

Proverbs

Proverbs

Summer 2009

Issue # 8



My son, eat honey, for it is good, yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste;

Know *that* wisdom is thus for your soul; if you find *it*, then there will be a future, and your hope will not be cut off. Pro 24:13-14

Wisdom literature of the bible and in particular the book of Proverbs contains sage advice, counsel and guidance for godly and righteous living in every age. The Proverbs of Solomon begins by stating this purpose: *“To know wisdom and instruction, to discern the sayings of understanding, to receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity; to give prudence to the naive, to the youth knowledge and discretion.”* Pro 1:2-4 Proverbs are wise, general truths that may have exceptions, but when followed and applied to our lives, guide us along the narrow road which leads to life. The book of Proverbs is literature with often terse poetic structure. There are recurring patterns of parallelism for emphasis, of cause and effect, action and reaction, and admonitions to avoid common pitfalls. Pro 1:7 reads, *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.”* Reading these proverbs is good, understanding them is better, and humbly submitting to the Lord’s wisdom and making application of this wisdom to our lives is not only sweet to our taste, but is truly acquiring wise counsel.

In This Issue

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You should find this issue to be somewhat unique. We typically focus articles on different aspects of a single subject. This issue, however, is centered on the book of Proverbs and the unifying concept is wisdom. Each of our writers have written about a proverb(s) they've found particularly helpful in their spiritual journey. Hopefully we've assembled a mosaic of wisdom that is special to our family at North Beach, and which you'll find to be particularly helpful in your spiritual journey as well.

Pride

"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way, and the perverted mouth, I hate." Pro 8:13 None of us are guilty of something the Lord hates, or are we? Pride is insidious, it incarcerates us in our own prison of self importance and distorts our sense of reality. It destroys relationships and causes pain and strife. *"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling. It is better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud."* Pro 16:18-19 Pride and arrogance eventually brings us crashing down, often hurting our friends and loved ones and causing us to lose everything. *"When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom."* Pro 11:2 Peter wrote, *"God is opposed to the proud, but give grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time."* 1 Pet 5:5-6

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A Contentious Woman

Louise and Ron Gray

con·ten·tious [kən ténshəss] *adj*

creating disagreement: causing or likely to cause disagreement and disputes between people with differing views

argumentative: frequently engaging in and seeming to enjoy arguments and disputes

This proverb along with its companion verses has a special meaning to me (Louise). I believe that a man has a lot of stress on his job and that his home should be his safe place. Women sometimes take out their stress and frustrations on their husbands. When I feel the urge to fuss at Ron, I think of the proverbs about the nagging, contentious woman, and this causes me to think about my actions. I don't think that there is anything more annoying than a constant dripping or a woman who nags her husband. *"A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike..."* (Pro 27:15).

Verse 19 of chapter 21 adds, *"It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman."* These scriptures evoke a smile or a giggle to those of us who are married and perhaps a bit of fear to those who are contemplating that relationship. They seem to bear out the old adage, "If Momma ain't happy – ain't nobody happy." Verse 16 of chapter 27 sheds light on the magnitude of this problem. It tells us that *"Whoever restrains her [the*

contentious woman] restrains the wind, and grasps oil in his right hand." So, husbands if you can stop the wind or grab a handful of oil without it slipping away, you can "control" your contentious bride! We have heard, "a man's home is his castle." How can this "king" seek peace, safety, and solitude from the daily battles which rage without, if his queen assails him within its walls? To him the rooftop and the wilderness may begin to look like prime real estate.

What is the answer to this problem which shatters the peace at home and works to undermine the solid foundation of a marriage? Is the Lord picking on women here? Does a man bear no blame or responsibility here? Is the solution as unattainable as it may seem in Pro 27:16?

The fact that these proverbs describe a contentious woman should not lead us to believe that only women can be guilty of this sin. Pro 26:21, *"as charcoal is to burning coals and wood to a fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife."* A person of either gender who is contentious can light the fires of strife and provide a continuous source of fuel to keep them hotly burning. Our Lord knows the hearts and natures of each of us. We can conclude that this type of contentious nature is more likely to develop in wives. This is similar to a statement in Ephesians 6:4 where the Holy Spirit says,

"It is better to dwell in the corner of a rooftop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman." Pro 21:9

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“and you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath...” Can wives never provoke their children to wrath? Can husbands never be contentious? We must be on guard to avoid these pitfalls which are specifically common to a certain gender.

