

Epic Day 2024

The Way of Wisdom: Tell Yourself The Truth

Hey everyone! My name is Kent. I'm the lead pastor here at Epic and I'm so glad you're doing church with us today especially if it's your first time with us. Now there are a couple of things going on today.

First, it's Epic Day which is basically our own holiday. We want everyone who calls Epic Home to be here on the same day and bring someone with them. So if you're here because you were invited by a friend, you should feel honored that they thought of you and I really hope you have a great time.

Second, we're kicking off a brand new series called The Way of Wisdom and each week we'll learn something from the book of Proverbs about how to live wisely. Now here's why that's a big deal. It's because wisdom isn't just information... it's better than that. Wisdom is information applied well. For example, it's one thing to know what to say, it's another to know when to say it. THAT'S wisdom. Have you ever said the right thing at the wrong time?... Yeah, you needed some wisdom.

The book of Proverbs is full of all these little nuggets of wisdom for life. Some of them are shared within the context of a story. We'll look at one today, but others are shared in these quippy ones or two-line sayings that give insight into how life works. You've heard this kind of thing before. Don't judge a book by its cover. Better safe than sorry. Out of sight out of mind. The early bird gets the worm. Every culture has sayings like that. Well, Proverbs is full of biblical sayings about how to live wisely. Here's one about friendship. **Proverbs 27:6 Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.** In other words a true friend cares enough about you that they're willing to confront you or say the hard things. And what they're saying can be trusted. But the person who just sucks up and tells you what you want to hear isn't a friend. There's a reason they aren't willing to tell you the truth.

So Proverbs is full of all these nuggets of wisdom not just about friendship, but about anything you can imagine. Family, work, community, sex, marriage, money, forgiveness, alcohol, debt, character, speech, justice, generosity, parenting... you name it, it's probably in there.

Now here's the thing, we live in the information age. A lack of information isn't our problem. But a lack of Wisdom is. So each week we're gonna learn something from Proverbs but in this series, we want to take it a step further and challenge you to read one chapter in Proverbs each day. And to make it easy whatever day of the month it is, that's the chapter we'll read. So today is the 4th, so read the 4th chapter in Proverbs. Tomorrow's the 5th, so read the 5th chapter. That way if you miss a day or two, you can just pick up with whatever day it is.

Now as we work our way through this Proverbs you're going to learn that each of us is on a path. We're all on this journey headed somewhere, becoming someone through the daily decisions that we make. And the question is which path are you on? According to proverbs, there are two paths in this life. There's the path of wisdom which leads to life and love and success, peace, and flourishing. And there's the path of foolishness that leads to death. Relational problems, conflict, poverty and pain.

God is a good heavenly father and he wants his kids on the path of wisdom that leads to what's best for them so He's given us the book of Proverbs as a guide for how to live wisely. So, a chapter a day. It's like a 5-minute read. I know it can be difficult to start a new habit, but if you

knew what hangs in the balance. If you knew what was a stake... you'd realize that it's worth it. That's why it says in **Proverbs 4:7 Though it cost all you have, get understanding.** Because nothing is more valuable than wisdom. So let's do it together. Deal?

Alright so to get us started today I want you to get to know the people around you so you can decide if you should move or not. SO, go ahead and get into groups of 2 or 3. Make sure no one is left out and answer this question. **If you could wake up tomorrow and have any superhero power, what would it be and why?** Ready? Go! (Song: One Call Away)

Alright, alright. So let's cut to the chase... How many of you just want to be able to fly? Yeah, that would be incredible wouldn't it?! Well I've given this question more thought than I care to admit and I would choose either time travel or being able to predict the future and here's why. I think those are the most practical of the superhero powers. I mean being able to fly is pretty cool, but I'm married, and having the ability to know you're about to say something dumb before you say it... Oh man, TAKE MY MONEY!

