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## Wisdom of Winning Souls : studies in Proverbs

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*The fruit of the righteous is  
a tree of life; and he  
that winneth souls is wise.*

— PROVERBS 11:30

# THE WISDOM OF WINNING SOULS

STUDIES IN PROVERBS

by CHESTER J. PADGETT

for **THE BIBLE INSTITUTE HOUR**

MAY, 1957

MONDAY, WEDNESDAY AND FRIDAY MORNINGS  
AT 8:30 A.M. — MUTUAL DON-LEE NETWORK

# **BIBLE INSTITUTE HOUR**

**LOS ANGELES 17, CALIFORNIA**

## **THE WISDOM OF WINNING SOULS**

(Prov. 11:30)

There are two great emphases that every believer ought to make. The first of these concerns his own personal spiritual life. Nothing is so vastly important to each individual as the nurture of his soul. The second is that of soul-winning. The Lord Jesus Christ has left the preaching of the Gospel and the witnessing of His saving grace to the church. This includes *every* believer. Every person who owns Christ as his Lord and Saviour should have a great interest in winning the lost to Christ. This is the emphasis of our text.

Let us think along two lines: first, why it is wise to win souls for Christ; second, how to win souls to Christ.

### WHY IT IS WISE TO WIN SOULS

It is wise to be a soul-winner because *the winning of souls is the Father's chief concern*. Read the parables of Luke 15. In this portion of the Word of God the Lord Jesus indicates the great joy in the Father's heart and in the Father's House over every sinner that repents and comes to Christ. The Golden Text of the Bible (John 3:16) indicates that God's heart of love goes out to the entire world, and that His loving arms are long enough to embrace the world's population if all men would but turn to the Saviour. Dear believer, do *you* share in this love of God for the lost?

Again, the believer should be a soul-winner because *in so doing he shares in the Saviour's great task*. The Lord Jesus came into the world for one express purpose — to “seek and to save that which is lost” (Luke 19:10.) From early morning until late at night, the Lord Jesus went about to accomplish this task. His redemptive was accomplished on Calvary where He gave His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45.) On the Cross, our Lord cried out, “It is finished,” signifying that He fully met the law's demands and fully satisfied the justice of God. His resurrection was God's seal of approval on the completed redeeming work of His Son. Note the statements of

Christ regarding the completion of *His* work (John 4:34; 17:4; 19:30.) The question now comes, are *we* completing *ours*? Someone has well said, "Only Christ can save the world, but Christ cannot save the world alone." By this statement we mean that Christ is depending upon His people to cover the earth with the Gospel message. As this is done the Holy Spirit will call out God's elect and the Saviour's work will become effective in the lives of millions.

In the third place, the winning of souls is wise because *when a soul is won to Christ he is delivered from the power of the enemy*. The Bible makes it crystal-clear that every soul outside of Christ is the slave of Satan (II Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 2:1-3.) Christ and Christ alone can break the chains of sin and set the captive free (John 8:36; Rom. 7:24-25; Rev. 1:5-7.) Do you *really* believe that every soul out of Christ is bound for an eternal hell? Dear friend, God believes this; Christ believes this; the Holy Spirit believes this; the inspired writers of the Bible believed this. And they believe this because it *is* true. May the Lord impress upon every believer's heart the horror of being lost and that believer will gladly confess the wisdom of winning souls.

Winning souls is wise because *every soul won becomes the heir to the riches of Heaven*. Many rich men give liberally to those in need, but no one is as rich or as generous as is the Heavenly Father. The Bible abounds in the promises of God that include *all* His riches for *every* believer (Rom. 8:16-17; Eph. 1:3; I Peter 1:3-4). Do you enjoy bringing blessings to other people? Then you will enjoy bringing inestimable riches to all who will trust the Saviour through your word.

