

Prov. 17:1, 14: Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife . . . ¹⁴ The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out.

Intro: We began a sermon series on the book of Proverbs on May 2, 2015. Chaps. 1-9, verse by verse. Chaps. 11-31, topical. We are doing all of the proverbs! Chap. by chap., covering every proverb but by topics (tongue, money, wisdom, foolishness, etc.) Our last sermon in Proverbs was Feb 16, 2020: we finished every proverb in chapter 16.

1. What Is The Book Of Proverbs About?

a. The book of Proverbs is about learning God's wisdom: What is wisdom? **Matthew Holst:** Wisdom is the righteous application of knowledge (God's Law/Word). (New police officer vs. Veteran; Rookie QB vs. Tom Brady)

Samuel Sey: My mom comes to me when she wants to understand the Bible better. And I go to my mom when I want to know how to obey the Bible better. There are Christians who understand the Bible less than we do, but they obey it better than we do. So be humble about your good theology.

Wisdom is knowing what to do (& doing it!) in any given situation so that God is absolutely trusted, treasured, loved, & obeyed with all your heart, mind, soul, & strength & your neighbors are loved just as you love yourself for the glory of God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew Holst: Wisdom is the righteous application of knowledge (God's Law/Word).

Deut. 4:5-6: See, I have taught you statutes & rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶ Keep them & do them, **for that will be your wisdom & your understanding** in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise & understanding people."

Prov. 1:1-6: The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom & instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, & equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge & discretion to the youth - Let the wise hear & increase in learning, & the one who understands obtain guidance, to understand a proverb & a saying, the words of the wise & their riddles.

Kidner: Like a rainbow, these all shade into one another, and any one of them can be used to represent the whole.

- 1) Instruction:** Discipline or training; pain may be involved – there is character formation; school of hard knocks
- 2) Understanding words of insight:** Discernment; knowing good and evil
- 3) Wise dealing:** Good sense, practical wisdom, knowing how to best handle a situation
- 4) Righteousness, justice, and equity:** What is good and right in God's eyes; racism, abortion, sexuality, politics
- 5) Prudence for the simple; discretion to youth; guidance:** know what's going on, street smarts; know the ropes
- 6) Knowledge and learning:** Knowing God's truth and knowing God Himself; learning – knowing sound doctrine

The book of Proverbs teaches us how to live the wise, righteous, good life in Christ, Who is all wisdom!

- **Col. 2:2-3:** Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom & knowledge. **GOSPEL!**

b. The book of Proverbs is about preparing your son to be a righteous, godly king: King Solomon is preparing his son to be king! The king is teaching His son how to live the wise, God-fearing life – to prepare him to be king! And God is preparing you all to be kings!

- **Rev. 5:9-10:** they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll & to open its seals, for you were slain, & by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe & language & people & nation, & you have made them **a kingdom & priests to our God, & they shall reign on the earth.**"

Matthew Holst: Wisdom is the righteous application of knowledge (God's Law/Word).

2. What Are Proverbs?

Short, memorable, general statements that convey God's truth & wisdom that we are to strive to know, submit to, obey, & live out daily. (Sometimes they are not merely general at all! They show the character of God! Prov. 17:5)

Prov. 10:27: The fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short.

John MacArthur: Proverbs are divine guidelines & wise observations, teaching underlying principles, which are not always inflexible laws or absolute promises. These expressions of general truth generally do have “exceptions,” due to the uncertainty of life & unpredictable behavior of fallen men. God does not guarantee uniform outcome or application for each proverb, but in studying them & applying them, one comes to contemplate the mind of God, His character, His attributes, His works, & His blessings. All of the treasures of wisdom & knowledge expressed in Proverbs are hidden in Christ (Col 2:3).

