

# CHRISTIAN WORKER

“We are workers together with Him...” (2 Corinthians 6:1)

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## A WORD OF ADVICE FOR PREACHERS

Kevin W. Rhodes

Preaching is a personal profession. For those who put their heart and soul into it, their work and identity intertwine so extensively that they sometimes have trouble distinguishing the two. This reality makes offering advice to preachers a task fraught with challenges lest any recommendation come across as criticism or, worse, an attack. Nevertheless, advice—even unsolicited—provides an opportunity for personal evaluation and potential improvement. And while I am well aware that I do not possess perfect answers for a work that requires developing character, honing skills, growing knowledge, and building relationships for a lifetime, my prayer is that my counsel might yet prove of benefit to some.

**Commit yourself to personal and spiritual growth (1 Tim. 4:12-16).** Develop a growth plan for yourself to address every aspect of your life and then stick to it (2 Pet. 3:18). Read to build your skills more than to gather others’ opinions on issues and doctrine, as tempting as that might seem at times. Building your own exegetical skills, homiletical skills, teaching skills, and leadership skills are far more valuable in the long run. Then, study intelligently and diligently (2 Tim. 2:15). Guard your study time as if *others’* souls depend on it, because they do. This makes it possible for you to preach from what you are learning—not just from what you know—and demonstrates a commitment beyond a paycheck. Most of all, use this time to fortify your own soul (1 Cor. 9:27). If you are not growing spiritually, neither are the people to whom you preach.

**Focus on YOUR work (2 Tim. 4:5).** Preachers can easily get caught up in Facebook envy, an overabundance of recreational activities, socializing instead of evangelizing, or whatever current issue plagues the brotherhood. Instead, focus on the work and

what the people need. Take the time to get to know the area, the community, the congregation, and the leadership. Consider what they are doing well and where they need help. Make the time to consider what lessons they need to hear and how best to reach them. Then figure out how your strengths can help them overcome their weaknesses—and vice versa.

**Build lasting relationships (1 Tim. 5:1-2).** Allow yourself to get close enough to people to know their needs and to make sure they know you care. That will provide the foundation to help them spiritually far better than listening to denominational lessons online or building the world’s best website. Build relationships with other preachers based on God’s truth, godly love, and mutual respect. They are fellow soldiers in the Lord’s army (Phil. 2:25)—not enemy combatants to fight. Build the congregation’s leadership and partner with them. Work with elders as partners, brothers, and friends—not as competitors. Be

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## A WISE MAN WILL HEAR...

Cody Westbrook

**W**hat does it mean to be wise? Who is a wise man? History's pages are filled with the lives of those to whom we may point in an attempt to answer those questions. But no man, regardless of how wise he may be, could ever rival the wisdom of Solomon. Jehovah gave Solomon a "wise and understanding heart" unlike any before or after him (1 Kings 3:12). It seems fitting, then, that if one wants to know the true character of a wise man, one should ask the wise man. Therefore, we must turn our attention to Solomon's inspired description of the truly wise man. The book of Proverbs.

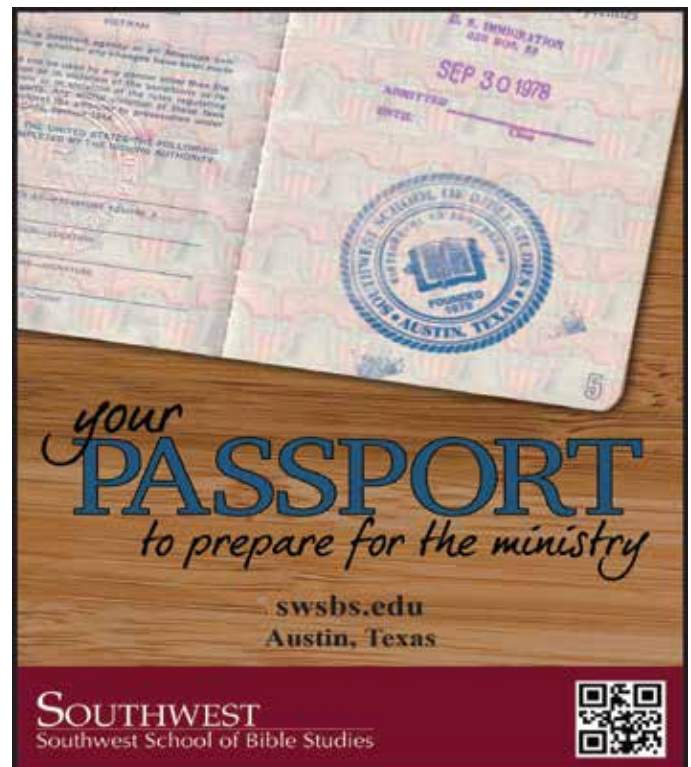
The purpose of the of Proverbs is "To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity (Pro. 1:2-3). The recipients of the book are identified in Proverbs 1:4-5: "To give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion—A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel." According to Solomon, the book of Proverbs is intended to impart divine wisdom which will enable one to navigate life with skill and understanding. Listening to what the book says and applying it with haste results in wisdom for both the young man, who has yet to learn it (1:4), and the older, wiser man, who could always learn more (1:5). In short, part of what makes a man wise is his desire to listen and learn regardless of age or maturity. "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser. Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning" (Pro. 9:9).