While we are in the book of Ephesians, let us see what God tells us about our relationship as husband and wife (Eph 5:22-33). Wives are to submit to their own husbands and to be subject to him in everything. The husband is the head of the wife. Some men may like to stop the reading right here, having their wives as a personal servant, but there is more. Man has the responsibility to model himself after Christ; willing to die for his wife, loving her as he loves his own flesh, nourishing and cherishing her. We both as man and woman are joined together as one flesh. Verse 33 sums it up in these words, *“nevertheless let each one of you so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”* In our “modern” society, these scriptures are seen as archaic suggestions. However, in a preceding verse (Eph. 5:17), we are given a warning, *“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”* These are commandments of the Lord. Obedience to His will brings peace and harmony to marriages.

When we as husbands and wives remember that we are one flesh and desire to follow the will of the Lord, strife will not be a fixture in our homes, but an unwelcome intruder.

Love Vs. Hatred

Ivana Baxley

It has been true for ages. You can have huge houses, big televisions in every room of your house, all the money you want and yet be hateful and not loving. You can have tables full of food, but if you do not have love and if you do not have people who you love and who love

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses. Pro 10:12

you, then your house or your life is going to be empty and sad. If we are able to do anything, but do not have love, we have nothing. God gave us the blessing that we can feel love, he gave us the ability to love. True love cannot hate. *“Love is patient and kind, love does not envy or boast, it is not arrogant or rude...”* 1 Cor 13:4-7 So if our life is filled with love we will not be able to hate. We will be able to be patient and kind with other people. This kind of love will not let us be ugly or rude to people around us. It will not let us hurt somebody else with our words or in any other way. We will try to be “slow to anger” and not “hot-tempered.” We can help people more if we are willing to help them with patience and kindness. And yes, it is hard many times to do that. James says that we are not able to tame our tongues. With the same tongue we bless our God, and with it we also curse people. We know it ought not to be that way. (Jas 3:6-10). If we love people we’ll be using our tongues to be nice and kind to them, to help and encour-

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age them. So, love will help us find a better way to deal with people.

Think about the love God showed us by sending his Son as a propitiation for our sins (1 Jn 4:10). And because God loved us so much even we are supposed to love each other. In that way we show that God abides in us and that hatred does not have any room in our lives. *“So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.”* (1 Jn 4:16-18). So with love in our lives we do not have to be afraid of anything, we can have confidence for the day of judgment.

If we have the right kind of love it will also help us cover all offenses. It will help us because we will have the right attitude towards our offenses. We will be able to realize when we sin and be humble enough to turn to God and ask Him to forgive us. And God will forgive us as He promised in His word. Love will help us stay on the right path leading to Heaven. There is another way to look at this love. If we have this kind of love for people around us, for our friends, our neighbors, for people we work with, and yes, even people who are not nice

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a fattened ox and hatred with it.
Pro 15:17

to us, we will care for these people. We will be willing to talk to them about God and try to help them find the right way to God. We will be trying to show them there is a different way of living with love by our example. And what is better than the soul of a lost person who turns to God.



Prudent Thought

Andrea Johnson

Life is full of choices. There is a prudent choice for dealing with every situation. It is important to me to think about the consequences of my actions before I make choices, but some people do not take the repercussions of their actions into consideration prior to acting. They fail to remember that *“A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.”* Pro 22:3 This is a particularly terrible proverb to forget. I can think of one situation in particular where my life experience illustrated this proverb to me. It is not so much my experience that illustrated this proverb to me, as much as my abstinence from an experience that ended up not turning out well for those involved. Generally it is easy for me to tell what situations I do or do not want to put myself into. This held true in the following situation.

It seemed as though everybody I knew

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and twice as many people that I didn't know were invited to this one party last summer. It was going to be awesome, or so everyone said. People were ranting and raving about it for weeks on end. I probably got around a thousand texts telling me I couldn't miss it. I didn't even know who was throwing it. All I knew was that it would be social suicide not to go. Granted, I didn't have a social status to begin with, but I figured I would really be up a creek if being absent from this party was added to the list of my social woes. As much as I wanted to go without caring about any details, my analytical side compelled me to ask someone why the party was going to be so great. After all, I couldn't help but worry that by going, I would be subjecting myself to things I didn't want to deal with. It was a logical train of thought considering how teenagers tend to be when they are in large, unsupervised groups. So I asked my friend Sarah what was going to be so great about the party. Her response did not comfort me.

"Well Josh, you know Josh the guy throwing the party? Well his parents are out of town, road tripping for like 4 weeks so he can basically do whatever he wants...Man it's going to be tight!"

I could immediately see the headlines: *Cops called when Teenage Boy left to do "whatever he wants," Twenty teens jailed while Parents are gone.* I tried to convince myself that I was being stupid and that the party was going to be completely fine. I had no luck convincing myself of that. I had no luck whatsoever. That made me angry because I really wanted to go, but I knew I

wouldn't be able to live with myself if I did.