Prov. 10:27: The fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short. **(Jesus!)**

- **John MacArthur:** The recurring promise of Proverbs is that generally the wise (the righteous who obey God) live longer, prosper, experience joy, and the goodness of God temporally, while fools suffer shame and death. On the other hand, it must be remembered that this general principle is balanced by the reality that the wicked sometimes prosper (**Ps. 73:3, 12:** For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked . . .¹² Behold, these are the wicked; always at ease, they increase in riches.), though only temporarily (**Ps. 73:17-19:** until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I discerned their end. ¹⁸ Truly you set them in slippery places; you make them fall to ruin. ¹⁹ How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by terrors!). Job illustrates that there are occasions when the godly wise are struck with disaster & suffering.

- **Derek Kidner:** Naturally [proverbs] generalize, as a proverb must & may therefore be charged with making life too tidy to be true. But nobody objects to this in secular sayings, for the very form demands a sweeping statement & looks for a hearer with his wits about him. We need no telling that a maxim like “Many hands make light work” is not the last word on the subject, since “Too many cooks spoil the broth.”

Proverbs: Short, memorable, general statements that convey God's truth & wisdom that we are to strive to know, submit to, obey, & live out daily.

Our Proverbs For Today: Prov. 17:1, 14: Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife . . . ¹⁴ The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out.

Foolishness brings conflict & fighting, but God's wisdom leads to peace. (We don't ever make peace with evil.)

3. Peace Of Mind With Poverty Is Better Than Riches With Rage

Prov. 17:1: Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.

a. What is “a dry morsel”?: Not much! Think of food that's not that good, & there's only a little of it. You have one slice of bread with no gravy. You have a little piece of bread but no PB & J! All you have is one cracker!

b. What is “quiet”?: Peace, tranquility, no conflict, no strife, no arguing, no quarreling, no anger & bitterness.

c. What is “a house full of feasting”?: Your favorite foods & lots of them! Steak! Ribs! BBQ! Hamburgers! French fries! Ice Cream! Chocolate & honey!

d. What is “strife”?: Conflict (loud!), arguing, quarreling, fights, anger, no peace, no tranquility, no quiet!

You have two families here: one is poor & enjoying what little they have & each other. The other family is rich, they have a feast, but there is so much conflict & fighting that they don't enjoy the abundance of food!

Peace of mind with poverty is better than riches with rage! It's better to be poor with peace than to be prosperous with pandemonium. It's better to have a dry piece of bread in a loving, godly, peaceful home, than to have feasts in a wicked, ungodly, home of conflict. It's not about the money, it's about the motives & the Master (Jesus!)

John Kitchen: The expression “feasting with strife” is, more literally, “sacrifices of strife.” The “sacrifices” probably refers to the so-called peace offering of Hebrew Temple worship (Lev. 7:11-17). Only a portion of the peace offering was actually consumed on the altar. The rest was to be eaten that day & made a reason for a grand celebration with family & friends. If so, it makes for a mocking parody of the reason for celebration & the actual state of affairs within the home. Better the peaceful & honest integrity of a meager meal than the clamorous hypocrisy of religious sham.

e. This proverb is similar to Prov. 15:16-17: It's Better To Fear The LORD & Be Poor Than To Be Foolish & Be Rich: Prov. 15:16-17: Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble with it. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox & hatred with it

f. Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure & trouble with it: It is better to fear the LORD & not have that much in material possessions than to have a bunch of material treasure but also have a bunch of trouble with it.

Bruce Waltke: “Trouble” stands opposite [of] the ‘fear of the LORD,’ [&] it refers elsewhere to inward turmoil, but its other uses in holy war suggest that this inward panic manifests itself in “the noisy, wild, stormy running & hunting about of the slave of mammon.” This stormy behavior probably involves oppressing others.

It's better to earn a living in a righteous, God-fearing way than to get rich quick through lies, immoral living, & a disregard for the LORD & His commandments.

g. These proverbs are about contentment: 1 Tim. 6:6-10: Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, for we brought nothing into the world, & we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food & clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless & harmful desires that plunge people into ruin & destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith & pierced themselves with many pangs.

