

## Well Driven Nails – Part 1 and 2

Luke 2:52; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; March 16 & 23, 2014

The temptation of ‘fathers’ is to be driven to everything but ‘driving nails.’

### 1. Jesus *Personified Wisdom as a Child*.

*The life of Jesus from 0-30 years old was characterized by wisdom. - Luke 2:39-52*

What is true + what must be done in light of what is true = wisdom. *Wisdom is the practical theology of ‘This IS so I DO.* So what did this wisdom *look like* in Jesus’ everyday life?

Proverbs!

- Jesus honored God as ‘God.’ - Proverbs 1:7
- Jesus was humble. – Proverbs 11:2; 26:12; 28:26
- Jesus was eager to learn. - Proverbs 1:5, 32
- Jesus received counsel and instruction. - Proverbs 12:15
- Jesus lived in light of eternity. – Proverbs 17:24
- Jesus was discerning in practical matters. - Proverbs 1:3; 21:22
- Jesus sought out the right company. – Proverbs 18:1; 13:20
- Jesus exercised self-control. - Proverbs 7:22; 29:11; 20:1
- Jesus spoke to heal. – Proverbs 12:18
- Jesus was careful. – Proverbs 14:16
- Jesus avoided unnecessary conflict. - Proverbs 20:3
- Jesus was diligent and worked hard. - Proverbs 6:6; 26:16

### 2. Wisdom is a ‘*Father-Son*’ project.

*Wisdom is given by God but His primary design for doing so is from ‘fathers’ to ‘sons.’ – Proverbs 2:1-5; 1:8; 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; 6:1; 7:1; 10:11; 13:1*

Just *how* did Jesus grow in wisdom? Jesus *sought wisdom* from the Scriptures through His parents and His teachers so that He was taught by God, His Father. In the Scriptures, the primary responsibility for teaching wisdom falls on the father in the home with the competent help of the mother and on the teachers in the community of faith. - Deuteronomy 4:6; Proverbs 1:8; 4:11. Is it only a ‘father-son’ project? There can be different kinds of ‘father-son’ relationships. So no, it is the nature of any kind of discipling relationship (mother-child; teacher-student; strong-weak; older-younger, etc.) – 2 Timothy 1:2; Proverbs 1:8; 31:1; Titus 2:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:2; Matthew 28:18-20

### 3. Wisdom is a ‘*Nail-Driving*’ project.

*‘Fathers’ are to drive the nails of wisdom into the lives of ‘sons’ by personal example, repetitive instruction, gentle correction, faithful participation in the community of faith and unceasing prayer. – Ecclesiastes 12:11; Proverbs 1:1-7*

Jesus grew up in a home where His earthly father was a carpenter and he became a carpenter. This was by divine design. Of all the professions He could have had, He was a carpenter (Mark 6:3). This is interesting to me in light of the emphasis on wisdom in the life of Jesus and the picturing of wisdom in terms of 'well-driven nails.' Wisdom is like 'well driven nails' of uncompromising truth and principle that shape a life and protect in times of temptation and give support in times of trial and provide vision in times of freedom and opportunity.

The 'nail' is like the principle of truth or practice. The 'wood' is like the heart of the 'son,' receptive or hard. The 'hammer' is like the means of communicating wisdom. The 'driver' is the 'father.' The success of acquiring wisdom depends on the 'driver' with his 'nails' and the 'wood' and God (who has to soften hearts)! Here some examples of 'nails' to drive home:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. God is the Supreme Good.           | 8. Seek God for LIFE.                     |
| 2. Man is an idol worshiper.          | 9. Serve others for their good.           |
| 3. Jesus is the double cure.          | 10. Submit gladly to authority.           |
| 4. Faith is trust in the promises.    | 11. Sacrifice in the exercise of freedom. |
| 5. Love is the obedience of faith.    | 12. Speak the truth in love.              |
| 6. God is sovereign over all.         | 13. Suffer to the glory of God.           |
| 7. Jesus is a willing Savior for all. | 14. Show grace to the ill-deserving.      |
- 
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Ask and you will receive.                                   | 8. You reap what you sow.                               |
| 2. The truth will set you free.                                | 9. If a grain of wheat dies, it bears much fruit.       |
| 3. It is better to give than to receive.                       | 10. Fleeting pleasure, Jesus is better.                 |
| 4. Bad company corrupts good morals.                           | 11. Do what is right and wise.                          |
| 5. Work from a position of rest.                               | 12. Don't plow with an ox and a donkey.                 |
| 6. Garbage in, garbage out.                                    | 13. Love to stand corrected.                            |
| 7. The eye cannot say to the hand,<br>'I have no need of you.' | 14. Do the hard thing and trust God for the good thing. |

How do we 'drive' home the 'nails' of wisdom into the hearts of our 'sons'?

