

Joke: A 70 year old retired Military officer had one hobby - he loved to fish.

He was sitting in his boat one day when he heard a voice say, 'Pick me up.' he looked around and couldn't see anyone.

He thought he was dreaming when he heard the voice say again, "Pick me up."

He looked in the water and there, floating on the top, was a frog.

The retired officer said, 'Are you talking to me?'

The frog said, 'Yes, I'm talking to you. Pick me up, then kiss me; and I'll turn into the most beautiful woman you have ever seen. I'll make sure that all your friends are envious and jealous, because I will be your bride!'

The retired officer looked at the frog for a short time, reached over, picked it up carefully and placed it in his shirt pocket.

The frog said, 'What, are you nuts? Didn't you hear what I said?' I said, 'Kiss me, and I will be your beautiful bride.'

He opened his pocket, looked at the frog and said

'Nah. At my age, I'd rather have a talking frog.'

Week 2 - Making a Course Correction - Proverbs 27:12

Last week we started this series taken out of Proverbs based on two books by Andy Stanley one, The Principle of the Path: How to get from where you are to where you want to be. And secondly,

Better Decisions, fewer regrets 5 questions to help you determine your next move. I mentioned that there is a principle and that principle was that your direction determines your destination.

We went a little further and said it really doesn't matter what you hoped would happen for you, or what you wanted to have happen to you—Your direction, not your intention, determines your destination.

It doesn't matter how smart, good-looking, or rich you are, if you get on 75 going north, you will eventually end up on the Mackinaw Bridge.

The principle isn't rocket science; it isn't brain surgery. We all know this when it comes to geography, but for some reason, when it comes to other areas of life, like relationships, finances, morality, eating habits, exercise, or developing skills that make us more competent and valuable, we often walk one way in hopes to wind up somewhere in all together different way.

Your direction, not your intention, not your hopes, not your dreams, determines your destination. This is the hinge on which everything we're going to learn today swings.

We'll build on this in a few minutes, but before we go there, let me just give some general information about the Scriptures, the Old Testament books specifically.

The first 17 books of the Old Testament are historical books. They tell the history of the people of Israel and God's preparation for the coming of his Son.

The next 5 books are poetic books. They teach us the wisdom of Israel.

Job answers the question, “Why is there so much pain in this life, and how do I deal with it?”

Psalms point heavenward and teach us how to walk with God.

Proverbs are aimed earthward and teach us to walk with God and people.

Ecclesiastes is a commentary on the nature of life.

And Song of Songs is an ode to romantic love.

The final 17 books of the Old Testament are the prophetic books.

With that said let’s begin looking looking Into Proverbs 1

Solomon, the primary author of Proverbs, tells us why Proverbs was written, he says. . .

Proverbs 1:2–4 (NIV): for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; 3 for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair; 4 for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young—

That’s awesome. Who doesn’t want all that? I sure do. . .

God oversaw the composition of this book we call Proverbs so that we could become *wise*, so that we would know how to live life well. How to use what we know in the best way possible.

And in this section, which is known as the Prologue to the book of Proverbs, a word appears twice that we don’t use very often. It’s a word that if you can master the skill it implies, will help life work much better for you.

Look at verses 3 and 4 once more and see if you can pick it out.

Proverbs 1:3–4 (NIV): for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair; 4 for giving prudence to those who are simple, knowledge and discretion to the young—

The word is “Prudent” or it’s adjectival form, “prudence.”

To be prudent means “to know what to do,” “to exercise good judgment,” or “having common sense.”

Prudent =

Knowing what to do._

Exercising good judgment.

Having common sense.

We don’t use that word prudent very much, but the book of Proverbs uses it plenty. In fact, Solomon compares and contrasts prudent people with a second kind of people, “simple people.”

I mentioned last week what simple people represent here in Proverbs remember what that was?

The term simple is from the Hebrew word Peti meaning young, naive, or a person lacking common sense.

Whatever you are, you don’t want to be a simple person.

Proverbs 12:16 (NIV): Fools show their annoyance at once, but the prudent overlook an insult.

What does that even mean?

Basically, it means The simple person let's their emotions get the best of them. They get mad, they spout off and complain when things don't go their way, but the prudent ones know how to control themselves, they stay calm under similar circumstances.

Here's another one:

Proverbs 14:15 (NIV): The simple believe anything, but the prudent give thought to their steps.

Simple people get fooled easily. Prudent people gives thought to the circumstances.

Can you imagine if we mastered prudence?