Rehoboam stands as a tragic example of the foolishness of refusing to listen to good advice. Upon his ascension to the throne, he sought the advice of the elders of Israel who instructed him well. But the new king rejected their wisdom and instead followed the direction of his young and foolish contemporaries. His actions resulted in the division of the kingdom (1 Kings 12). Rehoboam's folly is well captured in Proverbs 12:15— "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise." Moses, on the other hand, is a perfect example of listening to sage instruction. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, saw Moses sitting on the judgment seat from morning to night and rightly counseled him against it. He said, "The thing that you do is not good. Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to

perform it by yourself" (Ex. 18:17-18). Jethro advised Moses to delegate the task to good and able men so that Moses would be able to teach the people and bring the difficult cases before God. "So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said" (Ex. 18:24).

What makes a person wise? According to Solomon, a wise man is one who never stops listening to good advice. The temptation to stop listening tends to increase with age. An older man may think he has nothing still to learn, particularly from someone younger than him. But that temptation must be overcome. No one will ever be able to max out their need for learning and growing in wisdom. This edition of the Christian Worker is designed with that thought in mind. Our hope is that this issue will provide a nugget of wisdom for everyone, no matter their station in life. "A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel" (Pro. 1:5).

CW



## ... FOR ELDERS AND DEACONS

Ken Hope

**A**s a former elder and deacon, I'm excited about this opportunity to share some much-needed advice to others serving in these areas. Before the advice, let me first sound a word of appreciation.

"Thank you" to all the men who have served in the past or are presently serving as an elder or deacon in the Lord's church. As you have found out, this work is "the toughest job you'll ever love" (to borrow a catch phrase from the Peace Corps). Thank you for rising to the challenge of the greatest work known to mankind. Thank you for the time you invest, the prayers you offer, the sacrifices you make and the leadership you provide.

To give advice places one in a precarious position. The sad reality is that the self-sufficient of heart do not think they need it and the haughty of spirit will not heed it. Oscar Wilde humorously said, "The only thing to do with good advice is pass it on. It is never any use to oneself". On the other hand, it is still encouraging to know that the humble will always receive and appreciate it. An anonymous scribe once said, "Many receive advice, only the wise profit from it." Another declared, "To accept good advice is but to increase one's own ability." Thus, wisdom is not only needed in dispensing advice but also in receiving the same.

The advice I want to share was once given to me. It is still among the wisest and best advice I have ever received or heard. The one who gave me the advice was my father-in-law, Johnny Ramsey. Years ago, Johnny encouraged me to preach the gospel. He challenged me to leave my secular job and begin preaching in a full-time capacity. When I tried out for the work with my beloved brethren in Fruitvale, Johnny was delighted. When they asked me to come and labor with them, he was elated. Before we moved to Fruitvale, Johnny asked me to come over so we could talk.

I knew Johnny would be able to give me all kinds of helpful advice. I was confident he would tell me to "Preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2). After all, that is what Johnny was known for and loved to do. I was also certain that he would tell me, "In your preaching and teaching, strive to please God rather than men" (1 Thess. 2:4; Gal. 1:10). I also fully expected him to say something like, "Don't embarrass me or Iris".

When we met, I was surprised that he didn't mention anything I thought he might. What he did say caught me totally off guard. The wise advice he offered was none other than, "ENJOY YOUR FIRST WORK!".