1. Teach biblical truth and principles in concise and clear statements (with the Scriptural basis).
2. Teach through personal example: be a living illustration of the wisdom you are teaching.
3. Teach through repetitive instruction: don't be afraid of rote instruction or repetitive instruction, so pile the wood and pray for fire!
4. Teach through gentle correction: to 'drive' these kinds of 'nails' does not require 'force' but 'gracious' interaction.
5. Teach through faithful participation in the community of faith: God uses the body of Christ as well as the Christ-centered home to drive home the wisdom we need, so take advantage of what is offered.
6. Teach through dependence on God as our Teacher by praying unceasingly that God would grant the wisdom that leads to faith in Jesus and the path to LIFE.

## Well Driven Nails – Part 2

Luke 2:52; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; March 23, 2014

Read **Luke 2:39-52**.

I began by contrasting the life of Jesus as a growing Child to the ‘wisdom’ of Bill and Ted’s Excellent Adventure:

‘Be excellent to each other’ + ‘Party on, dude’ = ‘let me do what I want and I’ll let you do what you want and we’ll all have a good time’

That is the ‘wisdom’ of this age.

What is wisdom – true, biblical wisdom?

What is true + what must be done in light of what is true = wisdom.

*Wisdom is the practical theology of ‘This IS so I DO.*

### 1. Jesus Personified Wisdom as a Child.

*The life of Jesus from 0-30 years old was characterized by wisdom. - Luke 2:39-52*

See **Luke 2:40, 47, 52**

So what did this wisdom *look like* in Jesus’ everyday life? Proverbs!

### 2. Wisdom is a ‘Father-Son’ project.

*Wisdom is given by God but His primary design for doing so is from ‘fathers’ to ‘sons.’ – Proverbs 2:1-5; 1:8; 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; 6:1; 7:1; 10:11; 13:1*

But all of us can perform the role of ‘father’ and all of us are ‘sons’ in certain respects, so that this applies to all of us.

### 3. Wisdom is a ‘Nail-Driving’ project.

*‘Fathers’ are to drive the nails of wisdom into the lives of ‘sons.’*

***Ecclesiastes 12:11***

(hammer, nails, and board)

Jesus grew up in a home where His earthly father was a carpenter and he became a carpenter. This was by divine design. Of all the professions He could have had, He was a carpenter (Mark 6:3). This is interesting to me in light of the emphasis on wisdom in the life of Jesus and the picturing of wisdom in terms of ‘well-driven nails.’

Wisdom is like ‘well driven nails’ of uncompromising truth and principle that shape a life and protect in times of temptation and give support in times of trial and provide vision in times of freedom and opportunity.

- The ‘nail’ is like the principle of truth or practice.
- The ‘wood’ is like the heart of the ‘son,’ receptive or hard.
- The ‘hammer’ is like the means of communicating wisdom.
- The ‘driver’ is the ‘father.’

How do we ‘drive’ home the ‘nails’ of wisdom (‘fixed points of reference’ for truth and practice) into the hearts of our ‘sons’?

### **1. Teach biblical truth and principles in concise and clear statements (with the Scriptural basis).**

I ended last time with a quote from John Piper:

‘I have often said, “Books don’t change people, paragraphs do — sometimes sentences.” This may not be fair to books, since paragraphs find their way to us through books, and they often gain their peculiar power because of the context they have in the book. But the point remains: One sentence or paragraph may lodge itself so powerfully in our mind that its effect is enormous when all else is forgotten. (John Piper, *Books Don’t Change People, Paragraphs Do*)

- Apple Computer’s Steve Jobs said one thing to Pepsico’s John Sculley that ‘knocked the wind out of him’ and convinced him to leave New York and move to California to run Apple:

“Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water or do you want to change the world?”

