

REAL MEN IN A REAL WORLD
PROVERBS 11
“The Character of a Righteous Man”

1.0 AWARENESS

Real Men in a Real World. What does that mean? What is a real man? Is it Arnold Schwarzenegger? Is it Tiger Woods? Is it Charlie Moore, the mad fisherman? Is it Billy Graham? Is it your father? Your grandfather? A friend? Who do you think of when someone says “Be a Real Man?”

Let us look to our Creator for the definition. “Man” was created by God in His image. “Real” means true – not false. Not an imitation. So what is a true man? Jesus came as the Perfect Man to show us how to live. He said if you love the Father, you will be obedient. Yet the Bible tells story after story of imperfect men. David, Solomon, Jacob, Gideon, Samson, Peter, Paul. Why? Because we live in the “Real World” controlled by Satan. We are sinful by nature and Satan creates situations, temptations, so that we will fail as Real Men.

We need the armor of God – The sword – which is the Word of God – It is our ONLY offensive weapon. That comes from the studying the Word of God and memorizing Scripture. Jesus used the WORD of God when tempted by Satan; we can do the same.

So “Real Men in a Real World” is really about “God’s Men in Satan’s World” It is about survival in a world full of temptation and evil. We need “hokmah” – the Jewish word for wisdom and skill.

The Book of Proverbs is a book of “hokmah” showing one how to live skillfully - in a manner that shows training, experience, and wisdom. Most people learn how to live by making mistakes. No one has taught them; no one has showed them the way to live skillfully; ways to avoid dangers and pitfalls in life. Proverbs is the **Instruction Manual for Living** because it is godly wisdom. Wisdom is more than knowledge; wisdom is the application of the knowledge of God.. It is about how to live skillfully or successfully – “Practical Wisdom”. How to please God. It addresses:

Pride	Honesty	Integrity	Generosity	
The tongue	Sloth	Anger	Adultery	And even selecting a wife

Proverbs or wisdom in ancient times was something very valuable; something to strive for, to seek. “hokmah” was a high priority for Jewish men and for their children. Children were most important in the Jewish community. Josephus wrote “ **our chief ambition is for the education of our children.**” The center of education was the Jewish home. By using Proverbs, parents could train their children in godly living, just as their children would teach the next generation.

But Wisdom in Proverbs is **more** than an Instruction Manual for Living ...Wisdom as shown in Proverbs 8 is Jesus..... It is Jesus without the miracles...His character is revealed in Proverbs ... Proverbs is the Sermon on the Mount for Old Testament nation of Israel. Proverbs is the Gospel for the people of the Old Testament. Proverbs 8:32-36 says:

Now then, my sons, listen to me;
blessed are those who keep my ways.
Listen to my instruction and be wise;
do not ignore it.

**Blessed is the man who listens to me,
watching daily at my doors,
waiting at my doorway.
For whoever finds me finds life
And receives favor from the LORD.
But whoever fails to find me harms himself;
All who hate me love death.**

Let us find life through the Gospels of Jesus and the wisdom of Proverbs, the character of Jesus!

The source of many problems in our country today is that men lack integrity and character, and are not godly men. Godly living is no longer pursued by men or taught to children. So we have a society where right is wrong and wrong is right. Now, more than ever, men need “hokmah” for godly living and for passing on to the next generation. ... We need the Wisdom of Proverbs!

Now let's take a moment to pray: Take a minute to pray silently---- I will close.

Pray that we may be real men of God in a fallen world.

Pray that wisdom will become a passion in our lives.

Pray that the Holy spirit will open our hearts

Pray that.....

Now I want to digress for a minute. All of us are aware of the Soldiers that guard the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers. But did you know:

- They must commit 2 years of their life to guard the tomb.
- They live in a barracks under the tomb,
- The first six months of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone nor watch TV.
- After two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on his lapel signifying he served as guard of the tomb. There are ~ 400 presently worn.
- They cannot drink any alcohol or swear on or off duty for the rest of their lives. If they do, they must give up their wreath pin.

What we are talking about is a life time commitment built on 2 years of dedicated service.

I heard on Focus on the Family, children were asked to name their role models:

1/3 said mom, dad, grandpa

1/3 said none

1/3 said themselves.

Think about that for one minute. 2/3s or almost 70% of children have no role model or believe they are a role model. The world needs positive role models – it needs godly men.

The Real World needs Real Men Men who have made a commitment to God!

The goal of Proverbs Men Is

“Building Godly men, Men of Character, Men of Integrity One Day at a Time”

2.0 EDUCATION

Five years ago, I attended a Bible Study on Proverbs and started to read Proverbs on a daily basis. I was attracted to it because it had so many promises. There are more than 100 promises in Proverbs regarding prosperity, protection, long life – things I wanted from God. Prosperity as used in the Book of Proverbs means “Peace” – Shalom. I believe that if God said it then it is true. We believe in John 3:16:

**“For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”**

Can we not also believe.....

**1:33 but whoever listens to me will live in safety
and be at ease, without fear of harm."**

**3:1-2 My son, do not forget my teaching,
but keep my commands in your heart,**

**² for they will prolong your life many years
and bring you prosperity.**

**3:13 Blessed is the man who finds wisdom
The man who gains understanding (knowledge of God)**

**19: 8 He who get wisdom loves his own soul
He who cherishes understanding prospers.**

But as I continued to read month after month, I saw this as my daily guidance. I fell in love with Proverbs and wisdom because it drew me closer to God. It answered the question of how to please God in my daily living. I desired wisdom.

James 1:5 says: **“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God,
who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”**

As James instructed, I prayed for wisdom; and it is slowly being revealed to me.

As time passed, I started to share Proverbs with other men via email. Then God asked me set up a website, a non-profit, a monthly newsletter. How could I refuse; I was in training I was learning to obey. I wanted to make that **lifetime commitment** like that Soldier at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

In reading Proverbs daily, I made notes in my Bible. I came across Proverbs 11. Eric Lane says this chapter is about the **Character of a Righteous Man**. That is our topic for this evening. Let's open our Bibles to Proverbs 11

In the first 11 verses, God identifies four major character traits that He desires in Men; these are:

- **Humility**
- **Honesty**
- **Integrity**
- **Righteousness**

#1 God tells us to be humble.

**² When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
but with humility comes wisdom.**

Often we define humility as the opposite of Pride, but that does not define it. That only tells us what it is not. Holman Bible Dictionary says it is to recognize our dependence on God and respect for other persons. It is "Discovering God". Discovering that God is our Creator and that we are His creation. Humility is to acknowledge that we are the created not the Creator; we are the servant, not the Master.

Rick Warren states that "humility" is being teachable. Are you teachable? Are you willing to learn? To change your life?

Humility, the first step to wisdom, is to acknowledge our dependence on God and to be teachable. Our culture encourages pride, which separates us from God's wisdom. Pride says we are self-reliant; we know it all or deserve it all. As Proverbs says, pride leads to disgrace and failure in our relationship with God and others.

Humility opens us up to spiritual growth in God's wisdom. Look at Moses and what God said about him in Numbers 12:3& 8

³ (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

⁸ With him I speak face to face,

The life of Moses depicts humility – discovering God and our relationship to Him.

Jerry Bridges recently wrote a book Respectable Sins. Pride is one of those sins; it is so easy to fall into the sin of pride. As evangelicals, we can easily fall into the sin of self-righteousness or moral superiority. We may hold that our beliefs are correct while other beliefs are inferior. We can also be tempted by the pride of achievement or the pride of an independent spirit. I mention these because I am guilty of these. They draw us away from the humility that God requires.

Being humble is being strong in character while serving others in need.....

Proverbs 6:16-17

**There are six things the LORD hates,
seven that are detestable to him:
haughty eyes, a lying tongue,**

The first is **pride** ; the second is **dishonesty**.

#2 God tells us to be Honest.

