

Proverbs 18, Nov 4, 2024 -Men's Monday Morning Bible Study

Overview:

I am becoming convinced that Proverbs says more about speech than any other topic. In chapter 18, there are three pericopes, v4; 6-8; 13; and 20-21.

Commentary:

Mouth (v4; 6-8; 20-21)

V4 talks about the beneficial nature of wise words. They are a fountain of wisdom creating a flowing (life giving) brook or stream. Deep waters is a euphemism for profound speech. It is meaningful and weighty. It is not the common surface level politeness and courtesy of cursory pleasantries. Instead, it is a deeply dug well of sweet water.

Vs6-8 outline the fallout from foolish speech. It both, destroys the hearers and the speaker. The fool is constantly creating problems with his mouth. He deserves a beating. His mouth is his damnation (v7) "ruin" "snare of his soul".

Whereas the words of the wise come from a place of depth, the words of the fool go down into the depths of a man (v8b). The words of the wise are actually sweet, satisfying water, the words of the fool are only sweet tidbits that do not satiate. They are worthless.

V20 makes the implied truth above explicit.

V21 words have the ability to give life or take it. The speaker needs to be cognizant of the power of the tongue. Outcomes can be glorious or dire. James 3:1-12 should be on repeat in our study of Proverbs.

V1 -Isolation

"When you're by yourself, you're in bad company." -Mark Mitchell

It is selfish to just want to be alone all the time (“seeks his own desire”). It is also unwise (“he breaks out against all wisdom”). Prov 27:17 “As iron sharpens iron, so one man another.” People are hard to be around sometimes but that is precisely why God puts us together. We both reflect the nature of His character (he is in community as the triune Godhead) and we also rub off the rough parts of each other, thus developing character that is more pleasing to him.

We all know people and perhaps have had the experience ourselves of being in our own heads too much. Counsel and advice are not just beneficial but are necessary for wise living. Additionally, relationships provide companionship and meaningful connection.

No cave dweller Christianity. The NT is replete with imagery about how Christians are part of one body and function differently (1Cor 12:12-27). The early church also referred to one another as “brothers” implying that their relationship was as close as familial ties.

Every Wednesday, I thank God for each of you and pray for you. I would ask that you pray for me as well. We want to help each other out in life and encourage, rebuke and have fun together.

v10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are saved.

There is a song for this verse. This is very similar to the Fear of the LORD (FOTL). Wise men understand that Yahweh, in addition to giving us a place to connect to one another, provides healing and security.

This healing can be from addiction, pain, psychological distress or emotional fatigue. The security is from intellectual assault, actual physical aggression, financial ruin, and more. Indeed, “trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and he will direct your path” Prov 3:5-6

Riches (v11, v16)

Last week we looked at bribery as essentially injustice. It can be effective (v17:8 & 18:16). Make no mistake, money can create its own opportunities. Money making

money is one of the keys to wealth. Wealth opens doors to more wealth. This is just a simple fact.

Today, in v11, we see that money can create “delusion.” The idea that your riches provide protection can blind people into what we call confirmation bias, leading to destruction. When someone has money, it is not uncommon to see them think they are right about everything. They think that because they were right about finances, they must be right about everything else. This is not true.

In fact, it is so not true that the Bible says that people who trust in riches are delusional. They are believing a lie. They think money will insulate them from the cares and difficulties that assault other people, when in fact money itself sometimes creates unseen problems and difficulties in and of itself. “Mo money, mo problems” is the popularized rap song from the 90s that displays this truth.

V24 outlines the flip side of v1.

17:17 is the synonymous companion to this verse. “A friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity.”

While we all need community and friendship, we don’t just need a large quantity of friends, but we need at least one quality friend. To get good friends, we need to be a good friend. What does a good friend do? He is honest, loyal, trustworthy, generous and hospitable.

v22 “He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.”

We will look more closely at the ideal woman in the last chapter of Proverbs (31). Look also at 19:14 “House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, but a wife who has insight is from the LORD.”

For those not married, this needs to be a very serious prayer point for you. You also need to interview other men and create a criterion for sifting through your options as a wife.

My list:

Christian, reformed, based politically, wants to be a wife and mother (domestically inclined).

Closing Prayer:

Father, help us to walk in faithfulness and wisdom. Let us be men of bridled speech giving life to those under our care and in our paths. Let us indeed be brothers to one another and spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Help us to indeed trust You and not ourselves or our abilities or riches. We pray for our wives and pray for those who are seeking wives to find favor from You. We invite Your Spirit to lead and teach us. In Jesus' name, Amen.