"Oh it's a bummer that I can't make it." I replied after my brief internal dialogue.

"Cancel your plans!" was Sarah's reply, but she knew I just didn't want to go anymore. She later told me she could see the look on my face.

The party went on without me there, and I was still kind of disappointed that I hadn't gone. That feeling didn't last for long. It turned out that Josh's parents unexpectedly stopped by. Needless to say they were not happy about the alcohol, drugs or teenagers they found in their house. All of the people (which ended up not actually being everybody) got a call home to their parents, and most of them received a subsequent grounding.

A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is arrogant and careless. Pro 14:16

The results of the party I wisely refused to attend illustrated to me once more of the practical application of my favorite proverb. Nobody at that party seemed to take into consideration

the consequences of their actions, while everyone that didn't choose to go had considered the danger involved with and consequences of uncontrolled partying. I was simultaneously glad and sorry that the proverb "*A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.*" was illustrated in my life. I was happy that I had learned the lesson from this useful proverb, but sad that many had to learn it the hard way.



A Way That Seems Right

Steven D. Baxley

This particular proverb appears twice in the book, here at 14:12 and then again at 16:25. It deals with the difference between appearances and reality. The first phrase of the proverb tells us that

there is a way that *seems* right. As a man chooses that path, it *appears* in all respects to him to be the right path, the path that will take him where he wants to be. It *seems* safe. It *looks* to be reliable. It *has all the signs* of being the correct way to go, at least to him.

However, the reality is very different. At the end of this path the man has chosen lies danger and death. He has made a grave mistake, one that will cost him in uncountable ways. If he doesn't abandon this path and choose another, he will eventually end up dead, whether physically or spiritually.

The comparison of appearance with reality can be found elsewhere in the Scriptures. Isaiah 55:8-9 states it this way: "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*" Jesus expressed the contrast between two paths in Matthew 7:13-14: "*Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to*

life, and those who find it are few." Two paths. One is easy and wide, but leads to destruction. The second is narrow and hard, and yet it leads to life. This is completely opposite of what people would usually expect. *Appearance doesn't match reality.*

How do we know whether our path is the one leading to death? We receive lots of information from various sources telling us what we need to do, which way we should go, and what will make us happy. More often than not, these sources give us conflicting information, conflicting directions on the road of life. Can you imagine trying to find your way around a strange city with a GPS unit giving one set of directions, while your spouse is looking at a paper map and is giving a different set of directions? Reaching the destination would be very difficult to say the least!

The key to knowing whether we are on the right path lies in trusting our Creator to give us the proper guidance. Many of the things that God has forbidden (or commanded) seem to many people to be nonsense. They ask: "What's so wrong with ____, ____, or ____? (You can fill in the blanks with whatever the Bible forbids but yet man wants to do.) Or they ask: "Why do we need to do ____, ____, or ____? (Again, you can fill in the blanks, this time with whatever the Bible commands us to do and yet man finds to be uncomfortable or inconvenient.) We need to remember, though, that God is in a much better position to

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know what things will harm us and what things will help us. He sees not only the beginning of the road, but also the end destination as well. Plus, He sees every point between beginning and end. This puts Him in the unique position of being the absolute and perfect guide as we navigate through life. He knows which ways lead to death, and which way leads to life. Let us trust Him to give us good directions!



Wisdom and Understanding

Mark Gray

Most of the world values knowledge and learning. Unfortunately that drive to know more is often misdirected. Throughout history mankind has refused to fear and respect God, His power, and His authority. This refusal has allowed man to essentially ignore God and develop his own wisdom.

Historically humans have developed their own gods and barbaric rituals to accompany worship to them. This was done in ignorance of the “knowledge of the Holy One,” but even the Israelites who had been delivered from slavery by God promptly forgot that knowledge and made an idol at the foot of the mountain while Moses was receiving the law. Even after conquering the Promised Land with the help of Almighty God, they repeatedly fell back into idol worship. They had the knowledge and first hand experience, but chose to ignore it in favor of a god that pleased them more.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Pro 9:10

Soon after, mankind began to depend more on his own knowledge and wisdom. Even those among religious scholars fell in this group. The Jews rejected Jesus because he was not the king that *they* expected. Ignoring prophecies and miracles, they chose to kill Jesus rather than listen to Him and continued to wait for a warrior king to deliver them from Imperial Rome. When missionaries first went into China, they had a very difficult time spreading the gospel. Jesus dies at the end of the story, and the Chinese, for the most part wanted a hero like the Jews wanted. *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing...”* 1 Cor 1:18a Christian “scholars” have led to hundreds of different denominations each doing different things in “service” to God. This all came about because men thought that they knew what God would like, sometimes in stark contrast to what He actually said.