¹ **The LORD abhors dishonest scales,
but accurate weights are his delight.**

Honesty is the fabric that holds a nation together. Our nation was founded by honorable men who spoke the truth. Today, honesty is becoming less visible in our country. Our politicians, our business leaders, our families are no longer rooted in honesty. Maybe it is because people no longer seek the truth, but only want to hear what their "itching ears" want to hear. Maybe, it is because we are more concerned about image. Maybe it is because we are weak and afraid of the consequences if the truth is revealed. However, we must remember that –

"To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice."

(Proverbs 21:3)

Some time ago, I had a individual call me. He wanted to do business together. After some time, I simply asked him "are you honest?" His reaction..... He hung up. Another time, I did the same thing expecting the same result. This time the individual simply said "I wish I had asked that question of a few of my business partners." Ask yourself that question daily in your business activities – "Was I honest today? Did I please God?"

I love to tell the story of Donald Douglas of Douglas Aircraft and J.P. Hayes the professional golfer in our Proverbs Men Hall of Fame. In the early days of jet aviation, Mr. Douglas was willing to lose a \$135 million contract by telling the truth. Mr. Hayes gave up a year on the professional golf tour. I encourage you to share your stories of honest men. I encourage you and I to be honest men.

Larry Burkett of Crown Financial Ministries said **"A Christian's usefulness to God is directly proportional to his honesty."**

#3 God tells us to have Integrity.

**³ The integrity of the upright guides them,
but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.**

Integrity means to be whole - One. The opposite is duplicity. Think about that? Are you the same man at work as you are at home or at church? Does your word mean something? Does your language at work honor God as if you were at church.

Integrity goes beyond honesty – telling the truth; Integrity is keeping your promises, fulfilling expectations. Integrity means being willing to take responsibility for correcting errors whether we are at fault or not. Jesus was the greatest example of this. (Ref: Solomon Pg 53)

The word integrity is used only in this Proverbs and Job. Satan attacked Job and throughout it all – but Job still maintained his integrity. He was a whole man. He was consistent. Isn't that one quality you look for in others. Integrity - not to be two people but simply a man of God.

Be a man of Integrity.

#4 He tells us to be Righteous.

**⁴ Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath,
but righteousness delivers from death.**

⁵ The righteousness of the blameless makes a straight way for them,

⁶ The righteousness of the upright delivers them,

⁸ The righteous man is rescued from trouble,

**⁹ With his mouth the godless destroys his neighbor,
but through knowledge the righteous escape.**

¹⁰ When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices;

Our English translation for righteousness is "uprightness"; a quality that few have. **But righteousness, in biblical usage, is about the relationship between God and man.** Holman Bible Dictionary defines "righteousness" as absolute faith in and the commitment to God.

For me, righteousness is simply - "**Wanting to please God instead of myself**" - this increases my faith and my commitment. Often we have to make a choice. When someone says something that offends us or attacks us. When someone sues us. How do we respond? Our desire is to attack, but is that God's will? Will that please God? Jesus said we must pray for our enemies. As ambassadors for Christ, we must faithfully represent God's love and grace.

What if the next time we started to disagree with someone - like a teenage son, we said let's pray together before we discuss this.

In summary, these verses identify the four major character traits – Humility, Honesty, Integrity, and Righteousness. These are the **building blocks** God desires in us.

In Chapter 11 Vs 12-18 God reveals four characteristics as **we reach out to the Community** – to others. The four traits are understanding, trustworthy, wary, and kindhearted.

#5 God says Have Understanding

¹² **A man who lacks judgment derides his neighbor,
but a man of understanding holds his tongue.**

Proverbs 9:6 states that Wisdom is walking with understanding!! Understanding is defined in Proverbs 9:10 as the “**knowledge of God**”.

**"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."
Proverbs 9:10**

As we read about God, attend Bible studies, share fellowship, and worship God, we gain that knowledge that God wants us to have --- "Understanding"

**" Leave your simple ways and you will live;
walk in the way of understanding."
Proverbs 9:6**

We clearly see that "understanding" is a lifetime commitment; it is a daily practice as we walk with God.

Wisdom and understanding are so often linked together throughout Proverbs and the Bible.

It is through understanding (knowledge of God) that wisdom becomes a part of our daily lives."

