

Proverbs 14, Sep 23, 2024 -Men's Monday Morning Bible Study

Overview:

V1 wise WOMAN.

V7 is a command to LEAVE the presence of a fool

V12 & 15 naïve

Anger. V17&29

The poor (righteous). V21-31

FOTL -strong security, children have refuge. FOTL is a fountain of life to turn aside from the snares of death. V2; 26-27

Nations v34.

Commentary:

V1 wise WOMAN. This is the first time in the book a woman is portrayed in positive light. Up to this point it has been the wayward, loud woman. We will talk much more about this topic in the last chapter (31). However, it is worth noting that the wise woman, like the wise man, builds. He builds families, churches, cities, etc. She builds the home. She is a home maker. Houses are not homes. Women make homes. They decorate, bringing warmth and seasonality. They prepare meals, providing food and fellowship. They give stability, permanence, and predictability. In the building of a home, women are actually building people. Little people, and her husband. She educates and nurtures. She that is wise does this. A woman of folly tears it down with her own hands.

V7 is a command to LEAVE the presence of a fool. This is a theme that we've seen several times before. The idea that we become like those we associate with, is a common idea even in modern society. The command is to get away from fools. There is nothing to profit there. You cannot help them. Your words are like pearls before swine. They return void. It is of no use. Get away from them lest you be like them. Remember 13:20 "He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm." Don't waste your time and effort with idiots.

V12 & 15 naïve. There is a way that seems right that will kill you. How do you discern the path of death? V15... don't believe everything (or everyone). You need to be savvy. There needs to be a healthy amount of distrust with people. Get rich quick schemes are scams. Shortcuts to riches, or success, or influence are not real. They are fools' errands that will cost you greatly. Don't be naïve. You need to be craftier than the world. Don't get sucked into multilevel marketing schemes or online gurus. There is no substitute for thoughtful planning, careful execution and hard work. Those people online and on TV are taking money out of your pocket and putting it in theirs. People always think that their guy is different. No, he's not. He's the same. Wake up and be sober. Find a path forward that is not just a short cut.

Anger. V17&29. Being quick tempered is not wise. The Bible says that God is "slow to anger and abundant in steadfast love" Ps 86:15; 145:8. We would do well to follow Him. If holy God can forgive men, who are we to harbor anger and resentment? This verse is really about how short our fuse is. Be long fused. It should take a lot, a whole lot to cause us to twist off. We should have a big fuse that can handle lots of heat. This is a capacity issue. Most guys to are quick tempered are immature and weak. They do not have perspective nor bandwidth to deal with people.

Let's talk about traffic for a moment. Every day there are idiots on the road. Sometimes, we are those idiots. Sometimes people drive too fast and recklessly. Other times, people drive entirely too slowly and are overly cautious. Just know that if you get behind the wheel that there will almost always be idiots on the road.

Another place I find myself getting agitated is at the grocery store. It's the same scenario. What I find is that I love people, but I hate the public. Something happens when people congregate in masse. This is not the time to vent our spleens about things that agitate us. This is the time to recognize those things that push our buttons and be mature about them by not letting them get to us.

Guys who are high in anger and anxiety or fear tend to go together. Many times they become micromanagers, clean or control freaks, or neat nicks. They seek to control their out-of-control lives by over correcting. Instead of turning the finger on themselves, they focus outward on the mistakes and missteps of others while ignoring their own deficiencies.

Verse 4 is an interesting commentary about how productivity is messy. It's not always clean, straightforward and smooth. The ox makes a mess. He is stinky and probably hard to deal with. But... but he is productive. The wise man is not flustered by the ox being an ox. Instead he knows that putting up with a such an animal is the cost of productivity, or in this case income. He is not frustrated that he does not have the only ox on the planet that doesn't poop in a toilet. He is not an idealist. He is not naïve. Instead, he is wise and predicts the associated mess and plans around it expecting it's coming.

I've given examples of somewhat innocuous examples but there are other instances that can become far more damaging. For instance, situations at work that could lead to you losing your income. Or bringing those frustrations home and taking them out on the family that you are working to provide for. It makes no sense to take your day out on them, the ones you love the most. Be long suffering. This too is part of the fruit of the Spirit.

The poor (righteous). V21-31. You'll notice that Proverbs makes a distinction between two types of poor people. There are the righteous poor and the lazy poor. We have seen other verses about those who won't plow or work. They are not to be pitied. They get what they deserve. Unfortunately, in our culture, it's not ok to call someone lazy but that is a disservice to society.

Here, we have the other kind of poor. These are the righteous poor or unfortunately circumstanced. The most obvious example in Scripture were widows and orphans. Neither had a man to provide for them or to protect them from would be strong men who take advantage of them.

Notice the position or responsibility of proximity in v21. This is our "neighbor". We are responsible to take care of our own places of residence and those around us first. There are all kind of problems with shipping money and resources to unknown destinations because they don't have something. Most of the time, there are terrible unintended consequences of such actions.

Nevertheless, we must not become calloused to the needs of those around us. Particularly those near to us and even more explicitly, widows, orphans, single moms. This is not just about compassion but more explicitly, it is about honoring God. Look at verse 31. Perhaps God has put you in the position you are in so that you can help those

that cannot help themselves. How is God going to provide for and answer the prayers of those who don't have basic necessities? He is going to raise up men of productivity and passion to fill in the gap. Be the answer to someone's prayer. Don't give a dime of God's money to the lazy on the street corner. But be tender hearted and gentle, abundant with those who have no man to provide for them. Widows, orphans, single moms. James 1:27.

FOTL -strong security, children have refuge. FOTL is a fountain of life to turn aside from the snares of death. V2; 26-27. This is, as we've talked about before, THE theme of Proverbs. The fear of the LORD. In this case we see the benefits of fearing God. It provides strong security. God is hedge of protection around His people. Fearing God keeps you inside His camp. You are protected from the evil one. Outside His will, You are subject unnecessary pain and hardship. With the FOTL, there is life keeping you from death and destruction.

I was very recently made aware of how true this is. When the family does not fear God, there is prison, heartache, discord, hatred, drunkenness, destruction, disfunction... the list goes on and on.

Nations v34. When a family does not fear the LORD, it destroys the family. When a nation doesn't fear the LORD, the same things happen. Conversely, when a people are righteous, things go well. God is honored and the people are blessed. Wicked rulers are a sign of the judgement of God.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we commit ourselves to You new and afresh today. We invite Your Spirit to lead and teach us. Find us faithful servants. In Jesus' name, Amen.