- Ever feel overwhelmed with info? Are you just looking for something novel or new? Are you just reading because you're suppose to? Or are you driving nails that will shape your life?
- We need fixed points of reference in our lives that shape the way we think and the choices we make!

“The Chair” – famous presentation by Frank Peritti on our ‘fixed point of reference’ in a round, pitch black room (the chair can’t be moved and I must reference the rest of the room in light of the chair)

The ‘two hands’ of Gospel truth and practice have been used in our household to do this:

*Foundational ‘Nails’*

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. God is the Supreme Good.           | 8. Seek God for LIFE.                     |
| 2. Man is an idol worshiper.          | 9. Serve others for their good.           |
| 3. Jesus is the double cure.          | 10. Submit gladly to authority.           |
| 4. Faith is trust in the promises.    | 11. Sacrifice in the exercise of freedom. |
| 5. Love is the obedience of faith.    | 12. Speak the truth in love.              |
| 6. God is sovereign over all.         | 13. Suffer to the glory of God.           |
| 7. Jesus is a willing Savior for all. | 14. Show grace to the ill-deserving.      |

But there are many others, with more specific application, to be added, some pulled directly from Scripture (or close to it) and some summaries of Scriptural truth like the above.

*Specific Nails*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Ask and you will receive.<br>(Matthew 7:7-8) | 8. You reap what you sow.<br>(Galatians 6:7)      |
| 2. The truth will set you free.                 | 9. If a grain of wheat dies, it bears much fruit. |

3. It is better to give than to receive.

10. **Fleeting pleasure, Jesus is better. – Hebrews 11:24-26**

4. Bad company corrupts good morals.

11. Do what is right and wise.

5. Work from a position of rest.

12. Don't plow with an ox and a donkey.

6. Garbage in, garbage out.

13. Love to stand corrected.

7. The eye cannot say to the hand,  
'I have no need of you.'

14. **Do the hard thing and trust God for the good thing. – Romans 1:5**

Also:

- Turn, trust and love to glorify God above.
- Fight with all you have to enjoy all that God is.
- Gather to give and get, to connect and reconnect.
- Scatter satisfied in God to serve your family, church, workplace and world.

Why is this important? Why not just read the Bible and preach and teach the Bible without this?

- ✓ Even in the unbelieving world, generations pass down 'wisdom' (proverbs) from one to the other:

#### *Seven Wise Men of Greece*

The Seven Sages (of Greece) or Seven Wise Men (Greek: οἱ ἑπτὰ σοφοί, hoi hepta sophoi; c. 620 BC–550 BC) was the title given by ancient Greek tradition to seven early 6th century BC philosophers, statesmen and law-givers who were renowned in the following centuries for their wisdom.

Traditionally, each of the seven sages represents an aspect of worldly wisdom which is summarized by an aphorism. Although the list of sages sometimes varies, the ones usually included are the following:

- Cleobulus of Lindos: *"Moderation is the best thing."* He governed as tyrant of Lindos, in the Greek island of Rhodes, circa 600 BC.
- Solon of Athens: *"Keep everything with moderation."* Solon (c. 638–558 BC) was a famous legislator and reformer from Athens, framing the laws that shaped the Athenian democracy.
- Chilon of Sparta: *"You should not desire the impossible."* Chilon was a Spartan politician from the 6th century BC, to whom the militarization of Spartan society was attributed<sup>[citation needed]</sup>.

