

Proverbs 28:1-28

It's always good to look *into* & desire to learn *from* the word of God. After all, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. In other words true "life" goes beyond that which is physical, it consists as well (all the more) of that which is spiritual. That's why Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit & they are life." So connect the dots, "Man shall not live (have life) by bread alone, but by every *word*..." Jesus told us that His word was spirit & it was life... Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God.

We all need God to increase our faith; therefore it's good to be in God's word. Always good to look *into* & learn *from* the word of God.

Vs 1

When I 1st got saved this Vs used to puzzle me, "The wicked flee though no one pursues." It seemed like a riddle to me, when in reality it's very practical. One day the Lord reminded me of how in the world, when you were up to something you shouldn't be you're always paranoid of getting caught. You're always looking in your rearview mirror, you're leaving one place & heading to another to stay "on the move" even though no one is even looking for you.

There the drug dealer is, he's always on the move, always on the run, even though the police may not even be aware that he's even selling drugs or doing something illegal in the 1st place. He flees though no one pursues. Sin will place us in a state of fear & self-condemnation, no one has to chase you or point the finger at you, you're naturally unsettled. I believe the psychological term is, "guilt complex". It keeps you on edge.

However, "The righteous are as bold as a lion", Jesus already assumed our guilt, we've got nothing to hide, nothing to fear, no reason to run. No reason to always be looking over our shoulder or in the rearview mirror. Think about it, Adam knew no fear until *after* he was guilty of sin. Guilt will always be accompanied w/some kind of fear, some kind of paranoia, not wanting to be exposed. But the opposite is true as well, the removal of guilt (through the blood of J.C.) brings assurance. As the song says, "I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God."

Vs 2

To have a multilayered complex governmental system in order to keep everyone honest isn't a good thing. It speaks of the moral decay & breakdown in society, (the transgression of the land).

But by a man of understanding & knowledge, right will be prolonged. Godly leaders are a blessing to a nation.

Vs 3

You would think that a poor man would have sympathy for the poor; but that's not necessarily the case. Remember how Jesus spoke in Matt 18 of the 2 debtors? One who owed insurmountable debt & the other who owed much less by comparison but it was a lot to him nonetheless. **The point however was that neither one of them had the capacity to pay off their debt. The problem however, was that the one who owed a lot (though his debt had been forgiven) refused to forgive the one who owed him pennies in comparison. It was a poor man oppressing the poor...**

Solomon says it's like a driving rain which leaves no food. It doesn't help anything, it only makes things worse, leaving you hungry & hopeless.

Vs 4

Today we might say, "Birds of a feather flock together." If you don't want to be under any kind of moral restraint, than you'll side w/those & give praise to those who are lawless. In many respects this is where our country lives right now. People have gone from merely delighting in sin to publicly defending sin.

But such as keep the law contend w/them... In other words they see the value of law & order & it's to keep constraints on the *lawless*. The law exists for the lawless. In Rom 13 Paul said, ***"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same."***¹

One reason that God gives law & governmental structure is to restrain the wicked, & so the righteous see the value in the law whereas those who forsake the law gravitate toward & exalt the wicked. In other words, people who want to sin typically find themselves in the company & agreeing w/those who will justify their position.

Vs 5

Paul touches on this principle in 1 Cor Ch 2 where he writes, ***"These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."***

¹ The New King James Version. (1982). (Ro 13:1-3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² The New King James Version. (1982). (1 Co 2:13-15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

*But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.”*²

There is an intuitive knowledge that God imparts to the believer that the unbeliever simply does not have (because it's spiritually discerned). & Since before one knows the Lord they're dead spiritually it's simply impossible for them to understand or discern. The eyes of their minds are blind to the things of God.

Now as a *child* of God certain things seem so obvious to you, so clear, so easily understood (here Solomon mentions justice) we seem to want to defend the criminal & criminalize the victim. It doesn't make sense. But to the wicked (those who are evil), right & wrong isn't so black & white, it's relative. "It may be wrong for you but it's right for me." & You have moral relativism, each man doing what is right in their own eyes. But the bible is clear on moral absolutes, right & wrong, good & evil. Those who seek the Lord understand these things, those who reject the Lord don't get it, it's spiritually discerned.

Vs 6

There are worse things than poverty. The poor are often despised but God says that the poor who walks in integrity is better than the rich who lives in perversity. A person is defined by more than their bank account. Now that's not to say that a poor man can't be a perverse man or a rich man who is upright. Solomon is simply saying that the character of a man is made up of more than his bank account.

