

Woodland Baptist Church
 Wednesday, March 26, 2014
 Seeking Wisdom Together - Proverbs 12:15-28

1) READ PROVERBS 12:15-28

2) **15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.**

- a) The time of the Judges is a great example of this - **Judges 17:6** - 6 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.
- b) "The path of a fool is straight in his own eyes." The fool consults with no one, respects no other opinion. His way is the only way of accomplishing anything. On the other hand, "he that is wise listens to wise counsel." He has a healthy distrust of his own unaided judgment which might lead him astray (12:15).¹

3) **16 The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult.**

- a) When the fool becomes upset about something - he or she makes it known immediately through some form of outburst, instead of keeping their cool and dealing with it wisely.
 - i) Two marks of a fool and of a wise man are given in these verses: the fool ('ēwîl, "a hardened, thickheaded fool") thinks his way is right (cf. 21:2), which explains why he will not receive instruction (cf. 1:7); when he is annoyed (perhaps by an insult) he immediately shows it. A wise (prudent; see comments on 12:23) man, in contrast, is open to advice (cf. 10:17; 11:14; 12:1), and is not annoyed by insults. Overlooks means not that he ignores the insult but that he controls his response to it or forgives it. The same verb (kāsâh) in 10:12 is translated "covers." "Insult" is rendered "disgrace" in 11:2.²
 - ii) Angry speech (12:16). "A fool shows his annoyance in the same day." He shows that he is upset immediately. He has no idea of controlling himself or checking the expression of his wounded ego. Lashing out in the heat of anger, he arouses contention. On the other hand, "a prudent person conceals shame." He does not make a fool out of himself by shooting off his mouth. He exercises restraint and ignores an insult. He knows that by showing his

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² Bible Knowledge

resentment he will only make matters worse. He knows that it is best to let passions cool before he attempts to set things right.³

4) **17 Whoever speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit.**

- a) This is really self-evident - if we speak the truth we give honest evidence, in other words we are to uphold the ninth commandment to “not bear false witness.”
 - i) Perjured speech (12:17). “He that breathes (yaphiach) out truth utters righteousness.” The verse relates to the testimony of a witness in a court of law. The term “righteousness” here is used in its legal sense of “justice.” The idea is that a true witness supports the cause of justice by contributing to a right verdict. On the other hand, “a witness of lies [breathes out] deceit.” Such a one misleads the judges and is responsible for a miscarriage of justice. By his perverted testimony he reveals his true character.

5) **18 There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.**

- a) I know we can all relate to this Proverb - especially in long term friendships and marriage and especially within family. We know exactly what to say to get a rise out of each other; I know the exact topic to drag up if I want to hurt someone or try to provoke them.
- b) You know the feeling - someone says something and it feels like you have just been stabbed in the heart; tears form in your eyes, your throat tightens, your lips pinch together, your heart rate soars, your hands clench into fists, your spirit becomes completely aesthetic as it processes what has been said and realizes the implications for your life.
 - i) Sarcasm is a popular method of communicating today among children mocking one another is commonplace. [Logan’s recent experience][ML “sermons”]
- c) **The tongue of the wise brings healing** - the opposite of **rash words and sword thrusts** - the wise are calculated in their speech the opposite direction.

³ Bible Knowledge

- i) Inflammatory speech (12:18). “There is one who speaks thoughtlessly like the piercings of a sword.” Reckless words often have a harmful, and even fatal, consequence. The edge of the sword was called “its mouth.” The human mouth can do as much damage as that “mouth” of metal. On the other hand, “the tongue of the wise is health.” His words soothe anguish, undo injury, and heal wounds.⁴

6) 19 Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.

- a) Why would this be? It’s fairly simple, God is eternal and pure and ultimately, at the end of time, whether at our own death or at the end of the universe, everything will be set right. So, even if the lying tongue seems to gain the upper hand, we can rest assured it is only for a moment, although a moment can seem like a long time to us.
- b) Truthful lips endure forever - why? Because God is about truth - think about the gospel of John and where we are right now in our study together - the “truth” shall set you free...while slavery and bondage exists in lies and self righteousness.
 - i) **Isaiah 40:6-8** “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, 25 but the word of the Lord endures forever.”

7) 20 Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but those who plan peace have joy. [gospel of John] 21 No ill befalls the righteous, but the wicked are filled with trouble.

- a) Obviously we know that bad things happen to the righteous all the time, but this is saying that more likely than not, those that live lives that are righteous and steer clear from things that could ensnare us into trouble will avoid the majority of problems in their life.
- b) Wicked people many times seek out trouble; and by nature of who they are, people that are void of God, or worse, those antithetical to God, or out to try to slander God, have God’s wrath on them all the time which guarantees trouble.

8) 22 Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight.

