

CbC to March 14

March 8 Su Reading B67 — Prov. 7 — A Youth Lacking Sense

Audio: [Prov. 7 \(ESV\)](#)

The Penalty of Pleasure — This chapter marks the last of 15 appeals of a father to his son(s) until chapter 19, where we will begin to see eight more. Today's chapter starts with similar expressions that frame the first stanza: "...*keep my words*" and "...*to keep you from the forbidden woman*" (vv. 1, 5). Keeping what is good, keeps you from what is bad. The whole chapter is about temptations that come from the strong sexual drive that both men and women have. For the young man, it was a premarital adventure, and for the woman, it involved missing what was her normal practice when her husband was at home. The first blunder was for the young man to go near her house (vv. 7-8). She must have had a reputation in order to draw him there. In no way was she innocent, aggressively pursuing him boldly with flattery and a promise of security from detection (vv. 13-20). She was not only an adulteress, but she was also a hypocrite, telling him, "*I had to offer sacrifices and ... have paid my vows*" (v. 14). The tragedy of the story is the high price of his adventure: "*he does not know that it will cost him his life*" (v. 23). That is the approach and penalty for all kinds of sin: it attracts, then it stings. The penalty is not worth the pleasure.

March 9 M Reading B68 — Prov. 8 — Better Than Gold

Audio: [Prov. 8 \(ESV\)](#)

Pleasure or Treasure? — What a contrast there is between the "women" in chapters 7 and 8! The forbidden woman was human, selfish, tempting, and destructive. The woman in today's chapter is personified Wisdom. She is also seeking men, but for a different purpose: "*To you, O men, I call...*" (v. 4); "*O sons, listen to me: blessed are those who keep my ways*" (v. 32). She offered only what was good: "*I will speak noble things ... what is right ... truth ... [and] righteous*" (vv. 6-8). Whereas the adulterous woman provided only pleasure, what the wise woman provides is vastly more precious: "*My fruit is better than gold*" (v. 19). The forbidden woman was only human, but Wisdom is truly divine. She said that at God's creation, "*I was set up*" (vv. 22-23). Her wisdom is God's wisdom. Sin tempts with pleasure, but God's wisdom is of true value. We all need this wisdom, and God encourages us to seek it from Him: "*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him*" (James 1:5).

March 10 Tu Reading B69 — Prov. 9 — Calling to the Simple

Audio: [Prov. 9 \(ESV\)](#)

Simple Decisions — The contrast between these two "women" continues in this chapter, with the forbidden woman now becoming symbolic with the name "*Folly*" (v. 13). It is very interesting that, although both of these very different women were calling out to the simple, their introduction was identical: "*Whoever is simple, let him turn in here! To him who lacks sense she says...*" (vv. 4, 16). Wisdom invites the simple to a feast she has prepared: "*Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed*" (v. 5). On the other hand, the "food" offered by Folly is "*Stolen water ... and bread eaten in secret*" (v. 17). That is not a joyous feast with others but a lonely and selfish sampling of that which belongs to another. There is a contrast here between food and atmosphere. Another contrast is that of consequences. The positive result of turning to Wisdom is to "...*live, and walk in the way of insight*" (v. 6). The negative result of turning toward Folly is death: "...*her guests are in the depths of Sheol*" (v. 18). Wisdom and Folly are still calling today, and we hear them often. We Christians, however, are at an advantage because we know that the way of Wisdom is right and the way of Folly is disastrous. We must stay to the right!

