

Proverbs Week #100 (11:2-3)

“When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom. The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the crookedness of the treacherous will destroy them.” Proverbs 11:2-3

Wisdom has two very powerful lessons to teach us today. 1) She wants us to contrast pride and humility. 2) She wants us to weigh the outcomes of two different paths in life. [For those who have integrity, a safe path lies ahead—for those who act falsely or with cruel intent, She warns of destruction.]

When we consider the other context of the Hebrew word **בָּגַד** (bāgad – treacherous) which appears in verse 3, we can understand who might be harmed by the actions of those who are treacherous. In other places in the Tenach it appears in the context of wrong done towards a wife, a friend, a relative, and a king (in the form of treason or sabotage). How does acting mean or rude usually work out in your family or with your friends? Generally speaking, if you are mean to others are they nice back to you?

To Learn: There appears to be a very direct connection between these verses and what James teaches. Those who are proud and treacherous have more than just their spouse, friends, or local government official to contend with, God Himself opposes them!

“What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ...Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”? But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.” ...Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. James 4:1-10

To Discern: How do I know if I am proud? How do I know if I am humble? I might be able to discern the difference if I consider the way I act and treat others. Do I expect everyone to listen to me, do what I want to do, bow to my every desire? Do I get upset when I don't get my way? How easy is it for me to admit when I am wrong, to say I'm sorry for doing something wrong, or to ask someone for forgiveness? These things reflect how I relate to other people but I might also want to consider how this might apply to my relationship with God. If I am humble I can give God and His ways the proper weight in my life that He deserves. If I am too proud I will place too high a weight on my own ideas, plans, desires, or thoughts. How often do you thank God for what He has given you? Have you learned to be content with Him and what He gives you? Do you only pray to Him when you want something from Him?

One way we can begin to understand the difference between arrogance and humility is to consider the areas of service and greatness. Yeshua taught His disciples that if they wanted to be truly great that they would need to serve others (Luke 22:7). When the disciples were considering the seating arrangements at a meal and the positions of servants, Yeshua proclaimed, “I am among you as one who serves.” The King of Kings displayed humility in His attitude towards others by using His life to serve. He had every right to demand service but he laid down these rights to demonstrate those things which were important to Him.

To Receive: To receive this as truth in my life demands that I set aside my misplaced confidence in my own abilities and instead trust in God to take my life and use it for His purposes. Just as wisdom begins with a proper fear of the Lord, so too true humility must begin as a surrendering to God. This is not an act of weakness but an act of strength. To submit to God enables each one of us to know Him for who He truly is and in that light understand who we are truly meant to be. God has given to each of us abilities and talents so that we can use them to serve Him and others. We don't stop using our abilities when we humble ourselves in relationship to God. We learn to rely upon God to direct us in how and when we use them.

To Impart: Most parents don't have to be told to consider the needs of others. We show our love for our children by how we seek to care for them, protect them, and lovingly teach them. Those who are humble and wise understand that God is a faithful Shepherd. Our hope is to live long lives and in the end to hear our King proclaim, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” May this be our goal and the goal we set before our children's children.