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## PROVERBS 6:1-19

### Proverbs Series

Open your Bibles with me to Proverbs 6. Last week we finished a two-part series...well not last week because I was not here last week because my plane landed later than I could get here. Ed was ready and he took over as he faithfully does. I'm grateful for that. The week before we concluded a two-part series on the "sex talk" I called it because we took Proverbs 4:23 to the end of chapter 7 which has to do with all kinds of principles about sex. We talked about six of them. Six principles that we all need to know about sexual purity.

So if you didn't hear that, go to the app, listen, get it on our app, or go to our website. You can hear the sermons there. There's an RSS feed if you want so you can hear the sermons if you happen to miss them.

In the course of doing that, we skipped over nineteen verses. I want to go back to those nineteen verses today. That's where I want us to spend our time. So in Proverbs 6:1-19 we're going to see some wisdom that's very helpful for us as we're moving forward.

Now Proverbs is a book that gives us wisdom about how to live in life. It's a very effective book in giving us very practical ideas for life. How are we going to handle things, how are we going to live in order to manage our lives? Sometimes the things get so practical, you have to always remember the part about being tied into the fear of the Lord. We don't want to think we can do it humanistically. That we do this, this, and this and these blessings will come. We have to be tied into the fear of the Lord as we already learned earlier in the book of Proverbs.

Furthermore, I'm convinced if you look at the first two words in Proverbs 6:1, it says, *my son*, so the book of Proverbs is a book written to children, young people. The faith being passed on to these other people of this next generation. Now certainly us other folks can learn some valuable things from this book, but we can direct these to the next generation.

I hope that if you have children or you're influencing children that you're using the book of Proverbs to pass on the faith. If you're a young person today, you need to know that reading the book of Proverbs one chapter a day is a great way to gain a lot of wisdom to know how to navigate through the challenges of life. Life has lots of challenges that we face and Proverbs has some great ideas to do that. So it starts *my son*.

We're going to talk in this first section, verses 1-11, about two principles of finance. These two principles could be put on a list. If you're working with us over a period of time, you might want

to keep a finance list because as we go through the book of Proverbs there's going to be several success principles about money and you just want to write them down.

I'm really grateful that my dad taught me a lot of these things from the book of Proverbs even as a teenager. I think they're very valuable for us.

The first one starts out in verse 1 of chapter 6, a principle about finance, which is don't cosign a loan for somebody. Here we go.

*My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor, if you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger, you have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth. So do this, my son, to free yourself, since you have fallen into your neighbor's hands: Go—to the point of exhaustion—and give your neighbor no rest! Allow no sleep to your eyes, no slumber to your eyelids. Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fowler.*

The specific principle here is don't put up security for someone else. Security means you say to someone, "You can't get a loan on your own, then I will put up my credit for you and I'll sign on the dotted line for you so that you can get a loan." That's what the security is here that we're talking about. You can do it easy by credit cards today. You can do it all kinds of ways, but notice in verse 1 it calls it *security*. It's your credit.

You may put up some piece of your property as your house, for example. You might put up your house so they can get a loan or something. Just be careful of that, he's saying. He says don't do it.

Notice the first one. If you *put up security for your neighbor* – that's somebody you know, somebody close, somebody on the left, somebody on the right, somebody nearby you, in other words, somebody close to you – don't do it for them.

*If you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger.* In other words, if there's someone you don't know, you certainly don't want to be doing it for them. Be really careful with your money because (notice verse 2) *you have been trapped by what you said*. This isn't anybody else's fault. You can't go along and say, "But he didn't pay the loan." It's nobody else's fault but yours. Don't do it. You have been trapped by what you said. That's what it's saying. It's your issue that you need to deal with. *Ensnared by the words of your mouth* (verse 2). Don't blame it on anybody else. You take care of your finances in a way between you and the Lord. Don't let people take them away from you.

