

Woodland Baptist Church
 Wednesday, November 5, 2014
 Seeking Wisdom Together - Proverbs 26
 Foolishness, Laziness, Petulance and Purposefully Deceitful

1) READ PROVERBS 24

a) Illustrations of Foolishness in action:

i) **Like snow in summer or rain in harvest, so honor is not fitting for a FOOL.**

(1) First, a fool (kesil) should not be given a position of honor. To raise a fool to a position of honor would (1) confirm him in his folly; (2) give others a false impression of his worth; and (3) afford him increased opportunity for mischief. A fool in a post of honor is as harmful to society as unseasonable weather. Snow in summer would be harmful to the crops. Rain in harvest would prevent the housing of the produce at the proper time (26:1).¹

ii) **2 Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying, a curse that is causeless does not alight.**

(1) Second, a fool should not be feared. A fool might utter an undeserved curse on someone. That curse will not come, i.e., will not fall upon the person for whom it was intended. Such groundless outbursts of condemnation are like the birds which aimlessly and harmlessly fly through the skies (26:2).²

iii) **3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the back of FOOLS.**

- (1) Trying to get someone to do something is difficult enough. How many times do we have to give the command? How many times do we have to follow up on what they were supposed to do?
- (2) A horse is moved by a whip, a donkey is more tamable so they are given a bridle...but the fool...needs a "rod" for his back.

¹ Wisdom and Psalms, Logos

² Ibid

- (a) What are some examples of the “rod,” what would a foolish person have to endure to be moved?

iv) 4 Answer not a FOOL according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. 5 Answer a FOOL according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

- (1) Fourth, a fool should not be debated on his own terms. One should not degrade himself by answering a fool “according to his folly,” i.e., by stooping to his level in an exchange of recriminations; by arguing with him as if he were a sensible person (26:4).³

- (a) How would this look within the church?

- (2) Fifth, a fool should be exposed and silenced. One should “answer a fool according to his folly,” i.e., as his folly deserves. The folly needs to be exposed and shame brought upon it. Hopefully, this will bring the fool to a better state of mind. If one does not respond in this way, the fool “will be wise in his own eyes.” He will think that he has said something worth hearing or that he has silenced the believer by his superior intelligence (26:5).

- (a) Think of the evolution and creation debate...

- (3) **How are these last two proverbs, which seem to contradict each other, to be reconciled?** One might ask a foolish question, but do so innocently or in the right spirit. In such a case do not give a flippant answer to the question, i.e., respond with a forthright answer. On the other hand, if one asks the same question but in an arrogant manner or in an effort to ridicule the truth, refute his error in such a powerful way that the foolishness of the questioner is made clear.⁴

v) 6 Whoever sends a message by the hand of a FOOL cuts off his own feet and drinks violence.

- (1) We can inflict irreparable permanent harm on ourselves—like amputating one’s “own feet” or drinking the “violence” of poison—if we entrust an essential, perhaps lifesaving “message,” to “the hand of a fool.” A royal

³ Wisdom and Psalms, Logos

⁴ Ibid.

letter seeking peace, a commander's missive of battle strategy, a bid on a crucial parcel of property, a notice to a business colleague of a radical change in plans—those all require prompt, accurate, and responsible delivery. The fool may dally on the way, take the wrong turn in the road, give the message to the wrong person, or lose it altogether. And in so doing he may botch the sender's plan beyond recovery.⁵

(a) Have you ever experienced major problems from miscommunication from someone that did not know what they were talking about?

vi) 7 Like a lame man's legs, which hang useless, is a proverb in the mouth of FOOLS.

(1) Seventh, a fool should not be heeded. A parable in the mouth of a fool is as useless as the legs of a cripple. It falls lame from his mouth, affords no instruction to others, and makes no impact upon its hearers. In fact, a parable in the mouth of a fool is like a thorn-bush in the hand of a drunkard, i.e., a harmful weapon recklessly employed (26:7, 9).⁶

vii) 8 Like one who binds the stone in the sling is one who gives honor to a FOOL.

(1) By giving honor to a fool one arms him to do damage. This can happen, for example, by promoting him to a position of greater responsibility. The figure of binding a stone in a sling seems to suggest that the person doing the binding did not know how to operate a sling. People did not "bind" stones in slings but simply laid them in the sling so that, when the sling was slung, the stone would fly out. Similarly one who expects a fool to accomplish something honorable does not know how things work.⁷

viii) 9 Like a thorn that goes up into the hand of a drunkard is a proverb in the mouth of FOOLS. 10 Like an archer who wounds everyone is one who hires a passing FOOL or drunkard.

(1) Ninth, a fool should not be hired. To hire a fool or one merely passing by to perform a task is like hiring a reckless archer. That incompetent will do

⁵ Hubbard, Logos

⁶ Wisdom and Psalms, Logos

⁷ Constable, Proverbs, 156

more harm than good. If one wants a task to be completed he must hire an expert (26:10).

ix) 11 Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a FOOL who repeats his folly.

(1) A wise man does not repeat "his folly," but a fool does. Similarly, a dog returns to eat its vomit, but a man does not. A fool behaves like a dog, instead of a man, when he "repeats" his folly. Peter alluded to this proverb when he described the habit of false teachers in becoming entangled again in the defilements of the world (cf. 2 Pet. 2:20-22).⁸

x) 12 Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a FOOL than for him.

