

Proverbs 6:1-35

The 6th Ch of the book of Proverbs opens up w/a lil economic advice. It's true that God's word is ultimately concerned w/our well being *eternally*, but it's equally true that God knows where we live *currently* & wants us to use wisdom in our lives not only in things spiritual but in things practical as well.

& When it comes to practical wisdom, it really doesn't matter if you're a believer or an unbeliever; good advice is good advice. God in His grace issues what we call "common grace" to all of mankind. Meaning there are certain aspects of God's goodness that just don't discriminate; you don't always have to be a believer to benefit from God's goodness. For instance Jesus said, *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."*¹ Which is to say that God doesn't only allow the sun to shine on the righteous but unbelievers are shrouded in darkness. He doesn't only allow rain to water crops that will feed believers; He's gracious to the evil & the good. Even so when it comes to the practical wisdom of God's word; anyone who will take the time to listen to & apply it will benefit from it.

Ch 6 opens up w/a couple of warnings that can lead to poverty; foolish financial entanglements; & sowing to the ways of the sluggard.

Vs 1-5

2 Basic things in view here. #1 Beware of being a co-signer on someone else's loan & #2 Be careful that you don't enter into a business venture w/a total stranger. These things are just good solid advice for anyone.

Beware of putting your name on the dotted line for someone else. Now it's not that the bible strictly forbids sticking your neck out for someone; but it is saying that you better be willing to have you head cut off in the process. It's not saying it's sin; it's saying it's unwise. Just like entering a business venture w/someone you don't even know. You meet someone, start talking, he proposes a deal, it sounds great... but you don't even know him. You become the dreamer that the scam artists live for.

You just don't know their character; as we speak the city of Joplin was just reminded of the importance of this lesson.

¹ The New King James Version. (1982). [Mt 5:43-45]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Listen, this was just 7 days ago (published Feb 4th). (I'll paraphrase) "Joplin has ended its contract with the Texas-based contractor leading tornado recovery efforts after the firm skipped town as its co-founders resigned. The city of Joplin announced Wednesday that it severed ties with Wallace Bajjali Development Partners a day earlier. Reasons include 'fraud, gross negligence, and willful misconduct'.

The Sugar Land, Texas, firm was hired in 2012 having presented a plan for \$800 million in projects to help Joplin rebuild from a 2011 tornado that destroyed much of the city and killed 161 residents. Wallace Bajjali was paid about \$1.68 million by Joplin before the city learned third-hand that the firm's office had closed. Joplin officials later learned that the co-founders had resigned. The firm's former leaders haven't returned calls seeking comment."

Now I'm not trying to slam the city of Joplin, it's just a simple case in point that we have to be careful of who we enter into business with. & If you've taken responsibility for another person's debt, if you've entered into a deal w/someone you don't even know... Solomon says, "Get out of it as soon as you possibly can!" (Look at Vs 3-5).

Listen, I've done a bit of hunting in my time & I know enough to understand that when he starts talking about delivering yourself, "like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter", there's an urgency about it, a "don't think about it, just get it done" type mentality. When a deer senses danger, they just bolt & they run hard, (like their life depends on it). When a bird senses a snare, they don't seek to see if it's really what they thought it was, they just fly away... immediately!

That's what Solomon is driving at here. He's saying, "You've come into the hand of your friend." It's like you've fallen into the snare, now you're under his/her control, they have say & sway over you (they choose not to pay, it comes to you).

So he says, "Hey, humble yourself, go to them, plead obnoxiously w/them, deliver yourself swiftly/urgently from them. Get on your knees if you have to, beg & plead w/them to release you from that. Fight frantically to be freed from that commitment." He says, "Don't think about it, don't sleep on it or pray over it, just do it!" It's amazing how many things the bible speaks to plainly & directly & yet when you speak to someone about they're all, "Well, I'll pray about it" (believer/unbeliever relationship, the need to be serving somewhere in some capacity, ambiguous business practices), you don't need to think about it, sleep on it or pray over it, the bible is clear. God isn't going to speak you in a manner that's contradictory to His written word.

You can pray about entering into a business deal w/someone you don't even know all you want. The word says, ... it's not wise.

Vs 6-11

It's not just bad business decisions that can ruin you financially. You can also fall into ruin by being sluggardly. I would say "lazy" but a sluggard is more than just lazy, the proverbs also contrast the sluggard w/the upright, w/the righteous.

