

Woodland Baptist Church  
Wednesday, July 23, 2014  
Seeking Wisdom Together - Proverbs 19:1-15

1) READ PROVERBS 19:1-15

a) **Better the poor whose walk is blameless than a fool whose lips are perverse.**

- i) It is better to be honest and remain poor than to be one who seeks to escape poverty by a dishonest life. The latter is a fool to believe that he can prosper by evil methods. Either he will be discovered and suffer punishment, or God would thwart him in his plans.<sup>1</sup>

b) **2 Desire without knowledge is not good—how much more will hasty feet miss the way!**

- i) Let us note the evil of the lack of sound and disciplined knowledge in temporal matters. The uninstructed child or savage acts rashly. The impulsive person is impatient to finish his work and so always crowds too much into his days. He forgets that “things are not done by the effort of the moment, but the preparation of past moments.” “He that is in a hurry proves that the work in which he is engaged is too much for him.”<sup>2</sup>
- ii) Eagerness as opposed to sloth, is the energy of divine grace. But here it is compared with thoughtfulness, and to be hasty here leads to sin. This impatience shows that a person will only take notice of his own wishes and has not time for making carefully thought out decision. Rash experiments, often the result of haste, often land the nation in serious trouble. The same spirit cuts the church in two with schism. Let us remember that without self-discipline there can be no Christian consistency. The best of intentions without the will and Word of God, are only blind impulses. They should be checked and not followed. The real peace of faith is to stand or sit still and see how God will appear on our side, to make a way for us through many deep waters of perplexity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wisdom and the Psalms

<sup>2</sup> Bridges, 154

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

c) **3 A person's own folly leads to their ruin, yet their heart rages against the Lord.**

- i) We have here two instances of men's folly:- 1. That they bring themselves into straits and troubles, and run themselves a-ground, and embarrass themselves: The foolishness of man perverts his way. Men meet with crosses and disappointments in their affairs, and things do not succeed as they expected and wished, and it is owing to themselves and their own folly; it is their own iniquity that corrects them. 2. That when they have done so they lay the blame upon God, and their hearts fret against him, as if he had done them wrong, whereas really they wrong themselves. In fretting, we are enemies to our own peace, and become self-tormentors; in fretting against the Lord we affront him, his justice, goodness, and sovereignty; and it is very absurd to take occasion from the trouble which we pull upon our own heads by our willfulness, or neglect, to quarrel with him, when we ought to blame ourselves, for it is our own doing. See Isa. 50:1.<sup>4</sup>

d) **False Friendships/Poverty Results in - 4 Wealth attracts many friends, but even the closest friend of the poor person deserts them. 5 A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever pours out lies will not go free. 6 Many curry favor with a ruler, and everyone is the friend of one who gives gifts. 7 The poor are shunned by all their relatives—how much more do their friends avoid them! Though the poor pursue them with pleading, they are nowhere to be found.**

- i) Poverty results in friendlessness (19:4–7). “Wealth adds many friends.” People are attracted to wealth for they think that they shall derive benefit therefrom (cf. 14:20). On the other hand, “a poor man from his friend is separated.” Poverty drives away even the last friend of a person (19:4).
- ii) “A witness of lies shall not be held guiltless, and he that puts (lit., breathes) forth lies shall not escape.” The reference here is to one whose lies are as frequent as the breath of his nostrils. Virtually every word he speaks is false (cf. 6:19; 14:5, 25). Eventually his lies are discovered and he is censured by society, and ultimately punished by God. The connection with the preceding proverb may be this: A poor and friendless man might be tempted to accept a bribe for false testimony in a court of law (19:5).
- iii) “Many shall entreat (lit., smooth the face of) the favor of the noble, and every man is a friend to a person of gift,” i.e., a person who gives many gifts. The