It is an exceedingly wise thing to win a soul to Christ because *each soul won to Christ is weaned away from a futile and wasted life*. The Lord Jesus estimated that *one* life is worth more than the entire created material universe (Mark 8:36.) What is the real worth of a life? God considered each life worth the suffering and death of His Son. The Lord Jesus considered each life worthy of His self-humiliation (Phil. 2:5-11.) He became poor in order that every believer might become rich (II Cor. 8:9). The Son of God tells us that Satan, the

enemy of the soul, comes to do nothing but to "steal, and to kill, and to destroy" (John 10:10.) But He came in order that He might give abundant life. What a tragedy to squander one's most priceless possession. Dear friend, how is it with you? Read carefully and prayerfully Luke 19:11-27.

Again, it is wisdom to win souls because *every soul won to Christ becomes an influence for Christ and righteousness* in a world that needs more than anything to feel the impact of the power of God. The Lord Jesus said that the church is "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." Without the testimony and witness of believers there is no powerful force opposing the corruption of the world, and there is no adequate light to point men to Christ! Every soul led to Jesus is illuminated by the Spirit of God and adds his light to millions of others. Each year on the Fourth of July, in the great Coliseum in Los Angeles there is a tremendous display of pyrotechnics. This show draws thousands of people. During the half-time ceremonies, all the lights are turned out and the announcer asks each present to light a match and hold it aloft. On a given signal each match is ignited and held high — and instantly a beautiful glow illuminates the entire Coliseum. One match would hardly be detected, but all the matches, lighted simultaneously, produce a brilliant light. So it is with the church. Let every believer shine for Jesus and the light will send its rays into the remote areas of the earth.

The Christian should seek to win souls to Christ because *in so doing he brings a strange and wonderful joy to his own soul*. The winning of a soul to Christ must be something like the mysterious joy of a mother as she holds close to her heart her new-born baby. In a sense, the soul-winner is bringing into God's household a new-born babe. Of course, it is God alone who can give life and who can quicken those dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1), but He uses the witness of the Word through the believer. There is a wonderful statement in Heb. 12:2, with reference to the sacrifice of Christ. This Scripture refers to Jesus, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." The *joy* that was before

Him — what was this? It was the joy of winning souls! Believer, do *you* know anything about this joy?

There is yet another reason why it is wise to win souls — it is because *the coming age and the eternity to follow will not mean all it could if you have no souls there* saved because you cared! The Apostle Paul writes that believers are his joy and crown (I Thess. 2:19-20.) The Lord Jesus indicated that His peculiar joy and satisfaction of soul was due to influencing men to salvation (John 4:32-38.)

May I close this part of our discussion on the text by pointing out one other reason for winning souls to Christ. The believer will want to be a wise soul-winner because *engaging in this occupation serves as a mighty incentive for keeping one's life clean and usable*. The believer who has little or no concern for the souls of men is doubtless living in some sin, if only the sin of indifference. On the other hand, the man who is concerned about souls and shows his concern by actively engaging in seeking to win the lost is a man whose life is without doubt open and honest before God.

#### HOW TO BE A SOUL WINNER

The first qualification is to *be in touch with God*. No man who is not a born-again believer himself can win a soul to Christ. Soul-winning is really Christ-sharing. The Christian shares his experience of Christ with another — tells him how the Saviour came into his heart and life, how He saved him from his guilt and shame, how He brings peace and joy and the sweet assurance of salvation. Without these experiences the believer has nothing to give, nothing to share.

In winning souls to Christ *make yourself as inconspicuous as possible*. Lift up Jesus. He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32.) Many time the believer gets in the way of the Holy Spirit in winning men to Christ. It is the office ministry of the Spirit of God to call attention to Christ and to exalt Him (John 15:26.) Keep the Saviour central in your witness and God will use you to win men to Christ.

To be a soul-winner *have a genuine love for souls*. This love can come only from God. Ask Him for it. Pray that He will give you Calvary love for souls. Turn your life over to Christ and ask Him to "make you a fisher of men."