Verse 3 tells us why. It says, *So do this, my son, to free yourself*. Free yourself. The idea here is that there's a way to be financially free.

Dave Ramsey has helped a tremendous number of people. Probably some of you have gone through Dave Ramsey's program. He's a Christian guy who's analyzed a lot of stuff from the Bible regarding finances to help people be financially free so they're not under financial

bondage. He gives a lot of these principles from the book of Proverbs as part of his plan. I would encourage you to do it. Go through the study that Dave Ramsey offers.

When I was a young person, a teenager, my father helped me understand a lot of these principles for finance. I remember his words saying don't ever cosign for a loan. That was just one of the principles. Be really careful about putting up your money.

The challenge is, somebody's going to come to you with a story that's going to be hard to resist. I think we as Christians are very susceptible to this because we care about other people. We feel sorry for other people. We want to help this other person. And so we want to help this other person and they say, "Will you sign for me for this." Don't do it.

I think it's good for us as Christians to help other people, but look for another way to do it. You can use your money to help other people. That's not what it's saying. It's saying don't cosign. You can give other people money. Give them money if you want. That's certainly a way that you can use your money. You can work and earn money and give that to them. All that works, but it's saying really you don't want to do this because it's going to mess with you. It's going to mess with your freedom. You want the financial freedom that you could have.

This word 'freedom,' *free yourself*, that's mentioned in here is a word that's used both in verse 3 and verse 5. Do you see that in verse 5 as well? *Free yourself*. It's used in both places. This is the same Hebrew word that's used in the Old Testament when God says, "I will deliver these people from the hand of Pharaoh." He tells Moses, "I'm going to free them." He says it several times. "I'm going to deliver them. I'm going to free them from the Egyptians."

Then after they get freed, they're wandering around in the wilderness and they're doing the wrong thing and God says, "Remember I'm the one who freed you from the Egyptians." So there's a sense of bondage that we don't want to have.

Instead we want to have the financial freedom so that we can have this flexibility. We want to have financial freedom in our lives so that we're not in bondage to money. You could have no money and be in bondage to money. You could have lots of money and be in bondage to money. But the idea here is that you want to set yourself up in a way, not just with this principles, but with all the principles we're going to see about finances, to have some financial freedom in your life.

I am so grateful that my dad helped me understand how to save money and how to not borrow money and not borrow money for a car, borrow money on a credit card so that I can be financially free. I am so grateful for that.

Now in my life I'm able to leave Mercer County and come over here and plant a church where our church isn't large enough to pay me at this point, so for a period of time I can go without being paid because I have financial freedom. Flexibility – that's what it gives you. The flexibility to choose to do what you want to do instead of being under bondage to be forced to do things you don't want to do. It's just a real privilege.

A man came to me several years ago and, knowing that I invest money, he wanted some wisdom about the stock market. So I said, “Tell me about your finances,” and he shared with me that he had 15 or 16 thousand dollars in credit card debt and he was paying interest on that. And I said, “Okay, here’s what you do. Number one, you take one or two thousand dollars, put it aside for emergency fund, for unexpected bills. Set that aside. Secondly, you want to invest in yourself? Invest in that credit card debt and reduce it to nothing. Then come back and see me and I’ll talk to you about investing.” I didn’t think I’d ever see him again.

Two years later, he came back and said, “Okay. I’ve done it.” It took him two years to get out of that 16,000 dollars worth of credit card debt so that he could be financially free and move forward.

I think it’s such a strategic thing that we consider our finances. I’m going to point that out as we go through this book of Proverbs. You want to know what the principles are for financial success. They are to follow the Lord in all of your finances.

One of those things is don’t cosign for a loan. That’s what it’s talking about there. So one way that a person can become impoverished is that they mismanage their money. I’m going to read that last part of the verse again in verse 5. *Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fowler.*

Alright. Let’s go on to verse 6 because in this passage now we’re going to talk about a second principle of financial freedom.

