

## Proverbs 24, Dec 15, 2024 -Men's Monday Morning Bible Study

### **Review:**

Last week we skipped these verses because we ran out of time, but I want to circle back to them now. 23:22 “Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old.” The commands are to listen and not despise. The father is to be listened to, and the old mother is not to be despised or dismissed. The fourth commandment is to “honor your father and your mother.” This commandment does not go away or become null and void after leaving home. It endures and should be thoughtfully executed even by grown adults.

The commands here in Proverbs to listen to your father and to not loath or hate your mother are more specific ways to obey the fourth commandment.

An observation of someone other than me noted that old men just want to be listened to. Much of the time, as we get older, we begin to repeat ourselves. Life gets smaller and slower. Old men want to know that their lives mattered and that their stories have meaning. They want to believe that their presence was meaningful and made an impact. Much of the time, younger men dismiss the stories of these older men having heard them time and time again. Even if the older man knows he's told the story before, he wants to tell it again with the same or even newer embellishments. He wants to revel in the past and wants the younger generation to be interested in what happened. Old men just want to be listened to. Listen to your father. Listen to older men.

### **Overview:**

Prov 23 had approximately 28 commands: the most in any chapter by my count. Fourteen were positive, fourteen were negative.

Chapter 24 has 18 commands: twelve negative and six positives.

### **Commentary:**

**Build** -vs 3-4. Men who are short sighted only focus on the immediate needs and never think about tomorrow. We should be long term thinkers who are considering future generations not just today. The whole “YOLO” and “carpe diem” mentality is a selfish, immature attitude of boys. Be men. Build something that lasts. Build something that

confers permanence and gravitas. Reject the throw away culture and be a man of serious consequence who lives his life in view of eternity. Carpe Aeternum, not carpe diem. Have an eternal perspective and build things that will last for generations; for eternity. Build a name. Build a reputation. Build a family. Build a church. Build a business. Build a city. Build a country.

**The need for wise counselors:** vs 5-6. Find men who have character qualities you want and invite them to your life. Collect wise men. They will help you avoid mistakes and make your efforts more fruitful. Listen to them. Emulate them. Trust them. You need them. Seek them out and ask good questions. Follow their advice and learn from their successes and mistakes.

V7 tells us that ignorant fools don't open their mouths at the gate. The elders were at the gates. Morons don't know that they are missing an opportunity to gain wisdom. They let it slip by and don't take advantage of the circumstances. They are in the presence of wise men, but they squander the time. They don't open their mouths. They don't know how to talk to people and therefore, suffer needlessly.

Learn to talk. Ask good questions. Pursue wise counsel. Go where they are and when you find yourself there, be prepared and open your mouth. More importantly, open your ears.

**Choose your associates by their character.** V1-2 contains two negative commands with the same general message. “Do not be jealous of evil men, and do not desire to be with them;” The reason is given in v2 “For their heart meditates on destruction and their lips talk of mischief.”

V19 “Do not fret because of evildoers; Do not be jealous of the wicked.”

V21 “Fear YHWH and the king; Do not associate with those who do otherwise.” This is the 17<sup>th</sup> time the FOTL is mentioned. Here it is not only a choice to be made but it is also coupled with fearing the king. Having appropriate respect for those in power is part of wisdom. The second part of the verse repeats the theme at hand, namely to avoid people who don't fear God or the king.

This is similar to 23:6, “Do not eat the bread of a selfish man, a do not desire his delicacies. 23:17 is even more similar, “Do not let your heart be jealous of sinners but be zealous in the fear of YHWH always.” 23:20 Do not be with heavy drinker of wine or gluttonous eaters of meat.”

All these verses prohibit the association with people of evil and excess. You choose your friends, they don't choose you. You decide who you spend your time with. The people we associate with shape and influence our lives. So, choose those people wisely. If you are going to build something of eternal significance, you will need like minded partners. Seek them out. Avoid those on a different path.

### **Work ethic: v27; 30-34**

Building is hard work. It takes preparation and prioritization (v27). It is not to be jumped into impetuously but thoughtfully and with intention. There is a plan that has been vetted by other righteous counselors (v6) and now it is being executed.

The alternative is the neglected property and outcome of the lazy. Many men are lazy in their planning, preparation, and/or execution. They do not perform preventative maintenance. They put off and procrastinate. They make excuses. Building takes discipline.

Becoming strong spiritually requires work. There is no discipleship without discipline. Self-control, or discipline is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). In general, we should work hard and work smart. We work with an eternal perspective. We work for the glory of God and the establishment of our families. For our wives and children, and our children's children.

Lastly, this requires **perseverance**. V16 says, “For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked will stumble in calamity.” It does not say that the righteous do not fall. It doesn't even say that they don't stumble. They do stumble and they do fall, even seven times but what does he do? HE GETS UP, AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN.

Quitting is not an option for the Godly man. Christian men have no quit in them. Jesus set his face like flint towards Jerusalem. He also said that those who put their hands to

the plow and look back are not fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62). We are to be single mindedly pursuing the glory of God in all things. We are to be determined and unstoppable. This is about being relentless. Pain be damned. We embrace hardship and suffering and loneliness and being forsaken knowing that “neither height nor depth nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 8). There is no scheme of man, and no power of hell, that will thwart His kingdom. There is no turning back. We burn the ships. There is no giving up. We have an eternal supply of future grace given to us by the Spirit of the living God.

Closing Prayer:

Father, thank You for giving us strong hands, backs and heads. Help us to walk in wisdom with likeminded brothers. May we advance the cause of Christ in our generations so as to set a trajectory for future generations. Let our sons and daughters exceed us in their godliness and fervor. We invite Your Spirit to lead and teach us. Bless us for Your sake. In Jesus’ name, Amen.