

Proverbs Week #88 (10:6-8)

Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but the speech of the wicked conceals violence. The memory of the righteous is a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot. The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin. Proverbs 10:6-8

This week's verses provide a comparison for what is on the inside of a good person and how its opposite, the bad person, is seen on the outside. The words that are spoken on the head of the righteous promote the good things that are yet to be revealed (the good results of a blessing). The words spoken from the wicked have hidden messages too but these are violent and destructive (they will ultimately tear down and destroy). We learn that the very name and memory of both the righteous and the wicked can be understood in these terms. When we think of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob our hearts consider the blessings promised by God in the gospel that was given to them. When we think of Saul, Balaam, or Judas their names remind us of death, the consequences of sin, and unfaithfulness.

Our last set of comparisons takes us to the heart of the matter. Those who are wise learn the skills necessary to accept commands. They understand that learning what it means to love and acting in a loving manner have more value than just talking about things. The fool will boast of many things and with many words try to convince others of their importance, value, or "wisdom." However, with the fool is a life that may appear to be happy, rich, and blessed but according to God will end in ruin. What does the word ruin mean? In the world of children, maybe ruin is what your little sister or brother does when they recklessly trample the Lego or Lincoln log castle you so carefully built. In the terms of adults ruin might be something like a business, a marriage, or your own physical health that has fallen apart from a "negligent hand." (Remember our last lesson together in Proverbs and the verse - *Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. Prov 10:4*).

Learn: What do we need to learn in order to know these things well enough to profit from them? How do we internalize these things and make them a part of who we are as individuals, families, and as a community? We are seeking to continue to grow in our wisdom with God.

Discern: How open are we to being commanded? Do we take orders well? From the point of view of military service, recognizing proper authority, maintaining skills and discipline, and knowing the orders given to you is your duty. Duty – is this a learned concept? As disciples of Yeshua, He is our savior and our Lord. He is the King of kings and as part of His family we are His workmanship. Are we fighting the potter who is trying to mold us? These internal attitudes will show themselves in outward expressions.

Receive: I want to focus especially on verse eight and the phrase "the wise in heart accepts commands." Our hearts of stone must be changed to hearts of flesh if we are ever to receive the full truth of what this proverb teaches. In our sinful state, we will reject the commands of God. In the very core of our being sin will work in us unfaithfulness to God. Until God creates us anew, we will not be able to fully live a life that is pleasing to Him.

Impart: Knowing the need for God to do this work in the lives of every living being, how then should we view our interactions with others? If we are to shine the light of the gospel in our families and in the community what must we also do in relationship to God? I believe Paul's advice to Timothy can powerfully answer this question for us.

The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. 2 Tim 2:24-26

I think it is significant to remember that "those who are in opposition" are primarily opposed to God not us. If we know God (or better yet are known by God) it is because He has granted us repentance. How are you doing in creating "tool boxes" and "treasure chests" for these proverbs?