

Message Nine
**Reading the Book of Proverbs with a Praying Spirit
 So That It Will Render Us Nuggets and Gems
 to Strengthen Our Life of Pursuing Christ
 for the Fulfillment of God's Economy**

MC Hymns: 799, 812

Scripture Reading: Prov. 1:1-7; Eph. 4:22-24; 6:17-18

Prov 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, the king of Israel:
 Prov 1:2 For knowing wisdom and instruction; / For discerning words of understanding;
 Prov 1:3 For receiving instruction in wise conduct, / Righteousness, justice, and equity;
 Prov 1:4 For giving prudence to the simple, / Knowledge and discretion to the young man;
 Prov 1:5 That the wise man may hear and increase in learning, / And he who has understanding may acquire sound counsel;
 Prov 1:6 For understanding proverb and figure, / The words of the wise and their difficult sayings.
 Prov 1:7 The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; / Fools despise wisdom and instruction.
 Eph 4:22 That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit,
 Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind
 Eph 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.
 Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,
 Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

I. Proverbs is a collection of the words of the wise (1:1-7); it stresses the wisdom that man receives of God through his contacting of God (cf. 2 Chron. 1:10-12; Col. 2:2-3; 1:28-29), and it teaches man how to behave and build up his character in his human life (cf. Phil. 1:20; Gal. 6:7-8; 5:22-26):

Prov 1:1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, the king of Israel:
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 Prov 1:5 That the wise man may hear and increase in learning, / And he who has understanding may acquire sound counsel;
 Prov 1:6 For understanding proverb and figure, / The words of the wise and their difficult sayings.
 Prov 1:7 The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge; / Fools despise wisdom and instruction.
 2 Chron 1:10 Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?
 2 Chron 1:11 Then God said to Solomon, Because this is on your heart and you have not asked for riches, wealth, or honor, nor for the life of those who hate you, nor have you even asked for long life, but have asked for wisdom and knowledge for yourself so that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king;
 2 Chron 1:12 Wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and riches and wealth and honor I will give you, such as no kings who were before you have had, nor any after you will have.
 Col 2:2 That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,
 Col 2:3 In whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.
 Col 1:28 Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ;
 Col 1:29 For which also I labor, struggling according to His operation which operates in me in power.
 Phil 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.
 Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

- Gal 6:8 For he who sows unto his own flesh will reap corruption of the flesh, but he who sows unto the Spirit will of the Spirit reap eternal life.
- Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
Gal 5:23 Meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
Gal 5:24 But they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts.
Gal 5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.
Gal 5:26 Let us not become vainglorious, provoking one another, envying one another.
- A. Since the proverbs were collected mainly by two kings (Solomon and Hezekiah) in the age of the law, the book of Proverbs may be considered a subsidiary to the law.
- B. The law is the portrait of God; as such, it demands that God's people keep it so that they may be made copies of God for His expression and glorification—cf. Rom. 8:4.
Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
- C. Proverbs, as a subsidiary to the law, instructs people how to behave and how to build themselves up according to God's attributes, that is, according to what God is.

II. Proverbs has a particular character; that is, it presents to us the words of wisdom by many ancient wise men, which is unanimously considered good by all the people who read it; but we have to realize that what the book of Proverbs is to us depends upon what kind of persons we are and by what way we take it:

- A. If we are ethical persons with a strong mind and have a desire to be perfect as genuine moral persons, surely this book would help us to make a success in our pursuit of perfection; however, it would not help us to be persons who live in our spirit according to the Spirit of God (2 Tim. 4:22; Rom. 1:9; 2:29; 7:6; 8:4-6, 9-11, 16; 1 Cor. 16:18; 2 Cor. 2:13-14; Phil. 3:3; Gal. 5:15-17, 22-25; 6:18; Eph. 5:18; 6:18):
- 2 Tim 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.
Rom 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,
Rom 2:29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, in spirit, not in letter, whose praise is not from men, but from God.
Rom 7:6 But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were held, so that we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.
Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
Rom 8:5 For those who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to the spirit, the things of the Spirit.
Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Yet if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him.
Rom 8:10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness.
Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.
1 Cor 16:18 For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Acknowledge therefore such ones.
2 Cor 2:13 I had no rest in my spirit, for I did not find Titus my brother; but taking leave of them, I went forth into Macedonia.
2 Cor 2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in the Christ and manifests the savor of the knowledge of Him through us in every place.
Phil 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,
Gal 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another.

