

Woodland Baptist Church  
Wednesday, April 23, 2014  
Seeking Wisdom Together - Proverbs 13:1-25

1) READ PROVERBS 13:1-25

2) Teachability

- a) **1 A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.**

3) Words, Fruitful or Fatal

- a) Words pass, their fruit remains - **2 From the fruit of his mouth a man eats what is good, but the desire of the treacherous is for violence.**

i) *Words will bring a harvest - Matthew 12:33-37 - 33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. 36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*

- b) **Ammunition for your enemy - 3 Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.**

i) This rashness could show itself in promises, assertions, disclosures, the ruin could be financial, social, physical, spiritual.

ii) **James 3:7-9 - 7** For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, **8** but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. **9** With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

4) Sloth leaves you dissatisfied

- a) **4 The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.**

- i) The sluggard's character - he will not begin things...He will not finish things...He will not face things...he is restless.
- ii) The diligent is just the opposite - he will begin things...he will finish things... he will face things...he is not restless - he has initiative and discipline to get the job done.

5) Words fair and foul

a) **5 The righteous hates falsehood, but the wicked brings shame and disgrace.**

- i) As stated in 8:13, fearing the Lord involves hating what God hates. Since He hates falsehood (12:22), so do the righteous. Lying degrades and leads to mistrust and injustice. The wicked, however, by preferring falsehood, bring shame (lit., "cause a stink") and disgrace on others and themselves.<sup>1</sup>

6) Honesty is safety

a) **6 Righteousness guards him whose way is blameless, but sin overthrows the wicked.**

- i) **Romans 13:3-4** - 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain.
- ii) **Galatians 6:7-8** - 7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

7) Riches and poverty

a) Don't take a man at his own valuation - **7 One pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.**

- i) This proverb testifies to the universality of hypocrisy. For example, the poor man "pretends to be rich" so that people will honor and respect him, and the rich man "pretends to be poor," or at least poorer than he is, so that others will not attack him and take his riches. The Laodicean Christians claimed to be

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<sup>1</sup> Bible knowledge commentary

rich (materially), but really they were poor (spiritually; Rev. 3:17). The Gibeonites claimed to be poor, but really they were rich (Josh.9). This proverb is another observation on life, but it carries the implication that we should be discerning when we hear the claims that people make, especially regarding their finances.

(1) "Posing ('one who makes himself rich') as a possessor of wealth may deceive the community and demean those who have labored diligently for what they have. Worse still, it pretends to enjoy God's blessing of which wealth was viewed as evidence. Feigning poverty to mask the possession of 'great riches' is equally contemptible. It provides an excuse for miserliness not generosity; it mocks those who are truly poor; it signals ingratitude to the Lord who has made wealth possible.<sup>2</sup>

**b) Poverty has its compensations - 8 **The ransom of a man's life is his wealth, but a poor man hears no threat.****

i) The idea in this contrast may be that a rich man may lose his money by having to buy himself out of trouble. A poor man is not the target of robbers and kidnappers because he has little money. The more money a person has the more financial obligations become his, but a poor man is free of these distractions. Money creates differences. [My car]

8) Bright prospect

**a) 9 **The light of the righteous rejoices, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out.****

i) A light and a lamp, common metaphors (cf. 6:23; 20:20; 21:4; 24:20; Job 18:5–6; Ps. 119:105), refer here to physical life. If a lamp in a Near Eastern tent went out at night, the surroundings were pitch dark, mindful of the darkness of death. The righteous will have a long life, but the wicked will die early.<sup>3</sup>

9) The Products of pride

**a) 10 **By insolence comes nothing but strife, but with those who take advice is wisdom.****

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<sup>2</sup> Constable

<sup>3</sup> Bible knowledge

- i) insolence - is a lack of respect for other people - Much strife can be avoided by seeking the counsel of others, rather than simply proceeding to do what appears at first glance to be the right course of action.<sup>4</sup>
- ii) Pride/insolence (zāqôn, from zîd, "to boil"; cf. 11:2) means an unyielding arrogance. Such an inflated, know-it-all view of oneself leads to quarreling, in contrast with a humble, wise spirit that makes one willing to learn and take advice (cf. 12:15; see "quarreling" in the chart "Words and Speaking in Proverbs," near 6:17-19).