What??? Would you repeat that, Johnny??? Did I hear you correctly??? Didn't you mean to tell me something else??? How wise and insightful was Johnny's advice on that occasion. He knew exactly what I needed to hear in light of my new opportunity

and challenge.

"Enjoy!" A forgotten word far too many times. "Enjoy!" Because God fully intends our service to Him to bring joy and happiness (Matt. 5:3-12; Ps. 144:15). "Enjoy!" This still stands among the best advice I have ever been given.

Without enjoyment, the wonderful opportunity before me would have become tiresome, boring and a huge burden (1 John 5:3; Mal. 1:13). Without enjoyment, everything is reduced to sheer monotony and boredom. Without enjoyment, the blessing of serving becomes a curse. Without enjoyment, a shepherd turns into a hireling (John 10). David realized the absolute necessity of enjoyment when he stood before God and begged, "Restore to me the *joy* of Your salvation..." (Ps. 51:12).

### *Enjoy your work because you are...*

- working in the Father's vineyard, engaged in His business (Matt. 21:28; Luke 2:49).
- serving under the Chief Shepherd and walking in His footsteps (1 Pet. 5:4; 2:21).
- laboring in the greatest institution known to man, the church (Matt. 13:44).
- like Nehemiah, doing a great work (Neh. 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:1).
- fulfilling the greatest need of sheep, which is loving leadership (Ps. 23; Matt. 9:36).
- working with the greatest people on earth, your brothers and sisters in Christ.
- looking forward to the greatest of rewards (Ps. 19:11; Matt. 5:12; Heb. 11:6; 1 Pet. 5:4).

CW

## ... FOR PARENTS

Allen Webster

**I**n Proverbs, Solomon invites us into the intimacy of his family circle. Twenty-three times<sup>1</sup> in the book he addresses "my son." Forty times he mentions mothers and fathers. Five times he mentions a wife (5:18; 6:29; 18:22; 19:13-14) and five additional times he mentions a wise, virtuous, or gracious woman (possibly referring to his wife or a future daughter-in-law). Let's allow the world's wise man to give us the verbs we need to successfully prepare our children for heaven.

### **OBSERVE YOUR CHILD**

"Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right" (Pro. 20:11). The American Standard Version has, "Even a child maketh himself known by his doings." The phrase "maketh himself known" implies adult observation. The next verse says, "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made both of them" (20:12). Solomon seems to be saying that God gave us senses for a reason—to use them to watch and listen

<sup>1</sup> In twelve separate chapters, especially the first seven.

to our children. Some parents keep a notebook in which they assimilate meaningful patterns (interests, intelligence, abilities, social skills) in the child's conduct. We can use such information to turn children's hearts toward heaven.

### ACCEPT YOUR CHILD

A parent's approval is important. Solomon knew he was "his father's son"<sup>2</sup> (Pro. 4:3), which is another way of saying that he was "Daddy's boy." Solomon begins Proverbs by identifying himself as the "son of David" (1:1)—not a preacher (as he did in Ecclesiastes), king, wise man, husband, or scientist, although he was each of these and more.

Parents succeed when they create an atmosphere of acceptance and foster a sense of belonging. This goes against the grain with some parents who set high goals for their children and drive them hard to fulfill those dreams. This is good to a point, but wisdom creates room for falling short and doing better next time. When a child feels he is never good enough for Dad or that she never does well enough to earn Mom's approval, frustration or depression may develop.

We can focus so much on what children are not doing right, that we do not see what they are doing well. One said, "A father needs to be on his child's team—not on his back" (cf. Rom. 14:19). We must not expect an adult head to sit on a child's shoulders. We should remember what it was like to be three, six, and sixteen and give children room to make mistakes, develop, learn, and grow. Perhaps *Reader's Digest* said it best: Rearing children is like holding a very wet bar of soap—too firm a grasp and it shoots from your hand, too loose and it slides away. A gentle but firm grasp keeps it in your control.<sup>3</sup>

### MANAGE THE CHILD

Matthew Henry commented on "even a child is known by his doings," saying, "Parents should observe their children, that they may manage them accordingly."<sup>4</sup> Only important people have managers. Professional athletes have managers; actors have managers; presidents have managers. And children of Christian parents have managers. Children are that important (Matt. 18:3; 19:13-15). The psalmist compared children to arrows in the hand of a mighty man: "As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate" (Ps. 127:4-5).

