

Proverbs Week #124 (12:11-12)

*"A person is praised in accordance with his wisdom, but the one who has a twisted mind is despised. Better is a person of humble standing who nevertheless has a servant, than one who pretends to be somebody important yet has no food. A righteous person cares for the life of his animal, but even the most compassionate acts of the wicked are cruel. **The one who works his field will have plenty of food, but whoever chases daydreams lacks wisdom. The wicked person desires a stronghold, but the righteous root endures.**" (Proverbs 12:8–12 NET)*

Our verses today present wisdom in agricultural terms. Advances in technology separate most of us from seeing the processes of food being grown. For us, having plenty of food seems more dependent upon having a source of income. Our nation has elevated having food to a basic right. The social programs that provide food stamps or free meals to schoolchildren have made the idea of being without food unthinkable.

I believe it is even more important for us to hear these words in light of our socially conscience society. The wisdom found here reminds us that we reap what we sow. This fundamental principle is so powerful that God tells us to be careful and not to allow ourselves to be deceived.

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life." (Galatians 6:7–8 NAS95)

We should be very careful as we seek to learn all that these verses have to teach us. It might be easy to "spiritualize" this and see it only in terms of religious activities. One might think this verse is a warning about not skipping a daily devotion, not missing a church service, or praying a few hours a day rather than just a few minutes. The wisdom of these passages applies to all of life. The truth of this can be seen in any garden. If you want to grow corn and peas than you need to plant corn and pea seeds. This is a spiritual thing. The Spirit of God designed every seed to produce after it's kind.

Verse 12 above reminds us "the righteous root endures." The wicked desire to build but are chasing their desires and not God's. They are told that the strongholds they imagine will fail them. The desire to have something that endures is a good desire. When God appears to Abraham He told him not to fear. He spoke as one who would shield him and provide a great reward. This reward was a seed that would grow into a great people. This family would be so large that they could not be numbered.

The idea of growth can also be seen in the quality of our family relationships. When I was young I once asked an "old married couple" what they thought the purpose was that God created man. Their answer was that mankind's purpose was to know what it truly meant to love God and to grow in that love. At that young age I didn't begin to understand the fullness of what they were saying to me. In truth, I think I was trying to find a question that sounded important and wasn't really prepared to receive the answer. As God has graciously grown the relationships of friends and family around me, I have learned more of the wisdom that this couple shared with me.

God redeems us and reconciles us to Himself so that we would reproduce after His kind. The seed of love that He plants in every redeemed heart is seen in how they treat one another. These are the good works that God prepares for those He saves. Just as plant grows and matures by God's grace we too will grown and mature. Scripture constantly points us back to our Maker and reminds us that as we stay connected to Him we can be assured of success.

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:1–5 NAS95)