Unfortunately, we're not superheroes, are we? No, we're just regular people who make decisions and then have to live with the consequences. That's why the decisions we make are so important. It's because there are some for real consequences out there that we can't time travel our way out of. And listen I can't tell you how many times, as a pastor, I've sat across the table from someone who wishes that they could. Someone whose life has crashed and burned, or their relationship blew up, or their finances fell apart, or somehow they've lost their reputation, and it's in moments of crisis and consequence like these that we wish more than anything that there was a way to go back in time and make different choices.

See gang, It really is the choices we make that impact our lives more than anything else. So if you want to have a great marriage, then it's your choices that will determine that. If you want to know God and grow into the person he wants you to be, then it's your choices that will determine that. If you want your dating life to lead to something incredible, then it's your choices that will determine that. If you want your future financially to be secure, it's your choices that will determine that. Across the board, in every area of life it's your choices that determine where you end up. And listen, It doesn't matter what your intentions are, how high your hopes and dreams are, It doesn't even matter how grand your prayers are. Because if the choices we make along the way aren't consistent with what we're hoping and praying for... we won't get there.

Don't get me wrong, there's NOTHING WRONG with praying grand prayers and having high hopes. We should, **but you can't pray grand prayers, have high hopes and then turn around and make low decisions.** Right? So if you've got high hopes for your marriage, then make the decisions that will lead there. If you've got high hopes for your future, then make the decisions that will lead there.

I wish every single one of you could have my job for just a week because it's like having a front-row seat to the story of people's lives. You get to be there for all the best moments... like graduations, weddings, the birth of a child... But then you also get to be there during the hardest moments. Some of those hard moments are unavoidable. Like the passing of a friend or family member... that's just part of life. But then there are also some hard moments that we

bring on ourselves because of the choices that we've made. And It's like, "I'm sorry you lost your job, but telling the world how much you hate it online probably wasn't the best move." Or "Well of course they left you... you cheated! What did you think was gonna happen?"

And listen, those are extreme examples, but if you were in my shoes one of the things you'd start to notice is that oftentimes there's a huge disconnect between our hopes and dreams for our life and the choices we make in our life. Now that said, the biggest reason I know we need to talk about this isn't because I've seen it in everyone else's life, but because I've seen it in my own. That all too often it can be easy to have high hopes and great dreams and then turn around and make poor decisions.

SO today I want to take a few minutes to look at a story in scripture that connects the choices we make to the places we end up, AND THEN at the very end we'll bump into the first nugget of wisdom you'll need if you want to start making better decisions. You ready?!

Alright, here we go. Proverbs 7. Now this proverb was written by the wisest man who ever lived other than Jesus, a man named Solomon. And the way he writes this is so interesting because he tells this story about a young man that he sees from his window, walking down the street. And as this young man is walking down the street Solomon realizes that he knows what's gonna happen to him before this young man knows what is going to happen.

*On some level we've all experienced this. Maybe you've witnessed an accident. And you saw the two cars turn toward each other and for one brief moment in time you knew the future because you could see it coming. If you're a parent or if you've ever watched small children, you know exactly what I'm talking about because when kids are little they're fearless. You see them running toward something, climbing on something, reaching for something, and you're like "Oh no!" and there's this moment where you wince and tense up because you know before they do, what's about to happen. Like this... (VIDEO:)

So that's what is going on here. Solomon sees this guy walking down the street and he knows before this young man does, what's about to happen.

Proverbs 7:6-7 At the window of my house I looked out through the lattice. I saw among the simple, I noticed among the young men, a youth who lacked judgment.

Now there's a lesson here to be learned. In short, youth lack judgment. And that's not an insult, it's just a reality because most of the time good or sound judgment is a result of time and experience. People who are young haven't had the luxury of either of those, so they lack good judgment.

On top of that, I read that the part of your brain that's responsible for decision making isn't fully developed until you're 25 years old. Can you believe that?! Some of you are like, "Yes, I can absolutely believe that. This explains SO MUCH!" Lol

And listen, if you made some foolish decisions in your early 20's don't feel bad. It's not your fault... Your brain was broke. I'm Kidding.

