

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### First Quarter 2015: *Proverbs*

### Lesson 2 “From Ears to Feet”

#### Read for this week’s study

Proverbs 4; 1 Kings 3:9; Matt. 13:44; Proverbs 5; 1 Cor. 10:13; Prov. 6:1–19.

#### Memory Text

“Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left; remove your foot from evil” (Proverbs 4:26, 27, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Hear!
- III. Protect Your Family
- IV. Protect Your Friendship
- V. Protect Your Work
- VI. Protect Yourself
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Zdravko Stefanović

#### FROM PARENT TO CHILD (PROVERBS 2-4)

##### A. Path to Wisdom (2)

1. Some readers have noticed that much of Proverbs’ practical advice makes sporadic mention of God. Does the book’s concern for success appear to be quite secular?
2. In addition to the danger of listening to a gang of evil men, the father warns the son not to listen to the “strange woman.” Through centuries various interpreters have proposed that this woman is a symbol of (1) folly and wickedness, (2) doctrinal heresy (medieval times), (3) foreign gods and philosophies, (4) lust and evil; or that she is another man’s wife. Which of these interpretations do you favor?
3. The strange woman’s speech is smooth and flattering. Her power is not so much in her looks as it is in her tricky words. Why do “simple” persons listen to her and fail to see that her path will lead to death and destruction?

## **B. Walking with God (3)**

1. It is very clear from this passage that wisdom has spiritual qualities. Is it safe to equate the “fear of the Lord” or the “knowledge of the Lord” with one’s deeper cognitive conscience?
2. Is it unavoidable that an increase in our knowledge should come at the expense of humility and faith in God? Why do so many pious people appear to be anti-intellectual?
3. Identify the metaphors used in the text that express our constant need to stay close to divine instruction and to hold it permanently in memory.
4. Verse 17 is recited in the synagogues when the Torah scroll is returned to the Ark. Thus the words “She is a tree of life ...” are applied to the Torah. Can you think of any other interpretations of the expression “a tree of life” that was present with God at the creation of the world?
5. The last part of chapter 3 presents five admonitions (“do not”) and four aphorisms (“but”) contrasting the ways of wisdom and folly. Are these two methods of teaching equally persuasive or is the one more effective than the other?

## **C. Hug wisdom, hate evil! (4)**

1. Try to picture little Solomon sitting in Bathsheba’s lap and listening to his father David’s instruction: “Get wisdom, love it, hug it!”
2. Many people think that it is enough to obey wisdom/God. But the author is implying here that obedience is not enough. What goes beyond obedience?
3. The heart should be the most guarded part of one’s body according to 4:23. Aren’t there other parts of our body that seem more likely to succumb to sin?

### **Thoughts from Graham Maxwell**

Don’t you think too, that this book suggests that the people who lived in the days of the Kings and the Chronicles were not that ill-informed? Sometimes when we read those books they seem to be misbehaving so seriously! But it wasn’t that they were not well-informed. The principles taught in the Proverbs were widely disseminated at that time. More than that, before they went into Babylonian captivity they had listened to most of the prophets that we’re yet to read. They prophesied back in those days with some of the clearest pictures of God you’ll find anywhere in Scripture, so they were not so ignorant. And there’s a warning in this. One can be very well-informed and still go astray. Solomon was marvelously well-informed. He knew God very well. God blessed him. He was the wisest man who ever lived, and yet he was still free. He still collapsed. Well, think of Lucifer. Did anybody know God better? He served right in His presence. He went out as a light-bearer. He was the clearest exponent of the purposes of God, Ellen White says. And yet look what happened to him. Solomon came back. Lucifer never will. So we might know God very well tonight, January 18, 1982. We might even be among the

clearest exponents of the truth about God, as Lucifer was, but we are still free, and we can leave Him. And we can become His worst enemy.

So knowledge guarantees nothing except an opportunity to make an intelligent decision about God. It's hard to do that when we're ignorant. . . . But isn't there quite a serious warning in this? Solomon, wise enough to write the Proverbs, was yet free and capable of making such a fool of himself. God's signal blessing does not take away our freedom. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Proverbs*, recorded 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

\*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/29MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/30MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

In the beguiling warmth of spring each year, when a certain peach tree in the center of the campus began to bloom, friendships would blossom around the school, and the faculty would redouble their efforts to protect the academic interests of the students in their care.

When it appeared that a young man was in danger of making a premature or ill-advised commitment, the much-revered dean of women would invite him into her office for some earnest consultation.

"Young man," she would begin with kind solemnity, "you really have not had much opportunity to become well acquainted with this young woman." (Under the regulations, this was unavoidably the truth!)

