



## **WEEKLY STUDY October 8-14, 2023**

(Use this guide to individually or with a group dive deeper into this week's sermon.)

### **Wisdom to Live By**

**Our sermon series for October is: Wisdom to Live By: A Series on Wisdom Literature and Lived Experience. What wisdom does the Bible instill in us? What are the best pieces of advice we have been given about faith and life? This month we are going to both discover insight for our journey in Psalms, Proverbs, and Job – and hear the life experiences and learnings from our congregation members. As we read, listen, and reflect, we will gain wisdom to live by.**

### **Our scripture this week is: Proverbs 4:20-27**

“My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words  
Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart;  
For they are life to those who find them and health to one's whole body.  
Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.  
Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips.  
Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you.  
Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways.  
Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.”

- 1)** Our series on Wisdom began the first Sunday in October with the reading of Psalm 1. Pastor Sam stated that this psalm is an invitation to receive wisdom and to begin sharing your insight on faith and life. She stated that it sets forth 2 paths: one is a posture of constant openness to God's instruction and the other is a posture of arrogantly rejecting God's instruction. On the second Sunday we explored, “Wisdom from Nature” and were reminded of the importance of all creation in reflecting God's presence. Last week Marshall Brown was our lay speaker. Through his message, Marshall talked about his lifetime of experiences in seeking to follow God and to nurture his faith. He gave us a good example of how our individual experiences inform the decisions we make daily in response to God's love. This week, with the theme “wisdom for the body” Rev. Sam called our attention to the words of Proverbs 4: “...guard your heart, for everything you do flows fro it. Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep correct talk far from your lips.

Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought for the paths of your feet.....”

**Question: As you read through the different parts of the body and consider the wisdom contained there. What do you think we must pay attention to in order to guard our hearts, our mouths, our eyes, our feet?**

- 2) Pastor Steve offered the message for children this Sunday. He used the imagery of the heart to talk about the importance of remembering wisdom we are taught about God. We use the terminology of placing something in our hearts to indicate that it is something worth recalling and remembering. When we say we keep something in our heart, we mean it’s something we value deeply. Pastor Steve told the children to consider remembering these things about God: “God is love.” “I am a child of God.” “We are all family in the eyes of God.” He then asked them to talk with their parents about what they would want to remember about God.

**Question: What images, traits, beliefs about God do you keep in your heart to guide your way?**

- 3) As Pastor Sam helped us consider the message of Proverbs 4, she also made a statement about all of the wisdom literature of the Bible. In addition to the books of the Bible considered as wisdom literature, there are wise sayings and words of wisdom all through the various books of the Bible. She also talked about people who have provided wisdom to us throughout our lives that we remember and still use as guide for living. In particular she told us of wisdom from her mother; wisdom she received from her teacher, Coach Hardin; wisdom she received from our fellow congregation member, Marshall Brown. In each case, the wisdom was worked into a saying about life that made it easy to remember. This is the case with many of the things we remember from scripture as well.

**Question: Who are those who have offered to you wisdom that you have remembered and continue to use to guide your actions and words?**

- 4) Pastor Sam reminded us that in each attribute listed: heart, mouth, eyes, feet – there is the challenge to stay focused on love for God and love for others. We may find our mouths praising God and yet our feet aren’t following the path of love and justice. We may find ourselves hold close to our heart the love of God and yet find our mouths denying God’s love for those who are different from us. Just as Sam talked about swimming – the practice it takes; the habits one has to make; the focus that is required – she reminded that living as follower of Jesus requires that same practice, focus, endurance.

**Question: What are the habits you have in your life that allow you to keep yourself moving forward on the path of discipleship?**

**Prayer: (This week’s prayer is adapted from the prayer of Affirmation from Sunday’s service). Holy One, wise one, fill us with your good word. Keep us away from the things that hurt and destroy. Bring us closer to the things that enliven and affirm. Guide our steps that we may**

**walk in light and love. As a people joined together in this faith community, help us be people who speak justly, love fully, and follow you faithfully. AMEN**

**Weekly Challenges: Set a goal of daily reading from one of these Wisdom books of the Bible (Ecclesiastes; Proverbs; Job) for the month of October. Each day, recall one trait or description of God that you hold in your heart. Think of how you have let this trait or description shine through your words and actions that day.**

*(Weekly study guide prepared by Rev. MaryJane Pierce Norton)*