

Woodland Baptist Church
Wednesday December 18, 2013
Seeking Wisdom Together - Proverbs 6:1-19

1) Introduction

- a) God speaks here into three areas of our lives—how we handle money (vv. 1–5), how we discipline ourselves (vv. 6–11), and how we build community (vv. 12–19).¹
- b) Three different men with three different faults are depicted: the speculator who becomes trapped in unwise pledges (1-5), the sluggard who becomes prey to poverty (6-11), the scoundrel who stirs up dissension and is destroyed (12-19).²
- c) Both stanzas concern themselves with protecting one's future well-being - first by not jeopardizing it and then by providing for it. The last two pertain to the troublemaker...³
- d) Ploinger thinks that the warning against these inferior types of men is inserted into the coherency of the warning against the strange woman so that the warnings against the naive and the wicked should be considered as of equal importance with the warning against the strange woman.⁴

2) READ PROVERBS 6:1-19

3) How we are to handle commitments with others - 1-5 [Gullibility/Legal Entanglements]

- a) **My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor, have given your pledge for a stranger, 2 if you are snared in the words of your mouth, caught in the words of your mouth, 3 then do this, my son, and save yourself, for you have come into the hand of your neighbor: go, hasten, and plead urgently with your neighbor. 4 Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber; 5 save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the hand of the fowler.**

IF

¹ Ortlund, kindle

² Koptac, 186

³ Waltke, 329

⁴ Ibid, 329

i) [neighbor] Put up security...[stranger] Given your pledge...[mouth] snared/
caught in the words of your mouth

THEN

i) go/hasten - plead urgently...Don't sleep...Save yourself - like the gazelle/
hunter...bird/fowler

b) This security / pledge seems to be described as a rash decision possibly under some form of societal pressure, where we hastily enter into some form of promise on behalf of someone else.

i) This someone else may be as familiar as a neighbor or a complete stranger, but either way, we have let our mouth get ourselves into a situation that is going to hurt us financially.

c) This would be one of those situations when we have temporarily let our compassion over rule what we know to be right. Should we co-sign loan papers for people we hardly know? Should we enter into agreements with someone that we know is unethical and crooked? If our neighbor is known to be a spend thrift and is living beyond their means already, should we agree to help them financially to buy another new car?

i) When I was in Texas, I worked for the financing side of a motorcycle manufacturer and all I did all day long was receive credit applications for people that were trying to finance 20-30k motorcycles. About 1/3 of the applications that were approved for finance had bankruptcies / tax liens and, even worse, unpaid child support. Yet, many times the bikes would still be financed, sometimes at rates as high as 36% interest.

d) The writer or Proverbs is pretty clear that these types of pledges / securities / loans should not happen and when we find ourselves trapped within them, we need to work day and night to get out of them, as the long term damage to our reputation and character could be disastrous. [Dating service story]

2) Tension in the Gospels and Pauline Epistles

a) **Luke 6:32-36** - 32 "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward

will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

- b) **Galatians 6:1-5** -Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. 5 For each will have to bear his own load.
- c) **Philemon 17-19** - 17 So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. 18 If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. 19 I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self.
- d) **2 Corinthians 6:14-16** -14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols?
- i) Proverbs devotes a considerable amount of teaching to warn the wise against securing loans for other people (6:1-5; 11:15, 17:18, 20:16; 22:26-27; 27:13; 28:8). Charging interest was forbidden except to non-Israelites, but securing loans was thought to be a bad risk even in the case of the latter. If a person needed help and one had the ability, one should simply give a gift out of generosity, without the hope of every getting it back (11:24-26). Even so, it is important to note that the Torah on occasion encourages lending to those in need (Deut. 15:1-7), and though no interest may be taken, a reasonable pledge may be secured for the repayment of the loan (Exodus 22:25-27). In light of this, Proverbs may be seen not as prohibiting such loans but as warning of the dangers. If one lends to the poor, one had better be ready to sacrifice the loan.⁵

4) How we discipline ourselves - 6-11 [Laziness - Ant vs. Sluggard]

- a) **6 Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. 7 Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, 8 she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. 9 How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, 11 and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.**

⁵ Tremper Longman, Commentary on Proverbs, 553

- i) **Ant** - through the ant's diligence and work, she provides what she needs for those in the colony and she does this without someone directly telling her what to do, it is out of personal initiative.
- (1) **Has no supervisor - chief, officer, ruler** - no one is there continually directing the ant in what to do or trained how to be diligent, we know that there is some form of hierarchy to the colony [queen, , but that is not the writer's point - the point is that the ant instinctively knows what to do and works diligently continuously.
 - (2) **She prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest** - the ants are diligent to store up food in preparation for different times of the season for survival of the colony.
 - (3) Interesting facts about Ants:
 - (a) Ants are the longest living of all insects, living up to 30 years.
 - (b) The Ant is one of the world's strongest creatures according to it's size.
 - (c) Ants move an estimated 50 tons of soil per year in one square mile.
 - (d) All worker, soldier and queen ants are female.⁶
- ii) Compare to the Sluggard - **9 How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, 11 and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.**
- (1) **Sluggard** - occurs 14 times in Proverbs and nowhere else in the OT.
 - (2) **A little sleep, a little slumber...** presents the idea that the sluggard convinces himself that he will just take a quick nap, then get back to work, but the quick nap turns into a long time of sleep, which leads to habitual laziness and potentially free-loading behavior.
 - (a) Folding of hands - Hands folded when they should be working are the ultimate sign of sloth.⁷
 - (3) **Poverty will come upon you like a robber...armed man** - The point is not that it will attack suddenly, like armed robbers in ambush. Rather, poverty and indebtedness cling to the slothful like incorrigible beggars who

⁶ <http://www.antark.net/ant-facts/#.UrHKWvYjTnk>

⁷ Koptac, 187

always linger about the house and always want more. Laziness will siphon off resources until the indolent have nothing left.⁸

- (a) Sleeping in time of labor is out of place in a scene where man has been commanded to eat his bread by the sweat of his face. No one has a right to count on God to undertake for him in temporal matters, who is not himself characterized by energy and wakefulness.⁹

5) How not to build community - 12-19 [Way of Wickedness]

- a) **12 A worthless person, a wicked man, goes about with crooked speech, 13 winks with his eyes, signals with his feet, points with his finger, 14 with perverted heart devises evil, continually sowing discord; 15 therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly; in a moment he will be broken beyond healing. 16 There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, 19 a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.**

- i) Description of a wicked man:

(1) Devises evil with his perverted heart - continually sowing discord

- (a) *goes about with crooked speech* - lying and manipulating people to get what he wants.
 (b) *winks his eyes* - uses his eyes to send hidden messages, winks at people to make them think he is on their side, when in reality he is plotting against them.
 (c) *signals with his feet* - taps people on their leg or feet under the table, where other people can't see them or to signal when they are to launch their pre-planned deception.
 (d) *points with his finger* - to accuse or point out the victim of the desires of his perverted heart.

(2) His end - **15 therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly; in a moment he will be broken beyond healing.**

⁸ Garrett, logos

⁹ Ironside, logos

ii) There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him:

- (1) Haughty eyes - arrogantly superior or disdainful - to think that you are better than someone else for whatever reason so you look down on them.
- (2) Lying tongue - a mouth that is used to utter falsehoods and deception.
- (3) Hands that shed innocent blood - anyone that kills innocent people [Genocidal leaders such as Hitler, Stalin, Polpot...etc]; abortion is used as an example of this as well as genocide or homicide.
- (4) Heart that devises wicked plans - needs no explanation
- (5) Feet that make haste to run into evil - the wicked heart is excited about the idea of perpetrating evil, so they are in a hurry to do it, they are in a hurry to shed innocent blood...they are in a hurry to lie, a hurry to do evil.
- (6) False witness that breathes out lies - give the idea that with every breath they breathe, evething that comes out of their mouth along with their lying tongue cannot be trusted.
- (7) One who sows discord among brothers - lack of agreement and disharmony - one who wants to keep it stirred up and keep people upset and at each other's throats; it's almost like they don't know how to be peaceful and at rest.

6) CLOSE

- a) The one who pledges is caught in a trap, the sluggard will be ambushed by poverty, the scoundrel will be overtaken by disaster, and the one who stirs up dissension provokes Yahweh's loathing - no more threat need to be said.¹⁰

¹⁰ Koptak, 191