

**THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION**  
**Proverbs: Topical Applications of Proverbs**  
**II. Motivational Commands, Proverbs 1:8-9:18**  
**B. Things To Pursue**  
**3. Pursuing God’s Wisdom For Edifying Relationships**  
**(Proverbs 3:27-35; 4:20-27)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

The need for edifying relationships is very big today:

(1) The problem is both nationwide and worldwide: “The 2026 World Happiness Ranking, coordinated by the University of Oxford . . . considered the gold standard of global life-satisfaction studies,” found that “(i)n the United States, life satisfaction had declined steadily in recent years. US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy declared a national ‘epidemic of loneliness and isolation’ in 2023, and things haven’t improved much since. According to the new World Happiness report, part of the decline in US life satisfaction is linked to young Americans’ addiction to social media, which is driving up anxiety and depression among them.” (Andres Oppenheimer, “Fix the Happiness Gap,” The New York Post, March 30, 2026, p. 27)

(2) Relationship problems affect even people who have friends: (a) “Weary but Still Caring” wrote a letter to Annie Lane of the “Dear Annie” column in the Republican-American, April 6, 2026, p. B10, reporting, “I have known” a “woman for more than 20 years, and in many ways, she has been a loyal and lively part of my life . . . But in recent years, our friendship has begun to feel less like a comfort and more like a burden. Nearly every conversation revolves around her troubles, her grievances, her worries and the endless complications of her daily life . . . (I)s it wrong to step back from someone I care for when the relationship has become so one-sided?” (b) Another letter to the “Dear Annie” column by “Invisible in Plain Sight” admitted, “From the outside, my life looks full. I have family, friends, responsibilities and a calendar that rarely seems empty. Yet, somehow, I often feel lonely . . . I spend so much time taking care of other people . . . but very rarely does anyone ask how I am doing . . . Lately, I have found myself pulling back . . . because it hurts to keep showing up and feeling invisible.” (Ibid., April 7, 2026, p. B10)

(3) A significant need for many people is the need to relate well with oneself: (a) A Republican American lead editorial recently lamented, “It remains . . . deeply troubling, that hundreds of Connecticut boys and girls, men and women, are dying of drug overdoses every year . . . (T)he most pressing question is this: . . . Is the culture our forebears crafted . . . so empty, so unfulfilling, that large numbers of us succumb to the lure of drug use? What exactly are drug users trying to escape from?” (“Overdoses on the decline, but remain troubling,” Ibid., April 4, 2026, p. A6) (b) Relationship needs with oneself afflict many people who are sober, too: A letter by “Running On Empty” to “Dear Annie” admitted, “I’m constantly feeling exhausted and overwhelmed trying to balance work, family and personal life. Between long hours at the office, helping my kids with schoolwork, managing household chores and trying to stay connected with friends, it feels like there’s never enough time for myself. Even when I try to take a break, I feel guilty for not doing ‘something productive.’ I know I’m not alone – so many people I talk to feel the same – but I don’t know how to stop feeling stretched so thin . . .” (Ibid., April 8, 2026, p. B12)

Need: *So we ask, “In view of today’s big needs for edifying relationships, CAN we have them, and IF so, HOW?”*

- I. **Proverbs 1:8-9:18 provides motivational commands to get readers to align with God’s “wisdom,” His *hokmah*, or fixed eternal moral order for success and blessing, and Proverbs 3:27-35 with 4:20-27 reveal that pursuing the advice of God’s “wisdom” produces comprehensive, edifying relationships.**
- II. **The relationships that are edified by heeding the advice of God’s “wisdom” include one’s relationship with the Lord, his relationships with other people and his relationship with himself (as follows):**
  - A. Pursuing “wisdom” leads one to respect the Lord for a good relationship with Him, Proverbs 3:31-35:
    1. God’s “wisdom” leads one not to envy a violent person or to take any of his paths in life, for God detests such a perverse person but takes an upright person into His counsel, Proverbs 3:31-32.
    2. God’s “wisdom” leads one to live righteously in respect for his accountability to the Lord, for God puts a curse on the house of the wicked while blessing the abode of the righteous, Proverbs 3:33.
    3. God’s “wisdom” leads one to be humble and not mock other people, for God mocks those who mock other people, and He gives favor to those who are humble, Proverbs 3:34.
    4. God’s “wisdom” leads one to inherit the Lord’s reward of honor where fools who do not heed God’s “wisdom” He holds up to be shamed before others, Proverbs 3:35.

