

Proverbs 27:1-27

The scriptures declare that God *resists* the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore as we might anticipate when we're studying the book of proverbs, (a book based upon learning *wisdom*) there is a premium placed upon humility. That's the common thread that ties these 1st 2 Vs together. The comparison/contrast is between arrogance (pride) & humility. Notice.

Vs 1-2

Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth. In other words, if I don't even know w/certainty what's going to happen when I walk out the door each day, (I don't know what a single day may bring forth), what then gives me the audacity to brag about what I'm going to do tomorrow?

There's just something in the sin nature of man that gravitates toward pride & causes us to be overly confident in what's in store for our future. It's easy to brag about what we're *going to do* in the future. But wisdom says, we have no idea what the future holds... We can be confident of eternal life in Christ; outside of that we have no guarantees from day to day.

James picked up on this in the NT & he said, *"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.' But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil."*¹

Jesus taught on this same principle in Luke Ch 12. He taught a parable saying that the ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. So he thought w/in himself saying, "What shall I do w/all my surplus, since I'm out of room to store my crops?" **So he said, "I know, I'll tear down my present barns, build bigger barns, store my crops & my goods & say to my soul, 'Soul, you've made enough for 10 men to retire, it's time to take it easy; eat, drink & be merry.' But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?"** So is he who lays up treasure for himself, & is not rich toward God. Of course Jesus wasn't teaching that it was wrong to be wealthy, or to have a retirement plan, or to use wisdom in consideration of your future.

He was teaching that when God blesses you, it's so you can be a blessing (#1).

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jas 4:13-16]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& #2 We never have the right to presume pridefully upon the future but rather we're to humbly default to the sovereignty of God. We'll do what we do if God has it for us, but outside of that it's not going to happen.

Truth is there's a blessing found in being ignorant of our future. Seeing good can lead to presumption, knowing evil might tempt us to despair. But not knowing leaves us in the beautiful balance of simply trusting in the Lord & leading our lives day by day.

Vs 2 emphasizes that promoting/praising yourself doesn't really mean anything. There's no substance to it. It stinks of pride. But there's honor in being spoken well of by others.

Vs 3-4

What's the common thread here? Both Vs concern behavior that is burdensome to impossible to bear. "Rocks are heavy, sand is weighty, but a fool's wrath is heavier than both." A fool doesn't know how to handle his anger, it can become unbearable; he flies off the handle. The wrath of *anyone* can be a difficult thing, how much more that of a fool? It's a heavy burden for those around him to bear up under.

In a similar tone, wrath is cruel, anger a torrent (an overflowing flood), but who is able to stand before jealousy? Or maybe your bible says, "Envy". Envy put Christ on the cross. It's the kind of emotion that smolders in anger over the well-being or good fortune of another. In similar tone a jealous wrath can become unbearable. It can destroy marriages, families, friendships... The picture here is of something irrational, violent & destructive.

Vs 5-6

We're looking here at attributes of genuine friendship. Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed. A loving (prayerfully administered) rebuke will cement friendship, it may be difficult initially, but ultimately it brings forth fruit. & If a person's love is genuine he will confront a situation that needs confronting (again in love & humility considering how he wants others to approach him).

However if we fail to reach out to that person when we see them heading the wrong direction in a situation that's a demonstration of love w/drawn (carefully concealed) hidden away & not doing anyone any good.

Solomon is showing us the need for communication that leads to edification among people.

Love that professes not to see, or chooses to remain silent is what we might call a low level of love. A high level of love will express itself. We can't see someone headed for a cliff & not warn them of what's ahead (just ignore the situation) & still profess to love them.

So Vs 5 speaks to hidden emotion, Vs 6 contrasts genuine & false friendship (relationships are in view). Solomon just pointed to the potential benefit of open rebuke. Here he says, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." If someone is a true friend to you, they'll be willing to deliver the difficult painful/plain words to you that there's something that needs addressed.

You might initially interpret his/her actions as that of an enemy (the words won't feel good). We might be more prone to gravitate toward the one who's always flattering us, but we've learned of the sinful/self-seeking ulterior motives of flattery. & **Though we might take the time to paint the picture of a few "deceitful kisses" throughout the bible, the most prominent was no doubt found in Judas himself. It looks one way on the surface, but there's ulterior motive underneath, which is better for you? Who's the true friend to you?**

Vs 7

Pretty self explanatory- if you're not hungry, even the sweetest or what might seem to others to be desirable we loathe. There you are at a restaurant & you've all but glutted yourself & the waitress comes around, "Who saved room for dessert?" You're thinking, if I eat another bite it'll all be for nothing because my stomach will be empty again! 😊

But to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. If you haven't eaten in a good long time hand me a bag of bird seed, that's great! It doesn't matter what it is, so long as it fills my stomach it's delicious!