But what we can learn from this is that regardless of our age I think it's important that we have people in our lives that are a little further down the road than we are. Those with a little more experience because we could benefit from their perspective.

Anyways, Solomon sees this guy from his window and look what he says...

Proverbs 7:8-9 He (the young man) was going down the street near **her corner**, (this woman has own corner! ... just sayin.) walking along in the direction of her house at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in.

Now you don't have to be a Bible scholar to anticipate what direction this story might be headed. You don't even have to have read the next few verses. You can probably just guess. Think about it... Here's a young man, who lacks judgment, walking at night, to a woman's house, who has her own corner! This is not a good situation. Let me put it this way... he's not going there to buy cookies.

And AS he makes his way to her house I'm sure there's a soundtrack playing in his mind and depending on your age it was probably something like this... **(SONG: I Got a Feeling)** OR THIS... **(SONG: Lil Boo Thang)**. I know this is church but I'm just tryna keep it real.

So he's walking down the street and feeling pretty good about himself. Meanwhile, up in the window, Solomon is watching this unfold and he hears a completely different soundtrack. It goes like this... **(SONG: Jaws)** Jaws! Because he knows... this isn't good.

And we see there's this huge contrast between what this young man who lacks judgment thinks is about to happen and what this older wiser man knew was about to happen. And the reason there is such a huge difference between the two is because this young man didn't know what Solomon knew. Which is that there are two paths. The path of Wisdom and the path of Foolishness and they lead different places.

Proverbs 7:10-14 Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent. (She is loud and defiant, her feet never stay at home; now in the street, now in the squares, at every corner she lurks.) She took hold of him and kissed him and with a brazen face (and in what I'm sure was her most sultry and seductive voice) she said: **"I have fellowship offerings at home; and today I fulfilled my vows. Big Boy.** (Which makes no sense to us but he knew exactly what she was saying.) She was saying two things. 1) I'm not a prostitute. I've got plenty of money and I don't need yours. 2) She says, "Earlier today I went to the temple and got all my sins forgiven. My sin bucket is empty, and now I'm ready to fill it back up again... with you!"

Look what she says next. **Proverbs 7:15** So I came out to meet you; I looked for you and have found you!

So he's thinking, "Oh my goodness.... Me?! She came out to meet ME! She came looking for ME?! Oh man, this is it! This is the kind of thing they write movies and songs about. She doesn't need my money, she just wants me! And in that moment the soundtrack in his mind switched to... **(SONG: I will always love you.)** lol Love me some Whitney!

All of a sudden, the boys in LOVE... and the woman continues...

Proverbs 7:16-18 I have covered my bed with colored linens from Egypt. (She says, “Boy I’ve been lookin’ forward to this so long I decorated.”) I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. (Oh oh, not the cinnamon! You know it’s love when you pull out the cinnamon!) Come, let’s drink deep of love till morning; let’s enjoy ourselves with love! And now he’s thinking “Awwwwwe yeah!” and his soundtrack changes... to THIS! **(SONG: Lets get it on)** LOL! Now THAT’S a good song!... (If you’re married. Some of ya’ll don’t need to get nothing on... turn it off!)

Verse 19, Look what she says next. She drops a bomb...

Proverbs 7:19-21 My husband is not at home; (What?!?! Your Husband?! You’re married?! She goes on...) he has gone on a long journey. He took his purse (Well that might be the part of the problem right there... Her husband got a purse! filled with money and will not be home till full moon.” (He’s gonna be gone a long time. You can stay over if you want!) With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk.

Proverbs 7:22 All at once he followed her... (and I wonder what he was thinking... “She’s obviously not happy in her marriage. And He doesn’t love her... not like I could. And besides I think this could be it. We have so much in common. I’ve never felt this way about anyone. This is love. I know it is cause it just feels right. We’re meant to be together. In fact, this could be the beginning of something special...” But the wiser and older man telling this story said this...)

Proverbs 7:22-23 All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life.