The soul-winner *should be a man of strong convictions*. He must have it settled in his mind that he firmly believes in the inspiration of the Bible, the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the necessity of regeneration, the fact of heaven and hell, and the truth of the second coming of Christ. These doctrines, held not only in the head, but also in the heart will help to make a believer a winner of souls.

The man who would win souls *must live above reproach*. It may be that by the grace of God sinners are touched and led to Christ by a one whose personal life is not clean, but ordinarily God uses only those whose lives are fully yielded to Him. Sin in the believer's life will repel rather than attract unbelievers to Christ.

*The soul-winner will be a man of prayer*. He will pray for guidance in his witnessing, for understanding of the Word, for direction to the one to be witnessed to, for holy boldness, for tactfulness and patience, for the working of the Holy Spirit.

May God bless you and give you the desire to be used in this greatest of all services to men — the winning of many to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

# THE GIFTS OF GOD

(Prov. 17:8)

We are instructed to look for Jesus in every part of the Bible. (Luke 24:24-25; 44-46) This includes the book of Proverbs. Surely we find the Son of God in our text, Prov. 17:8. I want you to notice three things in this text: 1) the gift itself, 2) the evaluation of this gift, and 3) the benefits included in the gift.

## THE LORD JESUS GOD'S GREAT LIFE

The Lord Jesus is as a "precious stone" to the believer (I Peter 2:1-8.) In Him God has given to the believer every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3; I Cor. 1:30.) Think for a moment about this wonderful gift.

In the first place, the Lord Jesus is a *genuine gift*. God has not attached any strings to this gift. He does not require any merit for the reception of the gift of His Son (Eph. 2:1-10.) There is nothing for the believer to pay back (Rom. 8:32.) The gift of Christ is never taken back — God is not an "Indian giver" (John 10:28-29.) When you really love a person you are willing to give, and *do* give, gifts that represent your fullest ability to give. The same is true of God. When He wanted to give His best, He did not give *something*, He gave *someone* — even His "only begotten Son." This gift is the certain evidence of the genuineness of His love and the deep sincerity of His purpose to save all who believe.

The gift of Christ is an *inclusive gift*. When God sent the Lord Jesus into the world He sent *Himself*, for "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (II Cor. 5:19.) There is no gift greater than the Giver, none greater than God Himself! (Col. 2:9.)

When God gave us Christ, He gave us "all things" (Rom. 8:32.) The greater always includes the lesser. In Christ the believer has "all spiritual blessings" (Eph. 1:3.) Nothing God intends to give to the believer is left out in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus on his behalf. When God gave us

Christ He gave us all He possesses (Rom. 8:16-17.) We cannot even begin to know what it means to be an "heir of God" and a "joint-heir with Christ," but we do know that it is wonderful beyond all ability to comprehend.

Again, the Lord Jesus is a most *useful gift*. Some gifts are most impractical and serve no useful purpose. This is not true with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul tells us in I Cor. 1:30, that in Christ God has given the believer four wonderfully practical gifts. One of these is *wisdom*. This word means the ability to understand the truth of God (I Cor. 2:14; Eph. 1:15-22). Another practical gift included in Christ is the gift of *righteousness*. This means imputed righteousness, or justification (Rom. 5:1). The third gift is that of *sanctification*. Righteousness has to do with an *act* of God; sanctification has to do with the *work* of God. Christ is not only the believer's *substitute*, He is also the believer's Sanctification. As the believer yields himself to Christ, the Saviour lives His life out through that believer's life (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21.) Christ is also the believer's *redemption*. Full redemption includes the believer's body. Christ died for the complete man — body, soul and spirit. All three share in the benefits of His redemptive work. Study Rom. 8:11 and Eph. 1:13-14 in this connection.

## THE EVALUATION OF CHRIST

Our text says, "A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it. . . ." Again we think of the words of Peter, "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious. . . ." (I Peter 2:7.) Now, we know that to many people Christ is not precious. Things have not changed much since the prophet's time and were Isaiah living today he could make the same charge that he made in his great prophecy, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men. . . ." (53:1-2.)