Later on in the time line, man quit having God in the “equation” at all. He became more and more confident in his own wisdom and knowledge. Evolution seeks to sever any sort of connection to God. If indeed man is descended from goo and animals, then he is free to make his own decisions without God. In 1882, Nietzsche declared “God is dead.” It seems that most of the earth lives as if that statement is fact. Humankind became the ultimate creature, the pinnacle of evolution, and *“professing to be wise they became fools,”* Rom 1:22 Violence,

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divorce, drugs, and all sorts of immorality prevail as man's "wisdom" reigns supreme.

All of these things come from pride. Why should a free thinking intelligent individual let an ancient book tell him how to live? It is *"not in man who walks to direct his own steps."* Jer 10:23b We **need** God. If man would realize that it is not degrading to believe in and obey One that is greater, then the world would be a much better place. This is why Jesus tells the disciples, *"unless you are converted, and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."* Mt 18:3 Little children know that their father (and mother) is there to protect them, guide them, and teach them. They are not too proud to think that they have all the answers. When we respect and fear God as the Almighty Creator, we begin to have wisdom. When we read what God wants us to do, we come to a knowledge of Him and can understand His will for us. Humility brings wisdom and understanding. Pride brings ignorance, pain, and an eternity of suffering.



Train up a Child Pat Lumpkin

The book of Proverbs gives us much insight into how to teach and train our children if we'll only heed the wise advise. Unfortunately neglecting to train and discipline our children is one of the greatest failings of parents in today's society. The Bibli-

cal concept of discipline has both a positive side (instruction, direction, and training,) and a negative aspect (correction, punishment, and reproof). Parent's often fail to

see the wisdom in the "old fashioned" time honored,

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. Pro 22:6

Bible-based chastening that is talked about in Proverbs. Neglect of discipline and guidance often produces unruly, disobedient

children and can lead to the loss of their souls. Pro 29:15 tells us that, *"the rod and rebuke gives wisdom, but the child left to himself brings shame to his mother."*

The most influential people in a child's life are his parents. He learns from them, both good and bad, as he grows up and imitates them. It is a most obvious fact that what parents do, and how they treat one another and the children will have a great impact on the child. Pro 4:23-24 reminds us to watch our actions and attitudes because, *"out of them spring issues of life."* What a child will be like and what he will become is largely determined by the influence of the parents. However, outside influences, good and bad also play a part. Paul tells us in 1 Cor 15:33, *"Do not be deceived; bad company corrupts good morals."* Neglecting to guide and direct our children to select good friends can lead them down the wrong path.

I'm busy! I just don't have time! These are excuses often used in our "fast paced age" today. If we are too busy to "train up

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our children” then we have our priorities mixed up. Children grow up very quickly and the time frame we have to “train” them is very short. Pro 19:18 tells us, *“to chasten our children while there is hope.”* We don’t want to miss the window of opportunity.

Eph 6:4 tells us, *“to bring our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”* It’s really important that we set “boundaries” that are in accordance with God’s word and reinforce them by teaching God’s word to our children. We only have to look at the story of Adonijah, the son of King David (1 Kings 1) to see the terrible results of permissiveness. 1 Kings 1:6 says, *“His father had not rebuked him at any time by saying, “Why have you done so?”* It appears that Adonijah had always done what he wanted to do with no restraint from his father. It shouldn’t have been a surprise to David when his son usurped the throne and did what he wanted to do? The fruit of permissiveness is also seen in Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phinehas. 1 Sam 3:13 states, *“His sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them.”* Consider the end to their lives. Look at the sadness Eli’s sons caused not only to Eli, but to the whole nation of Israel who came to worship at the tabernacle. Neglecting to teach, instruct, and chasten can lead to destruction. If we neglect to set boundaries or to restrain our children – don’t be surprised when disaster strikes.

As parents, David and Eli failed miserably by neglecting to restrain and discipline their children. Pro 23:13 says, *“Do not withhold correction from a child. For if you beat*

(punish) him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod and deliver his soul from hell.” As parents we need to use the guidelines set forth for us in God’s word. The admonitions set forth in the book of Proverbs are a wonderful guide for raising children if we put them into practice. These practices should begin the very first day you hold your newborn child in your arms. Everything we do as parents should be done in light of eternity! Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual truths. There is no greater blessing than to see your children accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Most of us are familiar with the command God gave Moses to pass on to the children of Israel in Deut 6:4-9. God said, *“Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one! You are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength. You shall teach them diligently to your children when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”* These same words are applicable to us today. We must guide and lead our children to follow God’s ways through loving and consistent discipline. This is not merely administering punishment, but is lovingly nurturing them to make “disciples” out of them. Discussing God’s word with our children will give them confidence in who they are and life skills to serve God all the days of their lives.

Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul.
Pro 29:17



Trust

Charlotte Jobe

Solomon wrote in Proverbs 3:5 *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.”* David penned the same thought in Psalms 37:3-5. God showed that He wanted them to trust Him. Other O.T. passages show what man received when he trusted God.

He is happy – Jer.17:7 He feels peace – Isa 26:3-4 His actions could make others trust in God Psa 40:3 Loving kindness will surround him. Psa 32:10 Fearfulness of man is far from him. Psa 56:11 He is not afraid of bad news. Psa 112:7 Pro 29:25 tells of his safety. What blessings were seen when this proverb was followed!

What about us today? Do we trust God? TRUST: to show confidence in and reliance upon. In trusting God, we see Him as all wise. With this being true, we will not depend on our wisdom (UNDERSTANDING) He has given us His word. It instructs us. To know His will, we would everyday read, study, meditate on it. We trust that His teaching will help us to have the very best life. *“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellences.”* II Pet. 1:3 We want to take the things in His word and do them with ALL OUR HEART. *“And he (Jesus) said unto him, ‘You shall love the Lord thy God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind’”* Mt 22:37.

Trust in the Lord with all you heart, and lean not on your own understanding.
Pro 3:5

How is trust displayed in our lives? Spiritually, we have confidence that our sins are forgiven. *“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* Act 2:38 And our sins will continue to be forgiven. *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* I Jn 1:7-9. Jesus teaches that His Father will hear prayers of His people. *“But when you pray go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”* Mt. 6:6 God has promised to help us reach our goal. Phil 1:6 *“I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”*

We are not concerned about our physical needs. *“But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’”* Mt 6:30-31.

When problems arise, we can be assured of God’s awareness and help with them. *“Do*

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not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” Phil 4:6

We follow His pattern for pleasing relationships with one another. *“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” Eph. 4:31-32.*

Finally, we look forward to an eternal reward. *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.” II Tim. 4:7, 8.*

Fittingly, the Proverb which follows verse 5 sums up all of this. *“In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths.” TRUST IN THE LORD.*



Moral Integrity

Phil Lumpkin

Nearly 3,000 years ago Solomon strongly urged his son to get wisdom and understanding, then implored him not to forsake “her.” (Pro 4:5-6) Next he contrasted wisdom with things that compete for one’s attention and affections. One of the first ones he addressed was the strange woman, the adulteress (2:16-19).

Today, turn on the television, watch a movie, listen to workplace conversations, etc. and the matter-of-fact attitude toward sexual promiscuity reflects the heart of a society that is seemingly accelerating away from God. God says, *“The lips of an adulteress drip honey, and smoother than oil is her speech.” Pro 5:3* The world through its actions, counters with, “there is nothing wrong with sexual relations between consenting people.” The Lord’s wisdom, however, continues with the rest of the story, *“but in the end she (the adulteress) is bitter*

as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps lay hold of Sheol.” Pro 5:4-5
The world would have us believe there are no consequences for immorality. Yet even in our decadent age, the leading cause of divorce is still adultery.

Let’s not allow ourselves to be deceived by the enticements of the world. Adultery, fornication sexual immorality of any kind transgresses God’s law. We may experience a moment of pleasure, but such behavior is a sleazy quagmire with often devastating and irreversible consequences. Pro 6:27-29 states, *“Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Or can a man walk on hot coals, and his feet not be scorched? So is the one who goes in to his*

The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; he who would destroy himself does it. Pro 6:32

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neighbor's wife; whoever touches her will not go unpunished."

Under the Old Law, adultery was punishable by death (Lv 20:10). Jesus turned things up a notch when He said, *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart."* Mt 5:27-28 God has always demanded strict moral integrity from His people. He created us male and female, with all the chemistry and magnetism that goes with us. Thankfully He also gave us the marital relationship where sexual desire is not only lawfully fulfilled, but accomplishes His purpose to bind us together as one flesh.

"Drink water from your own cistern, and fresh water from your own well. Should your springs be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be yours alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving hind and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; be exhilarated always with her love. For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress and embrace the bosom of a foreigner." Pro 5:15-20

The world speaks of affairs, trysts, flings, free love, etc. Let's be wise and see adultery for what it actually is; momentary pleasure that leads to eternal death and destruction.



"Wisdom, From Man or God?"