There's irresponsibility in view, lack of initiative & laziness. Solomon says, "Look to & learn from the ant." Think about ants, microscopic in comparison to a person. Little body = little brain☺! Yet they in some way communicate; there's no captain, no one standing over them, barking orders at them, no one giving directions to them... no one following up on them to inspect their work. **Yet they have drive, initiative, they're industrious. They work w/the forethought to the future, gathering in the summer in store for the winter, there's no sense of entitlement or thinking that anyone owes them anything; they just pitch in & get it done.**

You see wisdom isn't simply being busy; but you're working w/a purpose, supplying not only for the present, but future needs. If you need someone always prodding you, or you don't give your best unless someone is watching or following up on you, you're not wise. We should be diligent in our work both practically & spiritually. **A lot of people who work hard physically are lazy spiritually, they won't commit to getting into the word & letting the word get into them. They want all the benefits of spiritual maturity, but won't put in the discipline it takes to move that direction. Solomon says, you'll be brought to poverty. None of us are entitled, spiritually or materially. We've got to use wisdom in how we navigate life.**

Vs 12-15

Vs 12-19 we could almost label, "The anatomy of evil." Solomon speaks of the mouth, the tongue, the eyes, the feet, the fingers & their heart. Jesus summed it all up like this, ***"You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them."***²

² The New King James Version. (1982). (Mt 7:16-20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

You can only hide who you really are for so long. Eventually the real you will come out. What Solomon is speaking of here is the attributes of the wicked, the worthless, the perverse. Everything he says, or does is suggestive, behind everything is a filthy connotation. You might say one thing, but you mean another. **That's the idea behind, "He winks w/his eyes, points w/his fingers."** You know, gestures that contradict the words coming from your mouth, it's the body language that's in view here. Of course the things he does outwardly is only evidence of what's happening in his/her heart inwardly, (Vs 14) **"Perversity is in his heart."**

You guys, that's always the problem. Who we are in our heart is eventually made manifest by the way we lead our lives. & There comes a point whereby a person can be callused & confined to their state. The Spirit of God will not always strive w/man. The bible says here, "his calamity shall come suddenly, suddenly he shall be broken w/out remedy." **In other words, there's no cure, no remedy. Sad is the day when God says of someone, "There's no remedy for them, they've gone past the point of no return."** Their conscience (1 Timothy 4:2) seared as w/a hot iron, past feeling, no conviction, no repentance.

Vs 16-19

Of course we know that the #7 points to completion, God has complete & total hatred of these things. Some people wrestle w/the idea of God "hating" anything. Because the bible teaches that "God is love" & if God is love isn't impossible that God should hate? No, it's because God is love that it's inevitable that He hate.

You love your child, but you hate that fever that racks his/her little body. Why do you hate that illness, that affliction? Because you love your child; you love your child but you hate the dog who is frothing at the mouth trying to attack your child. You see as long as we live in a world infiltrated by sin, things that can destroy those whom God loves; than God will hate (because He loves).

So to w/you & w/me, to love God is to hate evil. If God hates something, than you & I do well to hate it as well. What is it that God hates? Top on his list? "A proud look" or we could boil it down a bit further, "pride". God hates pride. **It's the attitude that overvalues self & undervalues others. It's that certain something in you/me that makes us think we're a little (or maybe a lot) better than someone else. God hates that, it's higher on His list than murder or drunkenness or anything else.**

Why? Because it's the root sin out of which all others spring. Pride was the "original sin". It was what was happening in the heart Lucifer that day in heaven where we read, *"For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'"*³ It's what he suggested to Eve when he said, "you will be like God" (Gen 3:5).

Pride is an abomination before the Lord, a disgusting thing. He abhors it. Next he speaks of "a lying tongue." David said, *"I said in my haste, 'All men are liars.'"* Ps 116:11 Someone said, "I've had a long time to think it over, & I still agree w/David." I do to! There's a big tongues movement these days; but unfortunately it's the lying tongue! The bible says, *"Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,"* Ps 51:6 We serve a God of truth; & a lying tongue is an abomination before Him, He hates that. The bible says that Satan is the father of lies, & in him there is no truth, however Jesus is the way & the truth... We're to put away lying.

#3 Hands that shed innocent blood. The murderer is to be abhorred because they've taken that which was sacred, human life. It's amazing how backwards our society has become. Today after a murder is committed, the murderer is brought to trial & suddenly his life is to be seen as precious & protected. Well, what about the life that he took? God says, "That life was precious & the cost of taking life is to forfeit life."