You have to understand I’m preparing this message two weeks ago while I’m visiting my grandchildren. I’m convinced Proverbs is for kids, so I’m trying to pass the message on to my ten-year-old grandson and my seven-year-old grandson and my four-year-old granddaughter and help them understand some things. So that’s what I was working through in this passage.

We go to verse 6 and I wanted them to understand verse 6 of Proverbs 6. Because it says, *Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!*

The word *go* there and the word *consider* are just the simple words “go and look.” Go and look. It’s not anything complicated there. Just simply go and simply look. That’s all. These are the most common words for that in the whole Hebrew Bible. Just go and look. Go and look at the ant and see his ways and be wise.

So I said to my grandkids, “Let’s go on a walk.” My grandchildren love to go on walks with me. It’s time we talk together, we explore, we find things, we dig up stuff. We do all kinds of stuff on our little walks together. “Let’s go for a walk. I have an assignment. I need to go and hunt for ants.” That’s what I told them. “I’m studying for my teaching on Sunday and the Bible tells me I need to go hunt for ants. Do you want to come with me?”

“Yeah, let’s go!” they said. So we go out the back gate, a big field out there, and we start looking for ants. We start going to the ants and we start looking and now I’m looking at ants running around all around this one hole (trying to stay away from them a little bit).

I said to the kids, “Why does God say go to the ant?”

Hudson, my ten-year-old grandson – “Well because they’re busy all the time and they work hard.”

I said, “That’s a great idea! I think that’s true. They work hard.”

I went away and the next morning in my study I’m continuing to study the passage and I realize that’s not all of it. That’s not the whole thing. Work hard. The other part of it has to do with verse 7. It says, *It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.* Wow.

There’s something else about the ant that I think we need to understand that’s going to help us move forward and that is the ant doesn’t have somebody telling him what to do. He doesn’t have an overseer.

So the next day, I go in, I come into their house, and Hudson’s there eating a bowl of cereal and milk. I said to him, “Hey, I learned about the ant. I learned why we study the ant. The Bible tells us to study the ant. It’s so important. It’s so that we don’t have to have other people telling us what to do because he doesn’t have a commander or an overseer or a ruler, but he still does it. He’s internally motivated. He’s not waiting for somebody else to tell him what to do. He’s internally motivated to do what’s right and to be industrious and to do the right thing.”

Hudson says, “Oh.”

I said, “Well are you like the ant?”

He says, “I think so.”

I said, “See the cereal box there on the counter? What’s going to happen to that cereal box?” because he left it out while he’s over here eating his cereal. “What’s going to happen to the cereal box? Well either Mom’s going to come and put it away or Mom’s going to tell you to put it away. But you could be like the ant. What would the ant do?” He smiles and goes and puts away the cereal box.

A few minutes later, he leaves his bowl with milk in it on the counter. I said to him, “Remember the ant?” And so he smiles and he goes and washes his bowl without someone having to tell him.

See, I’m convinced that this passage is not just talking about working hard. It’s talking about working hard in a way that’s internally motivated. That you don’t have to have someone tell you what to do; you’re internally motivated to do it.

Notice in verse 6 it contrasts the ant to the slugger. The sluggard really means the lazy person. Now most of us would not consider ourselves lazy. We work hard to do whatever we have to do. But there are some times when I do feel lazy and I’m not motivated on the outside to get something done and I need to be reminded of this passage. The lazy person is the person who doesn’t have the internal motivation to do what they need to do. The lazy person is the person who has to wait for something on the outside.

The procrastinator is the person who's not internally motivated but keeps going and going until something happens to prompt them to do it. So procrastination is a form of this kind of laziness. Go to the ant. He doesn't procrastinate. He's moving forward and doing what's right.

Maybe you've heard people who say this: "Give me a deadline." When someone says "give me a deadline" for something you've asked them to do, what they're saying is I'm not really internally motivated, I really need some help, so would you give me some external motivation so I'll know what that motivation is and that will prompt me to get it done on time.

