looking at what the book of Proverbs says about the importance of learning to make wise choices.

...for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her. Proverbs 8:11 (ESV)

The Bible says if you had to choose between winning the lottery and not having wisdom or having wisdom but not winning a cent, it is far better to have wisdom than wealth. In fact, outside of having Jesus as your savior, there is nothing better in life than having wisdom and making wise choices. That is a

strong statement. Wisdom is better than wealth. Wisdom is better than popularity on social media. Wisdom is better than power. You name it, wisdom beats it.

What is wisdom?

When the Bible talks about wisdom, there are some slight differences between the way the Old and New Testaments talk about wisdom that is important to know. In the New Testament, written in Greek, the word for wisdom is *sophia*. (My daughter has a friend named Sophie. Her name means wise in Greek.) For the Greeks, wisdom was conceptual. When the Greeks considered someone wise, that meant they could understand a difficult concept or solve a complex problem.

In the Old Testament, written in Hebrew, the Hebrew word is *hokmah*. It meant skill in practical living. For the Hebrews, wisdom is very concrete. It means making good and wise choices in everyday life.

This morning, when we talk about wisdom, we are talking about it the ways the Hebrews did in the Old Testament. It is how we can make good and wise choices in everyday living. Everything today will be extremely practical.

We will build today's message around answers to the question: How can I make wise choices in real life?

1. Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. Proverbs 9:10 (ESV)

If anyone is going to make good choices, if anyone is going to make wise choices, it all begins by having fear of God and knowledge about God. Wisdom begins by acknowledging the existence of God and desiring to know God. That is

only possible by Jesus Christ, who forgives our sins and brings us back into a relationship with God.

Fearing God is not trembling in front of God because he hates us. It is having reverence for God. It is having respect for God. It is having awe of God. That is wisdom. Pretending God doesn't exist. Living as if we came from nothing and will go to nothing and that this life is all that exists is the epitome of foolishness, not wisdom.

Since living as if we are all that exists is foolishness, that means we live in a world filled with fools. I think of the evolution that is taught in our schools. Children are told they came from nothing. They are going to nothing. They are taught that the entire world is a chance occurrence. They are taught that God doesn't exist. That is teaching our children to be foolish. This is what the Bible says about atheists who claim God doesn't exist and that creation is a chance occurrence.

[The fool says in his heart, "There is no God.".... Psalm 14:1 \(ESV\)](#)

Wisdom begins by looking at the world around us and saying that there must be a God. He created things. I need to know him. My life needs to be lived to honor him.

Today anyone who believes God exists and trusts the Bible is considered a fool. The Bible says the opposite is true, wisdom only begins when we acknowledge God's existence and that we must have respect for him. We must live to please him.

Closely tied to the beginning of wisdom and respect for God is that wisdom also involves respect for the Bible. The Bible is the book where God

reveals himself as he truly is. It is the only place where we can find the truth about God. That means wise people don't just revere God, they also have reverence for the Word of God.

...you have exalted above all things your name and your word. Psalm 138:2 (ESV)

I should add that respect for God and respect for God's Word also leads to fear of sin. If we don't fear sin but enjoy sin, it is because we don't fear God. Every holy person and godly person doesn't just fear God but they will also hate sin. Whenever you have a person who tolerates sin in their life it is because they don't have respect for God in their life. Respect for God, fear of sin, and a hunger to do the right thing, even if it is the hard thing, is the sign of a wise person.

Here are a few additional reasons why the fear of God is wise according to the book of Proverbs.

The fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short. Proverbs 10:27 (ESV)

The wicked generally live a short life. Those who fear God generally live longer lives. The choice is yours.

The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life. Proverbs 22:4 (ESV)

A man or woman who has respect for God generally does well in life. They will have riches, honor, and life. Those who insist on rebelling against God, doing their own thing, pursuing atheism and selfishness generally do not end well. That kind of life leads to poverty, shame, and death.

2. A wise person guards their mind.

If the positive side of wisdom begins with fearing God. The negative side of wisdom is that we want to be careful about what we put in our brains. We don't want to pollute our brains with all kinds of dark stuff and evil stuff or we will end up living like fools.

