

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes Book of Proverbs—Proverbs 18

10/2/12

Wisdom Instructions On Moral Virtues And Their Contrary Vices

THEME: Wisdom For All People (Chapters 10-24)

PURPOSE: Solomon wanted to impart wisdom to all people, regardless of their age, sex, or position in society. These short, wise sayings give us practical wisdom for daily living. We should study them diligently and integrate them into our life.

OUTLINE:

- I. THE MOUTH OF A FOOL (18:1-9): Fools only want to air their own opinions, they get into constant quarrels, and their mouths are their ruin.
- II. THE SAFETY OF THE LORD (18:10-11): The godly run to the Lord when in trouble.
- III. THE POWER OF THE TONGUE (18:12-21): It "can kill or nourish life."
- IV. THE WONDERS OF A WIFE (18:22) : "The man who finds a wife finds a treasure and receives favor from the LORD."
- V. THE BEST OF ALL BROTHERS (18:23-24): "A real friend sticks closer than a brother."

Proverbs 18

(New International Version)

(Verses 1-9) THE MOUTH OF A FOOL Fools only want to air their own opinions, they get into constant quarrels, and their mouths are their ruin.

¹An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends and against all sound judgment starts quarrels. ²Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions. ³When wickedness comes, so does contempt, and with shame comes reproach. ⁴The words of the mouth are deep waters, but the fountain of wisdom is a rushing stream. ⁵It is not good to be partial to the wicked and so deprive the innocent of justice. ⁶The lips of fools bring them strife, and their mouths invite a beating. ⁷The mouths of fools are their undoing, and their lips are a snare to their very lives. ⁸The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to the inmost parts. ⁹One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys.

PROVERBS 18:8

It is as hard to refuse to listen to gossip as it is to turn down a delicious dessert. Taking just one morsel of either one creates a taste for more. You can resist rumors the same way a determined dieter resists candy—never even open the box. If you don't nibble on the first bite of gossip, you can't take the second and the third.

(Verses 10-11): THE SAFETY OF THE LORD The godly run to the Lord when in trouble.

¹⁰ The name of the LORD is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe. ¹¹ The wealth of the rich is their fortified city; they imagine it a wall too high to scale.

PROVERBS 18:11

In imagining that their wealth is their strongest defense, rich people are sadly mistaken. Money cannot provide safety—there are too many ways for it to lose its power. The government may cease to back it; thieves may steal it; inflation may rob it of all value. But God never loses his power. He is always dependable. Where do you look for security and safety—uncertain wealth or God who is always faithful?

(Verses 12-21): THE POWER OF THE TONGUE It "can kill or nourish life."

¹² Before a downfall the heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor. ¹³ To answer before listening— that is folly and shame. ¹⁴ The human spirit can endure in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear? ¹⁵ The heart of the discerning acquires knowledge, for the ears of the wise seek it out. ¹⁶ A gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the great. ¹⁷ In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right, until someone comes forward and cross examines. ¹⁸ Casting the lot settles disputes and keeps strong opponents apart. ¹⁹ A brother wronged is more unyielding than a fortified city; disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel. ²⁰ From the fruit of their mouth a person's stomach is filled; with the harvest of their lips they are satisfied. ²¹ The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

PROVERBS 18:13, 15, 17

In these concise statements, there are three basic principles for making sound decisions: (1) Get the facts before answering; (2) be open to new ideas; (3) make sure you hear both sides of a story before judging. All three principles center around seeking additional information. This is difficult work, but the only alternative is prejudice—judging before getting the facts.

(Verse 22): THE WONDERS OF A WIFE "The man who finds a wife finds a treasure and receives favor from the LORD."

²² He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.

PROVERBS 18:22

This verse states that it is good to be married. Today's emphasis on individual freedom is misguided. Strong individuals are important, but so are strong marriages. God created marriage for our enjoyment, and he pronounced it good. This is one of many passages in the Bible that show marriage as a joyful and good creation of God.

(Verses 23-24): THE BEST OF ALL BROTHERS "A real friend sticks closer than a brother."

²³ The poor plead for mercy, but the rich answer harshly. ²⁴ One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

PROVERBS 18:23

This verse does not condone insulting the poor; it is simply recording an unfortunate fact of life. It is wrong for rich people to treat the less fortunate with contempt and arrogance, and God will judge such actions severely (see 14:31).

PROVERBS 18:24

Loneliness is everywhere—many people feel cut off and alienated from others. Being in a crowd just makes people more aware of their isolation. We all need friends who will stick close, listen, care, and offer help when it is needed—in good times and bad. It is better to have one such friend than dozens of superficial acquaintances. Instead of wishing you could find a true friend, seek to become one. There are people who need your friendship. Ask God to reveal them to you, and then take on the challenge of being a true friend.