Russ Ward

If we stop and think about it there have always been just two ways of approaching life, God's & man's. Regardless of the point of discussion or whatever is under consideration there are truly only two sides. I remember my father saying "Truth is truth and all truth comes from God and it really doesn't matter from whom the truth is spoken upon this earth because it did not originate from them." Sounds simple enough but think of how TRUE (pardon the pun) that is. Seriously, if God were to stand before any of us and we were to ask him all of the unanswered questions of the world, all of the philosophical questions that have been raised, or any of the self justified actions of mankind would not God be able to provide the answer to all of these. Absolutely, I mean if you can't trust God then, well who can you trust? Is that not the dilemma that has been ever present in front of man?

Man wants to believe in something or someone. It is what drives us to seek after the unknown, to peer into the depths of the unanswered or the unanswerable. We are not satisfied with the status quo of that which is known and because of this man continually seeks after that which would satisfy his mind and his very being. It is because of this insatiable appetite we possess that we find ourselves looking for sustenance in all the places except from where the mind can be filled with knowledge and understanding.

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For one cannot truly exist without the other. Knowledge must be sought and gleaned, yet one can attain vast amounts of knowledge having no understanding or discernment; and in the same vein wisdom does not exist without a basis of knowledge.

Consider therefore the challenge issued to man in Pro 2:1-6 by the Proverbs writer. If you accept my words, store up my commands, turn you ear to wisdom, apply your heart to understanding, seek it as silver or a hidden treasure then you will understand the fear (*Respect*) and knowledge of God. Why? For the Lord gives wisdom and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. These verses provide if you will the mathematical equation of knowledge and wisdom and the source from which it originates.

One must first accept and internalize the teachings of God for that is where knowledge is found and yet one does not read of thermo dynamics, nuclear physics, or even molecular biology within the scriptures. So how do we say then that all knowledge is of God? Well, God is omnipotent and omniscient and he created man in his image and breathed life into him, giving him a spirit and thus making him different from all of creation. (Gen 1:27 & 2:7) Man partook of the tree of Knowledge, Good, & Evil and his eyes were opened to discernment and understanding. (Gen 3:7) At the Tower of Babel the Godhead reasoned that man had the ability to achieve what in his mind he could conceive. (Gen 11:6) This provision

How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding. Pro 3:13

to add to our knowledge has no limitations, or does it?

Step number two; incline your ear to wisdom and your heart to understanding. The reality is that knowledge without wisdom is foolishness, for of what value is the ability to know yet not to share, to be filled yet left feeling unfulfilled, to continually seek yet never to find, what misery is found within such people of the world. How can we not recognize a creator who gave of himself for the sake of a creation not close to his equal? (Phil 2:5-11) Wisdom has not changed throughout the ages. Considering the knowledge man may have gained as time has passed there is a sufficient amount of knowledge that he has let fade away and still wisdom remains constantly tied to the truths that are found and the truths that have passed away from man's memory.

To find truth is to acknowledge and fear God. *"Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."* (Eccl 12:13) With such understanding God grants wisdom to those who would ask. *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. ⁶But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt..."* (Jas 1:5-6) Why? Because wisdom is not based upon man's reasoning rather it is based upon simple, pure truth and God from

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whom all Truth, all Knowledge, and all Wisdom is found. Let us not be found standing before God in Job's footprints! *"Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me."* (Job 38:2-3)



Where is your Treasure?

Megan Sweet

Where does the treasure of the world lay? Is it in heaven or is it in fancy cars, mansions, huge televisions, designer clothing, and more money, etc. As Christians, where does our treasure lay? Do we place God and doing what is right above everything else, or is it somewhere on our list of priorities that we get to whenever we have time? There are several examples in the Bible of how riches can lead to death, and how righteousness is what matters in the end.

In Luke 12 we read of a foolish rich man who was abundantly blessed by God in his harvest. Instead of sharing what God had blessed him with, he hoarded it and decided to build barns big enough to contain it all. Are bigger barns really necessary? The rich man was rich in only one area: himself. He had alienated himself from his friends; he was alone.

How much the foolish rich man could have accomplished if he had shared what he had sown. If he had instead clothed himself in righteousness and cared more about others than he did himself, how many people could he have helped? If we get a promotion in our jobs, or receive a raise, what are we doing with the excess God has blessed us with. Like the foolish rich man, our *basic* needs are met. Are we spending it on a new car or clothes when we could be helping someone who can't get to work or cloth themselves properly? Are we putting it away for a rainy day? **"YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU!"** If you wait and wait for that rainy day to come, it may never arrive.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Mt 6:19-21.

"Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death"
Pro 11:4

We will all die someday. It's not something many people care to talk about. However, if today was your last day on earth, would you rather spend it building bigger barns, or giving to the needy? Our barns will not come with us when we go to see our Lord. Would we rather be isolated from our friends and family, or surrounded by those we love? Christ wants us to put others above ourselves. By putting others before ourselves,

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we are doing the will of God, also. In Matthew 19 we read of a rich young ruler who wanted to know how to live. He was told to sell his possessions to the poor and only then will his treasure be in Heaven. Did Christ mean to literally sell everything he owned and give to the poor? That is probably not so. However, I am confident that Christ knew what a hindrance this man's money was on his faith in God and his desire to do what's right.

The examples of these two men can easily be applied to our lives. Is there anything wrong with being wealthy or having nice things? In a general sense, no! However, the minute that money or those things get in the way of worshipping and serving God, at that point, it is time to reevaluate those things in our lives. How easy is it for us to get wrapped up in wanting more money and working longer hours to have more things? If you can't make God first with all that "stuff", then too much emphasis is there and it may be better to live without the temptation. Just because there are not golden visages for us to look upon does not mean that idols do not exist today. What are the idols in today's world? In my opinion, an idol is anything that takes precedence over God whether it's jewelry, clothing, music, movies, alcohol, illegal drugs, and the like. These idols and these things will not help us get to heaven, but a righteous life will.

"Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, Cease from your consideration of it. When you set your eyes on it, it is gone, for wealth certainly makes itself wings, like an eagle that flies toward the heavens. Pro 23:4-5

Living a righteous life is what we should strive for every single day of our lives. In Christ's Sermon on the Mount we read the Beatitudes, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied,*" and "*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" We should always *hunger* to do the will of God and never stray from it, no matter the pressure the world may give us. Righteous living, that is, striving to do what is moral and good in God's sight, is what being a Christian is all about. By being righteous, we are showing our faith that He is real, He is worthy of glory and He is the path to eternal life. The world can't get us to heaven, and more things can't get us to heaven. Riches don't have to rule your life, but righteousness does...it's the only way to HIM, and to eternal life.



Open Mouth, Insert Foot

Craig Sweet

Have you ever said something, and as soon as it came out of your mouth, you wish you could have put it back in? I think we all have. I remember a time when I was preaching as a young 20 something who had just gotten married. I was talking about how hard it was sometimes to make ends meet. I

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said something like, “We never had very much money, but it feels like I have even less money since we got married.” Whoops, that is not what I meant! I was trying to say I had more responsibility since we got married. I did receive quite a chuckle from the audience and later I received a very sweet lesson on opening your mouth and inserting your foot from my wonderful wife! Needless to say, that event stuck with me.

Pro 18:7, says, “A fool’s mouth is his ruin, and his lips are the snare of his soul.” Sometimes we are just too quick to speak before we think. When that happens, it is so easy to say something that we didn’t intend. If we would take a moment and think about what we are saying before we say it, we might avoid hurting someone’s feelings or embarrassing ourselves. Pro 13:3 tells us, “The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; the one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.” The best way to guard your mouth is to close it. We can learn so much when we listen and then think before we speak. This is easier said than done!

So, why do we do this? I believe there are several reasons, but let’s just look at three. First, we sometimes want to impress someone or want someone to think we are knowledgeable. This is common when we are dating or getting to know someone better. We want to make a great first impression. However, when we say something that is not received well by the other person, it may be difficult to recover. Pro 17:28 states, “Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is consid-

ered wise; when he closes his lips, he is considered prudent.” One of the best ways to avoid “foot-in-mouth” is to keep silent when you don’t know what you are talking about. “The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, but the mouth of fools spouts folly.” Pro 15:2

A second possible reason we may put our foot in our mouth is described in Mt 15:18 which tells us that “...the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.” When we are not thinking and immediately respond, it usually represents what is in our heart. Those who might use curse words when not around others may find that those words might just slip out at the wrong time when a person is speaking and not thinking. If those words are in your heart it does not take much for them to come out of your mouth. I knew a man who, while preaching, made the statement that something “scared the ‘Hxxx’ out of him” but he actually said the word. He saw the reaction of the audience and realized what he said, and began to backtrack by stating, “And I meant that. That should scare us to the point that we will not want to go to hell”. He might have made a quick recovery, but the real underlying impression was left and could not be easily changed. When we have to constantly check what words we are saying to make sure that we are not using language we shouldn’t, maybe we should start by looking at our heart and



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take those words out of our vocabulary.

A third reason we might suffer foot-in-mouth disease is that we are upset and want the other person to hurt, so we say something hurtful back. Have you ever said anything in anger that you knew you did not mean or wish you had not said? I have. Even though we may say, "You know I didn't really mean it", it goes back to what is in our heart. Also, we really can never take words back once they have been said.

