

Message #79**Proverbs 20:17-20**

Perhaps there is no greater demonstration of wisdom than in the area of speech. The way a person relates to speech tells much concerning wisdom or stupidity. By virtue of the fact that Solomon keeps bringing us back to this theme, obviously to God speech is a central part of wisdom.

HOW WE RELATE TO WISE SPEECH AND HOW WE USE OUR OWN SPEECH DETERMINES HOW WISE WE REALLY ARE.

ADMONITION #1 – A wise person uses honest speech. **20:17**

The basic point here is that a wise person uses speech in an honest way because he realizes that if he uses dishonest speech, it will eventually catch up to him and he will get caught. The meaning of “bread obtained by falsehood” is that someone lies or colors truth in order to gain something. At first, the dishonesty seemed to pay off; it produced something that tasted sweet. It temporarily appeared worthwhile to tell a lie. The concept of having a “mouth filled with gravel” is the idea of chewing small stones, which imagery was used of the breaking of the teeth (Lam. 3:16). Solomon is saying that dishonesty which first seems sweet will lead to total discomfort, injury and be so distasteful and eventually it will leave the person broken. Being deceptive may bring some short-term benefits; but in the end, it will bring disaster.

ADMONITION #2 – A wise person listens to wise counsel. **20:18**

Now it is very important to point out that the word “consultation” or “counsel” refers to speech that is from one wise and prudent. The words “wise guidance” refers to advice from one who is cunning, particularly one who is a ruler or some governmental leader. What Solomon is saying is that in order to achieve objectives, it is imperative to listen to counsel, but not just any counsel; only wise, prudent counsel from one in a position to give it.

ADMONITION #3 – A wise person avoids those who gossip. **20:19**

The word “associate” means to mix, to exchange, to intermingle in fellowship with someone. Solomon’s advice is simple; do not associate with one who is a known gossip. Do not fellowship with them and do not open yourself up and share intimate things with them.

ADMONITION #4 – A wise person does not make light of his parents. **20:20**

The word “curse” in Hebrew means to make light of, to lightly esteem or to hold of little account. The point here is that a wise person does not lightly esteem his father or mother. Two promises are made to one who makes light of his parents:

- 1) His lamp will be extinguished—happy, blessed, radiant, prosperous life will be put out.
- 2) He will end up in the midst or middle of darkness.

Darkness refers to fearful adversity (Job 15:22); ignorance (Job 37:19); wickedness (Prov. 2:13); great sorrow (Eccl. 5:17); death (Eccl. 11:8).

God promises that one who mocks parents will be surrounded by ignorance, wickedness, sorrow and death. This is a stern warning given to young people to listen to the godly advice of parents.