

Woodland Baptist Church
Wednesday, November 19, 2014
Seeking Wisdom Together - Proverbs 27

1) READ PROVERBS 27

a) **Boasting and Praise**

i) **Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.**

(1) **James 4:13-17** - 13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"— 14 yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. 15 Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." 16 As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. 17 So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

(2) This makes us ask the question is it ok to plan? Is the simple act of making a plan for tomorrow an assumption that we are the one in charge? Yes, that is why James tell us to put ourselves beneath God's will by affirming, "if the Lord wills."

ii) **2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.**

(1) This Proverb is quite simple and obvious, we should not brag on ourselves. One of the things I was taught in MBA school was that if I was going to make it in business I was going to have "sell myself." In other words, I had to make myself look like a highly sought commodity in order to be successful.

(2) The Proverbs says, let other people do this for you - your praise should come from others, not yourself.

b) **Unbearable Personalities**

i) **3 A stone is heavy, and sand is weighty, but a fool's provocation is heavier than both.**

(1) One of the best examples of a fool provoking someone is what happened in 1 Samuel 24, with Nabal and David. David had proven faithful to not harm Nabal flocks and was a fellow Israelite in need. Nabal was a man of riches and means and could have easily fed David and his men, but instead accused his men of “breaking away from their masters,” and “who is this son of Jesse..” Nabal acted foolishly and it would ultimately cost him his life. Let us never be provoked by a fool - especially when concerning social media. Just because a fight breaks out on social media doesn’t mean you have to come to someone’s rescue. Make sure before you jump in or the Proverb we studied last week may come true - you may become like “grabbing the ears of a dog you don’t know.”

ii) 4 Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?

- (1) Jealousy is worse than wrath and anger? It certainly is capable of kindling the fire of rage and hate and can make you sick to the core of your being. What have you found yourself being jealous of lately?
- (2) **James 3:14** - But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.
- (3) **James 4:5** - 5 Or do you think it’s without reason the Scripture says that the Spirit who lives in us yearns jealously?

2) Values of Friendship

a) 5 Better is open rebuke than hidden love. 6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

- i) A true friend gives time and attention (v. 5) but is not always flattering (v. 6). In addition to a common catchword, both verses concern the nature of genuine friendship. Verse 5 especially points to the need for communication and interaction among people; few things are worse than being ignored, and the studied avoidance of honest contact destroys any relationship.
- ii) Verse 6 is somewhat different. Whereas v. 5 concerns stifled or hidden emotions, v. 6 contrasts genuine and phony expressions of friendship. One must distinguish between salutary rebukes that spring from honest love and hollow displays of affection where no true love exists. The two verses

together advise that in any relationship, an open exchange of honest and caring communication is essential.¹

3) Real Friends, Close at Hand

a) **7 One who is full loathes honey, but to one who is hungry everything bitter is sweet.**

- i) The point of this proverb seems to be that the quantity of a person's material possessions affects his attitude toward them. Those who have much do not appreciate some things, even some things that are valuable. On the other hand, a person with little tends to appreciate even the comparatively insignificant items that he receives or owns. For example, a person who receives much praise may find it nauseating, but someone who gets very little praise may savor what little he gets.²

b) **8 Like a bird that strays from its nest is a man who strays from his home.**

- i) A bird that wanders from its nest is in danger. So is a person who wanders from his place. Surrounded by friends and family one has the benefit of wise counsel and corrective rebuke. To walk away from that "nest" is to expose oneself to danger (27:8).³

c) **9 Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.**

- i) "Loving counsel on the part of a true friend is as refreshing and stimulating to the soul as oil and perfume are to the body."

(1) David found Jonathan's friendship and selfless counsel to him to be both refreshing and stimulating (1 Sam. 20).⁴

¹ Garrett, Logos

² constable

³ Wisdom and Psalms, Logos

⁴ Constable

d) 10 Do not forsake your friend and your father's friend, and do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity. Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother who is far away.

- i) The advice of a friend is a valuable possession. "Hearty counsel" is literally "advice of the soul," i.e., advice given with a genuine desire to be helpful. Such advice from a friend is compared to perfume and incense. It has a sweet aroma which gives pleasure to those who receive it. In a time of calamity one would be better off turning to a tried and true family friend than to a "brother," i.e., a kinsman. In an emergency a neighbor who is near may be of more benefit than a kinsman at a distance. For this reason one should cultivate friendship with those who live in close proximity. One has no control over the circumstances of birth and blood-relatedness; a friend, however, is chosen (27:9–10).⁵

4) Fatherly Advice

a) 11 Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him who reproaches me.

- i) A "wise son" brings great pleasure to his father, and he also equips him to defend himself against the attacks of critics. The criticism may concern the son's behavior or the father's. In either case, the behavior of a wise son can defuse the criticism and bring honor rather than shame on the parent. This proverb encourages the cultivation of wisdom in the son and diligence in the parent. Solomon, for example, brought great joy to aged David, and doubtless reduced the criticism that David received for raising Absalom as he had (1 Kings 2; cf. Eli and his sons, 1 Sam. 2:22-36).⁶

b) 12 The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it. 13 Take a man's garment when he has put up security for a stranger, and hold it in pledge when he puts up security for an adulteress.

