

PROVERBS 17

(v.1, 2) A “wise” servant will fair better than a son who causes shame.

(v.3) “Refining pot” – God “refines” the heart. The word “tests” – *investigates*; “hearts” – speaks of *our feelings, the will, our intellect*. To Solomon his son David said: **(1 Chronicles 28:9)** “As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.”

(v.4) Evil individuals love “gossip.”

(v.5) Maintain an attitude of charity, benevolence; understanding that the “poor” belong to the Lord. Therefore, we should not be glad when we see “calamity” (*oppression*), because the “poor” are usually the most affected by it. **(Psalm 41:1)** “Blessed is he who considers the poor; The LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.”

(v.6) Grandchildren are the “crown” of grandpa’s; but the glory of a child, is “father.” The word “glory” – *ornament, or beauty*. As father we can “adorn” our children with the beauty of God’s grace, and faith in Christ or “condemn” them to a life of insecurity, condemnation, and fear. **Research conducted by the Christian Business Men’s Committee found the following: When the father is an active believer, there is about a seventy-five percent likelihood that the children will also become active believers. But if only the mother is a believer, this likelihood is dramatically reduced to fifteen percent.** Keith Meyering, in Discipleship Journal, issue #49.

(v.7) Excellent speech does not fit a “fool” no more than “lying lips” a person of influence, and importance, (a prince) in society. An education for a fool will only prove him/her to be, *apart from a changed heart*, an “educated fool!”

(v.8) The meaning of this verse is, as one commentator notes: *Those who have money in their hand think they can do any thing with it. Rich men value a little money as if it were a precious stone, and value it as an ornament, and power; because of it people are bound to be at their beck*

and call. Wherever they turn this sparkling diamond dazzles the eyes of all. The “precious stone” like a bribe has great influence and brings him prosperity, for a season. **(Proverbs 27:24a) “For riches are not forever...”**

(v.9) Our carnal nature loves to use knowledge as “leverage” to get what we “want” or to get “even.” **(Noah; Japheth, Shem; Ham Genesis 9)**. We need to learn to walk “backwards,” rather than walking “on” people, by using information to demean them rather than taking the occasion to “lift them up!” This is not a “cover up” but a covering of grace, which enables love to *restore* and *heal*.

(v.10-12)

(v.13) Rewarding someone “evil” for their “good” will backfire on you. The “evil” you wished upon them will become your constant companion. Better to **“overcome evil with good,” (Romans 12:21).**

(v.14) “Contention” should be dealt with right away. The Hebrew word for **“contention”** is **riyb (reeb)** meaning: **“a contest.”** When we walk in the wisdom of God, live according to His word *contention* ceases. **Turn to James 3:14-18.** The remedy to “contention” Jesus offered was he heart of a “servant.” **Turn to: Luke 22:24-27.** When the only “winner” is Christ, we all “win!”

(v.15) God hates “injustice.” He commanded His people Israel **“to do no injustice,” (Leviticus 19:15, 35) (Deuteronomy 32:4) He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.**

(v.16) Wisdom is like a commodity one can purchase. You can give people the currency for it; but if they have no heart for wisdom the currency, (information), you give them will not benefit them. ***You can have a budget but if you will not follow it, what good is it?***

(v.17) No “rivalry” with friends, only brothers.

(v.18) Do not agree too quickly. Especially in business deals; and do not be “unequally yoked,” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

(v.19) The word “**transgression**” – *moral and religious revolt*; “**strife**” – *quarreling*. Some people live to quarrel; they’re not happy until something is “stirred up.” *In some perverted way it makes them feel important.* (v.19b) Those who seek to “exalt” themselves unwittingly make themselves vulnerable. (*pastor Albuq. – starting church; exalted self took on too much lead to his demise*). There’s nothing wrong with “ambition” – until *ambition* becomes all about us. Such an attitude is detrimental around the church. **(Philippians 2:3) Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. (Luke 14:11) “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”**

You can be *ambitious* and *humble* at the same time. “**Self deprecation**” is **not** humility; God never meant for us to beat ourselves up but, rather give thanks for *how* God has fashioned us and for *who* we are, “in Christ!” Paul said: **(1 Corinthians 15:10) “By the grace of God I’ am what I’ am.”**

(v.20, 21) The “tongue” will always expose the heart.

(v.22) “Merry heart” – or another translation; “**The merry heart makes medicine even better.**” Doctors have found that patients who have a “merry” *positive* disposition heal faster than depressed or negative patients.

One study from Boston University found that seniors who have a positive attitude recover better from surgery for hip fracture than seniors who are depressed with a negative attitude. Those seniors with a more positive attitude were able to rise faster from a chair and walk faster.

I believe that a positive attitude towards God’s grace is what attributed to David’s reputation of being a *man after God’s own heart*,” even at the lowest points of his life. **Shimei; (2 Samuel 16:12) “It may be that the LORD**

will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day.”

When a believer falls; suffering from a *spiritual broken hip*, a “positive” attitude, *confidence in God’s grace*, will prove to aid him/her in avoiding depression and recovering quicker. **(Micah 7:8) Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; When I fall, I will arise; When I sit in darkness, The LORD will be a light to me.** God is able to revitalize “dry bones,” **(Ezekiel 37; valley of dry bones).**

(v.23, 24) These verses go together. The one who accepts a “bribe” is a “fool” because his eyes are set only on the ends of the earth; the gratification of his flesh. He cannot see beyond the grave, where he will give an accounting to God!

(v.25, 26) (v.26) To punish the “righteous” is like “protesting” lower taxes; *striking a prince or politician for being upright politically.*

(v.27, 28) This is a discipline those of us who struggle with “over” communicating, need to practice. It’s amazing how wise we appear to others when we keep our mouths closed! As the old saying goes; ***“It is better to be silent and thought a fool than to open your mouth and prove it.”*** Often times we are more effective in spreading the gospel by our willingness to “listen” *first*, rather than “speaking” first. **Teenage prostitutes, during interviews in a San Francisco study, were asked: “Is there anything you needed most and couldn’t get?” Their response, invariably preceded by sadness and tears was unanimous: “What I needed most was someone to listen to me. Someone who cared enough to listen to me.”**

May the Lord enable us to listen that others might know we care, rather than just hear we care! (James 1:19) So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Listening is the key to great communication; when we feel listened to we feel loved. (Norma). *Remember these three things:*

- 1. Listen to the other person’s story.**
- 2. Listen to the other person’s full story.**
- 3. Listen to the other person’s full story first.**

