

July 2

Scriptures: Read Proverbs 15 & 16

Key Verse: “In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil.” (Proverbs 16:6)

Overview

Many verses in chapters 15 and 16 are devoted to the important matter of self-control (16:32), especially over the tongue. It is only the wisest and strongest of people who can, at all times, control this most unruly member. Harmful and hurtful things can easily be spoken in an outburst of one’s unrestrained temper. Parents need to keep themselves always in check, lest their words tear down rather than build up their children (cf. 15:4).

The truly wise person deliberates before any words come from his mouth. He not only carefully chooses his words, but he also chooses the right time to speak them (15:23, 28). The wise and wholesome tongue of the righteous pleases the Lord (15:26). Unlike the fool whose tongue brings destruction and death (16:27-30), the tongue of the wise is not only beneficial to the one who possesses it (16:21, 23-24), but it brings healing, peace, and life to others as well (15:1, 4, 18; 16:7). “The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly” and he also disperses knowledge (15:2, 7). This “knowledge” is no doubt the knowledge of God and His Law which all believers ought to be spreading to those around them.

The sovereignty of God, the One who sees and knows all, is also discussed in these chapters. Solomon once again emphasizes and warns that the way of mankind apart from God, even if it appears to be the right way, will lead to death (14:12; 16:25). God not only sees and knows all places, including hell, but He also sees the spirit and heart of all people. Therefore, He can justly decide the final destiny of each individual (15:3, 11; 16:1-2, 4, 9, 33).

The Lord knows when one is a hypocrite who feigns religiosity; this person may be able to fool others, but he cannot fool God. Such evil ones, including those that are “proud in heart”, are described as an abomination (something abhorrent) to the Lord. The Lord is far from such people, and they will be destroyed (15:8, 9, 25-26; 16:5, 18). God, however, takes pleasure in His faithful, humble, righteous followers who fear Him. “In mercy and truth”, He has provided atonement for them through the blood of His Son Jesus (16:6). He will honour, be close to, and hear the prayers of those who fear Him (15:8-9, 29, 33). If God’s righteous children have a “silver-haired head”, it is to be considered as a crown of glory, and God wants His seniors to be highly honoured and respected. Because of their many years of experience in living righteously, the younger believers should seek out their advice and guidance. As Solomon strongly insists, it is vital to the believer’s spiritual well-being that they do not scorn the reproof (correction, rebuke, or chastisement) of their father or the more spiritually mature and wise believers (15:5, 10, 12, 31-32; 16:20, 22).

Those who have committed their ways (works and thoughts, 16:3) to the Lord can be sure they are going the right way — the way of life that is established upon the Solid Rock which will lead them upward to glory (15:24; 16:17). They have understanding and knowledge of the goodness

of God; therefore, even though they may go through trials, they know that God has everything in control. Thus they can still have a “merry heart” and live joyously as though in a “continual feast” (15:13-15, 30).

When Solomon penned these words of wisdom, he was the richest and most powerful man in the world. Yet he knew that true riches and treasure were to be found only in the house of the righteous, even if that home is a shack. When there is understanding and the fear of the Lord within the home, along with love, righteousness, and wisdom, this is more desirable and of greater value than all the wealth the world can give (15:6,16-17, 27; 16:8, 16).

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank You for the spiritual wealth You give that the world cannot offer. May our home be a place that demonstrates Your love and wisdom and has a healthy fear of You.