(1) Being wise in his "own eyes," is very close to pride

(a) **Judges 21:25** - 25 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

(2) Always remember truth is external and objective, not subjective. It must be internalized subjectively, which involves interoperation and understanding, but truth itself is an external reality.

b) Illustrations of Laziness:

(1) Like 22:13, 26:13 teaches that lazy people can come up with outrageous excuses to avoid work. Verse 14 implies that the sluggard's only movement is confined to his bed, which he never leaves. Verse 15, like 19:24, portrays laziness as taken to ludicrous lengths. Verse 16 points out the slothful person's conceit; he thinks that avoiding work is the surest proof of his wisdom.⁹

ii) 13 The SLUGGARD says, "There is a lion in the road! There is a lion in the streets!"

(1) Lazy people come up with excuse known to man to avoid work. In this case, the lazy person uses the ridiculous excuse that there is a lion in the

⁸ Constable, 156

⁹ Garrett, Logos

streets that may attack him, as the reason he does not get up and do something.

iii) 14 As a door turns on its hinges, so does a SLUGGARD on his bed.

- (1) A door turns on its hinges every time it is used, so is the sluggard to the bed, he uses it all the time, in fact it's all he uses.
- (2) Could this be applied to generational poverty or entitlement mentality?

iv) 15 The SLUGGARD buries his hand in the dish; it wears him out to bring it back to his mouth.

- (1) Again, an extreme example of laziness in that the sluggard is too lazy to pick the food up out of the plate to eat it, he just buries his hand in the dish, but cannot lift it to his mouth.

v) 16 The SLUGGARD is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.

- (1) Fourth, a slothful person is arrogantly opinionated. He is too lazy to undergo the mental discipline which would enable him to give an intelligent reply in discussing issues. He considers research to be an unnecessary weariness of the flesh. He flatters himself that he is quite able without study to give a satisfactory account of any question presented to him. Yet he considers himself wiser than "seven men," i.e., a round number or several, who collectively and cautiously have rendered an opinion in the matter (26:16).¹⁰

(a) Have many Americans become like this?

2) The Petulant [bad tempered] - The undesirable traits of a petulant person are now set forth:

a) RISK of being MEDDLESOME - 17 Whoever meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a passing dog by the ears.

- i) First, he meddles in the strife of others. He was merely passing by, yet he stops to insert himself to the quarrel. He "angers himself," or gets exercised

¹⁰ Wisdom and Psalms

over the situation. Such a person is courting danger. He is like one who takes a dog by the ears and gets bitten (26:17).

(1) We have absolutely no idea what to expect from a dog we do not know and the same goes for arguments with people that we are unfamiliar with - there are times we probably should as Christians intervene, but we need to use good judgement in doing so.

b) EVIL of Open DECEIT - 18 Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death 19 is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I am only joking!"

i) Second, a petulant person excuses terrible misconduct as a practical joke. He deceives his neighbor and then excuses himself by saying, "I was only joking!" When a person has injured a neighbor by lies or malice, the plea that it was only a joke is not permitted. The injury is no less real because it (allegedly) was done in jest. Such a person is like one who recklessly hurls firebrands or arrows. Someone is bound to get hurt. "Firebrands" are darts with some blazing material attached to them (26:18–19).

c) The CONSEQUENCES of revealing SECRETS - 20 For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no WHISPERER, quarreling ceases. 21 As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.

i) Third, a petulant person delights in stoking the fires of controversy. This he may do through a whispering campaign of slander, false reports and innuendo (cf. 16:28). As a fire must have fresh fuel to continue burning, so contention is kept alive by such whispering. Others are more openly "contentious," i.e., they delight in contention. Whenever they are near, new coals and wood are thrown on the fires of controversy (26:20–21).

3) The Misleading Malicious

a) The LIPS show the CONTENT of the HEART - 22 The words of a WHISPERER are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body.

i) The next series of proverbs deals with malicious, especially deceitful, persons who dissimulate their hatred under a cloak of friendship. Gossips love to hear gossip. The words of a whisperer are as "dainty morsels," i.e., something delightful. They are taken into the innermost parts of the body, i.e., they are eaten and digested (26:22; cf. 18:8).

b) 23 Like the glaze covering an earthen vessel are fervent lips with an evil HEART.

- i) Hypocrites express friendship fervently with their lips. Yet the hearts of such people are wicked. They plot the ruin of the others who are lulled into a false sense of security by their “burning [fervent] lips.” Such people are like “the silver of dross,” i.e., the base metal which is left when the pure silver has been refined. This inferior silver was used to overlay earthenware and gave the vessel the appearance of being valuable. The point is that a glittering exterior often hides the reality within (26:23).¹¹

c) 24 Whoever hates disguises himself with his lips and harbors deceit in his HEART; 25 when he speaks graciously, believe him not, for there are seven abominations in his HEART; 26 though his hatred be covered with deception, his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.

- i) Some people are full of hatred, yet they feign friendship by friendly speech. Such a person “lays up” deceit until an opportunity occurs to vent the animosity. The teacher advises his readers to put no trust in the pleasant words of such a man. Within the heart of that man are “seven abominations,” i.e., countless wickedness. Hatred is frequently concealed with deceit. Sooner or later that hatred finds expression in some vicious act. The matter is then brought before the public assembly acting in a judicial capacity. At that time the fate of the hater is made clear (26:24–26).¹²

d) You shall REAP what you SOW - 27 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and a stone will come back on him who starts it rolling. 28 A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

- i) The person who maliciously digs a pit with the intention of injuring another, shall fall therein. Whoever attempts to roll a stone upon another shall be crushed by that same stone. This refers to rolling stones up to a height in order to hurl them down upon an enemy (26:27).
- ii) A liar selects as the objects of his slander those whom he hates. The person with a “smooth mouth” conceals his real thoughts. His intention is to bring about somebody’s downfall (26:28).¹³

¹¹ Wisdom and Psalms, Logos

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid