

The Book of Proverbs

“Wisdom and the Fear of the Lord: Proverbs as a Book on Faith”

Week 18: Proverbs 26-27, “More Wise Sayings from Solomon”

I. Proverbs 26, “Avoid the Fool”

1. This section relies heavily on comparison parables, mostly metaphors or similes dealing with fools. Because this section is concerned with avoiding fools, not imitating their destructive behavior, and not dealing with them, it focuses heavily on God’s Law. Although the Gospel and the forgiveness of sins are not mentioned, where does true wisdom come from? (Read Col 2:23.) What message do we have for the fool?

2. Verses 4-5 are probably the best known pair of proverbs in the book, but also the hardest to grasp immediately. What is Solomon trying to teach here?

⁴ Answer not a fool according to his folly,
lest you be like him yourself.

⁵ Answer a fool according to his folly,
lest he be wise in his own eyes.

3. Do we have a pair of proverbs in English that operate similarly?

4. Verse 8 is harder to grasp in our context, but the simile is similar to v. 7. What is the purpose of a sling, and what would happen if you tied the stone to it? How does this relate to fools and giving them honor?

5. We had discussed a similar proverb (22:13) to v. 13. How does the sluggard think up any excuse not to go to work? Why does the sluggard think he is wise for avoiding work?

6. Certainly good humor between friends is not condemned, but what about the person who covers up a grievous wrong by treating it as a joke? (v. 18-19)

7. How do the last 10 verses of the chapter remind us that our tongues can do more damage than our hands?

II. Proverbs 27:1-22, “Dealing with Family, Friends, and Neighbors”

8. Why does love express itself, even in correction, and why should we never consider it merely a static feeling? How has God manifested his love? (See John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10)

9. How is verse 8 a warning not only for those who wander from the safe haven of house and home, but also for believers who wander from God’s house?

10. There are many Bible passages about the heart of man. (e.g. Prov. 27:19) Read some of them and answer these questions:

a. What resides in the heart? (Gen 6:5; Deut 29:4; Job 22:22; Rom 2:15; 1 Cor 4:5; Heb 4:12).

b. How has sin corrupted it? (Gen 8:21; Jer 17:5, 9; 1 John 3:17)

c. What are God’s promises for our heart? (Ezk 11:19; Ps 51:10, 17; Gal 4:6; Eph 3:17-19; Heb 10:22)

d. So, returning to Proverbs, how does a man’s heart reflect who he is?

III. Proverbs 27:23-27, “Leaders as Shepherds”

11. What should every leader’s primary concern be for?

12. What are the blessings that will follow?

Memory Verses for Today:

Proverbs 26:4-5, “Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself.
Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.”

Proverbs 27:19, “As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man.”