

July 8

Scriptures: Read Proverbs 27 & 28

Key Verse: “Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand all.”
(Proverbs 28:5)

Overview

These miscellaneous proverbs deal mainly with human relations, including love, friendship, and charity. In all cases, the wisdom of God is needed to live and relate to others successfully. A ruler especially needs wisdom, and those who have wisdom and understanding are blessed by God with a prolonged dynasty and a successful and righteous reign, as God promised King David (28:2,15-16; 29:2, 4).

Those in any position who faithfully serve God are rewarded. The one who “tends to the fig tree”, even though it belongs to his master, will be blessed and rewarded by eating of its fruit (27:18a). Likewise, the one who sows and cares for the spiritual growth of God’s people, such as a pastor, will likewise reap not only spiritual benefits, but also the material benefits from those for whom he has cared, just as the diligent shepherd has his needs provided for by his sheep (wool and milk; 27:23-27; I Cor. 9:7, 10-14). If the servant has faithfully served his master, the master will honour him (27:18b). God knows the intent and motives of the heart (27:19), and He will bless and honour His servants who faithfully serve Him, as well as reserving for them a future reward (1 Cor. 3:7-9, 14). We must be diligent and faithful to do all things as unto the Lord, wherever the Lord has placed us.

We also find emphasized here the value of a friend’s rebuke. A true, loving friend will rebuke, reproach, and counsel you in the way you should go, since he wants to see you grow in wisdom and in the knowledge of the Lord. His words may sometimes hurt, but they are given in good faith, unlike the deceitful friend who is really no friend at all, for his flatterings and lies do not benefit, but rather cause harm (27:5-6).

The serious and strong words of counsel from a true and wise friend bring great delight to the heart of the one who is open to receive instruction (27:9); such a teachable spirit is an important qualification for one to be considered wise. The friend’s word of reproof “sharpens the countenance” thus helping to build a better character and personality (27:17). It is not only words of reproof that test and refine a person, but words of praise can do the same (27:21). The wise person must be careful that praise and popularity do not lead to pride. These are ways that one can be checked, lest he become puffed up with pride. The wise person will, in the end, thank those who have rebuked him (28:23).

The Book of Proverbs, as the divinely inspired Word of God, can bring reproof and correction to the receptive reader. The Lord desires that His people represent Him well, and for many the reading of these words of wisdom brings conviction to our hearts, for it draws our attention to areas where we need to improve or change in order to be more godly or Christ-like; for some it may be their temperament, and for others it may be their self-control or diligence. The Lord, who is the source of all wisdom, is pleased when we ask it of Him and desire to become better people.

But the most important step to any personal improvement is firstly to seek God and His righteousness, that we might be godly and have a right relationship with Him; then and only then will everything else fall into place in our lives (Mat. 6:33; 1 Tim. 4:8). With the strength and power of His Holy Spirit, we can become like the wise and righteous person described in this book, who walks blamelessly (28:18), has a wellspring of understanding (e.g. 28:5), and does not wander away from the place God desires him to be (27:8).

Prayer

To seek You first, oh Lord, is our soul's desire. Thank You for the right relationship with You made possible through the blood of Jesus Christ. Continue to renew our minds and grant us Your wisdom as we draw closer to You.