As an arrow needs to be aimed and propelled to reach its target, we both aim and propel our children toward heaven. What we reward and encourage gets repeated (humility, sharing, humor, love); what we punish and discourage (lying, pride, aggression, selfishness) is gradually eliminated.

A child with temperamental difficulties needs especially strong, loving management. Such children often turn out to be highly

<sup>2</sup> Remember that Solomon was the child born to David and Bathsheba after their first child died (2 Samuel 12:24).

<sup>3</sup> Quoting *Disciplines of a Godly Man*. R. Kent Hughes. Published by Good News Publishers, 2001. ISBN 1581342861, 9781581342864. Page 48.

<sup>4</sup> Commentary on Proverbs. E-sword Version.

creative, successful, even exceptional people—like Winston Churchill—but they need more management than "easy" children. Mothers especially have a powerful influence in aiming and pushing children in the right direction in their tender years. Some think this is the reason that mothers are mentioned in the Old Testament histories of the kings (1 Kings 15:13; 2 Kings 24:12; 2 Chron. 22:3). It seems that Lois and Eunice were the sole Christian family influences that molded Timothy into a capable preacher (cf. 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15).

### SHOW YOUR CHILD

"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways" (Pro. 23:26). More is caught than taught. In her autobiography, Linda Ellerbee, then co-anchor of NBC News Overnight, wrote that she once received this letter from a little girl: "Dear Miss Ellerbee, when I grow up, I want to do exactly what you do. Please do it better."<sup>5</sup>

Little eyes are watching us; little feet are following us; little minds are weighing our words and actions. Our character is a river flowing past our children hour by hour. One day our steps likely will be their steps, our thoughts will be their thoughts, and our words will be their words. "He walked in all the ways of . . . his father; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord" (1 Kings 22:43).

Verbs are words of action. "Go and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:37).

<sup>5</sup> Ellerbee, Linda (1986). *And So It Goes: Adventures in Television*. ISBN 0-399-13047-0.

CW

## ... FOR GRANDPARENTS

Dave Rogers

"Grandparent." Whether applied to an aged and enfeebled nursing home resident or a marathon-running, mountain-biking, adventure-seeking 45-year-old, in many ears this word conveys only one image—old. My own grandparents seemed "ancient" during my own childhood, though they were all about the age I have now attained. Two were faithful Christians and two were not, yet all are precious to me, and their examples are a large part of who I am now. Solomon wrote, "The memory of the just is blessed..." (Pro. 10:7), and I especially bless the memory of my Christian grandparents, and want all my grandchildren to know them in eternity.

A grandparent is first a parent and remains a parent. Though our own children have now become adults, our role in their lives has not ended, though it must necessarily change. No longer primarily teacher or disciplinarian, we now have the opportunity

to become mentor, counselor, and friend. In Proverbs 4:1-4, Solomon is passing on to his own children the good lessons he learned from his own father. We greatly bless both our children and grandchildren when the grandchildren can see that we embody and reinforce the principles their parents are trying to instill. Hindsight — the vantage point of our own experience — lets us see our successes and mistakes as parents. Take care to not damage a grandchild's soul by spoiling them or undermining the God-given authority of their parents. Our wisdom—if combined with humility and honesty—may enable us help our children repeat our successes while avoiding our errors. We can comfort and console grandchildren when they struggle to accept correction from their parents, but don't allow yourself to become a wedge between them.

Second, grandchildren are meant to be enjoyed so do enjoy them as much as possible (Pro. 17:6)! The Hebrew word for "crown" is the diadem or "wreath" of a king, a mark of honor. It corresponds in a large degree to the "victor's crown" of Philippians 4:1 and 1 Thessalonians 2:19, to which the apostle Paul compared the saints in both those places. Living to see our children's children is a significant accomplishment, and seeing a grandchild grow to become a faithful Christian is tangible evidence that we have touched eternity in the most positive way possible! Hebrews 11:4 reminds us that Abel "... though he died,...still speaks." The time you spend with your grandchildren is precious, so make the most of it! What memories will you leave, to touch their future? Will your grandchildren remember your wisdom, righteousness, and reverence for God (Pro. 1:3 & 7)? Imagine the joy that Timothy's faithfulness and commitment must have provided Lois, whose faith was the "root" of his own (2 Tim. 1:5)! Delight in your grandchildren, especially when they are also your brethren (remember Ps. 133:1).

