

06.16.24

Proverbs

Chapter 2 - Where Your Treasure Is Living Right (vs. 20-22)

Proverbs 2:20-22: So you will walk in the way of good men
And keep to the paths of the righteous.

For the upright will live in the land
And the blameless will remain in it;

But the wicked will be cut off from the land
And the treacherous will be uprooted from it.

We come to this chapter, and we begin to realize that there are two ways that we can go. There are paths that we find ourselves taking. There is the good way and there is the bad way. There are influences that draw us and the question is what is it that's drawing you? Who are you listening to? Within this setting, it's as a father talking to a son and saying to the son, "Choose the good way." But he goes beyond that because he knows that the affections will guide the son. What he loves, what he longs for will begin to influence him in the decisions that he makes. Therefore, it will take him down a particular path. The best way that he can describe this is in the setting of that which will be, in the future, one of the greatest influences of his life, and that's a woman. So, I think that on some occasions people read in Scripture and they see the harlot being used, and you need to understand as well in the Book of Proverbs that wisdom is a woman as well within the text. It's conveying that there are these influences, and they are strong influences that are beckoning, but the deciding factor is really what you love. Where is your treasure? You see that in the beginning of Chapter 2, that if you really love the word of God, that you'll search for it like a hidden treasure. The reason I bring this up is, I think it's easy for us to read certain passages of Scripture, especially oftentimes when people go into the Old Testament, and they become judgmental in the sense that "Well, Scriptures being misogynistic or chauvinistic in the sense of It just hates women." And nothing could be further from the truth. First of all, that's kind of a foolish and reckless statement to make that you are actually judging Scripture, but the second thing is that God would be unfair or unjust in anything that He

does would be ludicrous. Nevertheless, I think it's important for us to understand what the woman represents in the text, and it's interesting that really, we understand that Solomon is the one that has given this advice. Scripture conveys to the fact that this is the wisest man that walked the face of the earth at that particular time, and probably of all times. Yet, when you go to 1 Kings 11, you realize that it was the women in his life that turned his heart away from what he knew to be right. So, it's a natural thing that Solomon's going to be using this as a metaphor for the things of the world that draw us.

Just to set this stage as a preface, if you look with me in Revelation 18, it ultimately culminates in the city of Babylon. Once again, Babylon, being referred to as the great harlot that really beckons us. We understand that it's not dealing specifically with a woman, but it gives that persona so that it might describe that which is alluring to man.

If you look with me in Revelation 18, there is a cry against Babylon in verse 2,

“... with a mighty voice, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.”

(Revelation 18:3) “For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.”

In other words, what is it that she's drawing by? And the answer is, wealth. It's promising wealth. The world is promising wealth.

This is why you go to a passage like 1 John 2:15, and it actually uses the word “love,” “love not the world.”

The same thing is true in James 4:4, where God refers to your friendship with the world as an adulterous act, but the point is that the things of the world are beckoning us as powerfully as a woman would influence us.

It then begins to describe in Revelation 18:9,

“And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning,

(Revelation 18:10) standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’

(Revelation 18:11) “And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more—

(Revelation 18:12) cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones..."

So, obviously, we're not dealing with a specific one. The same thing is true in the book of Proverbs, that, though it will mention the harlot that it's beckoning, it is that picture of the things of the earth that are beckoning. So, don't listen to those things that are so easily that would so easily influence you.

So, as you come to this passage, it is clear that we're dealing with these separate paths, and when you look with me in Proverbs 3, once again, you see this picture of wisdom; wisdom being actually referred to as a "she" that also has her beauty; beauty of virtue, beauty of fidelity, and all of these things that wisdom promises.

If you look with me in Proverbs 3:13, it reads this way,

"How blessed is the man who finds wisdom
And the man who gains understanding.

(Proverbs 3:14) For her profit is better than the profit of silver
And her gain better than fine gold.

(Proverbs 3:15) She is more precious than jewels;
And nothing you desire compares with her.

(Proverbs 3:16) Long life is in her right hand;
In her left hand are riches and honor.

(Proverbs 3:17) Her ways are pleasant ways
And all her paths are peace."

Those Scriptures are conveying that there is a path that we can take that will be a good path.

In fact, if you back up into chapter 2, he actually describes this, that if in fact you'll long for the right things, you'll be on the right path.

(Proverbs 2:9) "Then you will discern righteousness and justice
And equity and every good course."

