



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church
September 14, 2021
DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces



Source: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

Today's Inspiration in one sentence

“Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding...”

(Proverbs 3:13)

Did You Know?

- We learned before, that scholars date the book of **Proverbs** for primarily during Solomon's reign 970-930 BC; however, some important parts were compiled and edited 715-686 BC, at the time of king Hezekiah. The authors of this collection are recognized as King Solomon and other wise men.

- Our reading for today is part of the so called “*introductory discourses*” in Chapters 1-9.

- The key feature in these chapters is the personification of both wisdom and folly as women, each of whom – by appeals and warnings on the part of Lady Wisdom, by enticements on the part of Lady Folly – seeks to persuade “simple” youths to follow her ways. These discourses are strikingly organized. Beginning (1:8-33) and ending (chs. 8-9) with direct enticements and appeals, the main body of the discourses is made up of two nicely balanced sections, one devoted to the commendation of wisdom (chs. 2-4) and the other to warnings against folly (chs. 5-7)

(The NIV Study Bible; Proverbs)

Personal Insight

The Our Daily Bread devotion that I picked for today corresponds well with this past Sunday's message. Lady Wisdom pleads with people to listen to her in order to **“live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.”** (Proverbs 1:33)

The main purpose of the Proverbs was to teach “simple” youths, who have no life experience and can easily ‘burn themselves’ with foolish decisions. But isn't it true with all of us? Sometimes, we adults, who should know better can fall into the trap of the enticements of “Lady Folly”.

In my own experience, to avoid bad decisions, which lead to disaster and calamity, we need to cling to the guidance of our Creator God. Drawing a parallel with Jesus' advice: **“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit...”** (John 15:4-5)

What a blessing that we have the option to abide with the Source of Wisdom, which will also lead us to joy, in this life and beyond!

Grace and Peace to You All,

Rev. Maria



From Wisdom to Joy

[Wisdom] will guide you down delightful paths.

Proverbs 3:17 NLT

READ Proverbs 3:13–18

The phone rang and I picked it up without delay. Calling was the oldest member of our church family—a vibrant, hard-working woman who was nearly one hundred years old. Putting the final touches on her latest book, she asked me some writing questions to help her cross the finish line. As always, however, I soon was asking her questions—about life, work, love, family. Her many lessons from a long life sparkled with wisdom. She told me, “Pace yourself.” And soon we were laughing about times she’d forgotten to do that—her wonderful stories all seasoned with true joy.

Wisdom leads to joy, the Bible teaches. “Joyful is the person who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding” (Proverbs 3:13 NLT). We find that this path—from wisdom to joy—is a biblical virtue, indeed. “For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy” (Proverbs 2:10 NLT). “God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those who please him” (Ecclesiastes 2:26 NLT). Wisdom “will guide you down delightful paths,” adds Proverbs 3:17 (NLT).

Reflecting on the matters of life, author C. S. Lewis declared that “joy is the serious business of heaven.” The path there, however, is paved with wisdom. My church friend, who lived to be 107, would agree. She walked a wise, joyful pace to the King. – By **Patricia Raybon**

REFLECT & PRAY

When I might take a rocky road, loving God, please point me back to Your path of wisdom and joy. Amen.

What paths have you taken in trying to find joy? How can wisdom lead you to joy?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

The book of Proverbs begins, “The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel” (Proverbs 1:1). Solomon is noted throughout the Scriptures as a man of great wisdom. Jesus Himself noted Solomon’s wisdom (Matthew 12:42). Two things, however, need to be understood about this wisdom. First, the wisdom of Solomon wasn’t Solomon’s—it was given to him by God in response to the king’s prayer (1 Kings 3:5–13). James reminds us that this same wisdom is available to all of us and that God will grant our requests (James 1:5). Second, this wisdom can be abandoned—as Solomon clearly did. His life of wisdom became the ultimate example of foolishness as he turned from God to follow idols (1 Kings 11:4). As James 3:13–18 reminds us, the wisdom we choose to live by is foundational to our walk of faith. – By **Bill Crowder**

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