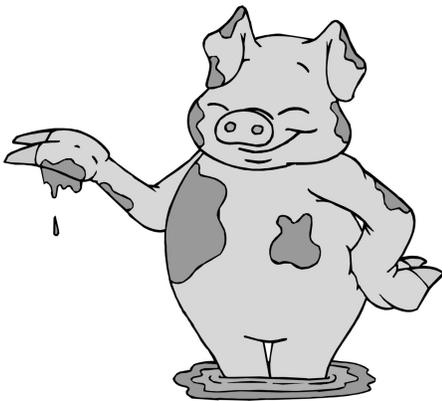


Proverbs Week #153 (14:14-15)

The backslider in heart will have his fill of his own ways, but a good man will be satisfied with his. The naive believes everything, but the sensible man considers his steps. (Proverbs 14:14–15 NAS95)



In today's lesson I want to paint a few pictures to help us remember the lessons these verses have to teach us. The first will be of a dog eating a meal and pig who is covered with dirt and filth. The dog is eating a meal that he has eaten before (no really this dog is eating food he has eaten, vomited, and is eating again – gross!!). The pig has been washed and made clean but doesn't stay clean for long. These pictures are to illustrate the idea of someone who is a backslider (we'll talk about that more shortly). The last picture is of a young boy on a bicycle who is about to run into a wall. Someone has tricked the boy into believing that there is a road in front of him. The young boy needs to be wise and keep his eyes open and on the road.

“The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.” (2 Peter 2:22 ESV)

What does it mean to be a backslider? The Hebrew phrase used here literally is “turn of heart.” It is used in the Bible to describe those who have turned back to worshipping idols after making a profession of covenant loyalty to the LORD. The imagery of a dog who returns to his own vomit is a quote from Proverbs 26:11, and Wisdom teaches us there not to be like a fool who returns to their foolish ways. Peter combines this proverb with the imagery of a pig who can't stay clean to illustrate what it is like for someone who has heard the good news of forgiveness and yet turns back to their old way of life. What we learn about Wisdom, the Messiah, and God's truth needs to be remembered.

The second part of our lesson reminds us that we need to grow in discernment. We need to develop skills to know the difference between truth and lies. This is true when it comes knowing the truth about God, but it is also true in relationships God gives us. As we mature we learn how to hold onto truth within us (in our hearts and minds) and graciously disagree with others when they tell us things that are not true. Paul speaks of this process in terms of how as a body we can help each other grow and mature.

...until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Messiah. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Messiah, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:13–16 NAS95)



Each of us have been created by God for His glory. We are each unique in how we can display His love, joy, peace, goodness, and kindness. As we continue to learn wisdom from the book of Proverbs, we can live our lives as those who are confident in God's provision and are faithful to Him.