Because the course that you begin to take then begins to delegate even the decisions that you make. As you find yourself on a particular path, the things of that path begin to lure and entrap you even more. If there are good things, it's a wonderful thing that God has in store for you.

So, as you go on, you realize in verse 15 that there is an evil way whose path is crooked. So, once again, there is this straight path, and this crooked path that we have.

Ultimately, as we looked at last week in verse 19, the path of evil will actually keep you from going into the path of life. So, now he actually shows that discernment between the path of death and the path of life. So, you have a decision, which path are you going to go down? Both paths obviously have their allurements but the obvious choice is clear.

We now pick up in verse 20, which emphasizes, as we emphasized last week, the allurement of the bad path; we begin to see this path that is good. It is important for me to clarify something within this first verse, as we start off in Proverbs 2:20, it seems to infer that you follow good men as they're walking down a path, and I would say that's sort of true. However, it's important to note if you read with me in verse 20,

“So you will walk in the way of good men...”

If you just kind of mark in your Bibles, the word “men” is actually not in the text. The point of the matter is, that though clearly good men ought to be sought, and you ought to have good company, as Scripture will say over and over again; as Jesus was questioned and one came up to Him and said, “Good teacher.” He responds, “Why do you call Me good? There's only one good and that's God.” So, the point of the matter is that, well, let Ecclesiastes say it better.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 reads this way,

“Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.”

That's pretty clarified. So, is there a good man? Well, there are men that are on the good path and Scripture says that we ought to associate with those individuals. In fact, the opposite is telling us as well that we should avoid bad company. 1 Corinthians 15:33, we understand that bad company corrupts good morals, which would also convey that the good company would actually encourage good morals. So, it's not as much that it's not saying that you shouldn't follow good men, but the emphasis is the path that they're taking. I would say this, as long as men are following the good path, follow them, but once they stop on the good path, don't follow them. This is one of the confusing things, because man oftentimes finds himself aligning with men rather than with the truth. The Scripture says, “Look, I'm a companion of all those who fear God and keep His commandments.” Which means at the point that the person isn't fearing God and keeping His commandments, don't follow him. So, I just want to clarify that as we come into the passage because as it begins to read, there would be a tendency to think that the emphasis is on following the men and certainly not on God.

One of the most encouraging passages dealing with following men of integrity is mentioned in Psalm 15. The way that it describes them is, “men who walk with integrity; men who walk and work the work of righteousness.” It goes on and describes the people who speak truth, he doesn't slander, he doesn't do evil; he honors those who fear God, he'll literally swear by his

own hurt. So, the point of the matter is, what are you looking for when you're looking for good company? Those kinds of people. That influence will be that which helps you in your path. However, the emphasis is the path that is good.

If you look with me, it reads this way in verse 20,

“So you will walk in the way of good...”

It's telling us that there is a way that leads you to a place of benefit. We're actually going to emphasize this particular word as we go into the text, but the word that is used, “*ṭôb*” in the Hebrew, is very general and broad in many respects, but always broad in a good sense, and it is very inclusive in so many different things. If I were to describe it, it would be that which is right, that which is proper, that which is virtuous, that which is pleasing as well, and that which is surprisingly prosperous; that which will bring you happiness. So, you can hear all the sense of what this word is bringing. It is that which is going to be beneficial. You can go the beneficial way; the way that will be the most benefit to you. Now, let me emphasize this point that in understanding this, it is perceived I think by many that they perceive a sense of goodness in all kinds of different paths. The world will actually help you define “good” by the things that they begin to describe, and they'll tell you, “If you do this, you're a good person. If you're tolerant of evil, you're a good person.” So, they'll define good according to their place. We define good in the way that we perceive it, and it's one of the reasons why you will see this verse repeated over and over again in the book of Proverbs, “There is a way that seems right to a man.” So, just because you define something as “good” doesn't mean that it's good. This is a very important point. Just because something at a particular moment may be beneficial to you doesn't necessarily make it good. So, one of the words that he's going to use to actually describe this word “good” is going to be the word “better,” and better will actually be “*ṭôb*” all the way through the book of Proverbs. So, when you see the word “better,” “It's better to do this.” What he's really using is the word “*ṭôb*,” good, the good path. The point is that “better” is oftentimes not something that we would describe as good to ourselves.

