

Woodland Baptist Church
 Wednesday, July 30, 2014
 Seeking Wisdom Together - Proverbs 19:16-29

1) READ PROVERBS 19:16-29

a) **16 Whoever keeps the commandment keeps his life; he who despises his ways will die. 17 Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.**

i) Obedience essential (19:16–17). “He who keeps commandment keeps his soul; he that despises his ways shall be put to death.” Most likely “commandment” here has become a technical designation for the Torah, the law of Moses. One who keeps God’s law preserves his life. One who despises God’s ways will be put to death, i.e., by the sentence of the court.

(1) Solomon now gives a concrete example of the kind of obedience commended in the preceding proverb. “A lender to Yahweh is one who is gracious to the poor; and his good deed he shall recompense to him.” The word “poor” points to one who is in need of any kind of help, not necessarily money. God becomes the debtor to any one who aids the poor because the helpful deed has his approval. The Lord always pays his debts. Thus one can expect a blessing for his kindness to the needy (19:17; cf. Matt 25:40).

b) **18 Discipline your son, for there is hope; do not set your heart on putting him to death.**

i) If a parent does not discipline his child while there is hope of correcting him, he is really, though perhaps not consciously, willing for him to die. The child's folly will lead to his death if his parents do not curb it with discipline. Some parents allow their children to go astray out of neglect.

ii) This appears to have been the case with Eli and David, to some extent (1 Sam. 2:12-17; 22-25; 2 Sam. 13—14). "Discipline" (Heb. *yasser*) includes chastisement as well as instruction. "Better the child is corrected by a parent than by a law enforcement officer in a correctional institution."⁴¹⁰

iii) "The teacher should not seek correction as the object, but only as the means; he who has a desire after it, to put the child to death in the case of his guilt,

changes correction into revenge, permits himself to be driven by passion from the proper end of correction, and to be pushed beyond its limits.”

c) 19 A man of great wrath will pay the penalty, for if you deliver him, you will only have to do it again.

- i) An uncontrolled temper will repeatedly send its owner into fresh trouble. The implication is that it is futile to bail such a person out of the trouble he gets himself into with his temper. King Saul is a classic example.¹
- ii) It is useless to shield a man given to uncontrolled anger; for though by the intercessions of his friends he may be again and again delivered from the unhappy consequences which would naturally have followed his ebullitions of temper, he is likely at any time to be as bad as ever, and to draw down righteous retribution on his own head, and involve those who undertake to defend him in common trouble and perhaps ruin. See chap. 22:24. Such a man is manifestly unbroken, and lacking in the grace of self-judgment. He should be left to himself till he learns by punishment what he would not receive otherwise. Samuel found it hard to bow to this lesson, and only gave Saul up at last when the Lord distinctly called upon him to separate himself from him (1 Sam. 16:1).²

d) 20 Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.

- i) Not only do fathers need to discipline their sons (v. 18), but sons need to "accept" the "counsel" and "discipline" of their fathers. A humble, teachable spirit, especially in one's youth, leads on to a life of wisdom. Moses gave Joshua good advice (Josh. 1:5-9), which Joshua heeded, and he acted wisely as a result.³

e) 21 Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

- i) Here we have, 1. Men projecting. They keep their designs to themselves, but they cannot hide them from God; he knows the many devices that are in men's hearts,—devices against his counsels (as those, Ps. 2:1–3; Micah 4:11),—

¹ constable

² Ironside

³ Constable

devices without his counsel (no regard had to his providence, as those Jam. 4:13, this and the other they will do, and not take God along with them),— devices unlike God’s counsels; men are wavering in their devices, and often absurd and unjust, but God’s counsels are wise and holy, steady and uniform. 2. God overruling. Various men have various designs, according as their inclination or interest leads them, but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand, whatever becomes of the devices of men. His counsel often breaks men’s measures and baffles their devices; but their devices cannot in the least alter his counsel, not disturb the proceedings of it, nor put him upon new counsels, Isa. 14:24; 46:11. What a check does this give to politic designing men, who think they can outwit all mankind, that there is a God in heaven that laughs at them! Ps. 2:4. What comfort does this speak to all God’s people, that all God’s purposes, which we are sure are right and good, shall be accomplished in due time!

f) 22 What is desired in a man is steadfast love, and a poor man is better than a liar.

- i) “A man’s desire is his kindness, but a poor man is better than a liar.” The intention to do good is that which gives real value to an act. A poor person’s desire to aid a distressed neighbor, even if he is unable to carry out his intention, is taken for the act of mercy. A poor man who gives to one in distress his sympathy and good wishes, even if he can afford no substantial aid, is better than a rich man who promises much and does nothing, or who falsely professes that he is unable to help.⁴

g) 23 The fear of the Lord leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.