The damage is done; the words hurt. Once spoken, it takes time for these types of wounds to heal. James says, "*No one can tame the tongue, it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison*" Jas 3:8 If this is the case, what can we do? There are a couple of things that should be done when we say something we shouldn't. First, the best thing to do is to stop talking, listen and let the fire die down so you don't dig yourself in deeper. If you stop talking, you don't have to worry about taking any more of your words back. If you are in a situation where there is one way communication (like a sermon), move on and listen later. When someone asks you what you meant, you'll have time to give a clear response.

Secondly, once we realize that we have said something that we wish we hadn't, we need to apologize at a calm opportunity. Pro 6:2-3 gives some very good advice: "*If you have been snared with the words of your mouth, have been caught with the words of your mouth, do this then, my son, and deliver yourself; since you have come*

"He who guards his mouth and his tongue, guards his soul from troubles."

Pro 21:23

into the hand of your neighbor, go, humble yourself, and importune your neighbor." In other words, you need to go to the person with a humble and loving heart and let them know that you are sorry. As this passage continues, verses 4-5 tell us that we don't need to wait to do this. "*Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids; deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hunter's hand and like a bird from the hand of the fowler."*

"Foot-in-mouth" disease is very difficult to overcome. However, with love in our hearts and patience we can be cured. Phil 4:13 says, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*".



The Virtuous Wife

Thelma Arnold

What a treasure we have! That beautiful collection of wise sayings, known to us as the Book of Proverbs. It is very likely that most of us have a favorite chapter. For women, myself included, the word portrait of the worthy wife of chapter 31:10-31 presents itself as the ideal pattern for us as we mature. It is not a goal to be attained by merely growing old. It is a deliberate decision throughout life, if we want to please God.

King Lemuel, possibly Solomon himself, inscribed what his mother taught him. No doubt she desired the very best woman for

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her beloved son. She outlined specific attributes that she believed were necessary for a suitable wife – one who would make him happy and successful during his life.

In reading the verses, it is very clear that she did not consider physical beauty as being foremost in his search for a wife. In fact, it is not even alluded to until near the end of her dissertation. One might wonder whether the mother of old just did not see beyond the essentials of life. That is not likely! She did appreciate beauty around her because she mentions beautiful tapestries and colorful clothing of fine linen and purple to be provided by the wife. Even her household would be clothed with scarlet.

“Who can find a virtuous wife?” The mother began, then proceeded to describe the ideal woman. As we read the chapter, try to visualize that woman of antiquity, then “fast forward” thousands of years to 2009 A.D. to see how we may best apply the entire set of instructions to our own personal life in this modern world! Read and compare!

In rereading the set of verses, with some exceptions because of the time periods, our modern virtuous wife has not changed that much! Her husband trusts her, confident that she will do him good and not evil – always.

She is industrious, helping to supplement the family income when needed. She takes care of herself as well as her family. She uses wisdom and kind words in her daily activities.

Although most of us do not have “live-in” servants, we do have helpers. Just scan the kitchen and laundry area for a start. The conveniences we enjoy should allow time to help and encourage others in ways mentioned in our “guide.”

Recently a host of family and friends had the joyful opportunity to witness the marriage ceremony of two beautiful young people. It is very likely that the parents of each of them had already instilled values long ago that included what to look for in a mate. Each searched for a virtuous partner of moral excellence! What a way to begin their life together! They plan to include God and His Son Jesus, Who said, “*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*” Jn 14:15. One day she may help qualify him to sit with the elders of the church!

Someday, when they reach the “three score and ten” part of their lives, with skin not as firm and bones that creak, they will have groomed the inner self to be beautiful!

In the May 2009 issue of Senior News, I read an article that seems to fit here. A little boy whose face was generously sprinkled with freckles was embarrassed when another child teased him about them. He cried into the arms of his elderly grandmother. She dried his tears, assuring him that to her his freckles were pretty. “Just name me one thing that’s prettier than freckles?” He paused, looked into his grandmother’s face, then softly whispered, “wrinkles.”

Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.”
Pro 31:30

Favorite Proverbs

Carol Lumpkin



There are six things which the Lord hates,
Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:

Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
And hands that shed innocent blood,
A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that run rapidly to evil,
A false witness who utters lies.

6:16-19

9:7-9

He who corrects a scoffer gets dishonor for himself, and
he who reprove a wicked man gets insults for himself.

Do not reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you.

Reprove a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction
to a wise man, and he will be still wiser. Teach a
righteous man, and he will increase his learning.

He who turns away his ear from listening to the law,
even his prayer is an abomination.

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but
he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

28:9,13