You read that and you’re like, “Really Solomon? Aren’t you being a bit dramatic? I mean I know it isn’t good, but “...like an arrow piercing his liver” seriously?”

Listen... If you don’t get anything else, here’s what I want you to see...

This young man thinks this is just a date. Solomon says it will cost him his life. And one of them is the wisest man who ever lived.

This young man thought this was a love story. Solomon sees it as a tragedy. One of them was the wisest man who ever lived.

This young man thought this was just a one-time thing. Solomon saw it as a choice that could affect the rest of his life. One of them was the wisest man who ever lived.

Come on, come on, come on... What kind of crazy stories have you told YOURself so that you can just do whatever it is you really want to do and not feel bad about it? Cause that’s what we do isn’t it? I know I do...

* One time I was sitting in Panera working on a talk and right before they closed one of the employees walked around with a tray of cookies and offered some to everyone who was still there. So this girl comes over to me and asks, “Do you want a cookie?” Now, at the time my wife Tiffany had me on this diet, that didn’t include cookies, (Whatever that’s about) and so I knew I shouldn’t take one of those cookies but all of a sudden I had this thought, “Wait a minute...” This young lady came all the way over here to do something nice and offer me a cookie. I don’t

want to hurt her feelings. I mean If anything, I can take the cookie and bring it home to my kids.”

Now, I know I lied to myself for 2 reasons.

- 1) If she would have come over and offered me broccoli... I would have been like, “No! I don’t want any of your broccoli. Get away from me. I’m busy. Broccoli?!?” I wouldn’t have cared about her feelings.
- 2) The other reason I know I lied to myself is because that cookie didn’t make it home. Neither one of my children saw one bit of that cookie. I ate that cookie up.
... But I “didn’t want to hurt her feelings.”

I don’t know maybe your issue isn’t cookies. Maybe for you it’s making poor relational decisions. Like you told yourself, “This time’s gonna be different. This time I’m going to wait to date until I find a man whose heart has been change by the cross!” But now you’re just happy to find a man with a tattoo OF a cross. And you’re like, “That’s good. We can make that work.” Maybe for you it’s not making poor relational choices, but it’s making poor financial decisions and you told yourself that you wouldn’t take on anymore debt, but you keep putting stuff on that credit card because you like to get the points. Meanwhile you’re going deeper and deeper in debt, you’re upside down financially.

Maybe for you it’s alcohol. And you’ve had issues in the past, but it’s no big deal. You’re just going out for drinks with the girls. But then one thing leads to another and you forfeit your sobriety.

How is this kind of stuff even possible?! The reason we can have such high hopes and then turn around and make such low decisions is because we lie to ourselves. You and I are experts on selling ourselves on something we want to do.

Look what Solomon goes on to say in the next few verses. He pulls out of the story and begins to speak to you and me.

Proverbs 7:24-26 Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. (And when the wisest man who ever lived says that, you listen...) Do not let **your heart** turn to her ways or **stray into her paths**. Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. Solomon wraps up this story in dramatic fashion and he says to his readers, “Listen, Don’t get so wrapped up in the details of the story that you don’t see yourself in it.” He says “Don’t be too quick to say, “I would never do that.” Yes you would! Maybe not exactly that, but your equivalent. People fall for this all the time...

And then did you catch what Solomon said the problem was? He says, “DON’T LET YOUR HEART, (your emotions, your feelings) turn to her ways. Don’t let your heart stray or wander down her path. And he says “hey, the reason why you can make choices that aren’t good for you, is because of your heart. See, Solomon knew something about our hearts or emotions that we need to know about ourselves. And that is that there’s something wrong with us. The prophet Jeremiah said it this way... **Jeremiah 17:9** The heart is **deceitful above all things and beyond cure**. Who can understand it?

He says, 1. “**Your heart is deceitful above all things.**” And this is true for everyone. True for you, it’s true for me, your mama, even your grandmama. (Not my granda!” Yes, Your sweet little ole

grandma was born with a deceitful heart.) He says, your emotions will lie to you. 2. **And beyond cure...** That won't change. It's a terminal condition.