- Gal 5:16 But I say, Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh.
- Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these oppose each other that you would not do the things that you desire.
- Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
- Gal 5:23 Meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- Gal 5:24 But they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts.
- Gal 5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.
- Gal 6:18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.
- Eph 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,
- Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
1. In the Old Testament Job was satisfied with his integrity, with his pursuit of human perfection, but that was not what God wanted of him; rather, it replaced what God wanted of him, and it became an enemy of God, frustrating Job as a man created by God to fulfill God's purpose.
 2. God's purpose was for Job to gain Him for the glorification of God, the expression of God; the highest service that we can render to God is for us to gain God to the uttermost, to be filled with God, in order to express God for His glory—Phil. 3:7-8, 12; Isa. 43:7; 1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; cf. John 17:1.

Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.

Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

Phil 3:12 Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Isa 43:7 Everyone who is called by My name, / Whom I have created, formed, and even made for My glory.

1 Cor 6:20 For you have been bought with a price. So then glorify God in your body.

1 Cor 10:31 Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

John 17:1 These things Jesus spoke, and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You;
 3. God's purpose in creating man is to have man gain Him and be filled with Him to be His expression, not an expression of human perfection; therefore, the success of Job in human perfection was torn down by God; then God came in to reveal Himself to Job, indicating that He Himself is what Job should pursue, gain, and express—Job 42:1-6; 10:13; Eph. 3:9; Phil. 3:14; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16-18.

Job 42:1 Then Job answered Jehovah and said,

Job 42:2 I know that You can do all things / And that no purpose of Yours can be restrained.

Job 42:3 Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge? / Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, / Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

Job 42:4 Hear now, and I will speak; / I will ask of You, and You shall inform me.

Job 42:5 I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You;

Job 42:6 Therefore I abhor myself, and I repent / In dust and ashes.

Job 10:13 But You have hidden these things in Your heart; / I know that this is with You:

Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

Phil 3:14 I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.

2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

- 2 Cor 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
- 2 Cor 4:17 For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory,
- 2 Cor 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

B. When we come to the book of Proverbs, we need to turn ourselves from the mind to the spirit by praying in our spirit (Eph. 6:18; Luke 18:1; Col. 4:2); if we come to Proverbs in this way, we will be touching the Word by the new man, and we will live a life not by our natural man, by our old man, and by our self but by the Lord Jesus, who is our life and person living in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22; John 6:57, 63; Jer. 15:16).

- Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
- Luke 18:1 And He told them a parable to the end that they ought always to pray and not lose heart,
- Col 4:2 Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,
- 2 Tim 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.
- John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.
- John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
- Jer 15:16 Your words were found and I ate them, / And Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart, / For I am called by Your name, / O Jehovah, God of hosts.

C. We must reject self-cultivation, condemn the building up of the natural man in the old creation (cf. Matt. 16:24; Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20), and come to Proverbs as a regenerated man in the new creation (Eph. 4:22-24; 2 Cor. 4:16) by exercising our spirit with the Spirit to contact the word in the spirit of prayer so that the word in Proverbs will become spirit and life to us (John 6:63; Matt. 4:4; Eph. 6:17-18).

- Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.
- Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
- Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- Eph 4:22 That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit,
- Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind
- Eph 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.
- 2 Cor 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
- John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
- Matt 4:4 But He answered and said, It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God."
- Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,
- Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

D. As New Testament believers, we should believe that Proverbs is a part of the holy word in God's Holy Scriptures; the psalmist says, "I will lift up my hand to Your commandments, which I love" (Psa. 119:48); to lift up our hand unto the word of God is to indicate that we receive it warmly and gladly and that we say Amen to it (Neh. 8:5-6).

- Neh 8:5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people); and when he opened it, all the people stood up.

- Neh 8:6 And Ezra blessed Jehovah the great God; and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshipped Jehovah with their faces to the ground.
- E. Proverbs is the breath of God for us to breathe in that we may receive the life supply from God; the Bible is God's exhaling; when we read any verse by means of all prayer, this pray-reading becomes our inhaling of God's breath—2 Tim. 3:16; Eph. 6:17-18:
- 2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
- Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,
- Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
1. All the words in Proverbs are God's breathing, which is altogether embodied in Christ; as we read Proverbs, we need to inhale all that God has exhaled, all that He has breathed out; by inhaling the divine breath in Proverbs, the more we receive the breath of the speaking God, the more we will enjoy Christ—2 Tim. 3:16; John 20:22.