[For as he thinks in his heart, so is he... Proverbs 23:7 \(NKJV\)](#)

The Bible tells us that what we think about in our heart will become the controlling influence that determines the direction of our life. Wise people are very careful about what they put in their minds. I still remember the first and the last time I watched a horror movie. I was a freshman at college and as part of a prank on the freshman, the upperclassmen invited us to a midnight showing of a horror film, but they didn't tell us what we were watching. I was so traumatized I couldn't sleep for the next two days because of all the garbage in my head. Every night, in the shadows, my mind would see a man with a hatchet just waiting to chop off my head. What I allowed in my mind became the controlling influence and determined the way I saw life. If we put garbage into our brains, we will have garbage coming out of our life. This is the way it works. This is why a wise person guards what they put into their mind.

We know this is the way it works with the media. Both social media and traditional media control what we see because they know that if they can get you to see certain things, they will get you to act in certain ways. They are aiming at mind control which leads to life control. This is one of the reasons I always remind us about the importance of filling our minds with good stuff. Reading the Bible is a good influence on your mind. Listening to a sermon or a helpful

podcast is good for your mind. Listening to Christian worship music is a good influence on your brain. So we must guard our hearts. Guard our minds.

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Proverbs 4:23 (ESV)

This is why we need to be very careful about what we watch on YouTube and what we see on the Internet. Wise people are careful about what they read and what they watch. In the past, a few people told me they made a wise choice not to watch the evening news. That is not because they wanted to be ignorant, it is because they found the news made them too upset. They needed to guard their minds so they did not become depressed and grumpy.

The simple inherit folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge. Proverbs 14:18 (ESV)

When Proverbs talks about a simple person, the word “simple” literally means an open door. A simple person can not say, “No.” They give everything full access to their mind. A simple person foolishly reads everything on the Internet. They foolishly look at every video on the Internet. They foolishly believe whatever they see written on the Internet. They are not wise enough to shut stuff out and turn stuff off in order to protect their mind. In fact, a simple person prides themselves on having an open mind while a wise person will see certain thumbnails but close their mind to those things that are unhelpful and unwholesome.

So a spiritually healthy person is a wise person. That begins by fearing God and the Bible. The next step of wisdom is not letting everything and everyone have full access to your mind. A wise person is discerning. Not all things are helpful, wholesome, and good.

3. A wise person chooses their friends carefully.

Just as wise people limit what they put in their mind because they know garbage in the brain will lead to garbage out of their life, a wise person is also careful about whom they call their friends.

My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. Proverbs 1:10 (ESV)

The beginning of the book of Proverbs are the words of a father providing wisdom to his son. The father tells his son that he will meet friends that will encourage him to join them in something sinful, something wrong. The father tells his son that when his friends ask him to join them in doing something evil, he has a responsibility to say, "No." This young man, like all of us, needs to get away from relationships that tear him down and put himself in relationships that build him up in Jesus.

Friendships, especially for young people, play a powerful role in determining the success or failure of their future. We all know young adults raised in good Christian homes that got involved with a bad friend group in high school or college. They went off the rails and their life turned into a disaster. We also know students raised in godly Christian homes who found good friend groups. When they hung out together, those friends strengthened one another in Jesus. They build one another up in Jesus. Proverbs says it this way.

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17 (ESV)

Parents pray for their children to have a solid group of Christian friends. This is why wise people will choose their friends carefully. If you can't find godly friends that build you up, you may need to go without friends until you find godly friends. That is hard. It is hard to be alone on a Friday and Saturday night. While

it is hard to be alone because you can't find godly friends, those hard times are also good times. I guarantee you that you will grow in spiritual maturity and character as soon as you are willing to pay a price to please Jesus instead of your friends.

Let's get back to a father's words of wisdom to his son.

