

Principles from Proverbs: Taming the Temperament

Understanding Grief, Sorrow, and Depression

Introduction: It has been said, “Into every life some rain must fall.” Grief, sorrow, and depression are all-to-familiar emotions. Various root causes for emotions of sorrow include (1) physical problems, (2) negative circumstances beyond our control, (3) attitudes and actions that ultimately result in sorrow, (4) negative relationships, and (5) spiritual conviction. The Book of Proverbs specifically addresses the practices and people that bring sorrow.

I. Attitudes and Actions that Ultimately Result in Sorrow

A. Greed and Dishonesty

He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live. (Proverbs 15:27)

1. Materialism always ultimately results in sorrow because physical possessions never bring true satisfaction.
2. Materialism sometimes leads to dishonest practices (accepting “gifts” or bribes, for example). Such practices ultimately catch up with the practitioner—often with grievous results.

B. Poor Treatment of Others

The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh. (Proverbs 11:17)

1. A merciful heart reveals a healthy soul. The soul includes the mind, will, and emotions. “Generous people do not have mental problems.”—Dr. Roger Campbell, University of Kentucky Medical Center.
2. Cruel treatment of others ultimately harms you. Cruelty carries with it physically degenerative consequences.

C. Trust of Strangers

He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretiship is sure. (Proverbs 11:15)

1. To be “surety” for someone means to be the guarantor on a debt. It is the same as co-signing for a loan. Co-signing for a stranger (someone not related by blood) promises disappointment and sorrow.

2. The practice of co-signing itself always threatens grief. The only way to be “sure” of your financial happiness is to hate the practice of co-signing. Just say, “*No.*” You’ll be glad you did.

D. Carelessness

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished. (Proverbs 22:3)

1. A wise man always takes the long look in every issue of life.
2. A wise man makes adequate preparation for the probable and the inevitable.
3. The simple man goes on his merry way, ignoring signs of impending trouble, and ultimately suffers for his carelessness.

E. Use of Beverage Alcohol

Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. (Proverbs 23:29, 30)

1. Alcohol use, even in moderation, results in grief and sorrow.
2. Moderate use of alcohol opens the door for abuse. Parents who use alcohol curse their children and sometimes are responsible for their untimely deaths.
3. The negative aspects of alcohol far outweigh any purported health benefits.

F. Sexual Immorality

But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. (Proverbs 6:32)

For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. (Proverbs 5:3, 4)

1. Those who commit sexual sins are victims of their own lusts, ruining their body and soul in the seeking of sensual gratification.
2. Sexual Sins = Self Destruction. (I Cor. 6: 15-20)
3. Indulgence in immorality always ends in bitterness. Bitterness stems from possible divorce, ruined home, damaged children, wounded character, sense of betrayal, and physical disease.