

Proverbs Study Guide #2

Proverbs 1; Acts 13:22, 34b, 36; II Samuel 11:1-27; 12:7-14, 24; Matt. 12:42; I Corinthians 1:30

The wonderful book of Proverbs is another jewel in our hand resulting from God breathing out His words through a man. Many clever books have sayings, but none of them can compare to the words divinely breathed as we find in this book. Many helpful things have been composed by small and great names among theologians, philosophers, anthropologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, etc., but none of them have the authority of the Word of God nor the endorsement of the Spirit of God as does the book of Proverbs.

Chapter one opens in a very unassuming manner... 'The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel...'. We must take note that perhaps the wisest man in natural human history issued from a source infamous for one of the greatest public failures in the history of the kingdom of God on earth. Nevertheless, King David is declared in the Acts as "a man after God's own heart..." We lose something in Proverbs if we don't appreciate its contextual source.

Solomon's father, celebrated as the boy giant-killer, warrior of warriors, as a man among men, stayed home at a season "when kings go out to war". In such a season of ease, he let his natural instincts and cravings lead him far astray as he gazed upon beautiful Bathsheba. Not only were his lusts given free reign, he imposed his evil design on messengers who went to retrieve the object of his lust and bring her to him.

Not only did David then commit adultery, a sin under the Law requiring death, but he continued to weave a web of deceit with his military general and with the husband of Bathsheba. Ultimately, the scandal climaxed with the faithful soldier of the King being killed on the front lines of battle, of David's offspring dying, and the valiant king being exposed as a deeply sinful sinner within the kingdom of Israel, the sons of the king committing incest, murder and undermining his kingdom. One passionate moment cost David a lifetime of honor and blessing.

How could such a one continue as the King? How can he still be one of God's favorites? David sinned, but God gave him a repentance matching his sin, and a nation forgave also. David's heart was still towards God and God's heart, which was to have a dwelling place on earth. At any price David wanted this, and for this he worshipped God while yearning for the temple and paying the price to bring Israel into a situation where a temple might soon be built.

It is in this point we find the crucial entrance of Solomon. Out of so many possibilities, it was Solomon who was chosen to be the king after his father's time. Solomon, unlike David, was a man of peace, becoming a legend among the nations of the world and in Israel in his time. The point of amazement and wonder is that Solomon came out of the union of David and Bathsheba. After their sin, after the death of their offspring of sin, and after the murder of Bathsheba's husband, they were joined as husband and wife. Out of that marriage God was able in mercy and in grace to bless David again. Out of a monumental failure came Solomon, a monumental gain.

Solomon-the-wise resulted from a fallen but repentant David. One forgiven much loved much, and gave God a larger way. David in repentance poured out Psalms that still today minister to failed and failing seekers of God. In the heart of God rests David, David the one who fell, but who rose up to walk again with a heart for the will of God and the house of God. Such a one invites the honor and blessing of the divine. Solomon comes and with him comes the temple.

For fellowship and study:

1. What do you think about the ten commandments as the basis for Proverbs? Why? (be specific) Why not? (be specific).

2. Can you identify with what is written in the introduction about David's failure and repentance, and about the grace he found thereafter, resulting in Solomon? Are you immune to great failure as a believer today? How would you treat another believer who failed greatly and fully repented? Could you ever trust him again? Would you love him more? Or just ignore him?

3. Is the Law of God and is the book of Proverbs something for our use as New Testament believers? If so, is our resource and approach and result the same, or different than the Hebrews? How, why, and so what?

4. The Law of God was given to Moses. When he sinned, the Lord took his life. Proverbs is richer because of that Law. When the writer's father, David, sinned, he was forgiven and in his renewed life was given Solomon, the wise one, the man of peace. The reason for the different results is profound and helpful. What are your thoughts about this, and application?

5. Comment on the introduction for each of the first two Study Guides. What do they and the contents have to do with you regarding your life as a believer...church, family, work?

6. Try to write down at least one or two specific things in the introductions or study or text or discussion, or your own time in these passages or in fellowship with others that has touched you.

7. Based on item four above, can you give a five or ten minute message to someone, a group or to the mirror? Ok, so you can. Will you?

8. How do you evaluate the first meeting(s) and your response to it (them)? Do you consider it (them)...knowledgeable only? ...life-affecting? ...life-changing? try to be specific.