

Proverbs Lesson #111 (11:22)

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

"Like a gold ring in the snout of a pig Is a beautiful woman bereft of sense." (Proverbs 11:22 JPS)

"Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful face on an empty head." (Proverbs 11:22 MESSAGE)

The first phrase of this proverb paints a vivid picture. It is easy to picture how silly it would be to try to dress up a pig to make it more appealing. Picture a pig dressed in the fanciest of clothes (the kind that movie stars wear when they walk the red carpet). In the end you still have a unclean pig who rolls around in mud and filth. We can clean a pig up but left to themselves they will return to their own muck.

The second phrase of the verse needs to be paired correctly with the first part. The beautiful woman is like the gold ring. The pig's snout is the place of being without discretion, sense, or an empty head (morally speaking). Where is the place where beauty can be found that is praiseworthy? In the beginning God created the world and proclaimed that it was good. How has sin taken something so good and changed it to something so bad?

To Learn Wisdom and Instruction: The blessing said over wives during Erev Shabbat prayers begins with "An excellent wife who can find, her worth is far above jewels." In the concluding verses it proclaims, "Charm is deceitful and beauty is fleeting. But a woman who fears the LORD she shall be praised." In these verses there are important lessons to be learned. We learn from them when we take their meaning to heart and begin to think, feel, and experience life in light of what they teach. We don't want to be gold rings in a pig's nose. We want to be where God wants us to be.

God has made us with value. We know what it feels like when we have a low assessment of our own worth. We are sad or sometimes even depressed if we feel unimportant or not valuable. As we have been studying in the book of Romans, we know that God has demonstrated His love to us in the Messiah. If He would go to such great lengths to redeem us when we are "bereft of sense," how can we think that He would not give us what we need to be beautiful in His sight? If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, do we really understand how God sees us? Are we held captive by our own low view of who we are or are we willing to hear what God has to say about us?

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Yeshua the Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." (Titus 2:11-14)

To Discern Wise Counsel: To live and experience the reality of who we are in the Messiah requires faith and action. We work out our salvation because we know it is God who is working in us (Phil 2:12, 13).

"Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil." (Hebrews 5:11-14 NAS95)

We do not want to be children of God our Father who are "dull of hearing." Our desire and God's desire is that we be children who are beautiful in His sight and mature in our faith. We do this as we continue to listen to Him and learn from Him. This daily exercise of faith will keep us in the place where God wants us to be and guard us from being like a gold ring in a pig's nose.