Vs 7

Wise is the one who obeys God's word. He speaks of obeying the law, but the law of Moses (not the law of our federal government) was what he had in mind. & It's not that we *shouldn't* obey our government (Rom 13) so long as they're not requiring us to sin, it's that we *should* obey God's word. Obedience to God's word leads us to subjection to authority anyway... So the person who has understanding will abide by & be obedient to God's word (which means he/she would be a person of the word).

However to hang out w/those who squander or are wasteful doesn't show wisdom, it's shameful. We're to be faithful & wise stewards.

Vs 8

Usury is high & unfair interest rates, someone needs money, you have it to loan but only at exorbitant return rates.

² The New King James Version. (1982). (1 Co 2:13-15). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The borrow \$1,000 but have to pay back \$1500, or they can back you back \$100 a month but it's @ a 20% compound interest rate. Or they use their position to exact more out of you via threats or high pressure, it's extortion.

God doesn't have a problem in certain scenarios w/people charging interest on a loan or whatever. But to use your position to bleed someone dry is wrong & ultimately God will have the last word. If you won't do the right thing w/your wealth, God will find someone who will.

Vs 9

Hey, who would've thought? There are times when people's prayers (far from being a spiritual sacrifice or service) are an abomination before the Lord. We can often see prayer as one of the highest or most spiritual act that man can take part of. But God says here that there are times when prayer doesn't go any higher than the ceiling or the top of your skull (if it's silent prayer) & is something we should be ashamed of rather than thinking we've done some spiritual service.

Now I want to say this, somewhere along the way it seems a common misnomer is that God won't hear the prayer of the unbeliever. The bible doesn't say that anywhere. If God didn't hear the prayer of the unbeliever, none of us could be saved. That's where we all came from. More accurate would be to say that God doesn't hear the prayer of the unrepentant. God doesn't play games like that & He knows our heart.

But here's the thought here. If you won't give heed to *God's word*, you can count on the fact that He won't give heed to *your words*. If you turn your ear from the hearing of God's word, than your prayer may be sentimental, but it won't be fruitful. The psalmist said, *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear."*³ Isaiah said it like this, *Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear."*⁴ It's not that God *can't* hear, it's that He *won't* hear. So if I have no intention of repentance, no heart for *God's Word*, than as far as He's concerned *my words* are an abomination to Him.

Vs 10

Some people get a wicked sense of pleasure in leading the godly down the pathway to sin. Jesus addressed this in Matt 18:6 (& again in 23:15).

³ The New King James Version. (1982). [Ps 66:18]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ The New King James Version. (1982). [Is 59:1-2]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He said it would be better to have a millstone hung around your neck & be drowned in the deepest sea than to lead one of God's children astray. But again, God will deal w/the wicked, if not immediately, than ultimately (even eternally) he himself will fall into a pit.

Now I wouldn't feel comfortable drawing doctrine from this one Vs, but it does lend itself to the fact that it's possible to corrupt a godly individual (to lead them astray in an evil way). Some people would contend that if they were truly converted than they'll always come back, I hope that's true, but there's a lot of gray in that. Best just to abide in Christ.

Vs 11-12

The rejoicing of the righteous is just good for everyone around. But when the wicked arise (Isis) even the ungodly will hide from them (the benefits & freedoms that come from the righteous are taken away when the wicked arise & people are oppressed & so they go under the radar, into hiding).

Vs 13

I'm sure that this proverb had a special place in Solomon's heart. Perhaps he consolidated the life lesson from his own father. David sinned w/Solomon's mom (Bathsheba). He took her, committed adultery w/her, had her husband murdered, married her & tried to cover it all up so he looked like a hero in the process merely carrying for one of his faithful soldiers widows...

But it wreaked havoc in his life. He wrote of his experience in Ps 32 & said, *"When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' And You forgave the iniquity of my sin."*⁵ When he sought to cover it, conceal it, pretend that it wasn't there & that it was all good, his life was a miserable mess.

But when Nathan confronted him & he confessed his sin, God forgave him (& you can read of his confession & forgiveness in Ps 51).

It's crazy how people will try to conceal their sin, how we will try to cover our sin pretending everything is great! & It leads to our guilt-ridden misery. But if we would just *confess* our sin God would forgive us & show mercy to us. Pride leads us to *cover*, humility leads us to *confess*.

⁵ The New King James Version. (1982). [Ps 32:3-5]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The human instinct it to cover (it has been since the sin of Adam), our conscience makes us ashamed, doesn't want others to know or to see, we think perhaps we can even hide it from God. But there's no benefit (only detriment) in covering our sin.

