

Proverbs 15, Oct 7, 2024 -Men's Monday Morning Bible Study

Overview:

The book of James in the NT is the closest thing we have to Proverbs. Highly recommended reading. It is only 5.5 pages in my Bible. You can read it all in 10 minutes. It covers many of the same themes as Proverbs, in particular, speech.

There are several verses about speech: v1, 2, 4, 7, 14, 28, 31.

3 verses speak to God's posture towards certain types of people: v9, 25, & 29

2 verses about the Fear of the LORD (FOTL): V16 & v33

Commentary:

Speech "mouth, lips"

V1 How we respond to people sets the tone and direction of our interaction. We have the power (and obligation) to rightly direct our engagements with other people. The wise man diffuses angry people knowing that these things tend to escalate and create bad outcomes.

V4 "A tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but perversion in it breaks the spirit." Life and death hang in the balance. Choose your words carefully. Don't be flippant but intentional and thoughtful. Perhaps, take some time to reflect before responding and make sure that a response is helpful and creates a good outcome.

V28 says that "the heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil things."

Furthermore, this positive, encouraging speech can be initiatory, that is, you don't have to wait for someone to say something but can unilaterally engage with encouragement and positivity. Noticing something good about someone and pointing it out. Calling out the type of behavior in your kids that you want to see more of. Make a big deal out of it. The same is true for any relationship.

V2 "The tongue of the wise makes wisdom look good; but the mouth of fools pours forth folly" One of the things that desperately needs to be done is to romanticize godly

behavior. That is, the glorification of righteousness, integrity, hard work, marital faithfulness, fatherhood, legacy building.

Love one woman for the rest of your life. Build her. Build a life with her. Build a family. Build a legacy. Build kids and grandkids and maybe even great grandkids.

Build a business. Build a church. Build a city, a state, and a country.

We're skipping v 7 & 14 for now. Please read them on your own.

V31 Listen to life giving reproof. Here the emphasis is on the listening. But, it should be noted that someone must give the life giving reproof. Someone must be wise and willing to say something. They must be willing to risk the relationship for the sake of the other person. They cannot be a man pleaser.

God's posture towards men:

V9, 25, & 29 has to do with YHWH's relationship with certain kinds of men.

V9 "The way of the wicked is an abomination to Yahweh, but He loves one who pursues righteousness." Obedience brings blessing. Plain and simple. This is not legalism. We're not saying you earn your salvation. We're saying that because you're saved, we are now free to obey and obtain a greater blessing. I want to be pursuing righteousness so as to catch the righteous one. This is, as the Lexus commercial says, "the relentless pursuit of perfection."

Conversely, He is against the wicked. What is wickedness. Whatever is not righteousness. Wickedness is being in opposition to God and His Law. It is high-handed, stiff-necked sin. See the sin lists in Proverbs and the NT.

V25a says that YHWH Himself will tear down the house of the proud. Those who take credit for their success instead of giving glory to God, will be destroyed. If He gives us success and victory, we need to be quick to defer attention to the one who gave it and not take credit. "Unless the LORD builds the house, the workers labor in vain."-Psalm 127:1 We want to be built up by God into His likeness and for His glory.

V25b "but He will cause the boundary of the widow to stand." I think the idea is that the proud man snubs His nose at God by taking advantage of the fact that the widow does

not have a man to protect her property, so he cheats her on the land deal. God will get that man. He will utterly destroy him. It is a heinous sin.

V29 "YHWH is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous"

V3 YHWH sees EVERYTHING. Nothing escapes His view. He sees and He will repay. "Vengeance is mine says the LORD." Dt 32:35 The wicked think that they get away with their ungodliness. They will not. Hell is real. Hell is hot. It is burning with the fiery wrath of God, that is His anger toward sin and sinners. It will not be quenched, extinguished or moderated. Instead, it is continually and forever poured out, full stop, without reserve, for all eternity. Wicked, evil, people who take advantage of unprotected people will be forever punished.

He sees their evil and He sees our good. Do what you do for Him. Do not seek recognition or glory. "Don't let your right hand know what your left is doing." -Matt 6:3

Examples: man who cares for single moms' cars and inflates their spare tires in addition to performing regular maintenance. Example 2: man who builds bicycles for children all year long to deliver to them on Christmas day. He rings the doorbell and runs away leaving the bikes on their porch. Example 3: men who build businesses, take a base salary and give the rest away to the church for the expansion of the KOG. Example 4: man who funded the building of houses for single moms who couldn't otherwise afford a decent place to live.

FOTL

V 16 & 33 FOTL -#11x qualitative superiority of FOTL over and against much treasure & 12x connection with discipline

This is a crisis of belief for some people. Do we love money or do we love God. Money in and of itself is not bad. But, it is not our Lord and it cannot save us. A little FOTL is better than a lot of cash.

FOTL is the discipline leading to wisdom. It cannot be found without the FOTL. Again, the FOTL is the starting place. It is not something we work into. It is the point of origin. There is no right understanding of God, and His world apart from the FOTL.

Humility is the initiation into the FOTL. “Humble yourselves in the sight of the LORD and He will lift you up.” James 4:10

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.