These proverbs won't be taught at your health, wealth, & prosperity false-gospel churches! These proverbs absolutely fly in the face of the health, wealth, & prosperity false-gospel.

h. Prov. 15:17: Better is a dinner of herbs [vegetables] where love is than a fattened ox & hatred with it: I would rather have love in harder, poorer circumstances (herbs/vegetables) than have much richer, more abundant circumstances (fattened ox) yet not feel loved – but hated.

Reminds me of the husband/father who is always working – oh he provides an abundance of material gifts to his wife/children (food, clothes, cars, homes, money, diamonds, etc). But he's never with them, never talks to them, never tells them he loves them, never cherishes them!

Peace Of Mind With Poverty Is Better Than Riches With Rage: Prov. 17:1: Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.

Applications: 1) Pursue God's wisdom in who you marry; 2) Pursue God's wisdom in what job you take; 3) Pursue God & His wisdom more than money; 4) Pursue peace! (confess sin, forgive sin, keep short accounts)

- Seven A's Of Confession (Ken Sande, Peace Makers Ministries): 1-Admit specifically (the sin); 2-Avoid qualifiers (excuses/minimize, but, if, maybe); 3-Address all involved; 4-Acknowledge the hurt (pain your sin

caused); 5-Ask for forgiveness; 6-Accept the consequences; 7-Alter your behavior (make a plan for change)
- **Four Promises Of Forgiveness:** 1-I will not dwell on this incident; 2-I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you; 3-I will not talk to others about this incident; 4-I will not let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.

5) Pursue contentment in God & what He provides.

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4. Once A Conflict Starts It Can't Be Contained, So Cut It Off Before It Consumes

Prov. 17:14: The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out.

A little leak in a dam of water can break forth into a great flood that you can't control! And it's the same way with anger & conflict. If you don't nip it in the bud (stop it immediately!), the strife & conflict could get out of control & bring great ruin: sinful actions, end the relationship, lawsuits, or even turn into violence! Cut it off immediately!

- **Jas. 1:19-20:** Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

- **Prov. 15:1:** A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

- **Eric Lane:** How wise was Abraham to nip in the bud the quarrel between his shepherds & Lot's (Gen. 13:8), Gideon to refuse to argue with the Ephraimites (Judg. 8:1-3) & the apostles to settle the dispute between the Hebrew & Grecian widows by appointing seven wise men to resolve it (Acts 6:1-3).

- **John Kitchen:** A destructive flood begins with but a tiny leak in the dam. Wise is the man who sees that leak, not for the trickle of water it is at the time, but for the raging torrent it will soon become & then flees from it. So it is with bickering & quarreling. What begins as a barbed comment soon becomes a biting accusation. That accusation, fueled by pride, quickly breaks out into arguments. The arguments give rise to bitter anger. The anger divides relationships, breaks up friendships, splits churches, & produces icy homes. Oh, how much trouble could be avoided if only someone would walk away from that barbed comment!

- **Prov. 20:3:** It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife, but every fool will be quarreling.

- **Matt. 5:25-26:** Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, & the judge to the guard, & you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

- **Rom. 12:18:** If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

- **2 Tim. 2:23-25:** Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. & the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth . . .

Foolishness brings conflict & fighting, but God's wisdom leads to peace.

Jesus lived out these Proverbs perfectly! Jesus is the wisdom of God! Jesus spoke like no man ever spoke & left his enemies speechless! He knew when to speak & when to walk away! And Jesus became poor & lost everything, so that we might feast with Him forever at the marriage supper of the Lamb! Jesus endured the greatest conflict (God's wrath toward sinners), so that we might have peace with God & peace with others forever!

Christ Jesus Is The Prince Of Peace
Though Poor, Not Having Many Feasts
He's Meek And Lowly, Our High Priest
Who Causes Joy To Increase
He Took All Strife In His Decease
Died, God's Wrath He Did Appease

Then Rose Again To Make Death Cease
And Now He Grants Us All His Peace
Who Trust In Him And Sins Release
He Is Our All, Our Treasure Piece
We Will, With Him, Forever Feast
Who All God's Pleasures Will Increase!