

INSIGHT TO PRAISE OTHERS VALUE

Proverbs 12: 8 (NASB)

“A man will be praised according to his insight,
But one of perverse mind will be despised.”

Probably, 35 years ago, in a 19-year series through the Book of Proverbs, I came across our text and realized for the first time that it is a test of our value before God as members of the Bride of Christ. Then last week I preached on I Peter 4: 12-19 starting in verse 12 which testifies, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial, (not if) but when it comes upon you to test you.” Does God test us? He does. He tested Job. We read in Genesis 22: 1, “After these things, God began to test Abraham. We read in II Corinthians 13: 5-6 which says, “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you, unless indeed you fail to meet the test!? I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test.”

This has been a difficult week. We have faced tests. With the funeral of Cheryl Stover yesterday, and this past Monday, our son, Nathaniel’s wife, LeAnn, had her dear aunt pass away, Peggy Ruth Van Amerongen; after our praying much for her recovery; then early Tuesday morning, at 8:30 AM, we had a family tragedy that we never dreamed of. Our grandnephew, Joey Arnegard, 16 years old was killed instantly on January 25, when his Toyota Avalon slid on black ice into a tragic broadside with a semi. He was killed instantly. Some of you remember Pastor David and Alida Arnegard. Joey was the fifth of Pastor David and Alida Arnegard’s seven children. Pastor David and Alida, former missionaries in Mongolia, joined our church on December 5, 2005. Pastor David pastored two of our Intermountain West District churches, Eden Valley for Jesus EFC in Wyoming, and San Juan Community EFC in Monticello, Utah. Joey was born in Farson, Wyoming on May 11, 2005. Joey’s parents dedicated him to Jesus in our church. He was only two miles from his home, coming home on black ice from an early basketball practice. He was a forward on the varsity of his Watford City High School, wearing # 25. Joey loved Jesus and everyone knew it. Wednesday night, at the Assembly of God Church in Watford City, a remembrance was held for Joey. Scores of students attended, including all the basketball players and their coach. The Gospel was delivered, and the entire basketball team came to faith in Jesus as did many others. From our side on earth, it seems such a tragedy, but from God’s side, already God is revealing how He is using this tragedy as the start of miracles.

The full story of what God is doing through this tragedy is still unknown, but it is unfolding as retired Colonel Chaplain Tim Carlson and his wife, Judy, and daughter, Liz, despite Judy’s desperate sickness, are on the road as I am speaking, and Tim will give the sermon at the funeral on Wednesday. I have been asked to give a 15-minute message at the private viewing of Joey’s body on Tuesday night. David and Alida asked for prayer as he and Alida drove just two miles from their home to the place where Joey died. David reported the man whose truck collided

with Joey's Toyota is not injured. David has tried to console him as David was a part of a small group at church with him in past years. Alida said the young EMT who cared for Joey's body at the scene of the accident was a close friend of her second daughter, Clara. I want to praise God for testimony of David and Alida and their family, and especially the testimony of Joey, their 6 foot, one inch forward on the Watford City High School basketball team, # 25, whose jersey will be retired, for Joey's open testimony of Jesus at his high school. Many are seeing Jesus in and through the David Arnegard family.

Let's turn to our message in Proverbs 12: 8, which declares, "A man will be praised according to his insight, (or the biblical strength of his testimony) but one of perverse mind will be despised." If you want to know what is inside of any of us, notice how we react when we are stabbed in the back or assaulted in gossip or criticized with evil intent in our face. Charles Haddon Spurgeon once wrote about John Bunyan, saying, "Wherever you prick him, he bleeds scripture." If we are not living in union with Jesus, we have no ability to have people see that we have been with Jesus. We have no true integrity, wisdom, and moral courage. God cannot use an empty testimony to bring the lost to Him. Worse, if we are not visibly living with Christian integrity, wisdom, and moral courage, it may be proof we yet need to be converted and born again. Paul wrote to his son in the faith, Timothy, in I Timothy 4: 16, saying, "Keep a close eye on yourself, and on your teaching. Persist in this, and by so doing, you will save both yourself and your hearers." Integrity, wisdom, and moral courage are not a suit we put on for special occasions nor are they attachments to our lives. Either these qualities are a daily part of us, or we do not have them at all. Our lives must match our message. Do we ask others to do what we will not do? Do we ask our children to believe what we reject in practice in our hearts—do we ask our children to memorize the Word when we refuse to? A quality servant of God must know God is ever stretching each of us, in unique and difficult areas, keeping us full of spiritual sap, and growing in Him—Psalm 92: 14, to keep us evergreen for Jesus. These qualities of integrity, wisdom, and moral courage come from time feeding on the Word of God, giving us spiritual authority.