One more:

Proverbs 22:3 (NIV): The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty.

Say that one out loud with me.

Now look at this:

Proverbs 27:12 (NIV): The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty.

Sound familiar?

It's the exact same proverb, just recorded in two different places. Why would God do that? Why would this proverb be recorded twice?

Here's what I think. God put Proverbs in the Bible to make us smarter at living life. God put this Proverb in the Bible twice because he thinks it's doubly important that we learn its lesson.

Simple people need to learn lessons the hard way, while prudent people just need a word. So let me give you some words today about prudence. You ready, they are:

The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty.

And that is what I want to share today.

Last week we learned that our path is of paramount importance, and if it is then the logical question is,

How do you choose the right path?

How do you figure out what path you should be on? Or, in some cases, how do you figure out what path to get off of?

This proverb is telling us ...

The primary difference between the prudent and the simple is not what they see but how they respond to what they see.

The prudent sees the danger and takes refuge. The simple sees danger and keep going. Keeps doing what they have always done.

Both of them see danger. One responds by changing course, the other keeps going and hopes that the danger will never arrive.

Maybe you've heard that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results.

It's like the ostrich who buries his head in the sand: "If I can't see it, it can't see me. If I ignore what I know is out there, it can't hurt me."

You can see why Solomon calls people like this "simple."

So how do you choose the right path?

1. Like the prudent you make course corrections.

If your driving down the wrong road. Knowing where you want to end up, but also knowing that the road your on won't get you there. You make the correction to get headed the right way. You don't keep driving down the wrong roadway. The simple might, but your more prudent than that.

It's a little more complicated than that in life. I get that.

But part of choosing the right path is getting off the wrong path. Saying, "This behavior, this habit. . .this relationship, this. . .you name it, is leading me somewhere that's going to hurt, it's going somewhere I don't want to end up, so I'm going to get off of this path and get on a better one."

Nathaniel Branden said, "the first step toward change is awareness. The second step is acceptance."

Proverbs 16:9 (NIV): 9 In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.

Proverbs 3:6 (NIV): 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight

I love this one check it out. . .

Isaiah 30:21 (NIV): Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.”

But, unlike the prudent, who make the course correction

2. The simple keep right on going.

- When a prudent person senses that a relationship is moving in an unhealthy direction, they do something. The simple keep going.
- When a prudent person sees trouble on their financial horizon, they do something. The simple keep spending.
- When a prudent person realizes that God is the most important person in the universe, and their relationship with Him isn’t growing, they do something about it. The simple keep doing whatever they were doing that took their time away from God.

Just so we’re clear, the second half of the proverb says, “the simple keep going and pay the penalty.”

The penalty for what? – For refusing to act on what they see. They pay the penalty because they see no connection between the choices of today and the experiences of tomorrow. They overlook the fact that every path has a destination.

In Oct. of 2009 David Letterman announced that he had been misbehaving with certain female members of his staff. USA Today quoted him as saying, “I’m terribly sorry that I put the staff in that position. Inadvertently, I just wasn’t thinking ahead.”

He said, “My wife has been horribly hurt by my behavior, and when something happens like that, you try to fix it? . . . Let me tell you, folks, I’ve got my work cut out for me.”

Here's the really sad part about not making course corrections: not only does the simple person himself pay a penalty, but often a lot of people around him pay a penalty too.

In David's Letterman's case it was His wife, his children, and his co-workers.

A little more recent. The fight that happened in the tunnel after the Michigan- Michigan State game. (Talk about who it affects).

Let me give you a scenario which describes how the simple react to problems.

"Oh, you know, that's probably going to be a problem. I really ought to. . ."

"Are you going to do something about it?"

"No. Probably not."

"But don't you see?..."

"Yeah."

"Shouldn't you do something about it?"

"Yeah, I should. You're right. I should."

"What are you going to do?"

"Nothing. Just keep going I hope things will change."

"Well, don't you see. .. they probably won't."

“Yeah, I probably should stop doing that. I should. not arguing with you about that.”

“What are you going to do?”

“Same old thing ai think”

“What, really?”

“Yeah, I’m going to keep going. . .and when I get there, it’s just going to work out. Something will happen I’m sure of it, or I’ll think of something when I get there.”

“Really?”

“Yeah.”

“Don’t you think. . .”

“Yeah. But I’m not going to do that.”

See, the simple thinks I’m going to drive toward the wall, but when I get there, the wall is going to miraculously disappear.

