

## 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?

I can identify with David. I have had one of the worse failures of my life as a Christian. I realized through that experience that there was not one hope that I could live according to God's righteous law. I realized that I was no better than the worst unbeliever. As I cried out in repentance I realized that the Lord was bound by His own Word to forgive me. No matter what I had done, He had to forgive me because I was truly sorry. I couldn't help what I was, I couldn't change myself, I was without hope in the world. But He said, and I reminded Him that He couldn't lie, that if I confessed my sins He was faithful to forgive them. Because of going through what I did it allowed me to see myself as incurable sin, worthy only for judgment. I remembered the Lord's promise to forgive my sins, past, present and future and reminding Him of it with a broken and repentant heart, I was able to experience a depth of His mercy and an outpouring of His unimaginable grace to an extent never known before. Years later, as I look back, I can see that terrible, unbelievable failure, coupled with such a desperate and deep repentance, issued in a subjective experience of the Lord's very real grace, which over the years has overflowed like wine to others. Such a brimming over of Christ's love from a person to others, issues spontaneously in the building up of the house of God. The same experience David had, is still repeated among us today. Terrible failures, repentance, receiving of forgiveness and Grace, overflowing of such grace, issuing in God's building. When I meet other repentant Christians that have also had terrible failures, I rejoice and marvel with them afresh in the Lord's amazing Love and deep reaching mercy.

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?

The Law of God and the Book of Proverbs is for us to see who God is in His character. We receive it differently from the Hebrews because we now have The Author and Person of these books joined with us in our spirit. God knew that we could never match His Words, therefore He, as the embodiment of them, came to dwell in our spirit that He through us, could live out and manifest His perfect character. Our resource of these books is different than it was for the Hebrews because we have the Resource joined with us in spirit whereas the law acted as a child conductor for the Hebrews, preserving them until the Spirit would come. The result of the law is

also different. The law for the Hebrews was to show them who God is and who they were not. To manifest to them their complete failure and inability to keep the law and also to prove to them their desperate need for a Savior. The result for us as New Testament believers is all of the above, but goes further to include the Way to live God as the fulfillment of the Law and as the out-working of His perfect and upright character on the earth today. (Jude 24:24-25)

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?

The Law came through Moses but Grace and Reality came through Jesus Christ. The Lord exercised His righteous judgment over Moses according to the Law which Moses brought. When Moses sinned, he was judged by death. This had to be because Moses represented the Law. However, David was a forefather of Christ. David was in the Line of Life which would bring in Christ as the sacrifice of all man's sins. Perhaps God forgave David because David repented and was a predecessor of Christ who was bringing in (even through David) a New and Living Way. David enjoyed the Reality of God's forgiveness of his sins even before Christ actually died for them. Perhaps because David was joined with God's very heart. His heart was towards God and he cared for what was on God's heart which was to have a dwelling place on earth.

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?

I had not noticed the correlation between the law and Proverbs before. My hope matches the following statements:

“May we yearn after the Spirit of life in these words, pray over them until they become food to us and thus be strengthened to become a character befitting of the life and Spirit of God within and through our daily living.”

“May we humble ourselves and find in Him grace, a wellspring of living water to refresh us and bring us into a living that expresses His joy through hearts and minds and wills set after God Himself, not merely improved behavior in a realm under the judgment of God.”

These statements are prayers that I believe God will answer for us. I believe that they are a plea sown in the heart of the author, by God. The outlines give an out-flowing of this sowing, to us, the privileged recipients of grace. What a mercy of the Lord that He would make us thirsty enough to come and drink and hungry enough to long after more subjective experiences of Him. All that we receive under this fountain will be splashed on all whom we contact in our daily lives. Others will see the resulting good works and glorify their Father.

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.

“Turn yourselves at my reproof, immediately I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you.” Prov.1:23

“But he who listens to me will dwell securely and will live at ease, without the dread of evil.” 1:33

I find these two verses especially delicious in my mouth. I believe Him as my ears and as my ease. I believe Him that He Will make His words known to me. I believe Him as my turning and as my choosing. I am touched afresh that we cannot do anything for God, but we don't have to because he already did it all. We can't adhere to the solid counsel in Proverbs and in the Law, but we can claim Him as our very life and the one that can. The more I eat Him, the more I become Him in His Life and nature and the more I live Him out in His upright humanity. I can't and I am not anything described in this book, but I am inseparably mingled with the one who Is and who Can. I have a Way to Choose Him as my Life and apply Him as my person which will produce a living out again, of the subjective reality of the words embodied here.

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?

yes

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.

Wish I could've been there.

Richard A. Nelson/ November 2003