He's saying look at the ant. Be internally motivated inside in order to do what needs to be done. What can we learn from the ant? I know we try to kill them. That's what we try to do, but they're always busy. You never see an ant taking a break. You don't see an ant cappuccino. You see them working hard. They're trying to provide here.

There are some people who at work (maybe you know these people) – the boss isn't around and so they kind of slough off and they're not doing their job. But you know that doing the right thing is the right thing. Because you're like the ant. You're internally motivated to do what's right.

You don't ever hear a boss put an advertisement out – "now we're hiring sluggards." The boss doesn't do that. He hires ants. He hires people who are independently working and so when you're working hard then you're doing the right thing.

Other people may say, "What are you working for? The boss isn't here." I'm working because it's the right thing to do. I'm internally motivated to do what's right.

It's a great lesson that I'm reminded of. Of course it's for children, but it's also a very important lesson for all of us.

Now go back to verse 6. I'm going to read the whole passage in just a second. I want to take apart a couple of words. In fact, this is a sheet that I handed out prior to you. If you would just take one of these and pass them back, if you don't have it already. These are the Hebrew words that we're looking at in the book of Proverbs. Just pass the whole thing back.

I want you to see some of the Hebrew words as we go through part of our passage and then bring it back next week because next week we're going to have a lot more that we're going to see as well. Okay?

Notice it says in verse 6, *Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways* [that's the word *derekh*. That's the way of living. The operating principles of the person. How they live. Consider his ways] *and be wise*. That's *hakhmah*. That's our word *wisdom*. So it's the way that he operates, the kind of plan that he's going through, the way that he operates. That's what you're looking at. Consider his ways and then you want to look at your own ways and say, "Are my ways matching up with this? What can I learn about wisdom (*hokhmah*), the strategies for life, greater insight, in order to do that?" So that's both words used there.

*It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.* The second principle about finances we see here is the idea of working hard.

Let's go on to the next principle that starts in verse 12. Again, one of those principles I'm talking to my grandchildren about. I sit Hayden and Hudson down at the table. Seven years old and ten years old, and I'm saying, "Look. There's a passage here starting in verse 12 talking about the troublemaker," and I contrasted for them the difference between the troublemaker in Proverbs 6 and the peacemaker in Matthew 5 where Jesus talks about *blessed are the peacemakers*.

You can imagine a home. Children are often competing and comparing one another, putting down each other, those kinds of things. So what does the troublemaker look like? And what does the peacemaker look like? That's the comparison I want to draw your attention to by looking at the verses in God's word in Proverbs 6:12.

It says, *A troublemaker and a villain, who goes about* – and let's just identify some of the things that characterize a troublemaker. First of all it goes about *with a corrupt mouth*. That could be foul language, it could be swearing, it could be someone who's cursing, or it could be someone who's lying, someone's who's doing putdowns, someone who's boasting and saying, "I'm better than you are," or something like that. So he goes around with a corrupt mouth. That is, his mouth is off track. That's the idea here.

*Who winks maliciously with his eye, signals with his feet and motions with his fingers.* He gives signals with his fingers. So you know, as I do, that if you're driving along and you make a mistake in traffic sometimes someone will show you something with their finger that has a message. So maybe that's what we're talking about here. Or maybe it's where someone says, "Oh everything's fine," and then winks as if to say they're giving them some secret message or something. That's what he's talking about here. Someone who's deceptive in what they're doing.

Verse 14: *who plots evil with deceit in his heart.* We'll come back to this in a moment. Note those words. He *plots evil with deceit in his heart*. In other words, he's thinking about deceit. He's thinking about evil. He plots. He plans. We'll see another word *schemes* in a minute.

He *plots evil with deceit in his heart*, and then notice the next one – *he always stirs up conflict. Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy.*

Let's talk about this word *stirs up conflict*. How does someone stir up disagreements? I think this is going to be a strategic thing for all of us, as we understand, because the word *conflict* here is an important word that increases the emotional energy in a situation. That's what happens. That's what stirring up conflict does.

