

What should you treasure besides financial wealth? (2:1-8)

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THE TEXT (NASB)

~~My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity, guarding the paths of justice and watching over the way of his saints (ESV).~~

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom. From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright. He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, Guarding the paths of justice, and He preserves the way of His godly ones. KJV - Proverbs 2:1

INTRODUCTION



We love treasures. Everyone has some sort of treasure, but do we cherish things that give lasting benefits—like our marriages?

God wants us to hoard his words, internalize his commandments like they're precious financial assets. If God hated riches—or if he wanted us to hate them—he would never have used visible riches to draw our thoughts to more important invisible treasures.

If you're tripping over the words 'my son,' read on.



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COMMENTARY

Translation: *treasure up*



The Hebrew word for “treasure up,” צָפַן (*ṣā•pān*, pronounced “tsah•fan”), is used thirty-three times in the Bible. It appears first in Exodus 2:2, where Moses’ mother hid baby Moses for three months to protect him from harm. The word means “to conceal with definite purpose,” storing things because of their value. It’s like the Hebrew word מָצֹפֶן (*māz•pōn*, pronounced “mats-pōn”), “hidden treasure.”

Something precious is protected. We don’t usually flout our treasures. We’re reluctant to disclose our income or finances. Our love makes the details a private matter. Yet we value more than just financial wealth. We treasure freedom, health, the respect of our communities, our families?

Treasure Good Teaching



This is the second time in “the financial Proverbs” (and fourth time in Proverbs) that the term “my son” is used. It’s first used to warn against “getting ahead” by teaming up with the wicked to rob others (Proverbs 1:10). Now the writer states that his commandments should be treasured like precious riches. The son’s pursuit should be God’s wisdom, understanding, discernment and more understanding.

Off On a Tangent of “Son,” “Daughter,” or “Child”

Why does the text read “my son” instead of “my child”? Does this show a bias toward the male at the expense of the female? Is God sexist?

God has designed the sexes for different roles. Male and female have equal importance but different, complimentary God-given mandates. Equal worth but different roles. Many people



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confuse equal importance with identical function. Disagreements over the relative worth of male and female is like arguing over the worth of a knife versus a fork. It depends on the job.

When it comes to using “Man” to refer to both sexes, take a lesson from the Creator, the Source of male and female. God himself says, “Male and female he (God) created them, and He blessed them and named them Man (Hebrew: Adam) when they were created” (Genesis 5:2, ESV). God consistently uses the masculine gender to refer to all humanity or the pronoun “he” to refer to a son, daughter or wife (Deuteronomy 13:6-8). Yet importantly, God also refers to groups of people, like the nation of Egypt (Isaiah 19:14), the tribe of Israel (Jeremiah 3:6) or the city of Jerusalem (Zephaniah 3:2) as “she.”

The Gender Hot Button



This tangential topic is controversial, especially now that “gender identity” is trendy and the gender blender, whirling on high. Yet: “In the beginning God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27). Men and women are together in God’s image, equally important but united in different roles and responsibilities. God designed men to lead and women to assist (Genesis 2:18). Men should lovingly provide and protect. Women should lovingly support and nurture. This design was established before the Great Rebellion, what theologians call the Fall. Now the Battle of the Sexes rages in academic circles as a debate between “complementarianism” and “egalitarianism.”

I believe the Bible teaches complementarianism. Given man’s leadership responsibility, God holds men, rather than women, primarily accountable for directing the family and community. God uses the word Man to refer to both men and women, and this was the common linguistic convention for millennia, until the West began to reject the natural and Biblical reality. The convention of naming the collective as female (like “cows” or “ducks”) occurs when the males (bulls or drakes) have harems, instead of united couples. Using the label “man” to refer to humanity does not diminish the natural differences, but celebrates their uniting in a couple.

The Great Rebellion



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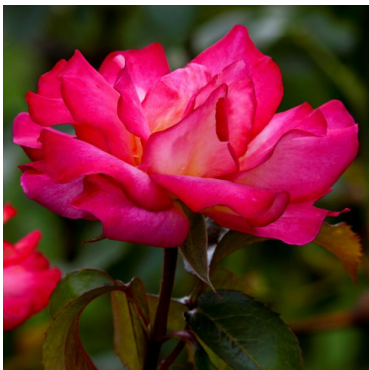


Unfortunately, our complimentary design differences were contaminated by the Fall, the Great Rebellion against God. Adam, the first male, deliberately violated his leadership responsibility and chose to disobey God. The resulting wound has infected relations between men and women ever since. God hates rebellion and cursed His Creation because of sin. Sin has poisoned all of Adam and Eve's children – us! The result of this rebellion is death, since a perfectly loving God cannot abide our imperfect pride.

Fortunately, “God so loved the World” (John 3:16) that He sent His son Jesus Christ, who paid the price for us by letting himself be executed on the Cross. (See video below, “What is the Gospel?”)

Men display sinful pride by either neglecting their duty to lead lovingly, or being tyrannical and insensitive. Much feminist anger is a reaction to loveless male leadership. Learn more about this at The Danvers Statement 1 (More tab) or visit the [Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood](#) website.

