

The Wisdom Literature

Lesson #13

Wisdom In Human Relationships

Introduction

- Hebrews 12:14 says, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord ..." Peace with all men involves interaction with people! As husbands we are to be at peace with our wives. Wives are to be at peace with their husbands, parents and children at peace with each other. We are to be at peace with our friends and our neighbors and show kindness toward others.
- By this, in part, we show the world that God is our Father and we are His children. Proverbs directs us in wisdom in these areas and we will profit from it if we fear the Lord (1:7; 10:27; 16:6; 22:4).

Peaceful Relationships

- Some attitudes that break down peaceful relationships (what and why of strife).
 - Do not strive with a man without cause (3:30).
 - Hatred stirs up strife, love covers all sins (10:12).
 - Trouble your own house ... inherit the wind (11:29).
 - When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him (16:7).
 - A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends (16:28).
 - He who covers transgression seeks love (17:9)
 - He who loves transgression loves strife, and he who exalts his gate seeks destruction (17:19).
 - Cast out the scoffer and contention leaves (22:10).
 - He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a dog by the ears (26:17).
 - Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases (26:20).
 - He who is proud of heart stirs up strife (28:25).
 - An angry man stirs up strife (29:22).
- Avoiding these attitudes and actions as well as heeding the above warnings will set a person on the path of peace.
- This peace permeates all walks of life providing peace at home, work, among neighbors and friends.

Peaceful Relationships In The Home

- The way of the wise wife.
 - She is godly -- fears the Lord (31:30), not like the woman of 5:6.

- She is wise -- "builds" her house (14:1), teaching of kindness (31:26), not boisterous (9:13) or lacking discretion (11:22).
- She honors her husband -- a "crown" (12:4), is trusted (31:11-12), not contentious (19:13).
- She is gracious -- attains honor (11:16), not vexing and contentious (21:9; cf. 25:24; 21:19).
- She is faithful to her husband, not like the woman of 2:16-17; 6:24; 7:18-19.
- The way of the wise husband.
 - There are no individual proverbs that address the husband like they do the wife above. In chapter 31 we find references to the husband of the "worthy woman" that give us a glimpse of his character.
 - However, the writer identifies the faithful man, the wise man, the prudent man and the righteous man. These qualities make up the way of the wise husband.
 - Compassionate (12:10).
 - Honest (29:24).
 - Hard-working (12:11).
 - Truthful (12:17,19).
 - Exercised in self-control (12:15; 16:32).
 - Gentle in speech (15:1-2, 4).
 - Generous (14:21; 28:27).
 - Willing to be corrected (12:15; 15:12, 31-32).
 - Full of integrity (19:1; 20:7).
 - Reliable (17:17; 29:3).
 - Forgiving (19:11).
 - Willing to admit wrong (28:13).
 - Humble (15:25, 33).
 - Not contentious (17:1).
 - Avoiding excesses (20:1).
 - Fearing God (13:13; 14:26).
 - Not jealous (27:4).
- The way of the wise child.
 - Just as parents have their responsibilities, so do the children. We live in a time when children are not being taught to take responsibility for their actions and attitudes. A number of proverbs are directed at the child and Lord expects children to listen and be wise, or suffer the consequences of the fool who ignores instruction.
 - The centurion understood that he was a "man under authority" (Matthew 8:9). He also had authority, but no man is fit to exercise authority who has not learned to be subject to it. Have our children learned authority? The Lord Jesus learned (experienced) obedience (Hebrews 5:8), have our children? Many children do not experience

authority or obedience to it until they leave the home (school, Bible class, jail)! A godly and wise child has several good characteristics.

- Accepts the father's discipline (13:10).
- Regards reproof and is prudent (15:5).
- Makes a father glad (15:20).
- Is not like the foolish son who is a grief to the father and bitterness to the mother (17:25)
- Does not assault his parents (19:26).
- Listens to father and mother (23:22).
- Parents rejoice in having given birth to this child (23:24-25). This kind of godly child is not a matter of "luck." It is a matter of fathers and mothers following the wisdom of the God in raising their children. Fathers and mothers teach, reprove and discipline their children.
- The way of the wise parents who discipline.
 - Wise parents teach their children to obey not only by words and examples, but also by punishing disobedience.
 - Using the "rod" in Proverbs means to spank. Many today who are influenced by human wisdom refuse to spank their child. God reveals in His word the purpose for spanking.
 - Why is the rod required?
 - Because we are not inclined to use it. Although you beat him with the rod, he will not die (23:13). He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves his son, disciplines him diligently (13:24).
 - Because it demonstrates and builds the character of the child. Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid (12:1). A wise son accepts his father's discipline, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke (13:1). A fool rejects his father's discipline, but he who regards reproof is prudent (15:5). A child who accepts discipline and responds to it by repentance and right conduct is on the path of the wise. The one who rejects proper discipline is headed down the path of destruction. It is often said, "Don't let it go from bad to worse"!
 - Because it is a teaching tool. For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life (6:23). He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise. He who neglects discipline despises himself, but he who listens to reproof acquires understanding (15:31-32). The rod of correction imparts wisdom. A child left to itself disgraces his mother (29:15, NIV). Stripes that wound cleanses away evil, and strokes reach the innermost parts (20:30).