#4 "A heart that devises wicked plans". Thoughts of iniquity, again the heart is deceitful above all things, desperately wicked. God pays attention to the things that swirl around in our heart & in our mind; how we need the cleansing hand of God upon our lives!

#5 "Feet that are swift in running to evil," the heart blazes the trail that the feet will follow. Isaiah said, *"Their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; Wasting and destruction are in their paths."*⁴

#6 "A false witness who speaks lies", So the liar gets a 2nd dishonorable mention. You guys, words should be used to build up & edify others, to enlighten & lead them to the truth. It is a gross perversion of the tongue God gave us to use words to deceive & manipulate, to spread hearsay & division. Ultimately that's what a lying tongue will do. You see the fruit of it in the 7th thing listed.

#7 "& One who sows discord among the brethren", that happens through the use of the tongue.

³ The New King James Version. (1982). [Is 14:13-14]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ The New King James Version. (1982). [Is 59:7]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

This is a peace breaker, Jesus said, “Blessed are the ‘peace makers’”. Behold how good & how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in *unity*. God hates division & discord in the body of Christ. Jesus said that people will know we’re His by our love for one another. **Now how are they supposed to see Him in us if we can’t even get along? If we’re sowing seeds of gossip, or disgruntled temperament, or criticism or negativity? Those things are divisive. Paul exhorted us (Eph 4:3) that we’re to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. God hates when we bring disunity through contention & discord.**

Looking into this list is a lot like looking in a mirror. We look at it & it makes us squirm a little bit, why? Because we see ourselves in it; this why we need to confess our sin that we might be cleansed. **All these things have something in common & that is this; they’re all attributes of the flesh. God is here declaring His absolute repudiation of our flesh, that all it can produce is an abomination before Him. We’re to be yielded to God, submitted & controlled by His word. We’re to crucify the flesh & walk in (set our minds on) the things of the Spirit.**

Vs 20-23

If you have (or had) a godly set of parents, you should praise God for that. He exhorts his son once again to “pay attention” to “keep” his father’s command, not forsaking the law of his mother. He says, “Bind them *continually* upon your heart; *tie them* around your neck.” **“They will lead you, they will keep you, they will speak w/you.” “For the command is a lamp & the law is a light.” In other words, godly advice will guide you, protect you, help keep you on the right path & lead you in the way of life... don’t disdain it, take it to heart & heed it. It will hedge you about... notice**

Vs 24-29

We talked about these things in Ch 5. Things don’t generally begin physically, there’s typically flattery involved. Seductive speech. He says, “Don’t lust after her in your heart.” Notice, we’re always coming back to the heart. Jesus said, **“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that *whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*”⁵**

Flattery, flirting eyes & lustful looking is a dangerous combination, any of which by themselves are sufficient to work destruction into your life, bring the 3 together & you have the ingredients for the perfect storm.

⁵ The New King James Version. (1982). [Mt 5:27-28]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

This brings us back to immediate gratification as opposed to considering the ultimate devastation. He says, "Count the cost", by means of a harlot a man is reduced to a crust of bread; impoverished (both spiritually & materially). Immorality can prey on your life (physically).

Can a man take fire to his chest and not be burned? Can you walk on hot coals & not sear your feet? Even so don't think you can commit adultery or enter into immorality w/out destructive ramifications. Illicit sexual exploits are like playing w/fire, you're gonna get burned.

Vs 30-31

You see Solomon is creating contrast. The person that steals to feed his family, though we don't approve of it & he has to pay for it, we can sympathize w/that. But to the one who steals another person's spouse; that's altogether different. That person "shall not be innocent".

Vs32-35

The one who involves themselves in adultery/immorality is walking in the antithesis of wisdom; that person is showing stupidity. He destroys his own soul, wounds & dishonor he will get.

The consequences are grave. Think it through. What would it do to your spouse? What would it do to your kids? (how would you feel if one of your parents committed adultery or broke up the family?) What will it do to your grandkids? What will it do to your friends? What will it do to folks at church that know you? What will it do to your effectiveness in your ministry? What will it do to people you've witnessed to? What will it do to the other person's spouse? What will it do to their family and friends? Not to mention the possibility of sexually transmitted diseases...

Walk in wisdom, honor the word of God, & the God of the Word will honor you...

Prayer Points:

Father thank You for showing us wisdom, may we be wise & walk in the wisdom You've given us. We thank You that there is forgiveness in Christ & I pray for anyone who may be under the heavy hand of condemnation; that Your forgiveness wash over them through repentance & confession. May we not walk in the flesh, but in the Spirit; thank You for redeeming us, thank You for making us new...