Multitudes today are blinded to the real worth of the Lord Jesus, and completely ignorant as to Who He is and as to the

rich benefits of His work (Acts 3:14-17; II Cor. 4:3-4.) Many today know *about* Him, but do not know *Him* (Phil. 3:10.) But, thank God, to other millions He is a lovely, precious, longed-for stone, as our text says, He is precious in “the eyes of him that *hath* it.” My dear friend, is Christ real to you?

#### THE BENEFITS IN CHRIST

Notice that last statement of the text, “whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.” Turn a diamond in any direction and it will send back rays of breath-taking beauty — so with Christ. No matter from which direction you approach Him — His Person, His work, His offices — from any angle He is indeed wonderful (Isa. 9:6.)

What a blessing, what a tremendous profit to meditate upon the *beauty of His character*. No other Person in all the world has so challenged the best in men nor produced the power to holiness and usefulness as has the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. This, of course, is true, because Christ is the only pure and spotless person since the first Adam (Heb. 7:26.)

How precious to consider *His works*. Walk with Him through those three years of His public ministry and watch Him heal broken bodies with fingers of tender omnipotence, see Him give sight to blinded eyes, hearing to deaf ears, action to withered arms and legs, life to the dead! Who but Christ can do these things? But the greatest work of all is His ministry of saving sinners from their sin (Luke 19:10; Mark 10:45; II Cor. 5:21.) Surely He has “prospered” in this gracious work!

What prosperity there is *in His words!* The entire Bible is the summary of His teaching who is Himself *the Truth* (John 14:6.) No more profitable summary of teaching has ever been given to man than the Word of God (II Tim. 3:16-17.)

Turn for a moment to consider *His offices*. He is prophet, priest and king. In His Person He sums up all the administration of God to His people. As the believer’s Prophet, He speaks for the eternal Word of God; as the Priest, He is both offerer and offering (Heb. 9-10); as King, He is the believer’s Lord now and coming King forever. It is no wonder that the poet has written about Him thus:

When you my Jesus understand,  
When you accept His loving hand,  
A happy morn will dawn for you,  
When you know Jesus, too.

His joy will gladden every day,  
His blessing shine along the way  
And you will share His promise true,  
When you know Jesus, too.

You’ll see His mercy thro’ your tears,  
His peace will hallow all the years,  
The valley holds no dread for you,  
When you know Jesus, too.

When you know Him, when you know Him,  
You’ll love Him just as others do;  
A happy morn will dawn for you,  
When you know Jesus, too.

# THE FRIENDSHIP OF JESUS

(Prov. 17:17)

One of the most beautiful relationships in life is that of friendship. Happy is the man who can gather around him a host of people whom he can call his friends. I call your attention today to a blessed fact — you may have Jesus Christ as your personal Friend! It seems to me that this text speaks, not only of friendship on a human level, but of the friendship that exists between the soul and the Saviour. Christ has many wonderful names in the Bible — Saviour, Lord, Judge, Intercessor, Advocate — and one of the sweetest is Friend.

## HOW JESUS QUALIFIES AS A FRIEND

There are certain qualities of personality which contribute to the ability to be a friend. Our Lord possesses these qualities in their fulness. He is *friendly*. Prov. 18:24, states: "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly. . . ." The emphasis is on the word "show." Surely our blessed Lord has shown Himself friendly toward sinners. He is called in the Gospels "the friend of sinners." (Luke 7:34.) The man who shows himself friendly takes the initiative and approaches others on a friendly basis without waiting for them to come to him. So did our lovely Lord. He came from Heaven to earth in order to make friends of sinners, and to provide them with eternal salvation through His blood. The man who shows himself to be friendly makes himself available and easy to know. Christ is like this: He is always available to all who will come; He is wonderfully easy to know. He said Himself, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37.)