In fact, when you go into Matthew 7, it talks about the broad way, and it talks about the fact that it leads many to destruction. I would say that many are led to destruction because oftentimes it is declared as a good way. Everybody's doing it. It's the way in which it is amiable and encouraging to people. It's the way that will bring peace for the moment, peace at all costs, and not thinking in terms of the righteousness of God. They're thinking in terms of “This feels good, and this seems beneficial and quite frankly, this makes me happy at this moment.” As Hebrews will say, there is a joy for a moment with sin. It's a passing pleasure of sin. However, it is a passing pleasure, and it isn't real joy. It ultimately brings an emptiness. So, the point is that, quite frankly, we don't know what good is. It's one of the reasons why we have these words of wisdom, and I want to emphasize this as well, that it's certainly not the good works that you

and I do that saves us, but it will keep you on the path of life. The point is that there are a lot of Christians that are really miserable, and the reason they're miserable is that they have forsaken the right way. They've stopped following Christ, and they've started going back to their old way. We even see that as we've been looking at the book of Galatians, where he goes, "Foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? What hindered you from doing the things that you did to begin with? What happened?" So, it's easy for us to go off of the path. One of the reasons why we have the book of Proverbs is to bring us back into the path of life.

Obviously, if we make a wrong turn, if you look at the end of Proverbs 2:18, her tracks will not lead us to life, but if you walk in the way of good, then God will bring you there.

Just to emphasize this, if you look with me in Proverbs 15, we'll look at the word "good" in this particular setting. That is to say, described as "better."

When you go into passages in the New Testament, like Romans 14, or you're going to a passage such as 1 Corinthians 8, and 1 Corinthians 10, one of the points that Paul is making in each of those passages is that you could actually do something that was for you a good thing, but it ultimately causes harm.

So, his statement in Romans 14 is, "Don't let that which is for a good thing for you, be spoken of as evil." In other words, people say, "What's wrong with this? It's a good thing. It's a good thing to help a person or do this thing." And God says, "Is it the godly thing?" Because our good is twisted, distorted and it's very egotistical. So, we can only think at little, whatever revolves around us. That's where we're reasoning. That's where we're perceiving the goodness coming, but there's a greater goodness. That's what Proverbs brings us to, because the path of our sense of goodness will never lead us to happiness; it will never lead us to benefit. It will never bring a sense of pleasantness in our life. It will never be really proper or right.

So, what is good? It is, as Scripture will say, good is better. Here again, the best way we can describe it in our own thoughts is, "The good way is best." You can't think in terms of, "Well, that's a good thing." Because a lot of good things that you may do will actually bring destruction in your life, but you must think in terms of, "But is it the best thing to do?" So, he'll use the word "better."

If you look with me in Proverbs 15:16, you'll see the word "better" being used. We're going to look at a few of the texts that refer to this better path.

(Proverbs 16:15) "Better is a little with the fear of the LORD Than great treasure and turmoil with it."

Now, the passage is not saying that treasure is a bad thing, any more than 1 Timothy 6 is saying that money is a horrible thing, but the love of money is going to bring a lot of heartache and

pain, he says. In this particular setting, what he's saying is that you can choose something that seems to be good, and it will bring misery to your life. Now, what is it in this particular text that he's telling you to choose? If I could just put it in true application in your own life, he's fundamentally saying, choose church and ministry over wealth and opportunity. "Why should I go to church? I can get overtime going someplace else and working, and I can make more money doing this and doing that, and God doesn't mind me making more money, does He?" No, He doesn't, unless you put the money in front of God. It would be better for you to be in the house of God. And what begins to happen is, man oftentimes compromises into the realm of "It's a good thing." "It's a good thing for me to have a family outing. It's a good thing for us to do these things together." And God says, "Are you choosing a good thing for you, or are you choosing best?"

If you look at the next verse, it actually uses the word "*tôb*" again.

(Proverbs 15:17) "Better is a dish of vegetables where love is
Than a fattened ox served with hatred."

Choosing relationships and fellowships over success and self-indulgence. Is it wrong for you to eat? No, but there are times where you are pursuing those things will compromise a relationship. One of the best places that it's described is Jesus, when He's talking to the woman at the well. There He is, and it's time to eat. The disciples let Him know it's time to eat, and He goes, "Not for me, it's best for Me to eat this food. This is a better food, for me to minister to this woman." And so many times, we forego, perhaps even a moment of in-depth discussion with somebody that really is hurting just because we're hungry, or just because we have some pursuit of something better for us and so it's not good.

If you look in Proverbs 16:8,

"Better is a little with righteousness
Than great income with injustice."