If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood; let us ambush the innocent without reason; like Sheol let us swallow them alive, and whole, like those who go down to the pit; Proverbs 1:11–12 (ESV)

I don't know about this guy's friends. They sound like MS-13 gang members. They are planning to kill somebody and take his stuff. These are not the kind of friends you want in your life.

we shall find all precious goods, we shall fill our houses with plunder; throw in your lot among us; we will all have one purse"— my son, do not walk in the way with them; hold back your foot from their paths, for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood. For in vain is a net spread in the sight of any bird, but these men lie in wait for their own blood; they set an ambush for their own lives. Proverbs 1:13–18 (ESV)

Here we learn an important lesson. Get away from evil friends because their sinful choices will always come back to bite them. If you are with them, you will suffer like them. I used to tell my boys when they wanted to hang around questionable friends that even if they did not do the evil things their friends did, just by associating with them and encouraging them, they would end up suffering with them. Get away from these kinds of people.

If you think young adults plotting the death of their friends does not happen today, this again. I don't know if you are aware of the latest TikTok rage. A group of kids will get together and attack another kid out of the blue. Everybody will kick and hit the person on the ground. In the meantime, the friends of the

gang use their cell phones to record the beating. Afterward, they assemble the video and post it on TikTok to see if they can get enough views to become TikTok famous. This is what recently happened to a young girl in New Jersey who was a freshman. After the beating and the hundred upon hundreds of comments on the video, all filled with hatred for her, she committed suicide. Now the students who took part in the beating and videotape are being prosecuted in association with her death. How would you like that as a 14-year-old and have to live with the realization that you pushed a classmate to such a point of despair that she killed herself? As I followed this story, what I found even more disturbing was to hear the complete outrage of the parents in the community toward the school and the children who took part in this beating. How would you like to spend the next few years living in that community where everybody knows you and everyone is furious about what you did? This is why Proverbs says wise people choose their friends carefully.

Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." 1 Corinthians 15:33 (ESV)

This is one of those verses that is a perfect one to memorize. It is short, sweet, and to the point. If your friends are a train wrecks, don't lie to yourself. If you hang out with them, you will become a train wreck.

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Proverbs 18:24 (ESV)

This is a great verse, but the point of the verse is often lost when it is translated into English. The meaning of the verse is the comparison between the two different Hebrew words for "friends" in this verse.

The ESV translates the first word as companions instead of friends. That is helpful. It is hinting at the difference. The Hebrew word translated as companions in the ESV is *reya*. It means acquaintances. It is talking about superficial friendships. I call these Facebook friends. Social media friends. Selfie friends. If you are pursuing popularity and lots of surface friends, you are probably headed for ruin.

The next word for friends in this verse is the Hebrew word *ahab*. There is an *ahab* who sticks closer than a brother. *Ahab* in Hebrew is a close friend, a loyal friend, a true friend.

This verse tells us that if you pursue popularity and lots of superficial, trivial, surface friendships in life, you are on your way to ruin because you lack accountability. You don't have anyone in your life that can ask you the hard questions and confront you about the uncomfortable issues in your life. Each of us needs people who are close enough to us and love us enough that they can talk to us about things in our life that are sinful or uncomfortable, but we trust them enough to listen.

If you pursue lots of superficial friends who don't know you well enough and care about you enough to speak the truth to you, your life will be ruined. If you are pursuing a smaller group of close godly friends who can speak the truth to you in a loving way, those friends are priceless.

It reminds me of when I was a young man. Cindy and I were married, and I didn't see anything wrong with myself or my habits. Once we were married, Cindy was my *ahab*, the close loving loyal friend I could trust to speak to me the

truth. In a gentle and loving way, she pointed out things in my life that were bad habits. They were rude, manly habits that needed to be improved. I was not seeing them. Thankfully, I have a wife who lovingly and gently pointed them out.

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. Proverbs 13:20 (ESV)

If you want to become a wise person, find wise friends. If you want to become a fool, hang out with foolish friends. The choice is yours.

A wise person learns self-discipline.

He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray. Proverbs 5:23 (ESV)

Learning self-discipline and how to say “No” is incredibly important. If people can’t learn to discipline themselves to avoid certain things, their end will be death. Lack of self-discipline doesn’t just lead to physical death, it leads to relational death. It leads to marital death. It leads to broken marriages and broken hearts.

There are plenty of areas where a wise people will learn to discipline themselves and stay away. Pornography is addictive. That will kill you. Drinking can be addictive. People must learn when to say “No” and push themselves away from the bottle, or the bottle will take over their life.