The simple just. . .like the energizer bunny keep. . .going. . .and going. . .and going

And the truth is if you’re 30 years old, 50 years old, or 15 years old, and you see a problem in the future because of your path, you need to get off that path.

A parent notices that their son or daughter tends to talk back and lose their temper. As they grow a little older, they do the same thing to their teacher or coach. The parent thinks, “When they grow up, this could be a problem.”

But figuring out how to positively and encouragingly teach their child how to act and take direction is too painful. So they don't do anything. They hope that by luck and their little hothead will grow out of his or her temper and hissy fits. But that child grows up to go from job to job to job because he or she can't control their mouth, so they keep getting fired.

A 20-something knows that he's gaining a little weight, but hey, that's what happens in your 20's, isn't it? Your metabolism slows down, but your appetite doesn't. A friend says, "When you're 40, this could be a problem."

"I know." And when they're 40, it is a problem. At 46, after their first coronary, they decide to figure out how to exercise and eat right. But by then, some damage has already been done.

Those scenarios could go on for days. . .

So how do you choose the right path? Here's the key. Are you ready for this?

3. Like the Prudent person, you know that it's not what they see that makes a difference, it's what they do.

So they *do* things. They make course corrections.

How do you make a course correction?

1. You do something.

You take action. You step off a path and get on another one.

I know that's easier said than done. It's difficult because we are creatures of habit, creatures of momentum. We naturally continue to do what we're used to doing. If we're used to overeating,

overeating feels natural to us. If we're used to losing our temper, losing our temper is natural to us. If we're used to online chat rooms or indiscrete pictures, that's what we're used to.

Momentum carries us in the same direction, so to change directions means. . .

2. You almost always give up something.

Here's an issue to what we're saying: When you see danger, it almost always requires sacrifice, which is why we don't do it.

And this is where it gets ironic. When prudent people act, they can look foolish. They do things that others aren't doing; they swim against the stream. They act as if then is now and change course before the wall ever hits them or they ever hit the wall.

And when you behave prudently,

3. You might suffer some embarrassment.

Why? Because nobody else is doing it.

And the last point I want to make is this, and this is the good news.

4. You (someday) will breathe a sigh of relief.

You know what's kind of funny about this proverb? It's the exact story mom told us about when we were kids. Did your momma ever read you the story of The Three Little Pigs?

You remember the story: One builds his house out of straw; one builds his house out of sticks. When the big bad wolf comes along, he huffs, and he puffs, and he blows their houses down.

Solomon would call those two “simple pigs.”

The third little pig was a prudent pig. He built a house out of bricks. Why? Because he saw danger coming and built a refuge!

Church, we all know that life is going to bring us challenges, don't we? Yet we are often surprised by them. When we recover from this economic downturn, there will be some up years, but eventually, there will be another downturn. Prudent people plan for it.

If you're married, some type of challenge will stretch and strain your relationship at some point. Prudent people know that, so they don't take their marriages for granted. They work on them in the good times so they have more strength to weather the bad times.

Maybe if your like me, I don't want to hit any more walls.

And so I may not be able to monitor every aspect of my life, but the top five areas I need to monitor are the:

1. Spiritual
2. Relational
3. Moral
4. Physical
5. Financial.

I think they're in that order too. The most important is God.

Imagine, church, if all of us in this room loved God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, like the Bible says He wants us to?

Imagine how great a place this would be as we were becoming more and more like God in character. Our church would be a little reflection of heaven – which we should be and in some ways are.

If we loved God enough, we'd actually spill our influence over into the community, which we're doing better and better every year.

Imagine if your reputation, your morals, and what people thought of you was exactly what you'd like them to think of you?

Someone once said, "My goal in life is to become the man my dog thinks I am." Imagine if we were those men and women.

Just go down this list. Imagine if we hit no more walls in any of these areas. That would be the good life, wouldn't it?

Church, let's not waste another minute on a path that leads somewhere you don't want to go. Let's take some time this week to reflect and redirect. To make some course corrections.

It is our direction, not our intentions that will determine our destination.

The prudent see danger and take refuge. They get off the wrong path and get on the right path. They make course corrections. They don't just think about it or worry about it—they do it.

So take some steps this week in preparation for next week. Next time we're together I'll help you to see why sometimes we have a hard time seeing what the right path really is. This is a really important part of our series.

Read from the book of Proverbs. Remember 31 chapters read one a day and it gets you through those 31 day months.

If need be, make some sort of course correction in your life. Ask Holy Spirit where that might be.