- i) Verses 12–13 are the first of a series of teachings on business and fiscal well-being (vv. 12–13, 15–16, 18, 20, 23–27). Verse 12 is similar to 22:3; here the danger may be especially economic. The wise avoid impulsive and unsound

⁵ Wisdom and Psalms

⁶ Constable

business ventures. Verse 13 is almost identical to 20:16. A young man should not risk his wealth for the sake of his irresponsible companions.⁷

- c) **14 Whoever blesses his neighbor with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, will be counted as cursing.**
- i) Normally, a neighbor's loud voice would be a blessing as he may be greeting him from afar or warning him about something. But in this case, the neighbor's blessing of a loud voice is turned into a curse when it is done early in the morning while people are still trying to sleep.
 - ii) Can you imagine doing evangelism that way - showing up at someone's home at 4:30am, knocking on their door and asking them if they have heard the gospel?
- d) **15 A continual dripping on a rainy day and a quarrelsome wife are alike; 16 to restrain her is to restrain the wind or to grasp oil in one's right hand.**
- i) A man goes into his house during a rainstorm expecting to find protection. But he finds that his leaky roof affords him no relief from the downpour. Similarly, a man gets married hoping to find that his wife will protect him from many of the discomforts of the world. But if he marries unwisely, he may find that his wife is more of an irritant than she is a comfort (cf. 21:9).⁸
 - ii) It is impossible to restrain the wind or grasp oil, therefore it is impossible to restrain the quarrelsome or nagging wife.
- e) **17 Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.**
- i) As one "iron" implement interfacing and interacting with another "sharpens" them both, so the interaction of two people improves them both. People who live alone or avoid the company of others fail to benefit from this helpful give and take. Sometimes it can be abrasive and unpleasant, but it usually yields a better person. This is one of the advantages of Christian fellowship (Heb. 10:25). David and Jonathan's interactions benefited both of them. So did Paul's contacts with Peter, Priscilla and Aquila, and his fellow missionaries.⁹

⁷ Garret, NAC

⁸ Constable

⁹ Ibid

f) 18 Whoever tends a fig tree will eat its fruit, and he who guards his master will be honored.

- i) Next the teacher sets forth the reward of industry. A farmer is able to eat the fruit of the fig tree he has labored to cultivate. The abundance of the produce of this tree makes it a good figure of the reward of faithful services. So also those who labor in the service sector will be rewarded for their diligent labor on behalf of their masters. If this is true of earthly masters, how much more is it true of the heavenly master (27:18; cf. Matt 25:21).¹⁰

g) 19 As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man.

- i) Rather, the point is that as there is an exact correspondence between the original and its reflection in still water, even so the heart of the man (his mind, inner self, character) corresponds to the man himself (i.e., the whole person). In other words, people have a basic consistency to them. Those who have integrity will maintain it in their inner and outer lives, and those who are perverse will be thoroughly perverted. The point is that one should learn how to read people and thus learn whom to trust.¹¹

h) 20 Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, and never satisfied are the eyes of man.

- i) In some languages this saying may be expressed, for example, "The grave never gets all the dead people it wants, and people never get all the things they want." The order of the two lines may also be reversed: "The mind of a person always wants many things, just as the place of the dead always has room for [more] people to go there."¹²

i) 21 The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and a man is tested by his praise.

- i) Public opinion is for a person what a "crucible is for silver" and a "furnace [is] for gold." A person's reputation indicates what that person is like, as does how he responds to praise. Gideon seems to have fallen victim to the praise

¹⁰ Wisdom and Psalms

¹¹ Garrett, NAC

¹² Handbook on Proverbs

that came to him following his amazing military success (Judg.8:22-27). Prosperity has ruined more Christians' spiritual lives than adversity.¹³

j) 22 Crush a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, yet his folly will not depart from him.

- i) Even severe punishment ("pound . . . in a mortar with a pestle") will not drive a hardened fool's folly ("foolishness") out of him. Many mature fools, having previously avoided instructions designed to help them, become incorrigible. King Saul went from bad to worse. He even refused to pay attention to Samuel's warning that he would die the next day (1 Sam. 28:19; 31:1).¹⁴

5) Commendation of Diligence

a) 23 Know well the condition of your locks, and give attention to your herds, 24 for riches do not last forever; and does a crown endure to all generations? 25 When the grass is gone and the new growth appears and the vegetation of the mountains is gathered, 26 the lambs will provide your clothing, and the goats the price of a field. 27 There will be enough goats' milk for your food, for the food of your household and maintenance for your girls.

- i) Verses 23–27 give the most basic of economic lessons: take care of your business, and it will take care of you. The language is highly poetic in the tradition of ancient poets who celebrated the pastoral life (e.g., Virgil). Verse 27 need not be taken to imply that goat's milk will be the staple of everyone's diet; after v. 26b the intent is rather that one can sell surplus milk or barter it for other kinds of food. It might be loosely rendered, "The milk of your goats [alone] will be enough [to provide] your food and food for your household and sustenance for your serving girls." In other words, you will have more than enough to meet all of your family's needs.¹⁵

¹³ Constable

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Garrett, Logos