⁴ Smith

- a) Again, this is a self evident truth - we know that lies are not in the heart of God, they are in the heart of Satan, so anyone that lies are an abomination to the Lord.
- b) **His delight is in those that act faithfully** - without faith it is impossible to please the Lord.
 - i) Evil counsel (12:20–22). “Deceit is in the heart of them that devise evil.” The reference is to those who give evil advice. Such are treacherous counselors. Their advice can only bring misfortune, not joy and comfort. On the other hand, “to counselors of peace is joy.” Some people work for a harmonious society and their endeavors bring them and those they counsel a feeling of joy (12:20).
 - ii) “No harm befalls the righteous.” The “harm” here is not misfortune or calamity, but the evil consequences that follow doing evil. A righteous man escapes the dangers faced by the wicked. Others take the term harm (‘aven) in an ethical sense. The meaning would then be that a righteous man will not commit some atrocious act because his nature will cause him to recoil from such conduct. On the other hand, “the wicked are filled with evil.” They easily succumb to the lure of sin and engage in evil deeds in spite of the warnings of punishment to follow (12:21).

9) **23 A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaims folly.**

- a) At first glance this seems to sound deceitful - like the prudent man is purposefully withholding information that is needed to be heard, but that is not what is happening here. There is a time to remain silent and a time to speak. The wise person knows the right time to speak and be silent.
- b) **Heart of fools proclaims folly** - fools lavish in their foolishness - they don't know any knowledge and don't care to run their mouths about it. [My own experience]
- c) A prudent man is not anxious to demonstrate his knowledge; he is not like fools who blurt out folly. “Prudent” translates ‘ārûm, “shrewd” in a good sense, a word used elsewhere only in Job (5:12; 15:5) and Proverbs (12:16, 23; 13:16; 14:8, 15, 18; 22:3; 27:12).⁵

⁵ Bible Knowledge

10) 24 The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor.

- a) Again, a generally accepted principle of life - if we are consistently working and trying to be faithful in what we do, most likely we will slowly or rapidly move up in responsibility and authority if we want it and it is God's will.
- b) **It is different with the slothful** - they will be put to forced labor - or they will be enslaved in some way.
- c) Restrained speech (12:23–24). "A prudent person conceals knowledge." The man of common sense is cautious and reserved. He is not inclined to utter unadvisedly what he knows, but waits for a fitting opportunity either because of personal humility, or wise caution. The allusion is to circumstances which demand caution (cf. 11:13). Under certain conditions, Proverbs advocates outspokenness (cf. 15:2). On the other hand, "the heart of fools proclaims foolishness." The fool rushes in to display his folly. He blurts out his opinion at the most inappropriate moments. The quick response exposes the stupid ideas which arise in his mind which he regards as wisdom.
 - i) "The hand of the diligent shall rule." Strong and active individuals rise to the surface in any organization or community. Such persons reach the position where they become the employer of others. They become the boss. On the other hand, "the slothful shall be under tribute." He will be content to remain a servant to others, an employee. If any connection exists between this and the preceding proverb it may be this: some people are all talk, while others quietly pursue their goals to the victory (12:24).⁶

11) 25 Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.

- a) **Anxiety** - fear or nervousness about what may or may not happen; [constable]
- b) No question about the truth of this verse, for any of us that have had anxiety attacks. It slows us down, makes us paranoid, anxious, difficult to deal with and just edgy overall. We don't think clearly, it impedes our ability to follow the Lord's will and is bad for our overall health.
- c) **A good word makes him glad** - a good word, would be an uplifting and encourage word, not empty flattery.
 - i) "Anxiety in the heart of a man shall bow him down." People who allow themselves mentally to dwell on their problems will be defeated by depression. The cares of life bring dejection and despair (cf. Matt 6:34; 1 Pet

⁶ Smith

5:7). On the other hand, “a good word makes it glad.” A word of encouragement may prove a real help in a time of trouble.⁷

- ii) As is well known today in the fields of medicine and psychology, anxiety can weigh a man down (lit., “causes a man to bow down” or depresses him). An empathetic kind word, however, can give an anxious, depressed person support and can cheer him up (cf. v. 18).⁸

12) 26 One who is righteous is a guide to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

- a) What does it mean to “lead people astray?” [High school friend that purposely gave someone the wrong directions]
- b) **One who is righteous is a guide to his neighbor** - we try to be people of integrity and honesty - we treat people as we would want to be treated; we would not want to be lead astray, therefore, we do not lead people astray. We need to be a righteous guide.
- c) **Way of the wicked leads them astray** - anyway that leads away from God and his truth is wicked and will end up astray from God.

13) 27 Whoever is slothful will not roast his game, but the diligent man will get precious wealth.

- a) Are there any hunters in the group? What do you normally have to do to have a successful hunt?
 - i) The slothful will not roast his game, because he will not catch any...or...he is too lazy to put the time in necessary to clean the kill and cook it. He enjoys the thrill of the hunt and kill, but lacks the follow through to eat it and therefore, wastes it.
- b) We must be diligent - steady, earnest, energetic effort. Some folks are going to be diligent - you don't have to tell them to do this or do that - they are going to do it because they have initiative...others are not that way - you have to plead, pull, beg, threaten...because they are slothful.

14) 28 In the path of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death.

⁷ Smith

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