And then he says, **"Who can understand it?"** In other words he says "You're heart will deceive you into to doing some things that you'll look back on and think, "What was I thinking?" It can get you to buy things that you're gonna look back on and think, "What was I thinking?" It can get you to do things in relationship that you're gonna look back on and think, "What was I thinking? They didn't deserve that."

So, here it is. The first thing we're learning from this series is this... Your heart will lie to you.

So everyone out there saying, "Just follow your heart." You gonna follow your heart off a cliff. **So what do we do?** When you sense start trying to talk yourself into something just stop and ask yourself, **Am I telling myself the truth?** Why am I doing this really? What's the real reason? Am I telling myself the truth? Am I being completely honest with myself?

The real reason I'm doing this is because I want other people to think I'm something.

The real reason is, I'm just lonely. I feel ugly. I'm trying prove something to someone.

The real reason is I'm selfish. I'm jealous, I'm angry, I'm addicted,...

And gang, it's when you finally just tell yourself the truth then all of a sudden the lies start to lose their power over you.

And then maybe we can begin to experience the promise of John 8:32...

John 8:32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Aren't you tired of being a slave to all the lies? Wouldn't it be great if you could finally, really be "free"!? Gang it starts with telling yourself the truth.

So, I just want to encourage you to be willing to have a conversation with yourself.

The real reason: I won't call that person is...

I'm buying this is...

I'm taking this job is...

I'm moving is...

I filed for divorce is...

We're moving in together... (It's not because it's cheaper. If you broke up you wouldn't stay.

Please just tell yourself the truth.)

I drink so much is...

I go from one unhealthy relationship to another is...

I'm not generous is...

I don't do church is...

I don't serve...

I just believe that if we'll make better decisions, we'll have better lives. Don't be a slave to lies but learn to stop and ask **Am I telling myself the truth?** If you do, you'll be free.

PRAYER

- Pray for this series and that we'll tell ourselves the truth.
- Lead people in prayer to become a follower of Jesus.

SLIDES
Epic Day 2024
The Way of Wisdom: Tell Yourself The Truth

1. **Proverbs 27:6 Wounds** from a friend can be **trusted**, but an enemy multiplies kisses.
2. **Proverbs 4:7** Though it cost **all you have**, get understanding.
3. If you could wake up tomorrow and have any superhero power, what would it be and why?
4. (Song: One Call Away)
5. **Proverbs 7:6-7** At the window of my house I looked out through the lattice. I saw among the simple, I noticed among the young men, a youth who lacked judgment.
6. **Proverbs 7:8-9** He was going down the street near **her corner**, walking along in the direction of her house at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in.
7. (SONG: I Got a Feeling)
8. (SONG: Lil Boo Thang).
9. (SONG: Jaws)
10. **Proverbs 7:10-14** Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent. (She is loud and defiant, her feet never stay at home; now in the street, now in the squares, at every corner she lurks.) She took hold of him and kissed him and with a brazen face she said: **“I have fellowship offerings at home; and today I fulfilled my vows.”**
11. **Proverbs 7:15** “So I came out to meet you; I looked for you and have found you!”
12. (SONG: I will always love you.)
13. **Proverbs 7:16-18** “I have covered my bed with colored linens from Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come, let's drink deep of love till morning; let's enjoy ourselves with love!”
14. (SONG: Lets get it on)

15. **Proverbs 7:19-21** "My husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey. He took his purse filled with money and will not be home till full moon." With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk.
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17. **Proverbs 7:22-23** All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, **little knowing** it will cost him his life.
18. **Proverbs 7:24-26** Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. Do not let **your heart** turn to her ways or stray into her **paths**. Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng.
19. **Jeremiah 17:9** The heart is **deceitful above all things** and **beyond cure**. Who can understand it?
20. Am I telling myself the truth?
21. **John 8:32** "Then you will know the **truth**, and the truth will **set you free**."