I mean, you can make a lot of money perhaps, I guess, chance in a gazillion, in the lottery. Sure, be fine, but according to this passage, it's not best, and you're compromise in that is actually going to bring pain and suffering because it's inappropriate. It encourages people to be taken. People suffer with this addiction type thing, and it allures other people in. The point of the matter is that you're choosing to do the right thing at great cost to you. When you think about it, that would not be a normal path that I would choose when I would do the right thing. I mean, there are times for any relationship you would have to give up certain things. I can see people opening their calculators going, "I think the price is too much to give up that." And God says, "What's more important?" You're going to find yourself hurting yourself and reaping pain

and sorrow if in fact you choose what is good for you over what is best according to Scripture, and you'll see this emphasize.

If you look in Proverbs 16:32, you'll see the word "better" used again.

"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city."

Obviously, the point is that you're choosing strength of character over strength of the physical. Well, it's not bad to just to pursue the physical strength. That's not a bad thing in and of itself, but if you choose that over, then you've hurt yourself.

(Proverbs 17:1) "Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it
Than a house full of feasting with strife."

The word that he uses in this, "quietness," is "šalvâ." It's a very interesting word because our thought is that you're actually settling for poverty, but the word itself actually has a connotation of prosperity. The point is that there is a prosperity that comes in through peaceful means. There is a prosperity that comes, if you look in the passage, through the "house of feasting." The word that is actually used in that particular text is a "house of sacrificing." The point is that there are victims in that house. People are partying and people are using people, and they're sacrificing relationships to get what they want, but there is a way in which you can literally be willing to sacrifice yourself rather than them.

The best description of this is found in Genesis 13, if you remember where Lot and Abraham were at odds because of their groups of shepherds. So, Abraham chooses the peaceful path. Now, you can't read about Abraham and think that he was impoverished, but he chose to find prosperity through the right means, rather than through the wrong means; choosing the uncontentious, edifying path to prosperity rather than the path of victims and sacrifice of other people. Very interesting text.

If you look in Proverbs 19:1, "It's better," here again, "good," "tôb."

"Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity (moral innocence)
Than he who is perverse in speech and is a fool."

I think sometimes, people think that if they talk a certain way to fit in with a certain crowd, and somehow, it will bring them some sort of advantage by doing so, but the passage is saying that it won't take you down the better path; it won't take you down the good path. Moral innocence and choosing integrity over gain is far more important than through, the way that it's worded here, "he that is perverse." That's kind of a twisted person that is deceptive in the things that he's saying and oftentimes oppressive. So, you can either be a manipulator of people or an

oppressor of people, but it helps you get what you want. He goes, "That's not a good way." It's not going to be beneficial to you in the long run.

If you look in Proverbs 19:22,

"What is desirable in a man is his kindness,
And it is better to be a poor man than a liar."

Somebody that's deceptive and using people. Our thought is, "Well it's kind of an immediate gratification. I can make money off of this really easy, really quick. Everybody's fundamentally idiots and they're like sheep. So, I can manipulate them." And Scripture says it's not going to go well. The path that you're heading down, though you perceive it as a good one, is going to be destructive for you.

(Proverbs 21:9) "It is better to live in a corner of a roof
Than in a house shared with a contentious woman."

Now once again, I'm not against women. So, I'm not a misogynist, and neither is Scripture, but the point of the passage is that sometimes it's better to choose to be alone, than to conform or compromise your standards. I know some people are just afraid to be alone, but sometimes being alone is better.

(Proverbs 21:19) "It is better to live in a desert land
Than with a contentious and vexing woman."

Well, there's benefit. There's actually one verse that deals with, you can live in a broad house with this woman, and what it's actually referring to is a house that's big. The point is, I actually think that some men maybe do this, they marry somebody because their thought is they have a lot of money, and this is going to be an advantage to them. So, the point is you have no idea what you're marrying into. You have no idea the sorrow, the pain. It doesn't matter how much money you have; it'd be better to be in a desert than to be there. So, very interesting passages. You'll see the same thing in Proverbs 25:7, but if you look in Proverbs 22:1,

"A good name is to be more desired than great wealth..."

I think one of the things I appreciated with the guy that I worked with as I worked as a mechanic out in California, and was going to school, is that he would always care more for the customer than he would for the money. It didn't matter who it was, if he felt like they needed help, or if he felt like he could help them in any way, he would forego any profit to help them. If he felt like it might have been an opportunity to point them to the Lord, he would forego any profit to help them. He never suffered loss. The Lord protected his business, made it very successful. I mean, we had four-to-five-weeks people standing by to come in. So, why was that

true? Because his name was good. They knew that as they went to that particular shop, this guy was not only not going to take him, but he might also end up just giving them stuff. Who wouldn't stand in line for that? People will stand in line to get a new phone, and they'll pay a lot of money for it. Anyway, a good name is to be desired far more than riches and wealth.