The word *stirs up* is a word that talks about sending out messages. The word stirred up is used by Noah. Noah's in the ark and the water's subsiding and he's trying to decide whether it's dry

enough to go out. So he opens the little window and he sends out a raven and he sends out a dove. When he sends those birds out, that's the same word *stirs up*.

We have to think about our own hearts. There are some times when things are going on in family life or in work or in wherever and we send out a little message. When we send out that message is it stirring up the conflict? That's going to be the question.

Now in order to help you understand this, I want to share with you three words that I think will be helpful for you. These are not Hebrew words. These are Turansky words. We have three words. We have tasks, problems, and conflict. I want you to understand these because this is how conflict takes place.

Tasks are the things you have to do. Let's say you're trying to get out the door in the morning. You have this list of things that you're tasked that you have to do as you're getting out the door. You have to get dressed, you have to get your food, eat your breakfast, you have to take your food for the day, you have to make sure you get that last email sent that you didn't get sent yet, and whatever else you've got to do. That's your to-do list, your tasks. You may write them down, you may not, but those are your tasks you're trying to get done. Just simple tasks.

Problems are things that get in the way of your tasks. My computer froze. I can't find my keys. Where's my cell phone? Those are problems that get in the way. If you have children living in your home then you've got lots of problems, right? Because you're not only worrying about yourself, you're worrying about other people too. I've got a problem here because I get to this place and there's a problem.

What do we do with problems? That's going to be the key because you have a choice. When you have a problem in life, you can either move it back to a task and develop a solution for the problem, or you can allow it to generate into conflict.

The way to get to conflict is to add emotions to the picture. Conflict always involves a sense of emotions. That's what it is. So if you've got conflict going on between two people in a family and you or the other person are making a comment to that, you're sending out a message. Is the comment increasing the conflict? Or is it being a peacemaker, bringing the conflict out? That's what we're talking about here. This malicious person is someone who stirs up conflict. That means we have to be really careful.

I was working with a seventeen-year-old girl a few weeks ago who realized that there's conflict going on in her home and the cue for her is conflict. Whenever the emotions start to rise, what she does is she puts in her two cents, which often isn't helpful, so it creates more conflict. It generates those things. She realized that the cue of conflict rising in the house was an opportunity for her to be a peacemaker instead of just making her two cents. She was drawn in by the emotional intensity.

If you're drawn in by conflict – see, here's the problem. We want to move problems down to tasks, but the reality is other people generate conflict. So now the emotions are because someone else got mad. Somebody else makes a statement that's inflammatory or something and so we're



getting sucked in. It's at that moment we have a choice to make. Are you going to move the conflict back down to problems of task or are you going to generate stay up in the emotional turmoil? Stirring it up, as the word says. I think it's a great picture for us and I think we can learn how to be peacemakers.

When emotions arise, peacemakers have a different approach. Some of you know this because you know that there are people in the office who have an ability when the emotions start to get up they can do or say things that bring you down. They are peacemakers. Whether they're Christians or not, they're doing peacemaking kinds of things. You may say, "I have an idea. Could we talk about this for a minute? Or try to understand what you're trying to say?" Those are peacemaking kinds of statements.

Every one of us can go into a situation and we can bring peace into that situation. God has called us to that, so we need to think about what are the messages we're sending out? Are we jumping into the conflict with our emotion? Is the comment we're making a comment that's going to stir up the conflict? That's what he's saying about this person who's a troublemaker. A troublemaker is someone who gets in there and stirs up the conflict. We want to be the people who are bringing peace into the situation.

A couple weeks ago when I was in Southern California, I was on the radio show "Pastor's Perspective." I don't know if you heard. I sent out a text or a Facebook message about thirty minutes before when I knew I was going to be on. This is a broadcast that has 300 thousand listeners in the United States. It's the Calvary Chapel station in Southern California. I was on that because I'm going to be doing a parenting seminar at their church, Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa, in October.

