



FIRST BAPTIST of Hayden

Proverbs
The Proverbs of Solomon
Chapters 9-21
03/29/2023

Introduction:

Consider the decision before making the choice! Pause and ask yourself, “Is this how Christ wants me to act, react or speak?” That is hard to ponder before doing. And last time we learned that our behavior will be judged.

In essence, how we act reflects upon the Lord and his character. As his child, if I act badly, I reflect his nature and his character badly. This applies to entering into business transactions with those whom we do not know or whom we know little of, “stranger,” and goes all the way to dishonest dealings with anyone we connect with.

Learn to act with integrity and do what you do with the Lord in mind, because we will give an account to him one day.

Message:

It seems that Solomon is focused on self-harm in this chapter. He consistently calls our attention to the choices we make and how they impact us in this life and how they will affect us before the Lord.

Proverbs 11:22–31 (ESV): 22 *Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman without discretion.*

This is beauty and the beast! She has the looks but lacks good sense.

In ancient Israel, women wore some jewelry in the nose. Like our ladies today, earrings, bracelets, rings on their fingers, etc., women in that day also wore what was considered fashionable, and some wore a nose ring.

Isaiah 3:16–23 (ESV): 16 *The Lord said: Because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks, glancing wantonly with their eyes, mincing along as they go, tinkling with their feet, 17 therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the heads of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will lay bare their secret parts. 18 In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescents; 19 the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarves; 20 the headdresses, the armlets, the sashes, the perfume boxes, and the amulets; 21 the signet rings and nose rings; 22 the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags; 23 the mirrors, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils.*

Solomon points out the incongruity of a beautiful woman without wisdom, and he compares that to the stupidity of putting a golden ring in the snout of a pig.

Here are few ways to rephrase this proverb:

- A beautiful woman who is stupid is a gold ring in a pig's snout.
- Beauty is wasted on a foolish woman like a gold ring is wasted on a pig's snout.
- A gold ring adorns a pig's snout like stupidity adorns a beautiful woman.

The juxtaposition portrayed in this passage is obvious. In both references – a pig's snout (which to the Jew was an unclean animal) and a woman who is indiscreet – beauty does not belong.

The ring in the pig's snout kept it from rooting and destroying the land upon which it lived. Discretion, taste, and wisdom keeps anyone from making foolish choices. Thus, indiscretion is the abandonment of good taste and the embrace of foolish choices. Therefore, the beautiful woman who adorns herself with indiscretion is like a pig with a gold ring in its nose. The value of the gold is held in low regard; likewise, the value of her God given beauty is held in low regard.

23 The desire of the righteous ends only in good, the expectation of the wicked in wrath.

The chief desire of the righteous is that things turn out (end) well for all involved.

That is never a guaranteed outcome. However, a good person, a righteous person wants what is good for himself or for others. Contrarily, the wicked person – those who seek only what they selfishly want without consideration for anyone else – with wicked desire ends with people angry, or at the worst, God’s anger toward the selfish person.

Another way to say this is,

- When the plans of a righteous person come to pass, only good things come out of it, but when the plans of a bad person come to pass, that makes God angry.

24 One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. 25 Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered. 26 The people curse him who holds back grain, but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it.

This is the surprise of generosity. It should not surprise anyone that God wants us to be generous, because he is generous. So, we should strive to live as he would want us.

Solomon paints us a picture of someone scattering seed across a field, and the end result is bountiful and excessive versus the person who only sows a few seeds, and the result is a very poor harvest.

2 Corinthians 9:6–10 (ESV): 6 *The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. 9 As it is written, “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.”*10 *He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.*

It is evident that in both the Old and New Testaments, God is involved with generous hearts.

Here is another way to translate these verses.

- Some give generously and increase their fortune.
- Some save more than necessary and become poor.
- Sometimes you can become rich by being generous or poor by being greedy and stingy.

27 *Whoever diligently seeks good seeks favor, but evil comes to him who searches for it. 28 Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.*

What are you seeking and in what are you trusting? These are penetrating questions that all of us should answer honestly.

The idea of good here is not merely what we can get that we call good. Rather, it is what is righteous in the eyes of God. This takes us back to the beginning of wisdom; we fear the Lord and that leads to wisdom.

We must seek what pleases God, and that is what brings favor – before him and before people who also want righteousness.

The idea of trust is to rely on someone or something else. What do you rely on? If it is not the Lord, you will fail. But if you trust the Lord, you will flourish like a green leaf.

Jeremiah understood this and knew that Judah's judgment sent by God from Babylon was a result of what they trusted in. They refused to allow the land to remain at rest every seventh year. They had refused the sabbath ordained by God, and they did not trust God's provision.

Jeremiah 17:7–11 (ESV): 7 *“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. 8 He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.” 9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*

10 *“I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”* 11 *Like the partridge that gathers a brood that she did not hatch, so is he who gets riches but not by justice; in the midst of his days they will leave him, and at his end he will be a fool.*

To fully understand what they did not do, let’s look back to the days of Moses and what God commanded Israel to do when they came into the land he was bringing them to.

Leviticus 25:3–6 (ESV): 3 *For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits,* 4 *but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the Lord. You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard.* 5 *You shall not reap what grows of itself in your harvest, or gather the grapes of your undressed vine. It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land.* 6 *The Sabbath of the land shall provide food for you, for yourself and for your male and female slaves and for your hired worker and the sojourner who lives with you,*

This was an issue of faith. Could they trust God to provide for their needs for an entire year? Who, or what were they relying on? The righteous trust in the Lord!

29 *Whoever troubles his own household will inherit the wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise of heart.*

It is unfortunate that within families, divisions occur. But, we all know it happens. Here is a Hebraism that, for the wise Jew, was a hedge against making bad choices and harming the family.

Trouble your family, and you lose your inheritance. You get nothing! Imagine our world today, if you take away what a bratty child has if that child is disrespectful or refuses to do his part to help the family: a student who refuses to do the work assigned by the teacher loses his access to his phone or gaming system; an adult who works against the interest of his family loses every cent promised by the parent or grandparent. If this actually happens, the unwise son or daughter ends up serving those who honored their parents and have received the full measure of blessing and inheritance.

That is the gist of this proverb: do stupid things, get stupid results. By the way, remember, *“The fool has said in his heart there is no God.”*

This coming Saturday, April 1 is the atheist’s holiday. In God’s world, fools serve those who are wise.

30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.

In other words, my lifestyle determines the product of my life. We could say *“The actions of a good person brings life.”* Have you ever met someone whose heart is always affirming and lifting? That is who this refers to.

And they draw people away from their foolish choices into a life of better decisions.

The story of Boaz and the way he handled Naomi and Ruth is an example of how this proverb works in real life.

31 If the righteous is repaid on earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!

This verse seems to point to recompense for wrong. God punishes, disciplines his children, and he does so while they live on the earth. So then, the expectation is that the wicked will receive a just reward in this life too.

We have the advantage of hindsight. God will discipline his children, while he will allow those who are not his to continue their spiral into wickedness.

He warns us, that as the last days approach that wickedness will increase and iniquity will abound.

Matthew 24:11–12 (ESV): *11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.*

Matthew 24:11–12 (NIV): *11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. 12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold,*

It is what we would like to see, but God will allow wickedness to abound as each life devolves deeper and deeper into a sin filled life.

Conclusion:

The struggle we all face is what we will do with the life God has given to us. We face ourselves within the choices and decisions we make. Will I trust God and do what he has commanded, or will I trust me, and do what I would prefer?