By the time you come to Proverbs 25, if you turn there with me, it will use this word in this particular context. Actually, Jesus will kind of quote this particular text as many were trying to find their position in places of authority. So, they would kind of push to sit at particular spots.

(Proverbs 25:6) “Do not claim honor in the presence of the king,
And do not stand in the place of great men;

(Proverbs 25:7) For it is better...”

Now, let me emphasize this too, lest you have this thought in your head, “better” does not mean that it would be an ok choice to make the other choice. The emphasis is this is the good path. The bad path is the other one. So, if you're not on the good, where are you? Ok. So, we're clear on that.

“For it is better that it be said to you, “Come up here,”
Than for you to be placed lower in the presence of the prince...”

In other words, you want to be humiliated? That wouldn't be a good path. The good path is this sense of “I'm going to let God do the exultation. I'm not going to do it.” Now, that's a path that once again, we wouldn't normally think because our perception is we've got to make things happen in our life in order for good to come. He's fundamentally saying that's not the good path. The good path is you walking in integrity, doing the right thing, letting God exalt you at the proper time.

Jesus, like I said, declares this in Luke 14 and another parallel passage that refers to this in Proverbs 27:2 reads this way,

“Let another praise you, and not your own mouth...”

“Well, if I don't tell my boss how wonderful I am, who will?” Maybe God. So, the point is that you're choosing to let God exalt you above man in every situation. We know, according to Proverbs 10:22, it's the blessings of the Lord that make rich, and He adds no sorrow to that. So, that's another reason why I'd much rather God do the blessing than me in my self-exultation, or even if I can somehow manipulate somebody to like me more through whatever means that I may choose.

James 4 makes reference to this, and there are two passages in particular you're going to see in the New Testament that make reference to this. If you look with me in James 4, drop on down

with me, in which the good reminder is that God gives greater grace to the humble, not to the proud.

(James 4:6) “But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”

(James 4:7) Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

(James 4:8) Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

(James 4:9) Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.”

Now, who would think that was the path to happiness? It doesn't make any sense, but the humbling of yourself and the sorrow over your sin is going to bring release. If you confess your sins, He'll be faithful and just to forgive you. He'll take those burdens off your shoulders, and you'll find yourself being happy again. Man's thought is, “If I just entertain myself more or drink more or whatever, find some sort of pleasure for myself, that somehow, I'm going to make myself happier.” And you're just not. It's not going to work. Draw near to God.

“Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.

(James 4:10) Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.”

We were talking about this earlier, not just lifting you up in the sense of exaltation before men but lifting you out of despair and depression. God will bring you into the realm of joy and happiness and peace and benefit which God has clearly for you.

If you look with me in Peter, Peter will actually use this particular phrase as well in 1 Peter. I like the question that he asked because it's actually a passage in Psalm 34 that he quotes from. He asked this question in 1 Peter 3:10, “THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS...” So, the question would just fundamentally be, you want to see good days? You want to be on a good path? I would hope that the answer would be yes. So, stop talking. You know how we get upset about things and we just feel like we have to share it with somebody? Stop. We might even think in our minds, “Well, it's cathartic.” And God goes, “Not cathartic; it's hurtful, damaging.” You might have gotten something off your chest, but you just put a burden on somebody else's shoulders, and that's not going to turn out well for anybody.

“For, “THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, MUST KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT.

(1 Peter 3:11) “HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD...”

I think one of the hardest things when you feel like you've been wronged, and you feel like you've got to even the score or whatever, is to start on the path of doing good; actually being a benefit to somebody else, helping somebody else, pursuing ministry in some way.

“...HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT.”

Most of us pursue getting even.

(1 Peter 3:12) “FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS,
AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER,
BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL.”

Now, it's in this context that you'll see this passage brought up in 1 Peter 5, and it sounds almost like a direct quote from James as we were reading in 1 Peter 5:6,

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.”

I know that the proper time for most of us is right now, but God's going to do it at the best time. There are times that [if] He may exalt us, or He may lift us up, it just brings more hurt to us as well as to others as we might become even condescending [in] our arrogan[ce] in where we are, but God's going to do it in such a way that it's going to be the most benefit to everyone, especially to you. God is doing a great work. So, when Proverbs 2 makes reference to “walk the good way,” and you want to see it in this context, it is the better way. It is the way that will always be different than the world. It's one of the reasons why, if you think about it, we have Scripture.

(Proverbs 2:20) “So you will walk in the way of good men
And keep to the paths of the righteous”

inferring the fact that you're trying to please God.

“*Sadiq*” is actually where the word Sadducees comes from, but it means they declare themselves as the righteous ones, which wasn't true. “Righteous” is that sense of I'm doing what I'm doing because I love God, and his point in this is that you want to stay on that path. In other words, the verse, when he says, “walk in the way of good,” what he's really talking about is the benefits that come from this path. Then, when he says, “keep to the paths of the righteous,” what he's really talking about is your motivation. So, your number one motivation for walking this way, though you're going to have the benefits and the blessings and the happiness and all the pleasures that come with that, the one thing that's going to keep you on course is doing everything you do because you want to please God. You've actually chosen, and the word that he uses in here is this sense of “This is a path that I've chosen to take. It is a path

that's going to cause me to do the things that I do. So, I want to be obedient. I want to be virtuous. I want to be pleasing to God or, as Ephesians 5 says, 'Trying to learn what is pleasing to God.' This is the path that I've taken." Of all the things that you choose to do in your life, make this your #1 goal. "I'm going to do whatever I do to please Him." It's going to keep you out of a whole lot of trouble, because if you try to please yourself, you're going to always take the wrong turns. If you try to please somebody else, you're always going to take a wrong turn. So, there's only one way that's going to keep you on the straight path, the good path, and that's what? Do everything for the Lord. Try to please Him; choosing the better way.

(Proverbs 2:21) "For the upright will live in the land..."

The "land" is a kind of a metaphor for a place of stability and continuance. So, it has that wonderful phrase, "the upright will live," probably another way of translating that is, "will actually dwell."

"... And the blameless will remain in it."

The thought is that, "Blameless, who are the blameless? Who is blameless?" There's nobody that's blameless, but "*tāmîm*" is emphasizing a perfect heart. We would probably transliterate it into a wholesome heart or a heart that's whole or a heart that's wholly His, and that's really what it's talking about; somebody that's all in for God.

It's really just the opposite of, if you look at verse 22,

"But the wicked will be cut off from the land
And the treacherous..."

If you look at the word "treacherous" there, it's the person that is deceptive and twisted in his thinking. So, the opposite of deceptive and twisted would be the person that is blameless or "*tāmîm*." This is the person who, with a whole heart, is transparent in his desires to love the Lord. Once again, it's just a good reminder, man looks at the outward appearance, God sees the heart and He knows why you do what you do. If you'll keep your heart right, God will make sure that you're on stable ground. You'll remain in it. You'll dwell in it. All of those emphases are: He'll give you security, He'll give you stability in your life. You want to know why people are unstable? I can tell you why they're unstable. Because they've anchored in the ocean without any rock. But we have an anchor for our soul, both sure and steadfast; an anchor that doesn't move and God has given us stable land. What is that stable land? Where does it begin? It begins with you having a heart that is wholly His. You and I have to make this decision that we're going to stop thinking in terms of, "Is it ok to do this?" And we're going to think in terms of what's best, and if we'll do that, God will keep us from being plucked out and thrown out.

If you look at the passage, how does it end?

“But the wicked will be cut off from the land...”

It's this sense of, well, it's clearly instability.

If you look at the end,

“... And the treacherous will be uprooted from it.”

The reason why it puts “uprooted” next to “treacherous” is because deception makes you think that they're getting away with it, and God goes, “Nobody's getting away with anything. I know where they are, and I know what they're doing.” See, I mean, they may have fooled everybody else, not God. Be not deceived, God is not mocked. God knows what's going on. So, how wonderful it is to know that God has a path for us, that it's a good path, and it's a path that only God, only by keeping our focus on Him, will keep us straight.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word, and we give You thanks for this passage that puts us on the good path. We know that there are alluring forces in this world that draw us away. We can sense them, we can feel them. Prone to wander, Lord, we feel it. Prone to leave the God that we love, and yet it's good to have this reminder that there is a path that is beneficial and joyful and happy and will yield this on a permanent basis, not on a temporary basis. That You'll actually produce in us a stability and a security that can't be taken away, if we'll put ourselves on this path.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed, probably the most tyrannous thing in your life are the things you thought were good. You thought to yourself, “Well, at least I'm not doing a bad thing.” The Scripture will ask you, “But was it best? Did you seek to please God?” Ah. That's the difference. Get on the good path.