If we don't stay open to the witness of the Word of God and to the witness and promptings of the Holy Spirit, we quickly become spiritually dull, like a chain saw that has been dropped into the dirt while we're sawing. Nothing dulls us as quickly as loosening our grip on obedience to the Word and to the Holy Spirit. Dullness comes when we refuse to embrace and fulfill our giftedness, God's mission in our lives, when we forget about doing what God has called us to do. If we do not stay in yoke with Jesus, and act and follow Jesus, under His divine orders, if we do everything possible to avoid being stretched by the Lord or others, we will soon lose our integrity, wisdom, and moral courage, and become spiritually dull.

Some of us may refuse to mentor others, because we know it will force us to make changes in our own lives. God often tests us in the very areas of our own spiritual strengths, where we have shown lifelong wisdom. When God tests us as He tested Abraham, in the very area where he was strongest, it proves God will never let us rest on our laurels. His strength is only made perfect in the areas we admit we have

weaknesses. (II Corinthians 12: 9). Why would God ask for the very thing He gave to Abraham after Abram waited 25 years for Isaac to come, through his wife Sarah? Whatever God requires of us, He will abundantly repay us. I ask myself and each of you, “Is there anything we would not do or give up for God in obedience to His command or prompting?” For a few moments, let’s examine four words in our little text—in Proverbs 12: 8--“A man will be **praised** according to his **insight**, but one of **perverse** mind will be **despised**.” These four words are a test for us from the Lord. Are we commended by the Lord and others with His test of true value?

ARE OUR LIVES AND WORDS PRAISEWORTHY? (I.) Proverbs 12: 8 declares, “A man will be praised according to his insight.” Both the KJV and the ESV translate this word praise as commended, but the literal translation is as the New American Standard—praise. The Hebrew word is **hallal**, which is the word from which we get our Hallelujah’s to the Lord. When praise is truly spoken of us, it is that others see the Lord Jesus Christ in us. Hallal is used 167 times in the Old Testament. It literally means 117 times, “to praise.” Peter and John were unlearned men, but everyone could see that they had been with Jesus. It can also mean to celebrate or to boast about. Since we can only legitimately boast in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, (Galatians 6: 14), when we boast in each other, and we should, it is because God has helped us see the cross of Jesus in each other. Interestingly, in Proverbs 27: 2, we read about the use of **hallal** in our lives. We read, “Let another **hallal**, praise you, and not your own mouth, a stranger, and not your own lips.” This is backed up in Proverbs 25: 27 where we read, “It is not good to eat much honey, nor is it glorious to seek one’s own glory.” God will not share His glory with another, Isaiah 42: 8. When we are praised, as God wants us to be praised by others, we need to quickly give all the glory and final praise back to God. II Corinthians 10: 12 tells us that, “to compare ourselves among ourselves is not wise.” Paul adds in II Corinthians 10: 18, “For it is not the one who commends himself, who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.” You will remember that God Himself commended and praised Job to Satan in Job 1: 8, saying, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?” The goal of every born-again believer is to someday hear the Lord say to us, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” (Matthew 25: 21) That is when God will show us our true value to Him, as we are His Bride. Someday, in front of the angels, God will hallal and praise us, giving us crowns. There is a second question.

DO OUR GODLY ACTIONS MATCH OUR GODLY WORDS? (II.) Proverbs 12: 8 declares, “A man will be praised according to his insight.” The Hebrew word for insight is **sakal** or **sekel**. This word is hard to translate with one word. It means to be and to act circumspectly, prudently, wisely, and with deep understanding. The first use of **sekel** is found in Genesis 3: 6. You recall Eve saw in the Garden of Eden the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve had been told by the Lord in Genesis 2: 16-17. “From any tree of the Garden, you may eat freely, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it, you shall surely die.” In Genesis 3: 6, we read, “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the

eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one sakal/wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.” Yes, Adam and Eve’s eyes were opened, and they knew they were naked. They gained insight, but it was not godly insight, but ungodly insight, for the fruit of that tree was forbidden fruit, by God’s command.

All of us as believers desire godly or biblical insight, don’t we? We desire godly insight to interpret events in our lives, to interpret what God is prompting us to do, and how to follow God’s word obediently, and do His will. A great example of God giving such godly insight is found in Isaiah 41: 17-20, as God gives insight in a national crisis. Listen! We read, “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the LORD will answer them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive. I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine together, that they may see and know, may consider and understand/sakal together, that the hand of the LORD has done this, the Holy One of Israel has created it.”

