

Proverbs Week #89 (10:9-12)

He who walks in integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will be found out. He who winks the eye causes trouble, and a babbling fool will be ruined. The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions. Proverbs 10:9-12

A Babbling Fool and a Fountain of Life

Today's verses bring pictures to our minds. Water is precious and it was not always easily found for travelers in Bible times. How can we learn from these verses in our life when all the water we need is easily found by just turning on a water faucet?

When we read about "the mouth of the righteous" what kind of things would we expect to hear on his lips? Regardless of the subject, we would expect his mouth to be proclaiming what is true. Just as water is readily available, so too we have a ready supply of all sorts of so-called truth that assaults our ears. The world of marketing, radio, and television provide any listening ear with "babbling" that we are expected to receive as "wisdom." "Buy this and not that, believe this and not that, and above all you can trust us to make you happy! Just buy what we say—and our products too!" Today's verses should cause us to stop and "push pause" on all these messages around us. They remind us that to find security in life one needs to walk with integrity. Our integrity is seen in verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. Why do you think our verse says that someone who "winks the eye causes trouble?" What exactly is this talking about? What examples of this might we see in our homes? It is also important to remember that messages are sent and received. We need to be careful on both ends; when we speak and when we listen.

Learn: There is a lesson about love here that should not be missed. In our last verse, love is contrasted with hatred. We need to learn something here in order to grow in wisdom. We can choose to speak and choose not to speak. You may have heard this advice before and it is worth repeating; "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." Now that might not be a universal rule but it can serve you well if what you are about to say something that is not nice.

Discern: How do you know when we are being loving in the way we speak with others? What skill can we develop to be able to notice the difference within ourselves? How important is what I am talking about? Have you ever said something you were not supposed to say and someone made you "eat soap?" While I am not endorsing its use, some parents might use soap to help children remember clean from dirty words. Learning to discern right and wrong can be learned the "easy" way or the "hard way."

Receive: Up to this point I have taught this lesson in an indirect way. Do you know what that means? Let me provide an example and then you can decide which is easier to receive. #1 - It is important to learn rules about kindness if you are going to speak with others. #2 - Don't be mean when you talk to your brother or sister! One of these was direct and one was indirect can you tell the difference? [Remember last weeks verse "*The wise of heart will receive commands*" Prov 10:8a]

Impart: "*To impart shrewdness to the morally naïve*" Prov 1:4 If we are going to teach these lessons we need to consistently live in accordance with the wisdom they teach. If we are to shine the light of the Messiah in the world, we need to learn from Him. As a reminder, we should allow didactic (teaching) portions of scripture to be our guide in what we should do and not necessarily historical narratives. Do you know what I mean by that? For example, Yeshua spoke very powerfully against the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:13-39. Should we follow his example and model our speech after His very words with everyone we meet? Should we start using the phrase "woe to you!" every time we talk to people? "Woe to you children if you do not pick up this room right now!" Yeshua does not tell us to do this. In other places in the gospels He does provide us with directions. Consider His teaching to forgive others (Mark 11:25), to resist an evil person by turning the other cheek (Matt 5:39), and to do and teach God's instructions as found in scripture (Matt 5:19). The wisdom of scripture can be learned and if it is forgotten or neglected we will all be in danger. The skills of wisdom must be maintained and kept current. What are you and your families going to do with the truth these verses present?