Third, realize that God has blessed you with a tremendous opportunity to teach and mold the souls of your grandchildren. Whether your time together is limited to summers, holidays and vacations, or is "full-time" due to economic stress, divorce, or some other challenge, your words, actions, and example will impact them for life. Don't try to "prove" your love by the money, property, or the university tuition you may leave them. While Proverbs 13:22 does say, "a good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children," a legacy of commitment to Christ has far greater value than any of this world's goods! In Deuteronomy 4:9 and 6:1-2, Moses reminded grandparents in Israel that they were to teach both their children and their grandchildren to "keep all his statutes and his commandments ... that thy days may be prolonged." He likewise warns us that the consequences of our misdeeds can reach to "...the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Deu. 4:25). It is worth noting here that all of these scriptural instructions conform to the fundamental principle expressed in Proverbs 22:6, of "training" a child, which speaks as much of demonstrating right conduct as of providing proper information.

Fourth, recognize that getting to be a grandparent is part of

God's reward for your own faithfulness, according to Psalm 128:1-6! We often joke that "grandchildren are God's reward for not giving up on their parents," but the reality is that they are His reward for our own patience and persistence in guiding their parents into the faith! We are blessed beyond measure when we are able to know our grandchildren as our brethren in Christ as well as "grand" children!

CW

## ...FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Trent Kennedy

### To the youth in the pew

**Y**oung people, you must realize that living in sin is an option, but it is not a good option. Some temptations may be greater for youth (2 Tim. 2:22). Many have tried it before coming to their senses (cf. Luke 15:17). Moses, educated in the ways of Egypt and understanding the lifestyle he could have led apart from God, chose to be associated with God and God's people instead of enjoying "the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:25-26). Young people, you must consider the options that this world offers. Only then can you count the cost of a lifetime allegiance to Christ (Luke 14:28-30). We want you to choose wisely, but you must commit for yourself (cf. Josh. 24:15).

There is a temptation to place one foot firmly in the church: you participate in Lads, you label yourselves Timothy's or Tabitha's, and you cultivate an image of faithfulness. Yet, with your other foot you are tempted to stand in the world. This creates an issue of limping between two opposing sides (cf. 1 Kings 18:21; Jas. 4:4). So, if the cost is worth it to you (I know it is to me!), then you must commit yourself fully to the cause of Christ (Mark 12:30). There is another temptation for young people, especially those who grew up in the church: you may be tempted to commit to Christ because of someone else. Maybe it is your family's tradition or your girlfriend's church or your husband's faith. This will never work. The faith is once for all delivered (Jude 3) and does not belong to your husband; the church belongs to Christ not your girlfriend; and the family that matters above all else is the one where God is the Father. You must cultivate your own faith. You should never want to just be in the pew. Christianity is a life that must be learned, lead, and lived. Understand that you still have to grow in your knowledge and ability in Christ. This is your responsibility not anyone else's. However, you cannot buy the line that "you are the future of the church" unless it is qualified by an understanding that you are also the present of the church - especially the local congregation who depends on you for energy, effort, and example. Do not wait until a later stage in life before you decide to make the greatest decision you possibly could (Ecc.12:1). You are important right now (Tit. 2:1-8; 1 John 2:12-14; 1 Tim. 4:12).

**To the youth in the pulpit**

There is a special group of young men among us, young preachers. These men, often inexperienced preachers or recent graduates, are truly a blessing to the Lord's church. We can see how special they are to God with the epistles to Timothy and Titus. Being a young preacher also comes with expectations and opportunities.

Above all, you must preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2). I think this goes without saying. Never deviate from the Good book for the words, thoughts, or comments of men. As young men who labor in the Scriptures, I would advise you to put your head down and do your work. Be more worried about the local work than about the "hot issues" in the brotherhood. I encourage you to spend more time at the kitchen tables of members and contacts than you spend at out of state lectureships. Show up every day and put in the work. Every VBS, you need to be there to support everything and everyone. Every workday, you need to clear your schedule, show up, put on the gloves, break a sweat, and learn something. Go to youth devotionals. Go to lunch with the older members. Teach ladies' class. After a few years of head down hard work, come up for air and look around. Then, put your head back down and put your hand to the plow once more.

