

## Proverbs 20, Nov 18, 2024 -Men's Monday Morning Bible Study

### **Overview:**

Today's chapter has six commands. Two verses have two commands each. We will look at those and some topics such as: work ethic, value of wisdom and counsel, vengeance, personal judgement as a character trait, and the final judgement.

### **Commentary:**

#### **Commands (v13[2]; 18b; 19b; v22[2])**

Remember that basic rule of Bible study that commands take precedent over everything else in a passage. With that in mind, we want to first focus on those then look at the other verses.

V13 has two commands: **1)"Do not love sleep, lest you become poor. 2)Open your eyes and you will be satisfied with food."** The Bible commands people to work. Men should be the primary providers. Women should work generally in the house.

**2 Thessalonians 3:10-13** "For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: **If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.**" The verse is interpreted as a teaching that able-bodied people should not depend on others for food and livelihood. Paul wrote the verse to the people of Thessalonica in response to some church members who quit their jobs and expected the church to provide for them while they waited for Jesus' return. The verse has been cited by House Republicans as justification for cutting some adults' SNAP benefits.

**1Tim 5:18** "*Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*"

**c.f. v4** "The sluggard does not plow from winter on, so he begs during harvest and has nothing." It seems built in that those who can work and don't should not be empowered in their laziness.

**V18 “Thoughts are established by counsel, so make war by guidance.”** The command is not to make war but how to make war. Or, to put it differently, to do whatever you do with sound advice from qualified counselors. Certainly, war is a dire time that needs much consideration and intellectual labor. V5 says something similar, **“Counsel in the heart of a man is like deep water, but a man of discernment draws it out.”** This verse has to do with the ability of one to ascertain good advice and counsel from those who may be reluctant to give it. It occurs to me that the key to unlocking the door of wisdom from others is the willingness and ability to ask good questions.

One way of going about this is to meet it head on and ask exactly what you want. This is effective at cutting to the chase so to speak. This is the brass tacks approach. Another approach is to ease into things slowly, feeling your way through delicately. Time and relationships dictate which tract to take.

Either way we should all have enough relational resources to draw upon in time of need. We should be cultivating our alliances and contact base. It is wise to know many people and have connections. It’s even better to know other wise people.

**V19 “He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets. Therefore do not associate with one of loose lips.”** People that talk too much are to be avoided. Do not be close friends with those who cannot keep things to themselves. They are not to be trusted. They are the kind of people that if they know something, everyone knows it. They may be otherwise likable or friendly. It doesn’t matter. Keep your distance. They are not an ally. They are untrustworthy and will tell your business as easily as they tell anyone else’s business.

This verse assumes that you have the ability to make a good judgement on the character of people based on their behavior. Pray for that prerequisite for yourself, your wife and your children. The people of God should be people of sound judgement.

Like v13, v22 had two commands: **“Do not say, ‘I will repay evil.’ Hope in YAHWEH and **He will save you.**”** Romans 12:19 **“Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord.”** Deuteronomy 32:35 **“Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall**

**slip in *due* time; For the day of their calamity *is* at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.”**

Vigilante justice is to be avoided. God has set up government to execute justice (Romans 13:3-4) **“<sup>3</sup> For rulers are not *a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of that authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same;*** <sup>4</sup> for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword in vain, for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.”

God sees. God hears. There is a day of judgement coming (Rev. 20:11-15). **“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sits upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup> Then I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*. And the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them, and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. <sup>14</sup> Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”**

Other notable Proverbs:

**V1 “Wine is a mocker, and strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by them is not wise.”** It is stupid to drink too much and make a fool out of yourself. There will be negative consequences.

**V7 “A righteous man who walks in integrity- How blessed are his sons after him.”** If you want your children to be blessed, be a man of holiness and righteousness. Be a man fully devoted to God. Remember the command and blessing of Exodus 20 and Dt 5 regarding how children are to treat their parents. This is the other side of the coin so to speak. Make obedience to the command to honor you and your wife, easy. Make it easy for your children to be blessed by God by your values and behavior.

**V10 and 23** basically say the same thing. God hates dishonesty, lying and cheating. They are an abomination to Him. He is a truth and life. These things undercut all relationships starting with Him. Trust is impossible with dishonesty.

**V29 “The honor of young men is their strength, and the majesty of old men is their gray hair.”** We all know exceptions to this, but the point is that a man’s value changes over time. When he is young, his strong back and work ethic is how he can primarily contribute. As he gets older, he should become wiser and more skilled. Time does not guarantee this but provides the opportunity for growth. It is the wise man who takes advantage of these opportunities and learns. Age itself does not qualify one as wise. It only provides the occasion by which one may become wiser and skillful.

Closing Prayer:

Father, help us to walk in faithfulness and wisdom. Help us to trust you with outcomes beyond our control or authority. Let us be men of sound judgement, being able to sift through people and circumstances well. We pray that as we become older, we would become more righteous, wise and valuable to the kingdom. We invite Your Spirit to lead and teach us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.