However, I think we would err to see Solomon's only application here as being limited to food. This truth is applicable in virtually every arena, materially, emotionally, academically...

The more you have, the harder it is to impress you or give a gift to you that blesses you. You don't really need for anything so you open the gift, "Oh, that's awesome..." then you set it aside & move on. However, if you didn't have the proverbial "pot to pee in" & someone gave you something...anything, you'd be incredibly grateful. When the prodigal was at home before he left, the fatted calf wasn't enough...

But when he was reduced to nothing he was happy to eat table scrap & slop alongside the hogs!

Here's something else to think through; it can be true spiritually as well... As believers some of us have been spoon fed so many so many 7 course studies from the scripture that we're no longer *hungering* for the word of God! We're like connoisseurs of fine sermons. We can dissect & analyze teachings carefully, but nothing really touches our heart deeply anymore... We're "satisfied", stuffed. What's the solution? What is it that builds an appetite physically? Being active, working, yes? I suggest the same is true spiritually. Start sharing, ministering, witnessing, serving, teaching, discipling & you'll begin to hunger again. If you're giving out, you'll appreciate just about any time in the word, any study of scripture, it'll be sweet because you'll be hungry. Start giving, start serving & you'll start loving the word again.

Vs 8

The picture here is being out of the place of safety & security. The bird belongs in it's nest but it wanders away. Last summer we were checking out a little tree in my yard & Isaiah walked up under it (it's a weeping cherry tree, flowering, not fruiting) & as he went under it about 5-6 feathered but not flying baby birds fluttered out all around him (scared him nearly to death ☺). **But instantly my dogs started in after them & they were fluttering toward the fence, we were yelling at the dogs, the dogs were in hot pursuit! They'd left the place of safety/security, they were in danger. That's the idea here.**

We could make an application to church hoppers. There they are wandering from place to place. (Charles Spurgeon called them gypsy-Christians, a kind of spiritual nomads). No settled place, no local habitation. It's not wise. You can't really engage or build up the body, you have no real sense of community, there's no genuine accountability in your life, it's dangerous. People need to learn to put down roots that they might be blessed & benefit from "the nest" the local body of Christ.

Vs 9

Even as perfume or cologne bring a pleasantness to the soul, so also does the genuine heartfelt counsel of a friend. Do you have anyone who can really speak into your life? Or is there anyone who allows you that place in their life? A lot of people seek counsel, but not *genuine* counsel. They look for someone to give them the go ahead so that they feel better about doing some dumb thing they want to do.

That's not what Solomon is talking about. Counsel that comes from the heart of your friend has a sweetness to it.

Vs 10

Solomon isn't saying that you shouldn't appeal to family. He's only saying that a genuine friend of the family is a blessing & sometimes it's better to appeal to him than it is to family if you have a need & your family lives ½ way across the country. Don't neglect the relationship of a true friend.

Vs 11-12

Vs 11 is an appeal for young people to walk in wisdom. Don't be doing dumb things that are going to bring shame to your parents.

Vs 12 again makes the appeal to let wisdom lead you. The prudent man is the sensible man. He's not walking around w/his head in the clouds or buried in the sand. He pays attention to what's going on around him so that he avoids unhealthy situations. The fool will just carry on obliviously & it will snap back to cost them. That doesn't mean accidents don't happen & that wise people don't occasionally become ensnared in a bad situation. It's speaking to a general pattern of life. The pathway of your life will be a lot less painful if you learn how to navigate it.

Vs 13-14

Vs 13 was cited in the 16th Vs of the 20th Ch. Basically if someone has a bad credit history or they're known for not being wise w/their finances, then when you loan them money you do well to acquire some form of collateral.

As for Vs 14 it's pretty self explanatory. You call someone early in the morning, "Hey friend! Just checkin in on ya, God bless ya today! Hope all goes well!" Well, it's not so far! Listen, even the right thing at the wrong time can be the wrong thing...

Vs 15-16

In ancient Israel roofs were flat & they were prone to having bad leaks. So let's not envision a little drip w/a water bucket under it (though that can be bad enough). But let's see a roof that's just got water dripping from it everywhere! You're looking for solace, a place where you can find shelter, but instead you only find more problems & it's an environment you want to be out from under...