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew Henry, Logos

- reference is probably to the wealthy politician who attempts to attach followers to his cause by the bestowal of gifts (19:6).
- iv) "All the brethren of the poor person hate him; how much more do his friends avoid him! He pursues [them with] sayings, [but] they are not." Blood relatives hate one who constantly begs for assistance. Much less are friends inclined to aid one who does not have the blood-tie. He continues to pursue both relative and friend with pleas for assistance. They, however, "are not," i.e., they are nowhere to be found (19:7).<sup>5</sup>
- e) **8 The one who gets wisdom loves life; the one who cherishes understanding will soon prosper.**
- i) The person who desires to spend time with wisdom will preserve his life ("loves his own soul"), and the person who lives by what God has revealed as being true and real will prosper ("find good"). The Apostle Paul is proof of this proverb. Though he died a martyr's death—probably in his late 50s—he lived through many experiences that would have killed most people (2 Cor. 11—12). He died at peace, rejoicing, and fulfilled (2 Tim.4:7).<sup>6</sup>
- f) **9 A false witness will not go unpunished, and whoever pours out lies will perish.**
- i) Here is, 1. A repetition of what was said before (v. 5), for we have need to be again and again warned of the danger of the sin of lying and false-witness-bearing, since nothing is of more fatal consequence. 2. An addition to it in one word; there it was said, He that speaks lies shall not escape, and intimated that he shall be punished. Here it is said, His punishment shall be such as will be his destruction: he shall perish; the lies he forged against others will be his own ruin. It is a damning destroying sin.<sup>7</sup>
- g) **10 It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury—how much worse for a slave to rule over princes!**
- i) The slave has the same rational power as his sovereign. But lesser habits of mind make him unfit to rule. There are, however, exceptions to this, as in the case of Joseph. But God's order is seldom reversed without anarchy and

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<sup>5</sup> Wisdom Literature and the Psalms

<sup>6</sup> Constable

<sup>7</sup> Matthew Henry

confusion. Peace and happiness belong to godly contentment. Those whom God has placed in a subordinate position should remember our Father's voice: "Should you then seek great things for yourself? Seek them not" (Jeremiah 45:5).<sup>8</sup>

**(1) 1 Timothy 6:6-10 - 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.**

**h) 11 A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.**

i) "An uncontrolled temper, manifested in hasty anger unjudged, bespeaks a man who has never learned, in the school of God, the great lesson of self-government. It is the pompous, conceited pedant who cannot overlook an injury done to him, but must vent his wrath upon the offender whenever an occasion presents itself. A man of sound judgment and discretion has learned to pass lightly over offences and seeming insults which would goad the one who is bereft of wisdom to intense indignation [cf. 14:29;26:21].<sup>9</sup>

(1) Esau proved to be "slow to anger," and he overlooked Jacob's many transgressions against him when he met Jacob returning from Paddanaram (Gen. 33:4-9).<sup>10</sup>

**i) 12 A king's rage is like the roar of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass.**

i) The roar of the lion inspires terror and warns of danger, even death. On the other hand, the king's favor is likened to the dew which keeps vegetation alive during the rainless seasons (19:12).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Bridges

<sup>9</sup>Constable

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Wisdom and Psalms

**j) 13 A foolish child is a father's ruin, and a quarrelsome wife is like the constant dripping of a leaky roof.**

i) What greater temporal comfort can a man have than a good wife and good children? Yet,

(1) 1. A foolish son is a great affliction, and may make a man wish a thousand times he had been written childless. A son that will apply himself to no study or business, that will take no advice, that lives a lewd, loose, rakish life, and spends what he has extravagantly, games it away and wastes it in the excess of riot, or that is proud, foppish, and conceited, such a one is the grief of his father, because he is the disgrace, and is likely to be the ruin, of his family. He hates all his labour, when he sees to whom he must leave the fruit of it.

(2) 2. A cross peevish wife is as great an affliction: Her contentions are continual; every day, and every hour in the day, she finds some occasion to make herself and those about her uneasy. Those that are accustomed to chide never want something or other to chide at; but it is a continual dropping, that is, a continual vexation, as it is to have a house so much out of repair that it rains in and a man cannot lie dry in it. That man has an uncomfortable life, and has need of a great deal of wisdom and grace to enable him to bear his affliction and do his duty, who has a sot for his son and a scold for his wife.

**k) 14 Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the Lord.**

i) "Fathers" can provide a physical inheritance of houses and riches for their children, but only "the LORD" can provide the spiritual inheritance of a godly wife. Therefore it is wise to look to Him in prayer for this great gift. This proverb is not guaranteeing that every man who asks God to provide him with a godly wife will get one. But it credits the Lord, in contrast to the husband's human wisdom, for a godly wife when a man has one. "Praise God from who all blessings (including "a prudent wife") flow." The story of how God provided prudent Rebekah for Isaac highlights God's providential leading in their union (Gen. 24). The story of Ruth is another example (Ruth 2—4).

**1) 15 Laziness brings on deep sleep, and the shiftless go hungry.**

- i) This proverb is one of many that warns against "laziness" (6:6, 9-11; 10:26; 13:4; 20:4; 24:33-34; 26:16; Cf. Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5). Laziness is evil because it involves squandering a precious gift from God of which we are stewards: time. It is dangerous because it leads to worse things: idleness generally, and hunger eventually. In Jesus' parable of the two sons (Matt. 21:28-31), the son who told his father that he would go and work in his vineyard—but did not—was lazy.<sup>12</sup>

**2) CLOSE**

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<sup>12</sup> Constable