- i) It is a synoptic statement of the precious truth unfolded in the 91st psalm—the portion of the man who dwells in the secret place of the Most High, abiding under the shadow of the Almighty. Resting in the enjoyment of His omnipotent power and unchanging love, he who fears the Lord has no anxious concern as to his affairs. He can rest satisfied, knowing that he cannot be visited with evil, for all things must work together for the good of one in such a case. What seems to be evil will become but a means of blessing, by

⁴ Smith, Wisdom Literature and Psalms

causing the heart to cleave more truly to the God of all grace. See Paul's song of triumph in Rom. 8:28–39.⁵

h) 24 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish and will not even bring it back to his mouth.

i) This humorous and ironic picture is of a person so lazy that he cannot even lift his food from his plate to his mouth (v. 15; cf. 26:15). The point is that a lazy person will bear the consequences of his own laziness. When Samson should have been fighting the Lord's enemies, he was lounging in the arms of a Philistine woman, and he died for it (Judg. 16). This warning is applicable to those who are too lazy to finish the projects they begin.⁶

i) 25 Strike a scoffer, and the simple will learn prudence; reprove a man of understanding, and he will gain knowledge.

i) Suffering and mistreating others are the subjects of verses 25–29. When a mocker is flogged (cf. v. 29), the simple (peʿî; see comments on 1:4) learn prudence ('ārûm; see comments on 15:5). But mockers do not learn (cf. 9:8; 13:1; 21:11). "The simple" are the untaught, uninitiated, open-minded, who here are warned by the public punishment of another. Whereas flogging is needed for mockers, a mere verbal rebuke (see comments on 1:23) is enough for a discerning person.⁷

(1) One of the reasons that Judah's punishment was so severe from God was that she did not learn from Israel's mistakes.

j) 26 He who does violence to his father and chases away his mother is a son who brings shame and reproach.

i) Here is,

(1) **1. The sin of a prodigal son.** Besides the wrong he does to himself, he is injurious to his good parents, and basely ungrateful to those that were instruments of his being and have taken so much care and pains about him, which is a great aggravation of his sin and renders it exceedingly

⁵ Ironside

⁶ Constable

⁷ Bible Knowledge Commentary

sinful in the eyes of God and man: He wastes his father, wastes his estate which he should have to support him in his old age, wastes his spirits, and breaks his heart, and brings his gray head with sorrow to the grave. He chases away his mother, alienates her affections from him, which cannot be done without a great deal of regret and uneasiness to her; he makes her weary of the house, with his rudeness and insolence, and glad to retire for a little quietness; and, when he has spent all, he turns her out of doors.

- (2) **2. The shame of a prodigal son.** It is a shame to himself that he should be so brutish and unnatural. He makes himself odious to all mankind. It is a shame to his parents and family, who are reflected upon, though, perhaps, without just cause, for teaching him no better, or being in some way wanting to him.⁸

k) 27 Cease to hear instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.

- i) This is a far-reaching command, of vast importance. It is an evidence of youthful pride for one to suppose he can listen to all kinds of theories, good and evil, but be defiled by none. Spiritual eclecticism may seem to savor of breadth of mind and liberality; but it generally ends in making shipwreck of the faith. You can only recognize and avoid error when the truth of God is known and delighted in. Therefore the need of earnest, diligent study of the Scriptures. When another gives out what is contrary to God's revealed word, it is time to refuse him and his teaching. You cannot afford to trifle with unholy doctrine.
- ii) Remember that what is opposed to the teaching of the unerring word of the Lord is directly from Satan. To dabble with it is to expose yourself to its powerful influence. Therefore refuse to hear it.
- iii) One simple question is all that needs to be propounded to any one taking the place of an instructor in divine things, in order to detect the bias of his doctrine. It is this: "What think ye of Christ?" He who is unsound here is wrong throughout. If the true deity, or divinity, of the Lord Jesus be denied; if the atoning efficacy of His blood be explained away; if the sinlessness of His spotless humanity be in any way clouded, the system is wrong at the foundation, and it will prove to be unsound in all else.
- iv) For a Christian to continue to hear, or to support, a man who blasphemes his Lord, is treason of the darkest hue. If any bring not the doctrine of Christ, he is to be refused, and no fellowship shown him, because he abides in the darkness; and "what fellowship hath light with darkness?" See the

⁸ Matthew Henry

Spiritualists of Isaiah's day (Isa. 8:19, 20), and the Judaizers and Gnostics of the apostolic period (Titus 1:10, 11; Col. 2:8; 2 John 9, 10). All these classes are to be found in our times, multiplied a thousandfold. "From such turn away."⁹

1) 28 A worthless witness mocks at justice, and the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity. 29 Condemnation is ready for scoffers, and beating for the backs of fools.

- i) "A worthless witness mocks at justice; and the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity." The "worthless witness" (beliyya'al) is one who is utterly depraved, one who knowingly, willing, eagerly gives false evidence. Such a one scoffs at justice and senses no personal obligation to see that standards of society be maintained. Instead of standing with his fellow citizens against evil, he swallows iniquity as if it were some tasty beverage, i.e., he rejoices in iniquity, consumes it, embraces it. He breaks the law by giving false testimony (19:28; cf. Exod 20:16; Lev 5:1).
- ii) "For scorners judgments are established; and stripes for the backs of fools." Scofflaws eventually are brought to justice if not here, then hereafter. The scoffer may stay within the law and thus avoid civil penalties. He cannot, however, escape the judgment of God. "Stripes" refers to the corporal punishment administered under the law of Moses (19:29; cf. 18:6).¹⁰

2) CLOSE

⁹ Ironside

¹⁰ Smith, Wisdom and Psalms