One of the best things you can do as a young preacher is practice discipline. Discipline yourself to study. You do not have all the answers. No one this side of God does. Challenge yourself to grow. Discipline yourself to be consistent with everyone. Do not be a respecter of persons. Always be willing to have your private words displayed publicly and speak accordingly. Be the same person in the pulpit and out of the pulpit. Be the same person on Saturday and Sunday. Have the discipline to filter your words and say everything you think. This is called wisdom. Plan to stay a while in the local work. No church family is perfect. No preacher is perfect. Invest in the local brethren with your time and energy. Get to know them and their families. Learn to speak the language. You can only do this by being a part of the local community or neighborhood where you live, labor, and preach. Look for a mentor in the local congregation or possibly an area preacher who can encourage your dedication to the local work. These mentors can provide great wisdom in the cab of the truck or over a cup of coffee.

Young people, you are important to God and the church. Never be content in the pew. Live, serve, work, be holy, be faithful. Never believe that standing in the pulpit elevates you above the church. Live, serve, work, be holy, be faithful. Realize that you have unique abilities and opportunities and use these to the glory of God.

**CW**

Ronnie Scherffius

**T**he book of Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings that teach practical and moral lessons. Written by Solomon (Pro. 1:1), it served as instructions to make a son wise and knowledgeable (Pro.1:2, 8; 2:1; 3:1; et al.). Though the book was written as instruction to an individual, there are many proverbs we can apply to the church. Let us note a few to emphasize the importance of laboring in the work of the church.

**A working church is a prospering church.** Throughout the book, Solomon consistently emphasized the importance of working in contrast to slothfulness. We find one example of this in Proverbs 10:4, "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich." The "slack hand" is the lazy man; the "hand of the diligent" is the working man. In laziness, there is poverty, but with diligent work is great increase. Applying this proverb to the church, we conclude that a working church is a church that prospers.

Many elderships discuss good works but never put plans into action. Church members are sometimes quick to talk about work that is not being done but refrain from putting their hands to the plow. To these, wisdom teaches: "In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury" (Pro. 14:23). Additionally, how often do we make excuses for abstaining from the work of the church? Solomon noted, "The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets" (Pro. 22:13). In other words, one excuse is as good as another! Nevertheless, excuses do not excuse one from his responsibility to be diligent in the work of the church.

Jesus pictured the work in the kingdom of God as laboring in a vineyard (cf. Matt. 20:1). With this thought in mind, consider the following:

I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man (Pro. 24:30-34).

Brothers and sisters, is the church where you attend and worship growing? If not, ask yourself, are we working or simply talking about work? Are we laboring in the vineyard of the Lord, or have we excused ourselves from His call? Wisdom teaches that a working church is a prospering church.

**The size of the local congregation is not the most important factor.** Another word of advice to the church from the proverbs

highlights size and numbers. “Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right” (Pro. 16:8). There is a mentality that the greater the numbers, the stronger and greater the church. After all, greater numbers translate to greater contributions; therefore, greater work. Because of this attitude, some churches are found sacrificing what is “right” for riches.

Parallel to this thought is Proverbs 15:16, “Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith” (Pro. 15:16). Compromising what is “right” for any reason is to invite trouble. That trouble may come with error. That trouble may come as strife among brethren. Trouble will certainly come in the day of the Lord (cf. Isa. 13:9; Jer. 46:10; Eze. 13:5) for the compromising church!

The key is not in great numbers but great faith and participation by the numbers we have. “Where no oxen are, the crib is clean; but much increase is by the strength of the ox” (Pro. 14:4). When none are working in harmony with the Lord, there is no fruit, regardless of the size of the church! However, even a few, when laboring with the Lord, can do much good work. The size of the local congregation is not the most important factor, but the depth of faith and participation of its members.

These are but a sample of the Proverbs of Solomon that serve as advice for the church. For further study, consider the benefit of the church to the local community (Pro. 11:10-11) and the nation (Pro. 14:34); the longevity of a local congregation (Pro. 10:30; 12:7; 14:11); the importance of elders in the church (Pro. 11:14; 15:22); soundness in the pulpit (Pro. 13:17); wisdom and necessity of practicing church discipline (Pro. 19:28; 22:16; 16:6). Brothers and sisters, let us ever look to the wisdom of the Scriptures for understanding in our personal lives as well as the life and health of the body of Christ.