The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin. Proverbs 5:22 (ESV)

In other words, people who will not exercise self-control to push unhelpful things out of their life will find themselves trapped by their sin. They will find themselves stuck in their sin. How many alcoholics think they will never be trapped by alcohol but now find they can’t get away? How many people who try

drugs think they will become addicted to drugs? Wise people discipline themselves to stay “No.” When we sin, we will suffer. That is always the way it works.

In the book of Proverbs, a big theme is about learning sexual self-discipline and learning to keep our sexuality inside of marriage and inside of marital commitment.

To be clear, God created sex. It was his idea. God created our sex drive. God wants us to enjoy our sexuality. Because our sexuality is so powerful, he wants us to enjoy it in the safety of marriage and in the fidelity and commitment of marriage. Inside of marriage and the safety of a life-long commitment, sexuality bonds a couple and builds them up. When used outside of marriage, sexuality breaks hearts and ruins lives.

[He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself. Proverbs 6:32 \(ESV\)](#)

A man or woman who refused to exercise sexual self-control will destroy themselves. This is why learning sexual self-control is very important.

How do we learn sexual self-control? One important thing to realize is that the Bible describes self-control as a fruit of the Spirit. The closer we walk with Jesus, the more we read our Bible, talk with God in prayer, and are part of a church with godly relationships and friendships in our lives, the more self-control will manifest itself in our lives.

Let me return to Proverbs, where a father talks to his son about the importance of learning sexual self-control.

[Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for](#)

yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress? For a man's ways are before the eyes of the LORD, and he ponders all his paths. The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin. He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray. Proverbs 5:15–23 (ESV)

4. A wise person watches their words.

Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. Proverbs 4:24 (ESV)

Wisdom says that when we speak, it should always be the truth. Deceitful words and lying words are foolish words.

A worthless person, a wicked man, goes about with crooked speech, Proverbs 6:12 (ESV)

The Bible tells us that the way to recognize worthless people and wicked people is if they can't tell the truth. Their words are deceptive. Everything they say is a little off. The story has a slant to it to make you believe what they want you to believe, not objectively understand what happened.

Have you made a promise in your heart that you will not speak deceptive words? That is a great promise to make to yourself. God, help me to live as a wise person. Help me always to speak the truth. When I speak, I don't need to say everything, but I know that what I speak will be truthfully spoken.

The Bible tells us Satan is a liar and the father of lies. The Bible also tells us that God is the truth and can only speak the truth. When we look at our words, are we more like Satan or more like Jesus?

How can we speak the truth with our words? Speaking the truth begins with a decision in our hearts to not lie to ourselves and only rehearse the truth.

But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. Matthew 15:18 (ESV)

If we practice telling the truth in our minds, we are much more likely to speak the truth under pressure with our lips. If we practice self-justification in our minds and shade the story, that is the way we will speak when our mouths open. The problem is that today the truth is so hard to find. People in government and the private sector are skilled and spinning the truth. We see it so much that we think this is what we are to do.

The one who conceals hatred has lying lips, and whoever utters slander is a fool. Proverbs 10:18 (ESV)

With the remaining verses in this section, I want to point out practical pointers on how to be wise with our words. Anyone who speaks against someone, that is slandering someone either behind their back or in front of their face is a fool. Social media is filled with fools who slander people in a written format. That is called libel. All the haters who jump into the comment section to say hateful and hurtful things are complete fools. No progress is made. It is just a continual lobbying of alphabetical grenades that leave broken hearts. A wise person learns to restrain their words. If they can't say something positive or uplifting, the wise thing is to say nothing at all.

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. Ephesians 4:29 (ESV)

After reading this verse, we would tell our boys that our words were to build people up, not tear people down. If you can't say something nice, don't say anything. If that was followed, think how much Internet traffic would be reduced.

Does this mean we can't offer correction to people? No. It means we offer correction to people in a positive way.

When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent. Proverbs 10:19 (ESV)

This one is a verse God drove home in my life. Have you ever found yourself upset and "Gone off?" I think all of us have done that. The problem is when we go off, even if we are going off for the right reason, we create so much damage with our words that we lose the respect of people. This happened to me more than once. A wise person steps away, weighs their words carefully, then speaks their words carefully, even if they are pointed words.