- Bias of Priene: "*Most men are bad.*" Bias was a politician and legislator of the 6th century BC.
- Thales of Miletus: (c. 624 BC – c. 546 BC) Thales is the first well-known philosopher and mathematician. His advice, "*Know thyself,*" was engraved on the front facade of the Oracle of Apollo in Delphi.
- Pittacus of Mytilene (c. 640–568 BC), governed Mytilene (Lesbos) along with Myrsilus. He tried to reduce the power of the nobility and was able to govern with the support of the popular classes, whom he favoured. He famously said "*You should know which opportunities to choose.*"
- Periander of Corinth (fl. 627 BC): he was the tyrant of Corinth in the 7th and 6th centuries BC. During his rule, Corinth knew a golden age of unprecedented stability. He was known saying "*Be farsighted with everything.*" (*Wikipedia*)  
Proverb = a brief popular saying (such as “Too many cooks spoil the broth”) that gives advice about how people should live or that expresses a belief that is generally thought to be true (Webster’s dictionary)

Proverb = a pithy saying, comparison or question (Hebrew word whose root meaning is ‘represent, be like’) – Pictorial Bible Dictionary

Examples from secular history:

- Haste makes waste
  - A stitch in time saves nine
  - Ignorance is bliss
  - Mustn't cry over spilled milk.
  - You can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar.
  - You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink.
  - Those who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.
  - A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
  - Everyone unto their own.
  - Well begun is half done.
  - A little learning is a dangerous thing.
  - A rolling stone gathers no moss.
  - It is better to be smarter than you appear than to appear smarter than you are.
  - Good things come to those who wait.
  - A poor workman blames his tools.
  - A dog is a man's best friend.
  - An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
  - If the shoe fits, wear it!
  - Honesty is the best policy
  - Slow and steady wins the race (*Wikipedia.org*)
- ✓ In addition to other kinds of literature in the Bible (law, history, poetry, prophecy, gospel, letters), God gave us a book of Proverbs.

- The book of Proverbs highlights the importance of brief summaries of truth and practice for memory and teaching.

‘sayings’ and ‘proverb’ and ‘figure’ and ‘words of the wise’ and ‘riddles’ (Proverbs 1:1-6)

‘Proverbial teaching is one of the most ancient methods of instruction. It was well suited to the time when books were scarce and philosophy was little understood. The mind, not used to the slow process of reasoning, was more easily engaged by terse sentences that expressed a striking thought in a few words. The wise man himself has given the best definition of these aphoristic maxims. He describes them as ‘apples of gold in settings of silver.’ (Proverbs 25:11) – Charles Bridges, *Proverbs*, 1846

‘A new way of writing, in which divine wisdom is taught us by Proverbs or short sentences, which contain their whole design within themselves and are not connected with one another. We have had divine laws, histories, and songs, and now divine proverbs; such various methods has Infinite Wisdom used for our instruction. Teaching by proverbs was 1. An ancient way of teaching. It was the most ancient way among the Greeks; each of the seven wise men of Greece had some saying that he valued himself upon and that made him famous. These sentences were inscribed on pillars and had in great veneration. 2. It was a plain and easy way of teaching. A proverb, which carries both its sense and its evidence in a little compass, is quickly apprehended and easily retained. It was a very profitable way of teaching and served admirably well to answer the end. The world is governed by proverbs. ‘As saith the proverb of the ancients’ or (as we commonly express it) ‘As the old saying is’ goes very far with most men in forming their notions and fixing their resolves. Some think that we may judge the temper and character of a nation by the complexion of its vulgar proverbs. Yet there are many corrupt proverbs which tend to debauch men’s minds and harden them in sin. The devil has his proverbs and the world and the flesh have their proverbs which reflect reproach on God and religion.’ – Matthew Henry, intro to *Proverbs*

‘Proverbs are simple, moral statements (or illustrations) that highlight and teach fundamental realities about life. ... The sum of this wisdom is personified in the Lord Jesus Christ. ... Proverbs is both a pattern for the tender impartation of truth from generation to generation as well as a vast resource for the content of the truth to be imparted. Proverbs contains the principles and applications of Scripture which the godly characters of the Bible illustrate in their lives. ... All of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge expressed in Proverbs are hidden in Christ. – John MacArthur, intro to Proverbs in MacArthur Study Bible

- ✓ In the history of the Church, we see this method of teaching in the form of creeds and catechisms.

Do we see this kind of emphasis in the history of the church?

*The Apostles' Creed*

1. I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
2. And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord:
3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary:
4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried: He descended into hell:
5. The third day he rose again from the dead:
6. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty:
7. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead:
8. I believe in the Holy Ghost:
9. I believe in the holy catholic church: the communion of saints:
10. The forgiveness of sins:
11. The resurrection of the body:
12. And the life everlasting. Amen.

I think we do, in the history of teaching the catechism. A catechism typically is a rote way of teaching truth in a short question and answer format.

‘If Christian men are wondering about what their primary role should be as a father, in terms of their obligation to be priests of their own homes, I suggest that the practice of catechism occupy a major role. The Scriptures make it very clear that parents, especially fathers, are assigned the role of recounting to their children the mighty acts of God in redeeming his people (Exodus 13:8 ff). God commands us to teach his commandments "to your children and to their children after them" (Deuteronomy 4:9; cf. also Deuteronomy 6:6-9). ... Certainly it is important that every dad teach his children about the meaning of life. Yes, it is important to know who Larry, Moe and Curly are and every properly mannered child should know how to make various Stooge sounds and gestures despite their mother's objections. It is also important for dads to teach their sons why an F-15 is superior to a Mig-25, and to even build a model of it together if possible. It is a must to know what a "draw play" is, and why if your child does not learn from your mistakes and grows up to be a Rams fan, they too must learn to live with perennial disappointment and heartbreak, a very difficult but valuable lesson. It is important to learn how to tie a ball into a mitt to make a good pocket, to run a lawn mower properly so as to not leave streaks in the grass and to position the firewood precisely so that you get a good hot and clean fire. But while all of this is important, it certainly pales in the light of eternity, when we realize that our children must also come to know the unspeakable love of Jesus Christ, who declared over the objections of his disciples, "let the children come unto me." There is no doubt that the Scriptures themselves assign specifically to fathers

the vital role of instructing their children in the Holy Scriptures and the great doctrines of the Christian faith. Let us never forget that our children come to Christ, many times, directly through instruction received in the home. But how can Mom or Dad best instruct their children in the faith? This can be done very effectively through regular Bible reading and catechism--practices that at one time were the distinguishing mark of a Christian home. ... In conclusion, there is one story that wonderfully captures the importance of catechism, perhaps more than all others. The great Princeton theologian B. B. Warfield, in an article defending the worth of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, recounts a wonderful story that demonstrates what he describes as the "indelible mark of the Shorter Catechism." We have the following bit of experience from a general officer of the United States Army. He was in a great western city at a time of intense excitement and violent rioting. The streets were over-run daily by a dangerous crowd. One day he observed approaching him a man of singularly combined calmness and firmness of mien [bearing], whose very demeanor inspired confidence. So impressed was he with his bearing amid the surrounding uproar that when he had passed he turned to look back at him, only to find that the stranger had done the same. On observing his turning the stranger at once came back to him, and touching his chest with his forefinger, demanded without preface: "What is the chief end of man?" On receiving the countersign, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever"--"Ah!" said he, "I knew you were a Shorter Catechism boy by your looks!" "Why that is just what I was thinking of you," was the rejoinder. Concludes Warfield, "It is worthwhile to be a Shorter Catechism boy. They grow up to be men. And better than that, they are exceedingly apt to grow to be men of God."<sup>2</sup> If we want our children to grow up to be men and women of God, one of the best possible ways for this to happen is to recover the practice of catechism! (Kim Riddlebarger, *Fathers, Instruct Your Children: The Need to Recover the Practice of Catechism*)

#### *Luther's Preface to the Small Catechism*

‘Martin Luther to All Faithful and Godly Pastors and Preachers:  
Grace, Mercy, and Peace in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The deplorable, miserable condition which I discovered lately when I, too, was a visitor, has forced and urged me to prepare [publish] this Catechism, or Christian doctrine, in this small, plain, simple form. Mercy! Good God! what manifold misery I beheld! The common people, especially in the villages, have no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine, and, alas! many pastors are altogether incapable and incompetent to teach [so much so, that one is ashamed to speak of it]. Nevertheless, all maintain that they are Christians, have been baptized and receive the [common] holy Sacraments. Yet they [*do not* understand and] cannot [*even*] recite either the Lord's Prayer, or the Creed, or the Ten Commandments; they live like dumb brutes and irrational hogs; and yet, now that the Gospel has come, they have nicely learned to abuse all liberty like experts.’