How do people try to cover their sin? They may do so through silence, lies, time, tears, trying to do something good to "make up" for their bad.

But healing doesn't happen through covering our sin, it comes through confessing. Not a simple admission of guilt, but an agreement w/God about the nature of our sin. To confess our sin is to side w/God against ourselves & to see it the way God sees it which leads us to then turn from it. Confession & repentance are like to sides of the same coin. One necessitates the other.

The NT version of this Vs in found in 1st John. *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*⁶

Who do we confess to? Who have you sinned against? I think we always do well to confess to God, because all sin is against Him. But if I sinned publicly I should confess publicly, if I sinned against *you* I should confess that to *you*. God likes to keep the knowledge of sin as small as possible but as large as necessary.

I should also say this; if someone sins *against you* & they come confess to you, you have responsibility toward them as well. Now it's yours to forgive them, to love them, to intercede for them & not tell others all about it. It's under the blood of Christ & we're to let it remain there.

One commentator said concerning this Vs, "Confess the debt, and God will cross the book; he will draw the red lines of Christ's blood over the black lines of our sins, and cancel the handwriting that was against us." (Trapp) I like that. & Again, "Confession is the soul's vomit, and those that use it shall not only have ease of conscience, but God's best comforts and cordials to restore them again." (Trapp)

Vs 14-16

The effect of a wicked ruler is one of uncontrollable ferocity; it's dangerous & unpredictable (like a charging bear or roaring lion).

& Again a ruler who lacks understanding is a great oppressor, he alienates himself from the hearts of his people.

But the one who hates covetousness will be responsible toward his people & the people will like having him around. Just like we spoke Sunday morning in Eph 6. If God entrusts to you a position of authority, use it wisely, reflect Him accurately & you will give Him glory.

Vs 17

The idea here is of a man burdened by the “guilt complex” we spoke of earlier. If he’s burdened by bloodshed (again it doesn’t mean he can’t be forgiven) but there are ramifications to sin that we’re not to get in the way of.

& That’s something I believe we struggle w/a lot. Especially as parents. We’ll see our kids heading down the wrong road, the ramifications of their ways will begin to come upon them & we’ll jump in there & try to comfort them. We’ll try to help them out & get them out of “the pit” that they’re in... But more times than not the bible teaches we shouldn’t do that, let God break them & bring them to the end of themselves that they might cry out (in truth) to Him.

Vs 18-19

We’ve spoke of this principle before. In all labor there is profit. The reward of the work is the harvest. But the one who is frivolous, never wants to work, always wants to goof around will come up short in the end. The Prodigal son would be a good example of this. He didn’t want to work, wanted to party all the time, & was reduced to nothing (& when he was, his dad didn’t go out & get him, he waited on him to come to his sense, repent & return home).

Vs 20

Get rich quick schemes will cost you.

Vs 21

Don’t be one who’s opinion (or judgment) can be bought. People will be persuaded for very little (a piece of bread), the approval of someone they want on their side or whatever. But we’re to purpose to be fair in judgment (& be aware of the fact that others may not be).

Vs 22

This has the same feel as the last ½ of Vs 20.

Vs 23

Just like last week. This carries the flavor of the faithful wounds of a friend.

Vs 24

It's a terrible thing to steal from your parents. Don't do it. Don't try to justify it saying, "I'll inherit it all one day anyway." Just don't do it.

Vs 25

At the root of strife, conflict & contention... is pride. In contrast, the one who puts aside pride & simply trusts in the Lord, God will take care of them.

Vs 26

Interesting isn't it? "You've got to believe in yourself!" "I know the bible says it's wrong, but my heart tells me it's right!" Jeremiah 17:9 tells us that the heart is deceitful above all things, & desperately wicked... Don't allow your heart to lead you, allow your values, morals & convictions to be shaped by the word of God. To do what *you* want (to trust in your own heart) will lead you down a pathway to destruction... Walk wisely, trust *in the Lord* w/all your heart, lean *not* on your own understanding, (don't be deceived by how *you feel*) go to the word of God.

Vs 27

This is the counterintuitive mindset of the kingdom. The blessing from the Lord isn't found in getting, but in giving. We can't out give God.

Vs 28

That's what our nations needs, the increase of the righteous.

Prayer Points:

God, once again we thank You for the practicality of Your word. You haven't spoken to us in ways that are past our finding out, but You've brought the instruction of Your word right down to where we live. Now may we walk in the wisdom of Your word & may Your blessing rest upon our lives to the glory of Your name.