"Don't you think common sense suggests that you should come to know her much better before making a final decision? Perhaps you could visit her at home next summer, see how she treats her parents and how she offers to help around the house." (As I said, things were quite old-fashioned in those days!)

"I don't need to know her any better," the student might politely demur. "I've even prayed about the matter, and I have a warm feeling of conviction that she's the one God wants me to choose as my wife."

"We know, young man, do we not, that it isn't safe just to trust one's feelings—especially at this time of the year. You can never be too careful in choosing the person with whom you will spend the rest of your life."

"But didn't you tell us, dean, in chapel the other day, that when it comes to deciding about giving our hearts to God, we should not be so doubting and ask so many questions, the way we do in science or history? Are you telling me that when it comes to choosing a life companion, we cannot investigate too thoroughly? But when it comes to choosing the God with whom we

shall spend eternity, we can safely trust our hearts instead of our heads?" {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 57-58. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter5.html>

But after Paul met Jesus on the Damascus road, he began to take a closer look at the Commandments. He heard that Jesus had taught that mere external conformity to those rules was not what God wanted. That's the kind of obedience you get from a servant. God hopes we will see that there is nothing arbitrary about the Commandments. They describe the behavior of loving, friendly, trustworthy people, who not only don't murder—they don't hate. They not only don't commit adultery—they don't even want to.

Paul must have recognized that Moses had taught this long before. When Moses said that the Israelites should love their neighbors as themselves, he added, "You shall not hate in your heart . . . or bear a grudge." (See Leviticus 19:17)

Paul's attention was drawn especially to the tenth Commandment. (Some Christians divide the Commandment about not coveting into 9 and 10.) In the light of what Moses and Jesus had taught, he realized that "You shall not covet" includes not even *wanting* to do something that is wrong.

As the meaning of that commandment dawned on Paul, it made him angry, he confessed. He had tried so hard. At times he had even wanted to break one of the Ten, but he had successfully resisted the temptation. Didn't he deserve credit for not giving in? And shouldn't he get extra credit, he may have thought, for being still in the prime of life and resisting stronger urges than other people?

I once had a college teacher who was incredibly energetic. He was also an inspiring Christian gentleman. But he was plagued with an explosive temper, which sometimes got out of control. "You must remember," he explained to some of us students one day, "I have probably resisted more temptation to lose my temper than any of you have ever felt!" He made me think of Paul.

But later, Paul's irritation at the command not to covet turned into agreement and admiration. To obey number ten would be the key to obeying all the others. To come to the place where he didn't even want to sin would mean receiving what David had asked for, a new heart and a right spirit.

No longer was Paul concerned about credit. Why should he be rewarded for doing something that was so beneficial to himself? And as far as the constant conflict was concerned, God assured him that he wasn't condemned for struggling. (See Romans 8:1) {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 154-155. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter11.html>

Lou: There's another phrase in here that raises questions many times. I've wondered about this myself. When we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," what are we really praying? Does that imply, have you ever wondered about this, "God, be careful; please don't get me into temptation?" That God would really want to do that?

Graham: One thing that helps is the word "temptation" means trial or testing. Some versions have, "Lead us not into hard testing." The idea that God would tempt is unthinkable, as our Heavenly Father. Remember James deals with this. That when we're tempted, don't even blame the devil. He says, "You are led away by your own lusts and enticements." Certainly don't blame God. He wouldn't do any such thing. So "Lead us not into temptation" cannot mean, "Please, don't You tempt us." But "Lead us not into testing," Jesus prayed that in Gethsemane. He said, "Remove this cup from Me, if possible." I don't think we should pray, "Lord, I'm ready for it. Bring on the trials; I feel very strong today." I believe we should say, "Lord, in all humility, I mean bring me not into trial; nevertheless, Thy will be done."

I think, "Lead us not into testing" must be coupled with, "Nevertheless, Thy will be done." Jesus did it in Gethsemane, and we do it in the Lord's Prayer. You know, the Lord's Prayer and the prayer in Gethsemane are very similar in a number of respects. "Lead us not into testing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, Thy will be done." So I think the prayer in Gethsemane helps us to understand the Lord's Prayer. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, session 15 with Lou Venden, "Talking To God as a Friend" recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/15MMCAG>*

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

God's promise is, "Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13. {SC 43.1}

The whole heart must be yielded to God, or the change can never be wrought in us by which we are to be restored to His likeness. By nature we are alienated from God. The Holy Spirit describes our condition in such words as these: "Dead in trespasses and sins;" "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint;" "no soundness in it." We are held fast in the snare of Satan, "taken captive by him at his will." Ephesians 2:1; Isaiah 1:5, 6; 2 Timothy 2:26. God desires to heal us, to set us free. But since this requires an entire transformation, a renewing of our whole nature, we must yield ourselves wholly to Him. {SC 43.2}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. "Come now, and let us reason together" is the Creator's invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly

and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

God does not control our minds without our consent; but every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they may find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart's unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who consent to enter into covenant with God are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature. {MH 93.1}