‘Paul's emphasis on "the teaching," the "deposit," the "sound teaching," the "sound words," and his instruction that it serve as corrective guideline to false teachings, false teachers, an nonessential subtleties creates a form with clearly recognizable features. Thomas Watson and Matthew Henry are convinced that the "form, pattern, standard of sound words" is a type of catechism: "the first principles of the oracles of God." The

apostles and other teachers in the New Testament worked with several clear, concise, verbally friendly confessional and catechetical devices to establish a foundation for the entire teaching ministry. The practice of learning by exact verbal patterns was well established, by divine mandate, in Jewish culture. A continuance that would not only be natural but an expected response to the divine disclosure of the words of the gospel. Nothing should hinder the conclusion that memorization of the deposit of truth is biblical. The catechism appears to meet this need most acceptably. – Tom Nettles

‘If there were any fear that Scripture would be displaced by handbooks of theology, we should be the first to denounce them; but there is not the shadow of a reason for such a dream, since the most Bible-reading of all the nations is that in which the Assembly's Catechism is learned by almost every mother's son. - Spurgeon cited in Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, s.v. Creeds, advantageous.

‘Bear us witness, we set up no other rule and practice, no other oracle, no other touchstone or test of orthodoxy, but the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament: these are the only fountains whence we fetch our knowledge;...and far be it from us that we should set up any form of words in competition with it, much less in contradiction to it; or admit any rival with it in the conduct an guardianship of our souls, as some do the traditions of the church, and others I know not what light within. Every other help we have for our souls we make use of as *regula regulata* - "a rule controlled"; in subordination and subserviency to the Scripture; and among the rest our catechisms and confessions of faith [*The Complete Works of Matthew Henry* 2 vols. (Grand Rapids; Baker Book House, 1979) 2:159, 160].

‘It would be anomalous indeed to say that in teaching that the Scripture is the only rule of faith and practice, the catechism is setting itself in the place of Scripture. All that the authors of our catechism have sought to do is to state in a plain, orderly and concise manner what the Scripture teaches. And do we any less in the sermon, which is the very central act of evangelical worship? What is a sermon, or at least what ought it to be, but a clear and forceful statement in the preacher's own words of what the Scripture means? And if this may be done in a sermon, why may it not be done in a catechism? – Paul King Jewett

- ✓ We also see the impact of this kind of focus in the lives of godly people.

We also see it in the history of particular Christians:

- John Paton, missionary to the New Hebrides, for instance.

*His courage came from personal fellowship with Jesus through faith in his promise, especially on the brink of eternity.*

‘The promise had been given precisely in the context of the Great Commission: "Go and make disciples of all nations . . . and Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). More than any other promise, this one brought Jesus close and real to John Paton in all his dangers. After the measles epidemic that killed thousands on

the islands, and for which the missionaries were blamed, he wrote: "During the crisis, I felt generally calm, and firm of soul, standing erect and with my whole weight on the promise, 'Lo! I am with you alway.' Precious promise! How often I adore Jesus for it, and rejoice in it! Blessed be his name" (p. 154). The power this promise had to make Christ real to Paton in hours of crisis was unlike any other Scripture or prayer:

“Without that abiding consciousness of the presence and power of my dear Lord and Savior, nothing else in all the world could have preserved me from losing my reason and perishing miserably. In his words, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," became to me so real that it would not have startled me to behold Him, as Stephen did, gazing down upon the scene. I felt His supporting power. . . . It is the sober truth, and it comes back to me sweetly after 20 years, that I had my nearest and dearest glimpses of the face and smiles of my blessed Lord in those dread moments when musket, club, or spear was being leveled at my life.<sup>15</sup> Oh the bliss of living and enduring, as seeing "Him who is invisible"! (p. 117)

‘One of the most powerful paragraphs in his *Autobiography* describes his experience of hiding in a tree, at the mercy of an unreliable chief, as hundreds of angry natives hunted him for his life. What he experienced there was the deepest source of Paton's joy and courage. In fact, I would dare to say that to share this experience and call others to enjoy it was the reason that he wrote the story of his life.<sup>16</sup> He began his *Autobiography* with the words, "What I write here is for the glory of God" (p. 2). That is true. But God gets glory when his Son is exalted. And his Son his exalted when we cherish him above all things. That is what this story is about.