2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

John 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.
 2. Whereas the children of Israel were charged to keep the commandments, statutes, and ordinances, we today need to keep Christ; by taking Christ, keeping Christ, and holding fast to Him, we will gain Him, enjoy Him, and live Him; we need to love Christ, keep Christ, teach Christ, wear Christ, and write Christ—Deut. 6:1, 5-9; Phil. 3:9; 1:19-21a.

Deut 6:1 Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the ordinances, which Jehovah your God has commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land into which you are crossing over to possess;

Deut 6:5 And you shall love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Deut 6:6 And these words, which I command you today, shall be upon your heart;

Deut 6:7 And you shall repeat them to your children, and speak about them when you sit in your house and when you journey on the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up;

Deut 6:8 And you shall bind them on your hand as a sign, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes;

Deut 6:9 And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Phil 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,

Phil 1:19 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Phil 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.

Phil 1:21a For to me, to live is Christ ...
 3. Because the Scriptures are the breathing out of God, the exhaling of God (2 Tim. 3:16), we should inhale the Scriptures by receiving the word of God, including the book of Proverbs, by means of all prayer (Eph. 6:17-18); as we are teaching the Bible, we should be exhaling God into people.

2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,

Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

- F. We should read Proverbs by being filled with the fullness of God in our spirit (Eph. 5:18-19; 3:19); furthermore, we should read Proverbs in the New Testament Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2), with our regenerated spirit (v. 16), and by mingling prayer with our reading (Eph. 6:17-18) in order to mingle the words with spirit and life (cf. John 6:63).

Eph 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,
Eph 5:19 Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming with your heart to the Lord,
Eph 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.
Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.
Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.
Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,
Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

III. According to God's economy, the big proverbs, like nuggets, and the small ones, like gems, are not for us to build up our old man; rather, they are for us to build up our new man to strengthen our life of pursuing Christ for the fulfillment of God's economy in producing and building up the Body of Christ, which consummates the New Jerusalem as God's heart's desire and ultimate goal:

- A. We need to receive the living and operative word of God with a praying spirit so that we can build up our new man and so that we may be able to discern our spirit from our soul—Heb. 4:12:

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

1. The enemy's strategy is always to mix our spirit up with our soul; our greatest problem is our mixture; the more we know God by being filled with His light, His presence, the more we will treasure purity over power—Matt. 5:8; Luke 11:34-36; Psa. 119:105, 130.

Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Luke 11:34 The lamp of the body is your eye. When your eye is single, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is evil, your body also is dark.

Luke 11:35 Watch out therefore that the light which is in you is not darkness.

Luke 11:36 If therefore your whole body is full of light and does not have any dark part, the whole will be full of light as when the lamp with its rays illuminates you.

Psa 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet / And a light to my path.

Psa 119:130 The opening of Your words gives light, / Imparting understanding to the simple.

2. The way to purge such mixture is through the revelation of the Holy Spirit; the dividing of the soul and the spirit occurs when God's word illuminates us, shining within us to reveal the thoughts and intentions of our heart—36:9; 1 Pet. 2:9.

Psa 36:9 For with You is the fountain of life; / In Your light we see light.

1 Pet 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

3. Whatever we see under the shining of God from the word of God is killed by the light; the greatest thing in the Christian experience is the killing that comes from light; the dividing of the soul and the spirit comes from the shining—Isa. 6:1-8; Acts 9:1-4; 13:9-10.

Isa 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

Isa 6:2 Seraphim hovered over Him, each having six wings: With two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.

Isa 6:3 And one called to the other, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah of hosts; / The whole earth is filled with His glory.

Isa 6:4 And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

Isa 6:5 Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! / For I am a man of unclean lips, / And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; / Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.

Isa 6:6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with an ember in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs.

Isa 6:7 And he touched my mouth with it and said, Now that this has touched your lips, / Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged.

Isa 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us? And I said, Here am I; send me.

Acts 9:1 But Saul, still breathing threatening and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest

Acts 9:2 And asked for letters from him to Damascus for the synagogues, so that if he found any who were of the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Acts 9:3 And as he went, he drew near to Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

Acts 9:4 And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?

Acts 13:9 But Saul, who is also Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him

Acts 13:10 And said, O you who are full of all deceit and all unscrupulousness, son of the devil, enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?

4. Revelation is seeing what God sees; it is God opening our eyes to see our intentions and the deepest thoughts in our being as God sees them; as soon as God exposes our thoughts and shows us the intentions of our heart, our soul will be separated, divided, from our spirit.
5. Apart from pray-reading, the book of Proverbs is merely a collection of proverbs, but when we read Proverbs prayerfully, that is, when we pray-read Proverbs, our pray-reading causes all the proverbs to become words of spirit and life to us.