#6 God says Be Trustworthy

**¹³ A gossip betrays a confidence,
but a trustworthy man keeps a secret.**

This characteristic is from Proverbs 11 where it says that a trustworthy man does not betray a confidence. To trust someone, we place our confidence in that person. They are dependable and reliable; we can rely on their **truthfulness** and **accuracy**.

But what about myself? Am I trustworthy? Or do I betray the confidence of another? Am I reliable or do I make excuses when I fail to honor commitments? Is what I say truthful and accurate or do I exaggerate? If I say that I will complete a specific task, do others trust that I will do it in a timely and a worthy manner? Am I trustworthy? Should I be trusted?.....

Proverbs 28 says we should **not** trust ourselves.

**26 He who trusts in himself is a fool,
but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.**

There is a conflict. I should be trustworthy, but I cannot trust myself? Why? Because I am easily distracted by actions/items that appear to bring happiness and pleasure - but they separate me from God. I need to place my trust in God, only then will I be truly trustworthy. Proverbs emphasizes trust in the LORD:

**Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge Him,
and He will make your paths straight.**

Proverbs 3:5-6

What a powerful verse? Memorize it. Share it with your family. Discuss it at the dinner table. **This is a life changing verse!**

Our ways, our understanding is flawed because we only see a fragment; we do not see the big picture and our humanity seeks happiness not godliness. Only by giving our heart, our entire self to God; only by **submitting to His will** in all aspects of our life (family, financial, business, spiritual, recreational) will our heavenly Father make our paths straight. Only then, can we truly be trustworthy.

#7 God says Be Wary

**"He who puts up security for another will surely suffer,
But whoever refuses to strike hands in pledge is safe."**

Proverbs 11:15

Initially, this verse sounds harsh. As Christians, we want to trust people. We want to believe the very best in others. One Commentary states: "God cautions us against taking on financial responsibility for another (literally for a stranger). The practice of striking hands was equivalent to a handshake, a demonstration that a deal was sealed." (Proverbs, Roland Cap Ehlke, People's Bible Commentary, 1993)

In addition, Matthew Henry's Commentary states: "The welfare of our families, our own peace, and our ability to pay just debts, must not be brought into danger."

God wants us to be wary with our finances. Today, we put up surety to strangers as we sign credit card applications and each credit card slip. We are taking on an obligation to pay to a stranger, the credit card company. We are making a pledge. I may be on loose ground, but maybe God is warning us to use cash. **To be wary.** Today, the average credit card debt of a household is \$8,000. I am sure many of those households wish they had **never** taken on that financial obligation.

Today, the world's economy is hanging on by a thread due the debt of the U.S. and many other nations. Following God's Word provides peace even amidst the storm. So let us be wary.

8 God says Be Kindhearted

Proverbs 11:16-17 states:

**"A kindhearted woman gains respect,
but ruthless men gain only wealth.
A kind man benefits himself,
but a cruel man brings trouble on himself."**

It is interesting that Holy Spirit directed our T-shirt and brochures to use the word "kindhearted" vs "kind". A difference that only recently was revealed.

The reason may be the subtle differences between the two words "kind" and "kindhearted" and Proverbs 4:23:

"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."

One can be kind to others without being kindhearted. Being kind can be taught as one says "Thank you", "No, thank you", "I am sorry" or "Let me know if I can help." But matters of the heart are much deeper, the other person knows that you are not just saying the words but that your heart is reaching out to his. You truly care about him and want the very best.

Now, the bigger challenge. How can men develop their heart so that they may be "kindhearted" to family, friends, co-workers, and strangers. The answer is Love. Jesus commanded us to

**"Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.
And love your neighbor as yourself."**

Matthew 22:37-38.

Think about that – isn't that **the Secret to Life** – to love God, Our Creator. To have a passion to serve Him. That is the LORD part of accepting Jesus as both LORD and Savior. But how can we love God. We know how to love our wife and children, to hold them in our arms, to spend time with them, to want to please them. But God – how can we love him?

1 John 5:3 says **"This is love for God; to obey His commands."** Now we know! It is that simple to understand; yet it is that difficult to do.