Josh, who's heading that up, he's one of the pastors at the church, was interviewing me on the radio station. Josh and I were talking about how Carrie and I raised him and how he's raising his boys and just talking about parenting. That was the dialogue for the first half hour and then we took questions from the listeners for the last half hour. It was a fascinating dialogue as Josh and I were talking about parenting in our relationship as father and son.

I said, "Josh, why don't you share with the listeners about how you taught your boys to engage people in conversation with open-ended questions." He said, "Oh yeah."

So here's what happened. This isn't what Josh shared, but this is how it happened. Carrie and I are sitting at dinner with the whole family, and Hayden, the seven-year-old, asked me a question. He says to me, "What do you like to do when you're not working?" A seven-year-old asked me that question. That's a pretty steep question, I'm thinking. So I said, "Well," and I like talking about what I do when I'm not working. Talking about myself is something I enjoy and so I'm doing that.

So he asks me another question to keep me talking. When he does that, Josh, who's sitting over here at the head of the table, starts laughing. And I said, "What's so funny?"

Josh says, “Let me tell you what Hayden is doing. We listened to a podcast together (this adult podcast Josh was listening to and Hayden and Hudson were there listening with him about how to engage people in significant conversation by using open-ended questions) so we practiced and we figured how you do it.”

Josh said to his boys, “You ask someone a question about what they’re interested in, you get them talking, then you’re doing the right thing. If they’re talking, you’re doing the right thing. If they’re talking, you’re doing well. If you’re talking, probably not doing it right. They’re talking. Then if you get them talking, ask them another question to keep them talking and then you’re going to be successful.”

So that’s what they’re practicing in their house. I’m going this is so bizarre for kids ten and seven learning how to be people who are engaging others in conversation. He’s teaching them how to be peacemakers in a lot of different ways, but that’s just one of them. I love what he’s doing.

When God responds to the troublemakers starting in verse 16, He responds this way: *There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him.* There are seven things that God hates. Let’s just look at them so we know what they are.

Number one – *haughty eyes*. That’s pride. Looking down on others. Building each other up. So I’m talking to my grandson because sometimes they say “I’m better than you” kinds of statements. That’s what’s happening here. *Haughty eyes*.

The second one – *a lying tongue*. That’s deceitfulness. I hate a lying tongue. God hates it. I hate it too because it undermines relationships. It damages relationships in a home or in a family. It’s really difficult.

I did a podcast last week, it’s really for parents, at the National Center for Biblical Parenting. The title of the podcast was “Sixth Truths About Lying Kids Need to Know.” Just trying to help children with this very important problem that can happen if they get sucked into lying. It’s dangerous and God hates it, it says right here.

The next one – *hands that shed innocent blood*. That’s murdering people. And most of us haven’t murdered anybody. Probably everybody here, but I don’t know all of you. But anyway, most of us can say we haven’t murdered anybody.

Just keep in mind we’re comparing this to the peacemaker in the Sermon on the Mount. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus is saying, “*You’ve heard that it was said, ‘Do not murder.’ But I tell you that anybody who is angry with his brother has committed murder inside his heart.*” Whoa. Now we’re talking about anger too. What’s the common ingredient between anger and murder? Revenge. The desire to get revenge. If you do it with a knife or you do it with your tongue, it’s still coming out of your heart in the same way. So let’s just think about that. We talk about innocent blood here and shedding it. We want to keep that in mind.

The next one, verse 18 – *a heart that devises wicked schemes*. As I look at that word *schemes* I realize I'm a schemer. I don't like to use that word for me because scheming has kind of a negative connotation. I'm a strategist. I like to develop plans. My doctorate is in organizational management and strategic planning and I apply that to a great extent to the family and to the church. I'm a strategist, but I'm thinking wow – it says *a heart that devises wicked schemes*. They're plotting evil. They're thinking how can we get away with this? How can we do this? That's what he's saying that God hates.

