

July 3

Scriptures: Read Proverbs 17 & 18

Key Verse: “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.”
(Proverbs 18:10)

Overview

We learn that God, who knows and sees the heart of mankind, also tests the heart (17:3). For the righteous, His testing produces refinement and purity of heart, but before God’s watchful eye, the vileness of the wicked will be exposed, and they will be cast out from the presence of God. The pure in heart and the humble, however, can unashamedly run to the Lord, their Strong Tower, where they receive refuge (18:10). The wicked, if they are rich, are proud and self-sufficient, thinking that they do not need God. They put their trust in their money, believing that it will protect them like a high wall (18:11). The meek who have the Lord, though they be poor, are in a far better place. “Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, and before honor is humility” (18:12). God will honor those who are submissive to do His will and walk in His way.

Much of chapters 17 and 18 deals with acts of folly. The emphasis is upon the folly of the tongue. Fools are classified as those who are liars, mockers, deceivers, gossipers, slanderers, and those who enjoy stirring up dissension (17:4-5, 7, 9, 20; 18:2, 6-8). Solomon also includes as foolish those who jump to hasty conclusions without hearing all the facts (18:13). It is written that the tongue has the awesome power of death and life (18:21). We must continually remember that we are held accountable for our words. May the Holy Spirit help us to be peacemakers (17:14) and have that calm spirit to speak only the right words that bring life (18:21), and may they be a “wellspring of wisdom” (18:4) that are satisfying and filling (18:20).

Not only is the silver-haired head a crown to the aged (16:31), but their grandchildren are a crown as well (17:6). From other verses, we learn that the children who are the “glory” of their father and the “crown” of their grandfather must be good, wise, and not bring shame to the family. The foolish son, including the one who is a scoffer, having no respect for his parents or any authority, brings sorrow, grief, and bitterness to his parents (17:2, 21, 25). Sorrow can cause a broken spirit, which can have an adverse effect on one’s health; but “a merry heart does good, like medicine” (17:22; 18:14). A merry heart is truly a blessing from God which is available to all those who follow the Lord’s way and walk in His will. It can lead to a strong spirit which can help sustain them in sickness (18:14).

Other blessings of life are listed as a good wife (18:22) and a true friend, who is described as having unconditional love (17:17; 18:24). Such a friend can become closer than a brother, and yet “a brother is born for adversity” (17:17). In times of trouble, one can depend upon a brother to give aid, for as a family member he is responsible to help care for his sibling. In the Old Testament, the brother was responsible for being the “kinsman redeemer” and the “blood avenger” (cf. Lev. 25:25, 47; Deut. 19:11-12; 25:5-6). There may be times, however, when even one’s brother cannot be relied upon; but we who love and believe in Jesus have in Him a friend upon whom we can always rely.

Prayer

Thank You, Lord, for Your promise of refuge when we run to You. Though others may fail us, You will never fail. May we learn the secret of abiding in You.