The world does not teach love of others; it teaches love of self. To learn love, we must spend time in the Bible and in prayer. We must grow spiritually in fellowship with others. We must belong to a church family, bonded together in love. We must be quiet and listen to the Holy Spirit; we must spend time with God. **Quality time; alone.**

In our front hall, we have a plaque, that greets me every morning:

**"Make time for the quiet moments
as God whispers and the world is loud."....**

It was not a mistake or oversight when four years ago, the Holy Spirit inspired the words "Be Kindhearted" in the margin of my Bible. God knew that I needed to change my heart. May these words touch your heart as you grow in wisdom as a Proverbs Man.

As Proverbs Men , we reach out to others by having understanding, and being trustworthy, wary and kindhearted.

Finally, I see the last verses of Proverbs 11 as Reaching up to God

Ask Forgiveness - blameless
Be generous
Be Fruitful
Trust God

#9 God says Ask Forgiveness

²⁰ **"The LORD detests men of perverse heart
but he delights in those whose ways are blameless."**

"Delights" rarely a word used to describe God; yet that is what God's WORD says. **"He delights in those whose ways are blameless."** i.e. "He receives great pleasure in those who ask forgiveness." Wow! **Our salvation delights God!**

God came to earth as Jesus to die that we may live. It is a choice; the most important decision we will make in our lifetime. We can choose to accept Jesus' sacrifice for our sins and become blameless or we can reject His gift of salvation. By rejecting salvation, one will stand before God with all of his sins and perverse heart exposed. Proverbs says " **The LORD detests men of perverse heart.**" These men will receive the wrath of God. The **secret to eternal life** is to accept God's gift of salvation and to make Jesus LORD of our life.

There are two parts: LORD and Savior. Accepting Jesus as our Savior can be done in an instant. We believe. Accepting Jesus as our LORD is a lifetime and more difficult. It is a daily walk with God where we make the commitment to be a **faithful servant**, listening to the Master's instructions and being obedient. It is being loving when we are angry; it is being generous when we ourselves are in need; it is about serving, when we want to be served.

II Chronicle 7:14 asks us as a nation to humble ourselves, pray, and turn from our wicked ways. Then God will forgive and heal our land. Just as the Israelites turned from God, so has our nation. Pray for our country. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, prophesied the destruction of Israel and Judah because of the people's sinfulness, their turning away from God.

Proverbs 14:34 **"Righteousness exalts a nation
But sin is a disgrace to any people."**

Be a light so that others may see. Bring light together so that we as Men may shine brighter.

#10 God says Be Generous

²⁴ **"One man gives freely, yet gains even more;
another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty."**

²⁵ **"A generous man will prosper;
he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."**

What can we say. God says that if we refresh others, we ourselves will be refreshed. We can not only be generous with our money, but with our time helping others. We come into this world with nothing; we will leave with nothing. Our stuff (a house, car, money, etc.) belongs to God – how will we share it?

Jesus was generous; he provided healing for so many. He gave life to those who had died, had leprosy, were lame, were blind. Boaz in the Book of Ruth was generous as he instructed his servants to let Ruth glean near the harvesters.

We can be generous with our words – saying things to encourage others. Encourage children as they do good things. Encourage them to say the prayer at meal time. Be generous in your business, share information on how to do things correctly. Do not be afraid to share. Solomon is known as the wisest man of all time. It was more than his Proverbs. **Solomon was the original Discovery Channel.** He knew nature, plants and wildlife. He knew business. He knew God. He openly shared his wisdom and knowledge – that is why others traveled great distances to meet with him.

#11 - God says Be Fruitful

³⁰ **“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
and he who wins souls is wise. “**

What an awesome verse. It summarizes what we as Christian Men are to do. It is the product of wisdom.

I recently attended a Memorial Service for Bill Mundo - a close friend, a Proverbs Man, a brother in Christ, a mentor to me. Bill and I would do a Bible Study at the County Jail and we would go to the nursing home together. I met the woman, Sally, who had brought his wife, Dale, and then Bill to Christ. Then Bill and Dale brought their children and their grandchildren to Christ. Jesus commanded us with the Great Commission. Think of the impact Sally had on the Mundo family! One person shared the Gospel – it has affected at least 3 generations.

