

## **Proverbs 21, Nov 25, 2024 -Men's Monday Morning Bible Study**

### **Overview:**

Unlike last week that had six commands, this chapter has no direct commands.

### **Commentary:**

#### **Work (v4-8; 17; 25-26)**

V4 laziness is sin. Plain and simple. God is working. Men should be working. It is part of the cultural mandate that displays the imago dei (Gen 1:26-27). Men should be working diligently and joyfully to the glory of God. Complaining is essentially arrogance. It says that if you were in charge, you'd be better. This is prohibited. "Haughty eyes and a proud heart... are sin," just as the fallow ground. Complaining and not working are certainly not the same but they are both sin. That doesn't mean that you can't raise concerns or do things differently if given the opportunity. However, it does mean that we should take responsibility for the things that we can control and trust God with the things we can't. We also need sound judgement to understand and accept the difference between the two. Complaining without trying to be a part of the solution is immature (boyish) and selfish. Stop complaining. Work hard in the area that you have responsibility over. Keep your mind on your work and prayerfully hand everything else over to God. If you have occasion to move up or take on more responsibility and effect change, so be it. If not, be faithful where you are. Otherwise, the arrogant attitude will consume you and steal all your joy as it is sin.

See also v1. "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of YHWH; He turns it wherever He pleases." God is in control. He is sovereign. There are some things that God has not given dominion over to us. We all have rulers whether they be bosses, customers, suppliers, or the civil magistrate. We don't always like the way things are going, but we must accept the things we cannot control. Don't get high centered on people and situations that you have no influence over. Pray and work hard.

V5 Work hard but also think hard. Hasty get rich quick schemes lead to poverty. Decisions should be thought through. Careful consideration should be given to investments. Be diligent in your research and vet potential partners with prejudice.

Verses 6-8 have to do with motive.

V6 How you work is important, not just that you work. Ethics matter.

Lying is also short-term thinking. It is a “fleeting breath.” Lying to get ahead leads to death. This is sin’s pattern. It always leads to death. Death is the payment for sin (Rom 3:23). This is an unescapable certainty.

V7 Because people refuse to “do justice” or make things right, destruction drags them away like a slave. This is willful neglect of righteousness. This speaks directly to business ethics. It is not ok to do something evil and excuse it by saying “it’s just business.”

V8 The motives and methods of a condemned man are twisted. Conversely, the one uncontaminated by worldly desires is above board, or straight up, not bent over nor does he euphemistically bend others over.

V17 To love comfort, ease, and alcohol will not make you comfortable or make life easy. In a stroke of irony, it will make you uncomfortable in the long run. Life will be difficult. Loving the wrong thing will not deliver what it promises, will just make you poor.

V25-26 the sluggard’s desire is his death. He wants the wrong thing. He refuses to work. He gives up and makes excuses at every turn. On the other hand, the righteous has enough to be generous and share with others. Be a producer. Be generous. Be hospitable.

### **V13 Stingy people**

Those who are tightfisted misers will themselves be dealt with by others and God. See also Luke 6:38 “Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.” Be generous to others. 2Cor 9:6-15 is the standard when it comes to NT giving.

### **Motive (v2) & God’s requirements (v3)**

Compare the book of Judges where “every man did what was right in his own eyes.”

God desires righteousness and justice over religious duty (v3). Both should be done but there the law is weighted. 1Sam 15:22 "Obedience is better than sacrifice." John 14:15 "If you love me you will keep my commandments." Matthew 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others."

People who don't understand that some things in God's law are more important than others don't understand the Scriptures. There are other examples such as lust versus fornication or even worse, adultery. Homosexual sin versus heterosexual sin is another example. The general principle here, however, is that we don't get to decide which sin is worse than others. God tells us. We should obey Him above everything else.

### **Wife (v9 & 19)**

V9 is a funny one that I regularly and jokingly remind my wife of. If you're picking a wife, don't get one that is going to constantly be fighting you.

V19 basically says the same thing but substitutes desert for corner of a roof. I told my daughters to not be like this.

### 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 thank you for and pray for our wives. Give those single men here godly wives. We invite Your Spirit to lead and teach us. In Jesus' name, Amen.