- Because of the devastating results of refraining from its use. Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die (23:13, NKJV). Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell (23:14).
- Because it is righteous and because God uses the rod on His children. To be godly is to act like God acts (Deuteronomy 8:5; Proverbs 3:11-12). Here is the rub with those who are unbelievers or are unbiblical in their thinking. They cannot conceive of spanking as godly because they cannot conceive of God as judging men and condemning them to an eternal hell. They consider spanking as ungodly because they picture a God who has only the attributes of mercy, forgiveness, etc., and not one who punishes sin with pain and death. If, as the Bible reveals, God punishes sin and chastises His disobedient children, we are only acting consistent with His character when we do the same with our children for their disobedience.
- The destructive nature of the immoral (adulterous) woman.
 - Solomon warns his son of the destructive nature of the adulterous woman.
 - The adulteress is destructive as are the consequences of sinning with her (5:1-14).
 - The worthy woman is trusted by her husband (31:11), but this woman betrays his trust (7:18-19).
 - There are four formidable barriers to the adulterous woman.
 - Guard your heart (4:23; 6:25).
 - Guard your mouth (4:24).
 - Guard your eyes (4:25).
 - Guard your feet (4:26-27).
 - Find companionship, fulfillment and pleasure with your own wife (5:15-23).
 - Listen to your parents' teachings, they will help you to avoid the immoral woman (6:20-35).
 - Be aware of the immoral woman's devices (7:1-27).
 - Flattery (6:24; 7:5, 15, 21).
 - Flirting (6:25; 7:13, 16).
 - Immodest dress (7:10).
 - She is not a lover; she is a hunter, a killer of souls (6:23, 26; 7:23, 26).
 - She destroys the love of young and naive men before they can start to have a happy home. She also destroys the home life of her own.

Peaceful Relationships In The World

- The way of the wise friend.
 - Everyone wants to have good friends, but how do we find them? There are plenty of fair weather friends (14:20; 19:4, 6-7). What qualities make for a good friend?
 - One who is faithful (17:17; 18:24; 27:10).
 - A person who rebukes when needed (29:5; 27:5-6; 27:17).
 - One who is thoughtful and tactful (25:20; 27:14).
 - A person who offers wise counsel (27:9).
 - We need to avoid and not associate with certain types of people.
 - The fool (13:20; 14:7).
 - Those who have no control over their temper (22:24-25).
 - Those who are evil (24:1-2; 29:24).
 - Those who are rebellious and always wanting to change (24:21-22).
 - Those who have no self-control (28:7).
 - These are qualities that we must seek out in people with which we want to associate. If we want to have these kind of friends then we must be this kind of person ourselves. Remember, the other good people in the world are looking for friends too. They are looking for people with the good character traits listed above. If we are not that kind of person, they do not want to have us a friends!
- The way of the wise neighbor.
 - Derek Kidner, in his commentary on Proverbs, suggests that the Hebrew word that is often translated "neighbor" involves more than just a person who lives next door. It can involve the relationship that we have with our fellow man or citizen. In the Old Testament, as well as today, God's people were to love their neighbors as themselves (Leviticus 19:18).
 - A good neighbor has many important qualities.
 - Is a man of peace (3:29; 25:21-22).
 - Understands when it is time to hold his peace (11:12).
 - Is generous and merciful (3:28; 14:20-21).
 - Works out the problem with his fellow man alone and does not gossip about the matter (25:9).
 - Does not lie about or deceive his fellow neighbor (24:28; 25:18).
 - Is a better help at times than family (27:10).
 - Is sincere and avoids flattery (29:5).

Conclusion

- By some counts, there are 126 proverbs relating to human relationships in chapters 10-30. Surely God has given us "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3).

- If we are to be at peace with all men (Hebrews 12:14), the book of Proverbs should be a book read over and over to remind us of ways in which this is accomplished.
- We should note, however, that peace with our fellow man begins first with our having peace with God. No one can have true peace without first knowing the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ.