

Proverbs 16, Oct 14, 2024 -Men's Monday Morning Bible Study

Overview:

Again, we see that speech, lips, mouth are all reoccurring themes. Verses 13, 20-24, & 27-28

Plans, verses 1, 3, 9, & 33

Kingly behavior, verses 12-15

“Better” verses 8, 16, & 19 (cf 17:1)

Memorable verse: v18 “Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

FOTL, verse 6. 13th occurrence in the book.

There is some overlap in v18-19 (esp v19) with the “better” language formula of v8 & 16.

Additionally, kingly behavior (v12-15) has a part about speech (v12).

Generally, I have grouped topics by theme but the “better” language category is a literary one not thematic as such.

Commentary:

Speech, lips, mouth. Verses 13, 20-24, & 27-28

V13 “Righteous lips are the delight of kings, and he who speaks uprightly is loved.” Truth speakers invite trust and confidence. Kings can lean on their input and feedback. Those who love the good, can be trusted and kings rightly prefer their input.

V20 “He who considers the word will find good, and how blessed is he who trusts in Yahweh.” To give thought to what we say and how we say it is a good thing. It demonstrates trusting in God and brings blessings. Contrast with 12:18 “There is one who speaks rashly, like the thrusts of a sword.”

V21 “The wise in heart will be called understanding, and sweetness of lips increases learning.” ESV translates “learning” as “persuasiveness.” What does the phrase

“sweetness of lips” mean. Have you heard the modern proverb, “You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar”? This is basically the same thing. “Sweet words” is pleasing or smooth speech. It is considerate and kind. It is not rash and harsh. It is persuasive and gets people on your side and gets them to do what you want them to do. It is instructive. It is the wise teacher who learns eloquence and rhetoric. He applies himself to his craft like any other craftsman. He studies technique and method. He practices and refines his skill for the sake of his pupils’ learning and benefit. See verse 24.

V22 “Insight is a fountain of life to one who has it, but the discipline of ignorant fools is folly.” Understanding brings about satisfaction to the otherwise frustrated. People without knowledge of how the world works are continually vexed. The wise have “insight” and are able to verbalize it in such a way that gives life to himself and others.

V23 “The heart of the wise gives insight to his mouth and increases learning to his lips”

V24 “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.” See comment on v21 above.

V27-28 “A vile man digs up evil, and the words on his lips are like scorching fire. A perverse man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close companions” Evil and wicked men set fire to the world with their speech. They spread discord and chaos with their secret lies. They create division and hardship for everyone around them.

Be upfront and truthful. Don’t engage in secret game playing. Be aware of it. But do not engage in it.

Plans: 1, 3, 9, & 33

V1 basically says that you can plan what you want but God is sovereign over everything and may completely change what you do. The old adage “if you want to make God laugh, make plans” applies here. This does not mean that you should not plan but that you should hold them with an open hand.

V3 tells us how planning should take place. It’s one of those verses that people like to claim is a promise, although it is not, it is a proverb about how things normally go. If you commit your plans to God, you are probably considering His ways, His counsel, and His wisdom. Your chances of success are definitely higher than with the alternative.

V9 is another way of saying what v1 says. This verse has a little more to do with the path or journey than the outcome but the truth is the same. We make our plans but God determines our steps.

V33 The casting of lots was like rolling of dice, or drawing straws. It was a way to make decisions when all other wisdom and consequence has been exhausted. Everything has been considered and no clear direction is to be had. It is like the flipping of a coin. Please note that it assumes the former before engaging in the latter. The proverb is about God's sovereignty in the action. I have made real life decisions this way, literally by doing everything I knew to do to determine a course of action, narrowing it down to a few options and literally flipping a coin between two options. God is in control of everything and we must recognize that when making plans and decisions.

Kingly behavior v12-15

V12 God hates evil rulers. He gives staying power to those who love him (righteousness).

V13 Good kings recognize the value of good people and surround themselves with them.

V14 Rulers' power has the ability to give life and take it. Better to stay on his good side and know who you're dealing with.

V15 Likewise, his favor is valuable. You want his face to be "toward" you not against you.

"Better" verses 8, 16, & 19 (cf 17:1)

V8 having little with integrity is better than abundance with injustice. Integrity is better than money and wealth. If you have to choose one over the other, always pick integrity.

V16 Wisdom is better than gold and silver. Again, get wisdom over wealth.

V19 Humility is to be chosen over arrogance with wealth.

The common theme is money. Money is worth less than integrity, wisdom, and humility. Doing the right thing, having understanding and being humble is worth more than great riches.

Memorable verse: v18 “Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

Cf. 3:34 quoted by James (4:6) and Peter (1Pt 5:5). God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. James says to humble yourselves. You want to humble yourself. You do not want God to humble you. Peter says that younger men are to humble themselves before older wise men. Be sure that they are indeed wise, but once found. Submit.

Bottom line: Be careful what and how much you think of yourself.

FOTL, verse 6. 13th occurrence in the book.

“By lovingkindness and truth, iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the LORD one turns away from evil.” Covenant relationship and truth get rid of sin. It must be confessed, repented of and forgiven. However, FOTL keeps you out of the situation altogether. “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” It’s much easier to stay out of trouble than to have to go through the painful process of consequences, repentance and restoration. Choose the FOTL. Be wise.

Closing Prayer:

Father, help us to consider our speech. Let it be filled with life and truth. Let us indeed be the kind of men who you delight in. May we be men who fear God and love people. We invite Your Spirit to lead and teach us. Find us faithful servants. In Jesus’ name, Amen.