Jesus Christ Gives Clarity



In Christ there is “neither male nor female” (Galatians 3:28). Yet, when Jesus appointed twelve apostles, He did not choose six men and six women. Likewise, the Spirit of God led the apostle Paul to appoint only males as elders in the churches (1 Corinthians 14:34), though women were often the first followers. He told men they should die for their wives: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25).

Those who reject Jesus as their Saviour have no spiritual insight to apply Proverbs' lessons for a blessed unity of men and women. They keep women under their thumbs, instead of by their sides, where God created them (Genesis 2:22-24). Self-sacrificing leadership is easy to obey



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and support. Proverbs is addressed especially to men because of this servant-leadership. So the Hebrew word in the text is properly translated as “son,” not “child.”

Back from the Tangent: Dig For Treasures



People make huge efforts to find hidden treasures, like sunken Spanish galleons. But wisdom and understanding, like gold and silver, do not come easily. Gold may be patiently panned from a stream, and silver requires real mechanical excavation. Gold and silver must be sought, mined, hunted. Rock and dirt must be discarded to find the treasure. The concept of hidden treasure ties into the fuller meaning of the Hebrew word “tsah•fan.”

As my dad used to say, anything worth having takes sweat. Wisdom, understanding, and knowledge are all treasures, so be prepared to make the effort— like right now. They are not inborn like raw intelligence or athletic ability. A sharp mind and a healthy body need training. Without nutrition, exercise and proper rest, minds can become dull and the athlete, a couch potato.

God’s Word is Precious

Why make the effort of mining God’s word like a precious metal? The answer is outlined in the rest of Proverbs 2 in three categories:

1. We receive the *perspective of God Almighty* (2:5-8), and this guides us in making wise choices and guards us against painful, costly mistakes.
2. God’s word overflows with *practical common sense* (2:9-19). This will help us to choose the right friends, partners and associations.
3. God’s perspective enables us to *enjoy life and be confident* about the future (2:20-21); those who disregard these instructions have lives of frustration, dissatisfaction, and anxiety.



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OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

This text from *Proverbs* speaks of prizing and internalizing the words and wisdom of God Almighty. We then read in the new covenant (John 1:14) that the conversation of God with our world “became flesh and dwelt among us.” The message became a person. God’s thought was born as particular person at a particular time and place. Amazing! If this is true and God is conversing with all humanity through the person of Jesus Christ, then Jesus is more important than the text of *Proverbs*.

How much do we prize Him? How much effort do we exert in seeking Him and becoming like Him? According to Jesus, unless we become like Him, we are zombies - the walking dead. Read the words for yourself. Are they controversial? Read Jesus’ words for yourself: John 6:53.

APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Identify an area of financial need in your life. It will likely be one of the four battle zones (sectors) from Prospecting in Proverbs. Then begin to study the relevant biblical financial truths on this topic. For example, in the battle with spending, learn to avoid impulsive buying for personal pleasures.
- Form an accountability team with one or two other people and begin to memorize the sacred scriptures together. Consider using a scripture memory program such as the Topical Memory Systems put out by the Navigators.
- Spend time and money to get this type of security. It does not come without cost and effort.

Which of these steps, if any, does Jesus want you to take now? Ask Him.



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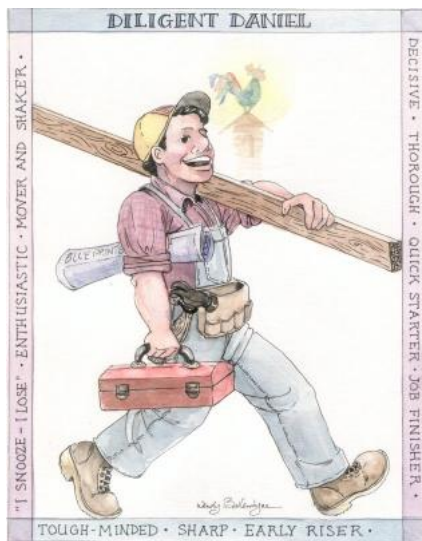
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KEY WORDS

better life (quality), commandments, gold, integrity, LORD, stability, treasure, wisdom, bf saving

ILLUSTRATION

Who is Diligent Daniel?



Diligent Daniel is a friend of Steady Eddie. Whereas Steady Eddie is known for his staying power, Diligent Daniel is known for his decisiveness and thoroughness. He is an early riser, a quick starter, and a job finisher. There's no room for procrastination here.

Daniel is tough-minded and sharp. He tells himself each day, “I snooze- I lose.” He pushes himself and calls himself lazy. He is tough on himself—not rough.

He’s the one Benjamin Franklin was thinking about two hundred years ago when he came up with the maxim, “Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, WEALTHY, and wise.” Daniel’s also the one the author Oswald Chambers described with the words, “The heights by great men reached and kept, were not attained by sudden flight, but they while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night.”

Daniel is more of a thinker than Steady Eddie, but is known for his enthusiastic work capacity, not his brilliance. He’s a mover and a shaker. He’s not afraid to get his hands dirty and is in good physical condition. He’s a builder. He starts the job right away and gets it DONE. He doesn’t flip-flop in this thinking. He is not double-minded. He remains humble while exuding confidence.



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(ESV)
One of his favourite financial tools is the Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP).



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FOOTNOTES

¹ The “Danvers Statement.” [PDF Here.](#)