This is the effect of a contentious woman. This isn't the woman who argues w/her husband from time to time (welcome to the human race). This is the one w/whom it *never stops*.

The quarreling & contending never come to an end... He marries this woman w/the expectation of finding good, protection & shelter from the rudeness of the world, but she's always criticizing him & dogging on him even in his own home...

There's no restraining her, it's hard to get a grip on the situation. So what is he to do? Don't try to change her, you can't. Instead you be wise, love her as Christ loved the church & leave the job of changing her up to God. Folks, it doesn't take too long in the marriage relationship to realize you're not going to change your spouse (& they're not going to change you). (That's why I tell people, if you can't love them as they are don't move forward. Don't think you'll be able to change them after you're married for a while, it won't happen). It's God's job to change your spouse, it's your job to love them.

Vs 17

A piece of iron can sharpen another piece of iron, but it happens through friction, sparks are involved. Even so a man can be used to sharpen (improve & develop) his friend, but it may involve a bit of friction & few sparks flying here & there. That's not always indicative of something negative, godly confrontation & communication are necessary, & we should be willing to receive it.

Vs 18

The worker is worthy of his wage. If a man tends to & takes care of the tree, it's appropriate that he eats of its fruit. The point is that it's not good to keep a man from the fruit of his labor.

"So he who waits on his master will be honored." Same thing, if you properly serve, tend to & take care of the one whom you work for, he'll take care of you. The idea is that if we work well at our job we'll typically be honored.

The same is true spiritually. We often have a picture of "waiting on the Lord" as standing around doing nothing. We should think more of a "waiter" or "waitress". They may not be constantly busy, but they're goal is to be there for whatever your need may be. Even so, waiting on the Lord (though it can involve inaction) includes being about His business until He directs us otherwise. When you "wait" on your Master, you will be honored. Jesus would say that like this, "Great shall be your reward in heaven."

Vs 19

What's in the heart comes out of the mouth. Clearly as your reflection in the mirror your heart will reveal your true character.

Vs 20

It seems the grave always has room for more, it's never full. Even so the eyes of a man are never satisfied. I tell my kids all the time, "The flesh is never satisfied." Be it lust, covetousness, we never see enough. Once you see the Rockies you wonder about the Smokey Mts, you want to see Hawaii or perhaps the Bahamas, but that's not enough you wonder about other parts of the world.

If you like roller coasters you don't just ride one & go, "Well, I've done that so I'll never feel like riding another." "I've caught one fish, that's enough". Fill in the blank. Our flesh is never satisfied, that's why pornography is a billion dollar industry. Logically you'd think once a person had seen one naked body, it basically is what it is from there. But the flesh wants fed, it's never enough. How much money is enough? Just a little bit more, right?

There's a reason styles change, trends change, cultures evolve... Because our eyes are never satisfied. We're always on the look out for something new. Only J.C. truly satisfies, everything else will only leave you wanting more.

Vs 21

Couple ways this is interpreted. One is that even as it takes the refining fire to display the true value of the precious metal, it's not a man's opinion of himself that counts but the value is found in the reputation he has w/others.

The other is that the praise of another person is like a furnace, it shows what you're truly made of. Does it humble you or puff you up in pride. Praise humbled David, but it revealed the pride of Saul's heart. I suppose there's value either way you want to understand it.

Vs 22

A fool and his foolishness are inseparable. One of the sad character traits of a fool is that he simply won't learn. This is why we should choose our friends carefully. In another proverb we read, "*The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked* (foolish) *leads them astray.*"²

Vs 23-27

Of course Solomon was writing to a culture steeping in the world of agriculture. But the principle is plain enough.

² The New King James Version. (1982). (Pr 12:26). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

We're to be diligent; to work hard at being aware of the state of the things God has placed us over. Because if we're not aware of the condition of something, we can't effectively, fruitfully manage or lead it. We should be inquisitive as to what's happening in the environment God has placed us, don't leave it to everyone else to figure out for you. Supervise, oversee, be faithful to tend to those things.

Because as we said in the beginning, the future is uncertain for us all. Take good care of what God has entrusted to you now & perhaps it will provide for you in the future. If you *don't* take care of what you have you can be certain *it won't take care of you* in the future. Care for your resources, work hard & recognize God's provision in your life. Work now & you'll enjoy it later. Keep the fig tree & you'll eat of its fruit.

May God give us a heart of diligence & may we be found faithful w/all that He's entrusted to us.

Prayer Points

Thank You God for the wisdom of Your word. May we not be hearers only, but doers of it. Pour Your Spirit out upon us, use us for Your glory & we'll give You praise.