Godly insight is first of all the ability of a man or woman of God to know the ways of the Lord, and to know the origin of events, situations, leadings, and checkings of the Holy Spirit. Godly insight is knowing that the hand of the Lord is always consistent with His holy Word, and insistent, and persistent, for God will never change His mind about His Word or His promptings. I love how Jeremiah puts it in Jeremiah 9: 23-24, saying. “Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands/sakal and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”

Our greatest glory in life should be when we begin to discern who God is, when and how He speaks, and that we willingly follow Him. Do we sakal understand and know God or do we literally stand up to Him, question His Word or His promptings, debating and countering Him, preferring our own way? Hindsight is 20-20, but godly insight means we are John 10: 5 and 27 people. There Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” Beloved, as long as we have breath, we will be tested by God by whether we will listen and follow His consistent, insistent, and persistent voice. God has a third question for us to answer? There is a third question.

DO WE SHOOT STRAIGHT WITH OUR WORDS AND ACTIONS? (III.)

Proverbs 12: 8 declares, “A man will be praised according to his insight, but one of perverse mind will be despised.” The Hebrew word for perverse or crooked is avah. It means to turn from the truth, to be perverted, or distorted. It is often used in the Old Testament as a synonym for avah, which is chata. Chata means to lead astray or to be amiss, wide of the mark. The best commentary on the Bible is the

Bible itself. So, turn with me to Proverbs 14: 2. Listen! “Whoever walks in uprightness fears the Lord, but he who is perverse, devious, **avah** in his ways despises God. If you have biblical insight, you will be despised by the world. Look also at Proverbs 17: 20. It reads, “A man of crooked **avah** heart does not discover good, and one with a dishonest tongue falls into calamity.” Many years ago, I knew a minister of the Gospel who had an **avah** crooked, perverse mind and heart. He spoke to his secretary and told her he loved her, and he no longer loved his wife. He wanted an affair which he talked his colleague into. This pastor had a secret problem with drunkenness. Proverbs 23: 33 says, “Those who tarry long over wine will make your eyes see strange things, and your heart will utter avah, perverse things.” Proverbs 28: 6 adds, “Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than a rich man who is **avah** crooked in his ways” Proverbs 28: 18 adds, “Whoever walks in integrity will be delivered, but he who is **avah** crooked in his ways will suddenly fall.” Beloved, do we shoot straight in our words and actions. As Lowell Lundstrom says, “Do we fiddle with God’s favor?” Do we tell it like it is, or do we twist things to gratify our flesh? God forbid! Do we twist what others say and attribute bad motives to good people or to good words we don’t understand? Do we have twisted judgment? God wants us to say what we mean and mean what we say. He wants us to obey the Lord, His Word, His Spirit’s promptings, and leadings. Paul said it well in II Corinthians 1: 18, 19, and it was one of his tests. “As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in Him it is always Yes.”

There is a fourth and last question.

ARE OUR WORDS AND ACTIONS SHAMELESS? (IV.) Proverbs 12: 8 declares, “A man will be **praised** according to his **insight**, but one of perverse mind will be despised.” Despised is the Hebrew word is **buwz**. **Buwz** means utterly shamed, scorned, contemptible, vile, and disrespectful. I have read commentaries criticizing Abraham for being willing to raise a knife to kill his son, and suggesting Isaac was foolish to allow himself to be tied up and to trust God and his father. I understand their criticisms, because the entire world would declare Abraham was a fool to go as far as Abraham went in almost killing his son. Be sure, what God asks us to do may not receive praise by many people, and it may make people throw shame upon us. The world mocks, distorts, and holds in contempt what God has to say on many subjects—and one of the most ridiculed in our day is what God says about discipline in the home. If we obey God’s Word and follow His Spirit’s leadings and promptings, the world will shame us. But may God spare each of us from the **buwz**, the shame of God. Do any of you remember the man of God who came to visit Eli, and who warned him for not being willing to discipline or hold back his young, and then grown-up sons. The man of God in I Samuel 2: 30 saying, “Those who honor Me, I will honor, and those who despise/buwz Me, shall be lightly esteemed.” Over the years in America, even in otherwise godly homes, biblical and godly insight on raising our children has been trashed by many, and avoided, shamed, and lightly esteemed by even born-again believers. Proverbs 29: 15 declares that a home without godly discipline will be a

home facing public shame. We read, “The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way, brings shame/utter shame-**buwz** to his mother.

Following God’s directions wins God’s praise of us and His approval. Remember when Abraham did the unthinkable, and God tested Abraham, Abraham obeyed, and God stopped him. What did God say to Abraham? We read in Genesis 22: 11-18, “But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So, Abraham called the name of that place, “The Lord will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.” And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, “By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.” In Luke 9: 26, Jesus said, “For whosoever is ashamed of Me and of My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.” God forbid that we would ever do anything in opposition to God’s Word and will. I close with the benediction of I Thessalonians 5: 23-24, with God’s praise of us who obey Him.