The next one – *feet that are quick to rush into evil*. Running into evil. As soon as there's struggle, they're in it. All the students, you just need to know that there's going to be evil on the college campuses. Some people will run to it. You'll see it.

Verse 19 – *a false witness who pours out lies*. That's saying something about you that isn't true or saying about someone that isn't true. Rather we want to have a sense of integrity.

Notice the last one – *and a person who stirs up conflict in the community*. That's the troublemaker idea being presented again. God hates that when people are stirring up conflict. I just want you to remember, you can be right and stir up conflict. Do you know that? Two people are fighting and you see one of them is right, one of them is wrong and so you side with the one who's right. You could be right, but you could still be stirring up conflict.

We're not talking about right or wrong; we're talking about stirring up conflict. If you entertain or you engage in people in a way that's unhelpful, you're stirring up conflict. God hates that. You're doing that troublemaker thing that's dangerous. So the solution, of course, for us is to be a peacemaker.

If we look at Matthew 5 we have these attitudes (we call them the Beatitudes), the first few verses, where Jesus does the Sermon on the Mount. He's talking about a lot of things and He's talking about the heart with people. He's talking about these attitudes that you want to have.

He says this: *Blessed are the peacemakers*. Happy. *Happy are the peacemakers*. These are the people who are bringing the energy down in a situation. They're bringing solutions to problems, moving them down to tasks. These are the people who bring peace into the situation.

In fact, Paul tells us that we are ministers of reconciliation. What that means is that we are helping the people get reconciled with God, certainly that reconciliation, but there is also the sense that we are helping others be reconciled together. I find a lot of my work is doing that, trying to help people be reconciled to each other.

What does that mean? How do you do that? How do you break the habits of engaging in dialogue that's unhelpful and move into a place where we can have more peace in a situation? God calls us to be peacemakers. You just have to look at each one of the Beatitudes and what it says after that – *for what? Blessed are the peacemakers for they are sons of God*. Wow. That's a calling that God has given to us. We are peacemakers. We are not troublemakers.

We want to certainly teach that to our children, but we also want to take it to heart ourselves because as we go into different situations, wherever we are in life, we can bring about that peacemaker idea. We can be the peacemakers if we know how to engage people in a way that brings people to peace. Not just bring what's true. Sometimes bringing what's true is not peaceful. I'm not saying you lie. But I'm saying that you don't always have to say everything you know and point out everyone else's weaknesses because you know they're wrong. That's stirring up conflict sometimes. We're talking about being a peacemaker and when you're a peacemaker it says we are *sons of God*. That's pretty amazing and a great thing to be pursuing in our own lives.

Proverbs has a lot of wisdom here. We're going to pick up the story in chapter 8 now. So as you're reading ahead, go to chapter 8 and we're going to learn about wisdom and the value of it in some significant ways. We'll see most of those Hebrew words that you see on your page are in chapter 8 and we'll be talking about them as well.

Remember, in order for you to be wise the first step is for you to be connected to the Lord. *Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*. That's what we need in our lives.

Let's stand. Let's pray together and then we're going to sing and worship the Lord some more.

[PRAYER] Lord, we come before you and we see these ideas and we don't want to implement them humanistically in our lives saying, "Oh here's a good idea," but we want to trust you and thank you for the way you've created the world and you've embedded wisdom in life situations and people and relationships. Lord, we want to be wise. We want to be able to move forward. We want to follow you in everything that we do. And so we ask you to speak to us. Lord, we are needy people. We are hungry for you. We need you every minute of our lives. We need you every hour of our day. And so we're asking you to just fill us with your grace, give us the solutions that we need, empower us to do what's right even when it's hard for us to do what's right. Help us to be the kind of people you want us to be. In Jesus' name, amen.