- B. Pursuing “wisdom” leads one to relate with others caringly for good relationships with them, Prov. 3:27-30:
  - 1. God’s “wisdom” leads one to do good to others to whom good is due when it is in his power to do good instead of either neglecting to do what is good or withholding it from those who deserve it, Prov. 3:27-28.
  - 2. God’s “wisdom” leads one to avoid plotting harm against his neighbor when that neighbor lives trustfully beside him and has done no harm to him, Proverbs 3:29-30.
- C. Pursuing “wisdom” leads one to manage himself well for a good relationship with himself, Proverbs 4:20-27:
  - 1. God’s “wisdom” leads one to heed the advice of godly parents for his comprehensive welfare, Pr. 4:20-22.
  - 2. God’s “wisdom” leads one to avoid twisted, perverted speech and to speak only what is transparently true, for doing so supports his welfare in relating with others, with the Lord and with himself, Proverbs 4:24.
  - 3. God’s “wisdom” leads one to guard his inner man, for it is the wellspring of his earthly life, Proverbs 4:23. (This will include pulling back from corruptive or abusive people, 1 Cor. 15:33 NIV; 2 Tim. 3:1-5 NIV.)
  - 4. God’s “wisdom” leads one to keep his focus on his proper goals without getting distracted from them to his harm, Proverbs 4:25. (This also leads to applying 1 Cor. 15:33 NIV and 2 Tim. 3:1-5 NIV.)
  - 5. God’s “wisdom” then leads one to make level paths for his feet and to take only secure paths to avoid harming himself, Prov. 4:26. (This also leads to applying 1 Cor. 15:33 NIV and 2 Tim. 3:1-5 NIV.)
  - 6. God’s “wisdom” then leads one to avoid swerving from the level, firm paths that point him to his proper goals to avoid harm, Proverbs 4:27. (This also leads to applying 1 Cor. 15:33 NIV and 2 Tim. 3:1-5 NIV.)

**III. These edifying behavior patterns are obtained in the current dispensation of the Church by one’s correct personal spiritual alignment with the Lord (as follows):**

- A. We must first trust in Christ for salvation from sin to be indwelt by God the Holy Spirit, John 3:16; Titus 3:5.
- B. As we then rely by faith on the Spirit for behavior control, God enables us to have good relationships (Gal. 5:16-23), and we can nurture these relationships by fellowship with godly believers. (1 Jn. 1:4-7; Heb. 10:25)

***Lesson:*** Pursuing the advice of God’s “wisdom” leads one to comprehensive blessings in relationships by respecting God, by relating caringly with others and by managing oneself well.

***Application:*** (1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we then rely by faith on the indwelling Holy Spirit of God to respect God, to relate to others caringly and to manage ourselves well for edifying relationships.

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message and/or provide additional guidance . . .)

Each issue of concern in our introduction can be addressed by the proverbs and Bible truths in this sermon:

- (1) Each issue can be **begin** to be solved by (a) trusting in Christ for salvation from sin to receive eternal life and be indwelt by the Holy Spirit (b) followed relying on the Holy Spirit for behavior control in one’s relationships.
- (2) Then, the issue of society-wide loneliness and isolation can be handled by applying Proverbs 4:23 to guard one’s inner man by cutting back on one’s involvement in worldly social media and enhancing one’s spiritual fellowship with the Lord and His godly believers for fulfillment by meeting with them. (1 John 1:4-7; Hebrews 10:25)
- (3) The issue of one’s friendship turned burdensome can be handled by applying Proverbs 3:29-30 on doing the burdensome friend no harm while applying Proverbs 4:23 to nurture one’s inner man by enhancing one’s fellowship with the Lord and godly believers for fulfillment by meeting with them. (1 John 1:4-7; Hebrews 10:25)
- (4) The issue of always giving but not getting in relationships can be met in applying Proverbs 4:23, 26-27 to guard one’s inner man by making level, secure paths for his feet and then not swerving from them as one avoids company with abusive or corruptive people who harm his inner man. (1 Cor. 15:33 NIV and 2 Tim. 3:1-5 NIV)
- (5) The issue of substance abuse can be handled by applying Proverbs 3:33 to live righteously in accountability to God for His blessing and not discipline, all by the Holy Spirit’s enabling (cf. Galatians 5:16-23).
- (6) The issue of feeling pressured between avoiding the feeling of being unproductive and overworking that ends in burnout in relationships can be handled by applying Proverbs 4:23 and 25 to focus on guarding our inner man by adopting God’s goals for us. Then we can heed Proverbs 4:26 to make level, secure paths for our feet to reach God’s goals followed by applying Proverbs 4:27 not to swerve off of those paths no matter what we or others think! (This may involve applying 1 Cor. 15:33 NIV and 2 Tim. 3:1-5 NIV in avoiding troubling people.) A lot of false guilt comes from errant expectations that we or others put on us where God wants us to rest in Him (Matt. 11:28-30)!

**May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God’s gift of eternal life. May we then rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit Who comes to indwell us at salvation to respect God, to relate to others carefully and to manage ourselves well.**