

Proverbs Week #65 (6:16-19cont)

"There are six things which the LORD hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers. (Prov 6:16-19)

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." (Ex 20:16)

The LORD hates "a false witness who utters lies." It is popular today to think, "God hates sin but loves the sinner." I think I understand the motivation for wanting to communicate this to people. Even the Bible teaches us, "While we were yet sinners the Messiah died for us." (Rom 5:8) But I wonder if we diminish the power of a verse, dull the sword if you will, by not allowing God's words to have their full impact. If our theme about lying was not repeated in these verses we might be able to twist these verses in this fashion. We might reason, "God just hates the lying tongue not actually the person." But here, as this idea is repeated, we see that the LORD hates "a false witness." These words do not leave much room for consolation. As parents we discipline our children because we love them and at the same time we understand the dynamics of joy and sorrow connected to training our children to be wise. (Heb 12:11) We may not be able to understand or explain how God can hate and love at the same time. I do not intend to explain how this works. My goal today is to help increase your awareness of both realities.

"The way of the guilty is devious, but the conduct of the innocent is upright." (Prov 21:8)

Most people normally relate with others as though their actions are righteous and good. Our society would not function smoothly if we were always overly suspicious of others. Most people trust others by default, but sometimes people are devious and not trustworthy. Wisdom teaches us to know the difference. You do not have to look outside yourself to learn this lesson. As I mentioned last week, it is a good idea to apply these lessons to one's self before we see how they work in others. How often has each one of us tried to minimize or shift blame when we have done something wrong? When we do something wrong and know it what do we do? Do we find reason to justify our bad behavior? Do we humbly admit we were wrong and seek forgiveness from others? God has given each one of us a life to live. How we live it will make a difference.

When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers. (Prov 21:15)

Many people in our jails are repeat offenders. Of course, if you asked them they are likely to say they are innocent. The ability of a criminal mind to be devious is great. Any system of justice requires honesty and fairness. If witnesses are false the damage done by criminals can be magnified and all sense of fairness and justice is lost. This is the point where I believe God's anger flares. Without God's help the damage grows and spreads. A society that has little or no respect in its courts is in danger of becoming a society of "victims" where bitterness and hatred rule. As individuals this caution remains; when we are wronged we must not become proud and hateful.

"Help, LORD, for the godly are no more; the faithful have vanished from among men. Everyone lies to his neighbor; their flattering lips speak with deception. May the LORD cut off all flattering lips and every boastful tongue that says, 'We will triumph with our tongues; we own our lips — who is our master?'" (Psa 12:1-4)

It is God's steadfast love that causes us to hope in Him. From His throne He takes notice of the things on the earth. (Psa 113:6) As a loving Father He corrects His children and because of this we grow in wisdom and join with Him in His character and plans.

"Because of the devastation of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, now I will arise," says the LORD; "I will set him in the safety for which he {the godly and faithful} longs." (Psa 12:5)

Our relationship with God and our relationships with one another are important. When truth does not prevail we groan as people. Sometimes we groan because of actual harm done to us by others, and sometimes we groan because we see the negative effects of the wrongs others are doing. It is within the context of "the fear of the LORD" that journey of wisdom starts and continues. We know that the plans of God's heart will prevail. (Psa 33:11)

"...work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (Phil 2:12,13)