There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. Proverbs 12:18 (ESV)

Are you one of those people that likes to use nasty comments? The perfect zinger comes to mind, and you can't resist using it. The problem is that those zingers used to hurt people leave a trail of body bags. You may be witty. You may be quick, but you will lose the respect of everyone with your hurtful words. Wise people use their words to heal people, not hurt people.

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1 (ESV)

I always use this verse in my premarital counseling classes. Many new couples find this hard to believe, but in marriage, there are occasions when your spouse will become annoying you. They will get under your skin. The person who loves you the most has the potential to hurt you the most. The problem is that when your spouse says something hurtful, it is easy to respond by ratcheting things up and saying an even more hurtful comment to them. As you know, it

doesn't stop there. Your spouse, who is probably having a hormonal moment, will say something even more hurtful to you. It keeps going back and forth like a game of pickle ball where you hurt one another more and more.

People who fight like that are foolish people. A wise person knows that when their spouse says something hurtful and turns the temperature up in the room, it is their responsibility to keep calm, then respond with loving and kind words. That is the way a wise person handles conflict. A fool stirs up conflict.

6. A wise person works hard.

Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man. Proverbs 6:6–11 (ESV)

Ants have nobody leading them. They have nobody threatening them but they work hard. They prepare in the summer. They are self-motivated. They get out of bed. They are not lazy. Proverbs tells us we get to choose our future. If we want to be poor, then be lazy. If we work hard and do a good job, we will float to the top of the pack because hard workers are hard to find. There are far too many people who lack motivation. We are capable of working much harder than most of us realize. Today many people have a low threshold for pain. They don't know how to do hard work. Too many people delight in free time instead of doing their best while at work. A wise person works hard, and hard work will bring you to the top because hard workers are hard to find.

The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road! There is a lion in the streets!" As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed. Proverbs 26:13–14 (ESV)

This is telling us we can identify a sluggard because they always have an excuse for why something is not done. It is usually a lame excuse for why they don't get out of bed and go to work. In this case, they are afraid of a lion in the streets. That is a lame excuse. Lions don't walk through city streets. They stay in the wilderness. They avoid the city.

A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame. Proverbs 10:4-5 (ESV)

This tells us that a wise person doesn't just know how to work hard, but they know how to work even harder in tough times. Being farmers, you know how this works. In harvest season, there is a limited window of opportunity to harvest the crops. Harvest time is not the time you sleep in. It is the time you work extra hard and extra long hours. You can't always live that way, but wise people know there are seasons in life where long hours are the way things work.

I was talking to my son in Ames this week. He manages a knife-sharpening plant. He had just finished an 18-hour day. A lot of extra knives came from the slaughterhouses. The employees went home. He knew the knives needed to be done for the plants for delivery the next morning, so he stayed at work all night. He went home at 4:00 AM, got up the next morning, and went to work. He can't live that way every day, but as a wise person, he knows there are times in life when a job has to get done, and you can't make excuses. You have to work extra hard.

7. A wise person manages their money.

Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine. Proverbs 3:9-10 (ESV)

The first thing for us to know about wisely managing our money is that our money is not our money. It is God's money. We need to honor God by worshipping God with our wealth. It is when we honor God with our wealth that God promises to fulfill our needs and provide even more than our needs.

A wise person worships God financially. A fool refuses to worship God with his wealth because he loves himself and his money more than he loves God. Many people give a tithe of their income to the church, which is ten percent. If you can't afford to start with a tithe to the Lord, give something to God that is regular, proportional, and joyfully given from your heart. Remember wise people give to God and trust lean into God's promise to provide for even more than their needs. Foolish people refuse to worship God with their wealth.

Conclusion

This morning, we looked at how to make choices in life. We learned there are two lenses we need to use, not just one. We must not just ask ourselves if a choice is sinful or acceptable. We need to use a second lens. We must also ask ourselves if a choice is wise or foolish.

I pray that this week, you use that second lens in all areas of your life, from friendships to finances.



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