#### 10) Easy come, easy go

- a) **11 Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.** ["Get rich quick" schemes]
  - i) "Wealth obtained by fraud" would be money gotten improperly or illegally. This kind of income dwindles, in that: though it is "easy come," it is also "easy go." Wealth accumulated by consistent hard work tends to increase. "This is a warning against wild speculation."<sup>5</sup>
  - ii) Dishonest money, gained illegitimately (cf. "ill-gotten treasures," 10:2), does not last (cf. 10:2; 13:22; 23:5). On the other hand money can grow by being accumulated honestly little by little.

#### 11) Hope Deferred

- a) **12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.**
  - i) When we "hope" for something for a long time, and it never comes to pass, the normal human response is to feel disappointed and depressed ("heart sick"). But when we hope for something and then get it, we feel rejuvenated and invigorated, like a "tree" full "of life." This is another psychological observation about life. Job illustrates both of these responses, before and after his encounter with God.<sup>6</sup>

#### 12) Obedience pays

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<sup>4</sup> constable

<sup>5</sup> ibid

<sup>6</sup> Constable

a) **13 Whoever despises the word brings destruction on himself, but he who reveres the commandment will be rewarded.**

- i) "The word" in the first line of this proverb must refer to God's Word, in view of the second line, where the synonym is "the commandment." God, who gives the Word, will demand payment from those who despise it. Saul and Jonah despised it, and they paid a stiff penalty. But God will reward those who fear (respect, yield to, and obey) His Word (cf. Isa. 66:2).

13) Law means life

a) **14 The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.**

- i) The "teaching (or law) of the wise" refreshes, invigorates, and prolongs life, like water from a "fountain" does physically. This teaching is designed to turn others aside from those practices that ensnare people and lead to death (cf. 1:8-19; 14:27). Ezra's teaching of the Law resulted in a spiritually refreshing revival after a remnant of Israelites returned from the Babylonian Exile (Neh. 8:1-8).<sup>7</sup>

14) Tact with integrity

a) **15 Good sense wins favor, but the way of the treacherous is their ruin.**

- i) A "good understanding," of precisely what, produces favor? Evidently the Word and will of God, i.e., the way of wisdom, is in view, considering line two. Those who follow God's instruction usually receive favorable treatment from others. Joseph certainly did. In contrast, those who treacherously try to find a better way on their own discover that their journey becomes difficult. The Pharaoh of the Exodus did.

15) The product proclaims the man

a) **16 In everything the prudent acts with knowledge, but a fool flaunts his folly.**

- i) A prudent person bases his or her actions on information ("knowledge), not feelings. Fools do not behave that way, and so demonstrate their folly. For example, Moses led the Israelites as he did because God told him what to do,

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid

and he did it (e.g., Lev. 8:4, 9, 13, 17, 21, 29, 36; et al). Korah and his company demonstrated their folly by presuming that Moses had exalted himself to leadership (Num. 16:1-3).<sup>8</sup>

#### 16) Envoys good and bad

##### a) **17 A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a faithful envoy brings healing.**

- i) The contrast here is between an untrustworthy ("wicked") and a trustworthy ("faithful") messenger. The former will run afoul of trouble, while the latter will facilitate "healing" in relationships. Good communication is essential to good relationships. "In the work of the gospel this is all-important. We live in a day of great restlessness and activity. But few are the servants who wait to get the mind of the Lord as revealed in His Word. The result is much mischievous teaching and faulty instruction, that bewilders and perplexes the hearers. Precious is the message of the faithful ambassador as he goes forth beseeching men to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20)."

#### 17) Welcome criticism

##### a) **18 Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is honored.**

- i) The "discipline" of following instruction is in view here. Poverty and shame will come to those who consider it beneath them to pay attention to instruction. But the person who willingly and humbly accepts correction ("reproof") will receive honor.
- (1) The Israelites who survived the Babylonian invasion of Judah in 586 B.C. asked Jeremiah what God's will for them was, but when he told them what it was, they refused to follow it, and they perished (Jer. 42). Jeremiah himself is a positive example, because he followed the Lord's instructions to him, even though doing so involved great difficulty, and he enjoyed God's blessings.