“Being entirely at the mercy of such doubtful and vacillating friends, I, though perplexed, felt it best to obey. I climbed into the tree and was left there alone in the bush. The hours I spent there live all before me as if it were but of yesterday. I heard the frequent discharging of muskets, and the yells of the Savages. Yet I sat there among the branches, as safe as in the arms of Jesus. Never, in all my sorrows, did my Lord draw nearer to me, and speak more soothingly in my soul, than when the moonlight flickered among those chestnut leaves, and the night air played on my throbbing brow, as I told all my heart to Jesus. Alone, yet not alone! If it be to glorify my God, I will not grudge to spend many nights alone in such a tree, to feel again my Savior's spiritual presence, to enjoy His consoling fellowship. If thus thrown back upon your own soul, alone, all alone, in the midnight, in the bush, in the very embrace of death itself, have you a Friend that will not fail you then? (p. 200) – John Piper, *John Paton*

- John Piper for another.

‘God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.’

- ✓ We see this kind of approach in other places in the Scriptures.

Besides the book of Proverbs, do we see this reflected elsewhere in the Bible?

‘trustworthy statements’ = 1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9

Other short but sharp statements like Acts 20:35 and 1 Corinthians 15:33

In God’s Word, we have both brief summaries of truth and practice along with expanded explanations and illustrations and applications. The brief summaries help to keep us on track as we go through the huge amount of material in the Bible and they aid our memory in the heat of the battle of life.

- The Ten Commandments or Ten Words are brief summaries of truth and practice (as the Lord Jesus reveals in the Sermon on the Mount). – Exodus 20:3-17; Matthew 5:21-32

<sup>3</sup> “You shall have no other gods before Me.

<sup>4</sup> “You shall not make for yourself an idol. (4-6; with explanation)

<sup>7</sup> “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain. (with brief warning)

<sup>8</sup> “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. (9-11; with explanation)

<sup>12</sup> “Honor your father and your mother. (with brief promise) (Matthew 15:4; 19:19)

<sup>13</sup> “You shall not murder.

<sup>14</sup> “You shall not commit adultery.

<sup>15</sup> “You shall not steal.

<sup>16</sup> “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

<sup>17</sup> “You shall not covet. (with explanation) (Romans 7:7; 13:9)

- The Lord’s Prayer is a brief summary of what we are to pray for (as the two varying accounts indicate). – Luke 11:2-4; Matthew 6:9-13

<sup>2</sup> ‘Father, (shortened from Matthew)

hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come. (shortened from Matthew)

<sup>3</sup> ‘Give us each day our daily bread.

<sup>4</sup> ‘And forgive us our sins, (with explanation)

And lead us not into temptation.’” (shortened from Matthew) - Luke 11:2-4

<sup>9</sup> “Pray, then, in this way:

‘Our Father who is in heaven,

Hallowed be Your name.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Give us this day our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> ‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.>] - Matthew 6:9-13

- The Beatitudes

<sup>2</sup> He opened His mouth and *began* to teach them, saying,

<sup>3</sup> “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

<sup>7</sup> “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

<sup>8</sup> “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

<sup>9</sup> “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

<sup>10</sup> “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:2-10)

- Think about the temptation of Jesus and how it was brief quotes from the OT that He used to rebuff the Devil – Matthew 4:4, 7, 10

<sup>3</sup> And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” <sup>4</sup> But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.’” (Matthew 4:3-4; OT context: Deuteronomy 8:1-10)

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil \*took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> and \*said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU’; and ‘ON *their* HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.’” <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, ‘YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.’” (Matthew 4:5-7; OT context: Deuteronomy 6:10-19)

<sup>9</sup> and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.” <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus \*said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’” (Matthew 4:9-11; OT context: Deuteronomy 6:10-19)

‘I have often said, “Books don’t change people, paragraphs do — sometimes sentences.” This may not be fair to books, since paragraphs find their way to us through books, and they often gain their peculiar power because of the context they have in the book. But the point remains: One sentence or paragraph may lodge itself so powerfully in our mind that its effect is enormous when all else is forgotten. (John Piper, *Books Don’t Change People, Paragraphs Do*)