Revealing Words — Chapter 10 marks the beginning of a new and different section of this book (chapters 10-22). The first nine chapters were centered on instructions given by a father to his son, then Solomon bridged to the next section with the summary that “*A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother*” (v. 1). Notice the contrast here, which is typical of many proverbs. The contrasting word “*but*” is used 25 times in the 32 verses of chapter 10, and three other verses are also in the form of a contrast. The dictionary defines a “proverb” as “a short pithy saying in general use, stating a general truth or piece of advice.” Although many of the proverbs we will read over the next two weeks may seem to have little connection to each other, there is often a theme that runs through each collection. What stood out to me in this chapter was the many references to the mouth, tongue, and lips. Fifteen times these kinds of words were used. Our mouths often reveal the kind of person we are. Three times, Solomon writes of “*the mouth of the wicked ... [that] conceals violence*” (vv. 6, 11) and “*is perverse*” (v. 32). The contrast to that negative mouth is “*The mouth of the righteous... [that] is a fountain of life*” (v. 11), and that “*brings forth wisdom*” (v. 31). Are our words life-giving or violence-inviting? Do they reveal a heart of righteousness or wickedness?

Righteous Honesty — This is another chapter of contrasts, using the word “*but*” in 20 of the 31 verses. The words “*righteous*” or “*righteousness*” appear 13 times, and the impact of righteous people is emphasized here: “*When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices ... By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted*” (vv. 10-11). How we live as Christians is recognized and influences many around us. Another impact comes in our struggle not to share negative information about others: “*Whoever belittles his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding remains silent... Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered*” (vv. 12-13). This is a subject about which we really need to check ourselves. It is so tempting to gossip, but it is sinful. It influences people around us in a negative way. This chapter also makes a significant comparison with two parallel verses, each telling what is positive and negative in God’s sight. Verse one begins with the subject of integrity: “*A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is his delight.*” God delights in honesty. Verse 21 uses the same form but broadens the subject to include the individual’s motives and actions: “*Those of crooked heart are an abomination to the LORD, but those of blameless ways are his delight.*” A crooked heart does not walk blamelessly. This is also about honesty. This is what delights God.

Immune to Retaliation — There were several things that stood out to me in today’s reading. First, was another abomination-delight verse structure like we saw yesterday: “*Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are his delight*” (v. 22). Here, the contrast is between lying and acting faithfully; it judges between what you say versus what you do. Second, there are two similar verses using the expression, “*the root of the righteous*” (vv. 3, 12). Two different results are emphasized here, that of stability (“*...will never be moved*”) and fruitfulness (“*bears fruit*”). Righteous people are permanent and productive. Third, is the expression, “*...right in his own eyes*” (v. 15), which we have seen three times earlier in our reading and will see once more. It is a picture of being unteachable—a know-it-all. That often becomes obvious during teenage years. Hopefully, it will change with maturity. In contrast to that proud attitude, verse 15 continues with the contrast that “*a wise man listens to advice.*” Be teachable! Fourth, the verse that struck me most says, “*the prudent ignores an insult*” (v. 16). To ignore or overlook an insult takes divine help because it is so

unnatural. Make this your motto: "Refuse to be offended!" It will keep us from retaliating sinfully and will save us from soul-rotting bitterness we might carry for years to come.

March 14 Sa Reading B73 — Prov. 13 — Little by Little

Audio: [Prov. 13 \(ESV\)](#)

Diligence and Righteousness — I am amazed as I have been reading these wise proverbs by Solomon. God had given him phenomenal wisdom. It is almost as if we were reading the results of asking Google to collect the wisest sayings in world history. Here they are, and we are not even halfway through the book. They are not only wise, but they are often clever and presented with variety, even on the same subjects. Chapter 13 begins with more advice for a son from his father, i.e., he must listen; he must learn. One subject stressed in this chapter has to do with money and how it is obtained and held. Compared to the lazy and hungry sluggard, "*the diligent is richly supplied*" (v. 4). Diligence is an important factor in gaining wealth, and diligence implies that it comes over time. Solomon then adds this very significant verse: "*Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it*" (v. 11). Diligence is involved in that verse, too. Gradual growth is long-lasting. Greed is not the best generator of true wealth, righteousness is: "*the righteous are rewarded with good*" (v. 21). Then Solomon ended his string of thought with this conclusion: "*...the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous*" (v. 22), which is something that God orchestrates. What we must concentrate on is diligence and righteousness.