#### 18) Heart's desire

##### a) **19 A desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul, but to turn away from evil is an abomination to fools.**

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<sup>8</sup> Constable

- i) Even though it is pleasant (satisfying) to hope patiently a long time for something better, and then finally see it happen, a fool will not do so, because he would rather continue practicing evil. Fools characteristically do not hope for higher things. They only want to continue in evil. King Hezekiah lived to rejoice in the fulfillment of God's promise to deliver the Judahites from King Sennacherib (2 Kings 18—19). But King Rehoboam refused to follow good advice, and then pursued a course of evil to his death (1 Kings 12).

#### 19) Education by friendship

- a) **20 Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.**
  - i) Outcomes again are contrasted. The result of making friends with, and keeping company with, wise people—is that one becomes wiser himself. But the result of spending a lot of time with (being a "companion of") "fools," is that "harm" eventually befalls him or her (cf. 1 Cor. 15:33). Paul's fellow missionaries demonstrated wisdom that they learned in part from keeping company with him (cf. 2 Tim. 2:2). King Jehoshaphat got into trouble for keeping too close company with wicked King Ahab (1 Kings 22).

#### 20) Requital - what comes in return

- a) **21 Disaster pursues sinners, but the righteous are rewarded with good. 22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous.**
  - i) The "inheritance" that "a good man leaves" to his grandchildren is an honorable reputation and a good example, at least. Money is not necessarily involved. Cecil Rhodes is reported to have said that the worst thing parents can do for their children is to leave them a lot of money. He evidently believed that everyone should have to learn to make his own money, rather than living off what someone else made.
    - (1) David left a godly legacy by which all of the succeeding kings of Judah were measured (1 Kings 11:4; et al).
  - ii) What "the sinner" considers his treasure, however, hands better able to use it properly after he dies. For example, creditors often take possession of what the wicked dead person owed them, and the wicked man's reputation soon

disintegrates. Such was the fate of wicked King Jehoiachin (Jer. 22:24-30), and many others of Israel's evil kings who did not receive honorable burials.

21) Method matters most

a) **23 The fallow ground of the poor would yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice.**

- i) The Lord provides "abundant food" in the uncultivated farmland of the poor, but sometimes they cannot obtain it because tyrants sweep it away through "injustice." Though a poor man may have opportunity, the more powerful may snatch it from him. This climactic (or integral) proverb is a word of warning: opportunity by itself does not guarantee success, even when taken advantage of diligently. Wicked Queen Jezebel stole Naboth's vineyard and had him put to death, through no fault of his own (1 Kings 21).

22) Spare the rod, spoil the child

a) **24 Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.**

- i) "'Spare the rod and spoil the child.' This common maxim (a one-size-fits-all approach to child discipline) is often wrongly attributed to the Bible. (This maxim comes from a poem written by Samuel Butler in 1664.) In reality the book of Proverbs, when taken as a whole, encourages its readers to use multiple levels of discipline ranging from pointing out improper behavior to the use of corporal punishment."<sup>9</sup>

(1) "The proverb simply commends bodily chastisement as a means of training; details are left to the judgment of parents. . ."293

- ii) Solomon linked love with "discipline," and hate with failure to discipline ("withholding the rod"). The popular childish viewpoint is that hate produces discipline, and love grants unbridled freedom. Eli failed to disciple his sons, and God destroyed them (1 Sam. 3:13; 4:11). Abraham is a positive example of a loving parent (Gen. 18:19).

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<sup>9</sup> Constable

23) Requital

a) **25 The righteous has enough to satisfy his appetite, but the belly of the wicked suffers want.**

- i) This proverb illustrates well the difference between a proverb and a promise. It expresses a condition that is generally true in this life—all other things being equal. However, God never promised that He would keep every righteous person from starving to death (cf. Matt. 6:33; Lev. 26). David's statement that he had never seen the righteous forsaken or his seed begging bread (Ps. 37:25) was a personal testimony, not a guarantee that God will always provide all the physical needs of all the righteous. A righteous person will be satisfied with what he "has," be it much or little, because he accepts it as God's will for him, like the Apostle Paul did (Phil. 4:11). But the wicked are never satisfied, and always want more, like the prodigal son (Luke 15:12).

## 24) CLOSE