*Christ qualifies as a Friend because He is loving.* Our text says, "A friend *loveth* at all times. . . ." Love is one of the marks of friendship, a quality that distinguishes between acquaintance and friendship. And — a friend loves *at all times*. A friend is a person who knows a great deal about you and loves you still. The Lord Jesus knows all about you and loves you still. He loves you even when you sin. Sin grieves Him and

will always put a wedge in fellowship, but it can never change His heart of love toward His own.

*A friend is one who is sympathetic.* The Son of God identified Himself fully with us in order that He might be our faithful and sympathetic high priest (Heb. 2:14-18.) He is called "Immanuel" — this means, "God with us." When in the presence of Mary and Martha after the death of their brother, the Saviour wept (John 11:35.) Christ is touched by the trials and temptations and troubles of every believer. What a Saviour! What a Friend!

As our Friend *the Lord Jesus is loyal.* He will never turn His back on a believer, or on anyone who depends on His help or who looks to Him. He is "a brother born for adversity" (Prov. 17:17.) This means that He is always right there when He is needed. He is "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." (Prov. 18:24.) It seems difficult to conceive of anyone's being more loyal than a brother — but Jesus is!

## HOW TO BECOME A FRIEND OF CHRIST

We know, from the text, that He is the Friend of sinners and that He wants to be the Friend of every man in the world. But how does a man come into this blessing relationship? *First, by believing that He wants to be your friend.* Do you need proof of this? Come with me to Calvary. Look upon the body of that Man hanging on the Cross. His face is brutally mutilated. "more than any man's." (Isa. 52:14.) His body is covered with blood and gore. He is there, not for His own sins, for He had none, but for your sins and mine. Can you doubt, then, that He wants to save you and wants to be your Friend?

*You may become a Friend of Christ by coming to Him.* He offers you His friendship (Matt. 11:28-30.) He is not standoffish, not distant, not cold, not aloof, not indifferent. He is warm toward you and delights in your nearness. Approach Him, then, and find Him ready to receive you.

*You may become a friend of Christ by obeying Him* (John 15:14.) Your loving obedience to His Word is the evidence of your friendly relationship.



### THE BENEFITS OF FRIENDSHIP WITH CHRIST

No believer wants to be a friend of Christ just for the personal benefits that come to him through such a wonderful relationship. But there is nothing amiss with counting up the blessings that come through friendship with Christ. The first benefits that comes to mind is *the rich privilege of closeness with the greatest personality in the universe*. Men vie with each other to make friends with great men and to come within their good graces. Usually this is true of people who want to use another's name for personal benefits. How privileged is the child of God to be intimately associated with the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords!

*Another benefit is that of being able to use His influence.* The Christian is tied in with the throne of the Universe. His Friend is the Mighty God. Through prayer the believer has access to God, and when he breathes the Name of Jesus, God would stop making worlds to hear and answer. The Christian can use the influence of His Name both for himself and for others. What a powerful privilege is this! (Rom. 8:31-35; Heb. 7:25-26; I John 2:1-3.)

Because you are a friend of Christ *you are the constant recipient of His beneficence*. Wealthy people delight to shower expensive gifts upon those they love — upon their very closest friends. So it is with Jesus. Nothing is too good for His friends. In fact, the Saviour has arranged that every believer shall be a joint-heir with Him of the wealth of God! (Rom. 8:16-17.)

### THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS

It is a blessed but a solemn thing to be a friend of Christ! To be His friend requires loyalty to Him. He is always loyal to us, but are we always loyal to Him? Loyalty to Christ means upholding His Name, being faithful to His Word, and faithful to His Church. It means living a consistent daily witness, putting Him first in everything.

Friendship with Christ surely means that the believer who is so favored and privileged will assist the Saviour in the work that is closest to His heart. Christ came to seek and to save the

lost (Luke 19:10.) Are you, His friend, helping in this great cause by giving of your time, you talent and your treasure to extend the influence of the Gospel around the world?