B. We should not come to Proverbs as a letter-keeper but as a Godseeker; we should be those who seek God with all our heart, who seek God's favor by entreating His countenance, who ask God to cause His face to shine upon us, and who walk in God's presence—Psa. 27:8; 105:4; 119:2, 10, 58, 135, 168; 2 Cor. 3:6.

Psa 27:8 When You say, Seek My face, / To You my heart says, Your face, O Jehovah, will I seek.

Psa 105:4 Seek Jehovah and His strength; / Seek His face continually.

Psa 119:2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, / Who seek Him with all their heart.

Psa 119:10 With all my heart I have sought You; / Do not let me wander from Your commandments.

Psa 119:58 I entreated Your favor with my whole heart; / Be gracious to me according to Your word.

Psa 119:135 Cause Your face to shine on Your servant, / And teach me Your statutes.

Psa 119:168 I have kept Your precepts and Your testimonies, / For all my ways are before You.

2 Cor 3:6 Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

IV. Ephesians 4:22-24 tells us clearly that a believer in Christ has two men—the old man and the new man; the old man is of Adam through our natural birth, and the new man is of Christ by a new birth, regeneration; we need to live a life of putting off the old man and putting on the new man; according to God's

economy, Proverbs should not be used to cultivate and build up our old man but to cultivate and build up our regenerated new man:

Eph 4:22 That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit,

Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind

Eph 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

A. In order to enter into the intrinsic significance of the book of Proverbs according to God's economy, we need to be those who are living according to the new creation (Gal. 6:15); the old creation is our old man in Adam (Eph. 4:22), our natural being by birth, without God's life and the divine nature; the new creation is the new man in Christ (v. 24), our being that is regenerated by the Spirit (John 3:6), having God's life and the divine nature wrought into it (v. 36; 2 Pet. 1:4), having Christ as its constituent (Col. 3:10-11), and having become a new constitution.

Gal 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation is what matters.

Eph 4:22 That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit,

Eph 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

John 3:36 He who believes into the Son has eternal life; but he who disobeys the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him.

2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

B. In our spirit there is the marvelous, wonderful, processed, allinclusive, sevenfold intensified, life-giving Spirit (Phil. 1:19; Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:6; Rom. 8:16); when we exercise our spirit to contact Christ as the living Word of God (John 1:1; 5:39-40) in the written word of God (10:35), He becomes the applied word of God as the Spirit to us (Eph. 6:17-18); then our reading of any word in the Bible will become spirit and life to us to revive us (John 6:63).

Phil 1:19 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Rev 4:5 And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

Rev 5:6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having just been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

1 Cor 15:45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

2 Cor 3:6 Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 5:39 You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me.

John 5:40 Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

John 10:35 If He said they were gods, to whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken,

Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,

Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

C. We need to turn the Bible from a book that apparently teaches us to cultivate the self and to build up the natural man into a book that actually is full of light, life, spirit, and spiritual nourishment by receiving it in a spirit and atmosphere of prayer; this will tear down our self, break our natural man, and supply us with the consummated Spirit of the Triune God.

V. We must be persons who love the Lord and pursue Christ, not self-perfection (cf. Phil. 3:3-14), and who love the Lord's word in the entire Bible and read it with a praying spirit, not to seek the doctrine of letters but to seek the Spirit and word of life (cf. John 5:39-40; 2 Cor. 3:6); we should read Proverbs not to gain any help for self-cultivation but to nourish our spirit so that we may live a Christian life that is perfect in the divine virtues, which are the expressions of the divine attributes (Gal. 5:22-23; Matt. 5:5-9).

Phil 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,
Phil 3:4 Though I myself have something to be confident of in the flesh as well. If any other man thinks that he has confidence in the flesh, I more:
Phil 3:5 Circumcised the eighth day; of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;
Phil 3:6 As to zeal, persecuting the church; as to the righteousness which is in the law, become blameless.
Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.
Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ
Phil 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,
Phil 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
Phil 3:11 If perhaps I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.
Phil 3:12 Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.
Phil 3:13 Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,
Phil 3:14 I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward.
John 5:39 You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that testify concerning Me.
John 5:40 Yet you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.
2 Cor 3:6 Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
Gal 5:23 Meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
Matt 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
Matt 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
Matt 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.
Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
Matt 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.