

June 26

Scriptures: Read Proverbs 6

Key Verse: “For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life.” (Proverbs 6:23)

Overview

Solomon continues to give instruction and advice about being wise in commercial dealings. He warns his student against rashly pledging himself as surety, so that his friend might be given a loan. The motivation behind becoming the guarantor was likely pride in himself, his achievements, and money, and it displayed a trust in others that could prove disastrous. We can only be one hundred percent sure of our trust in God but not in our fellow man. There must have been corrupt business practices during the time of Solomon, and he did not want to see his student fall into the trap and lose everything, as he may have seen happen to others. Solomon warns the student that if he ever unthinkingly and unwisely did such a thing, he should immediately realize his grave mistake, humble himself, swallow his pride, and persistently plead to be relieved of his obligation before it is too late (v. 1-5).

Solomon encourages industry and hard work, which is the way to prevent poverty. He mocks at the “sluggard”, for an ant is wiser than such a person. From the other uses of the word “sluggard” or “slothful” within the book of Proverbs, we come to understand that the word implies not just a lazy person but one who is also a fool or a sinner (compare 15:19; 21:25-26; 26:13-16). He can learn much from the ant by watching its discipline, diligence, perseverance, co-operation, and even prudence. When a person is idle, he leaves himself more open to temptation and sin, such as happened to David when he sinned with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:1-4).

The next type of person that Solomon describes is one who is not slothful but even more worthless. He busies himself with stirring up dissension and deception, and he is always devising evil. Everything he does outwardly, with his mouth, eyes, feet, and fingers (possibly referring rude gestures) reflect the perversity of his heart (v. 12-14). Just as he sows discord, so will he reap the calamity upon himself that discord brings. God hates his sinful ways and Solomon lists them in the form of a numerical proverb. The six that are listed are a background for the seventh, upon which lies the emphasis. The same thought was introduced before: “He sows discord” (v. 14), and now Solomon lists that particular evil as the worst: “discord among brethren”. The Lord, however, is most pleased with a peacemaker and loves to see people dwelling together in unity (cf. Matt. 5:9; Ps. 133:1; Col. 3:15).

The one who fears the Lord, obeys His commandments, and heeds the instructions of his parents will be blessed and will also be a blessing to others. Moses had instructed the people to put the Law of God upon them and within their hearts as a constant reminder of their obligation to obedience. Solomon reaffirms this same practice by instructing his son to do likewise with his godly and wise teachings (v. 21; Deut. 6:6-9). If a person treasures the Word of God in his heart, then it will always serve as a lamp to lead, keep, and even speak to him. The Word, however, may speak words of reproof, which serve to convict of sin, and thus preserve one from falling into sin and keep him headed on “the way of life” (v. 23). The wisdom from God’s Word will tell him to stay far from the harlot or anyone who continually practices sin, for that is the way of destruction, poverty, and ultimately death (v. 26).

Prayer

We praise You today, dear God, for Your Word. May we not be slothful in our Christian walk but wholly trust and obey Your Word, as it sheds Light on our path and convicts us of sin.