

Proverbs Week #105 (11:12,13)

“He who despises his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding keeps silent.

He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.”

Proverbs 11:12,13

To speak or not to speak that is the question. In this case though the real question is what kind of speech is going on inside your head. That is where trouble starts. We are taught here that a person who lacks sense despises his neighbor. The notes for the NET Bible relate, “the participle בָּז (baz, from בִּזָּז, buz) means “to despise; to show contempt for” someone. It reflects an attitude of pride and judgmentalism. In view of the parallel line, in this situation it would reflect perhaps some public denunciation of another person.”

The Torah teaches us, “*You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.*” (Lev 19:18) Loving God and loving our neighbor are the two greatest commandments. Wisdom teaches us that at times keeping silent is the wisest thing we can do, especially if what we are going to speak comes from a heart that is not loving or honoring God.

To Learn Wisdom and Instruction: It is not enough to just know the right things to say but we must learn to practice being wise in this area. I know that when I am upset or frustrated it is the hardest for me to keep myself quiet. But at these times the best prescription might be to cry out to God and not to others.

“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.” Psa 50:15

To Discern Wise Counsel: How can we remember and distinguish when it is right to speak and when we should hold our tongues? If you are about to tell a secret about someone else or if you are about to tell someone else about another person, you might want to stop and think before you speak. “Hey let me tell you something about Tim...or did you hear what Josh Meeks did yesterday?” Both of these remarks may be the starting statements which if continued may end in a violation of the commandment not to go about as a talebearer. Knowing when to speak and not to speak takes wisdom.

To Receive Moral Instruction in Skillful Living: What will it take for us to learn to do better in this area? Will our words have to hurt someone we love before we realize we have done wrong? Will I have to be “spanked” by God for not being wise in this area? What more does God need to do in each of our lives to help us grow in wisdom and maturity?

To Impart Shrewdness to the Naive: This past week I have been thinking about this subject a lot. I have come to the conclusion that I need to spend much more time in prayer when it comes to building godly and wise relationships. I believe God desires for us to be more like Him. To be faithful in all that we do. “*For the word of the LORD is upright, and all His work is done in faithfulness.*” (Psa 33:4) God is always faithful. The USMC slogan is *semper fi*. Marines are taught and trained to be faithful to their fellow marines. They are taught to come to the aide of a fellow marine whether that person is serving on active duty or not. We can learn a lesson from their examples of sacrifice and courage.

Here is a prayer that I’ve been thinking about and praying for others this past week:

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Messiah which surpasses knowledge that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Messiah Yeshua to all generations forever and ever. Amen.” Eph 3:14-21