In the Jewish culture, mother and father passed on the wisdom of Solomon to their children. It was a given that they would read and share God’s Word and the Love of God. As parents, as godly men we must not neglect that responsibility. It is the greatest gift that we can share with our children. Help them to open that gift.

In the Book of Daniel, it says that after Daniel was taken to Babylon and prepared for service to King Nebuchadnezzar; as a young man he was found to be 10x wiser in matters of wisdom. How? I believe the answer is simple. Daniel was from the royal family of King Jehoiakim in Jerusalem. As a youth, he probably studied the thousands of Proverbs written by Solomon approximately 400 years earlier. And God blessed him!

Help others ---- be fruitful. Share your faith and the wisdom of Solomon with the youth you know.

#12 Trust God

²⁸ **“Whoever trusts in his riches will fall,
but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.”**

Our coins and our currency state "In God We Trust"; we say in our hymns and our prayers that we trust in God. But do we? What do we trust God with? Do we only trust Him with our prayers when we need a miracle and we have run out of options? When we have messed everything up.

Returning to:

Proverbs 3:5-6

**Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge Him,
and He will make your paths straight.**

Let us change our lives by inviting God into every part of it. Let us place our trust in God in all aspects of our lives. Let us lean on God. How do we do that? We simply ask God to lead us and we commit to follow His will. This includes our businesses, our careers, our families, our hobbies, and our spiritual growth. In each area, ask God to intervene and to show us the path for our lives.

God says we must not trust in our riches; our trust must be in Him. These are difficult times. Many are unemployed, businesses are failing. What is God doing? He is getting his attention back to Him. He is saying do not place your trust in your riches – but Trust Me – Lean on Me.

We must be obedient to the direction He gives. We must walk in faith that His way is the best.

There are many great men of the Bible who trusted God and by their obedience to God they accomplished His will. Think about the lives of Abraham as he left his family to follow God; Moses as he led the nation of Israel out of Egypt; David as he challenged Goliath; Peter as he got out of the boat to walk on water.

The motto of Proverbs Men is **“Seeking Wisdom, Trusting God”**. As we grow in wisdom, we grow in our trust in God. It is the result of our wisdom.

These are only 12 characteristics of a righteous man as written in Proverbs 11; there are more. In Isaiah 28:17 the Bible states that righteousness is the plumb line used by God.

3.0 ENCOURAGEMENT & SHARING

IN CONCLUSION

1. **SEEK WISDOM** – Jesus - Proverbs will give us the wisdom, the guidance to be Real Men in a Real World. We need that daily time in the Word – it is our **ONLY** offensive weapon. Let us put on the armor of God.

Probably you have memorized John 3:16. Memorize some Proverbs. Search for wisdom as if it is a buried treasure.

2. **MAKE A COMMITMENT** - We need to make a lifetime commitment to God just as the soldiers at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. They prepare, they serve, they honor their commitment every moment of every day.
3. **SHARE** - We must be a role model and pass it on. Share also your stories of godly men. Men of integrity; men such as J.P. Hays who disqualified himself for using an illegal golf ball. As a professional golfer, playing a sport that is self-policed - a sport in which integrity

is as important as winning titles and cheating is practically non-existent - Hayes knows he did the right thing. Share these modern day role models.

Leave a Legacy.....

One of our greatest responsibilities as a parent is to encourage our children to seek wisdom and understanding (the knowledge of God). We are to help our children grow from:

- (1) foolishness to wisdom
- (2) selfishness to unselfishness and
- (3) the knowledge of God to a passion for God.

David shared his love of wisdom with his son, Solomon. When Solomon went astray in his latter years, God said Solomon was responsible for tearing the nation of Israel apart by his sins, but it would not happen in his lifetime because of God's Love for David. David was not there to correct Solomon.

4. **HAVE PASSION** - Create a passion for wisdom in your life -- What would the world be like if all men had these 12 characteristics? What would your family be like? We change the world one man at a time --- **Let it start with us!!!!**

May God bless you and your family with Wisdom and the Love of God!