CW

understanding of God’s Word. (And they should improve their teaching skills with this in mind.) But preaching should explain *how* to put faith into action, *how* to go from the doctrinal to the practical, and *how* to move from understanding to implementation. Do not expect people to recognize personal application themselves; counsel them how to apply God’s truth to their lives as specifically and distinctly as possible. Show them how to build greater character. Challenge them to take on greater responsibilities. Push them to greater heights of spiritual understanding and growth (1 Thess. 2:11-12).

**Seek excellence rather than acceptance (Phil. 3:13-14).** Do not allow yourself to become too comfortable with yourself. If you want other Christians to excel, then you must demonstrate a commitment to consistent improvement yourself. A preacher should always be improving—as a Christian, as a husband and father, as a speaker, as a student, as a friend. Let people see that, and take them along for the journey.

**Make God’s perspective your perspective (1 Sam. 16:7).** Preach the gospel with the heart of one who loves souls as God does (John 3:16). Defend the truth as you would the core of your being (Jude 3). Become God’s man for God’s people (1 Tim. 6:11). See yourself as a servant (1 Cor. 4:1-2). Put God at the center of the work—not the congregation and not yourself (1 Cor. 3:21-23). Meditate on God’s priorities until they become your own.

This advice, admittedly, addresses only the bare fundamentals of a preacher’s life and work. However, I pray that you will consider it in the spirit offered and that your work may be blessed as a result. The church needs faithful men doing faithful work (2 Tim. 2:2). And I am thankful for each and every one of them.

CW

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the best friend you can be to everyone with their souls in mind, and you will build relationships for eternity.

**Love people sincerely and deeply (1 Thess. 2:7-8).** Be there for them—when they are ignorant, when they are weak, when they are confused, and when they are a problem. And appreciate those who are knowledgeable, strong, clear-headed, and helpful. Make the most of your time with the brethren—all of them (1 Thess. 2:17-20). Care for those who are critical of you (Matt. 5:43-44). Rejoice in those who support you (2 Tim. 1:16-18). They are all God’s people—the best people on earth and your family in eternity. Make that meaningful.

**Teach meaning; preach significance (1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 4:2-4).** Preachers should teach people to have a greater





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# SOUTHWEST

SOUTHWEST SCHOOL OF BIBLE STUDIES

Southwest graduates serve as preachers, authors, campus directors, missionaries, and school leaders on five continents. Whatever your passion, with strong academics and hands-on training, our collegiate program will empower you to serve Christ and His church.

## FACULTY

Steven Lloyd Director  
Clay Bond Associate Director  
Matt Gibson  
Carl McCann  
Ronnie Scherffius  
Cody Westbrook

- Two year full-time program for men and women
- Well-respected Bible faculty
- Verse-by-verse study of the entire Bible
- Training in expository preaching
- No tuition
- Living expense assistance available
- Studies in Biblical languages

“To Know Jesus and...make Him known”

## From the Director's desk



Steven Lloyd  
Director SWSBS

We have been busy the months of February and March. In addition to the third quarter getting underway, we were involved in Southwest's annual Arise! Spiritual Growth Workshop. It began Thursday evening and ended on Sunday afternoon. Four days prior to the Arise! Workshop both first and second year students met with brother Rob Whitacre for advanced training in personal work.

The first weekend in March we traveled to Round Rock for the PTP Spark! workshop —another Thursday through Sunday event. At the writing of this update, we are back in the classroom making every effort to finish our work for the quarter.

Looking forward, we already have a robust incoming class in August 2022. To date, there are eleven students who have sent us their application. All but one or two have been formally approved. Some were approved over a year ago and are now setting things in order to attend. Three of the students are from outside the United States. Sister Jovita Putri is from Indonesia. Brother Isaac Golegeor is from Liberia. Jonathan Tabora and his family are from Honduras. Sister Jovita Putri has already been approved by the US Embassy. The approval of Isaac and Jonathan is pending their appointments with the US Embassy.

Last, but not least, remember to pray for brother Trent Kennedy and his family for all the traveling ahead of them. Lord willing, they will return to Texas sometime this Summer to join our work in the school.

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