Marvelous will be the transformation wrought in him who by faith opens the door of the heart to the Saviour. {MH 93.3}

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Christ. "The truth shall make you free;" and Christ is the truth. Sin can triumph only by enfeebling the mind, and destroying the liberty of the soul. Subjection to God is restoration to one's self,—to the true glory and dignity of man. The divine law, to which we are brought into subjection, is "the law of liberty." James 2:12. {DA 466.5}

God has given us the power of choice; it is ours to exercise. We cannot change our hearts, we cannot control our thoughts, our impulses, our affections. We cannot make ourselves pure, fit for God's service. But we can choose to serve God, we can give Him our will; then He will work in us to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus our whole nature will be brought under the control of Christ. {MH 176.2}

Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in the life. By yielding up the will to Christ, we ally ourselves with divine power. We receive strength from above to hold us steadfast. A pure and noble life, a life of victory over appetite and lust, is possible to

everyone who will unite his weak, wavering human will to the omnipotent, unwavering will of God. {MH 176.3}

God does not compel men to give up their unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which they will accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture. Had the Jews laid by their prejudice and compared written prophecy with the facts characterizing the life of Jesus, they would have perceived a beautiful harmony between the prophecies and their fulfillment in the life and ministry of the lowly Galilean. {DA 458.3}

The will is the governing power in the nature of man. If the will is set right, all the rest of the being will come under its sway. The will is not the taste or the inclination, but it is the choice, the deciding power, the kingly power, which works in the children of men unto obedience to God or to disobedience. {Te 113.1}

You will be in constant peril until you understand the true force of the will. You may believe and promise all things, but your promises and your faith are of no account until you put your will on the right side. If you will fight the fight of faith with your will power, there is no doubt that you will conquer. {Te 113.2}

Your part is to put your will on the side of Christ. When you yield your will to His, He immediately takes possession of you, and works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. Your nature is brought under the control of His Spirit. Even your thoughts are subject to Him. If you cannot control your impulses, your emotions, as you may desire, you can control the will, and thus an entire change will be wrought in your life. When you yield up your will to Christ, your life is hid with Christ in God. It is allied to the power which is above all principalities and powers. You have a strength from God that holds you fast to His strength; and a new life, even the life of faith, is possible to you. {Te 113.3}

You can never be successful in elevating yourself, unless your will is on the side of Christ, co-operating with the Spirit of God. Do not feel that you cannot; but say, "I can, I will." And God has pledged His Holy Spirit to help you in every decided effort. {Te 113.4}

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18. {SC 72.1}

The Lord will not compel men to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God; He sets before the human agent good and evil, and makes plain what will be the sure result of following one course or the other. Christ invites us, saying, "Follow Me." But we are never forced to walk in His footsteps. If we do walk in His footsteps, it is the result of deliberate choice. As we see the life and character of Christ, strong desire is awakened to be like Him in character; and we follow on to know the Lord, and to know His goings forth are prepared as the morning. We then begin to realize that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—R. & H., March 31, 1896. {CS 138.1}

Christ came to teach the human family the way of salvation, and He made this way so plain that a little child can walk in it. He bids His disciples follow on to know the Lord; and as they daily follow His guidance, they learn that His going forth is prepared as the morning. {MYP 15.2}

You have watched the rising sun, and the gradual break of day over earth and sky. Little by little the dawn increases, till the sun appears; then the light grows constantly stronger and clearer until the full glory of noontide is reached. This is a beautiful illustration of what God desires to do for His children in perfecting their Christian experience. As we walk day by day in the light He sends us, in willing obedience to all His requirements, our experience grows and broadens until we reach the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. {MYP 15.3}

The voice and tongue are gifts from God, and if rightly used, they are a power for God. Words mean very much. They may express love, devotion, praise, melody to God, or hatred and revenge. Words reveal the sentiments of the heart. They may be a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. The tongue is a world of blessing, or a world of iniquity (MS 40, 1896). {3BC 1159.2}

Some are seen to come forth from their daily communion with God clothed with the meekness of Christ. Their words are not like a desolating hail, crushing everything before it; they come forth sweetly from their lips. They scatter seeds of love and kindness all along their path, and that all unconsciously, because Christ lives in their heart. Their influence is felt more than it is seen. {SD 180.6}

Kind, tender, compassionate words will flow from sanctified hearts and lips. {SD 180.7}