

CbC to Apr 18

April 12 Su Reading B102 — Proverbs 25 — King Hezekiah's Collection

Audio: [Prov. 25 \(ESV\)](#)

Control Your Tongue — This chapter is the first of five that contain more of the 3,000 proverbs of Solomon that King Hezekiah collected as part of his religious reform that began 215 years after Solomon's death. Many of the proverbs in this chapter relate to controlling one's tongue, instructions that apply to us today as much as in ancient times. There are warnings about gossip: "*a backbiting tongue*" (v. 23) and "*do not reveal another's secret*" (v. 9). Sadly, that is a very common sin, even among Christians. We need to restrain our tongue from saying negative things about others. Using careful words was another emphasis from Solomon in today's reading: "*A word fitly spoken ... [and] a wise reprover*" (vv. 11-12) are compared to beautiful jewelry. Pick your words carefully, especially if you are trying to correct someone! We should place high value on how our words will be heard and interpreted. Similarly, Solomon wrote, "*With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone*" (v. 15). A person's tongue is physically weak but can be very strong if it is used wisely and patiently. We need to convince others gently, taking our time to let what we say gradually sink into their minds and hearts. This chapter closes with a broad statement that also applies to the subject of our tongues: "*A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls*" (v. 28). If we do not control our tongue, we will be defenseless against Satan's attacks in other areas of our lives.

April 13 M Reading B103 — Proverbs 26 — Wise in His Own Eyes

Audio: [Prov. 26 \(ESV\)](#)

Self-Deception — There are three kinds of negative people featured in this chapter: the fool (vv. 1-12), the sluggard (vv. 13-16), and the deceiver (vv. 17-28). All three deceive themselves in one way or another. The fool deceives himself because he thinks he is wiser than he is, i.e., "*wise in his own eyes*" (v. 5). He thinks he already knows it all and ends up looking very foolish in the eyes of those who know the truth about the subject under discussion. His speech gives him away. That should serve as a caution to us about expounding to others on what we think we know. Be quiet! The sluggard also attempts to defend his laziness with frivolous excuses while he stays in bed, claiming to not even have the strength to eat. He deceives himself because he ignores the fact that God has made people to be active and productive to maintain good health. Be active! The last deceiver is called out in verses 19, 24, and 26. The result of his attempted deception is self-defeating, being exposed to his peers "*...in the assembly*" (v. 26) and having the rolling stone he intended to harm others, turn to crush himself (v. 27). Be transparent!

April 14 Tu Reading B104 — Proverbs 27 — Relationships with Others

Audio: [Prov. 27 \(ESV\)](#)

Iron Sharpens Iron — It seems to me that this whole chapter centers around relationships with other people. The first is a caution about promoting oneself: "*Let another praise you, and not your own mouth*" (v. 2). All of us are encouraged by praise, but it should come voluntarily from others, not from ourselves. Holding back on expressing one's love and concern for others does not help them, but even being hurt by the helpful correction of a friend can result in good (vv. 5-6). Positively, the "*earnest counsel*" of a friend is sweet (v. 9). Friends are forever, so they should not be abandoned (v. 10). Relationships should be handled with consideration of others' feelings, like not shouting, "Good morning!" to neighbors before they are awake (v. 14) or quarreling within one's family (v. 15). A classic proverb in the middle of this chapter is, "*Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another*" (v. 17). Although some irritation is involved in sharpening iron and relationships, its intention and result are good. We are good for each other. As the first relationship caution was about praise (v. 2), so is the last: "*...a man is tested by his praise*" (v. 21). How should we handle praise that comes to

us from others? We can respond by denying some positive thing another person sees in us. When we do that, however, we may be ignoring or denying God's work in developing goodness in us. We should expect to be growing and improving as Christians. We could, instead, respond to praise by taking credit for it, thus becoming proud. That response reveals one's selfishness. God's desire for us is to respond to praise with grateful humility, knowing that any good seen in us is because of God's grace and gifts. Thank them and thank God!

April 15 W Reading B105 — Proverbs 28 — When the Wicked Rise

Audio: [Prov. 28 \(ESV\)](#)

Who is Ruling? — These proverbs have much to say about rulers and how they affect the well-being of the people they rule. First, the condition of stability is dependent on the righteousness of its people and its ruler: "*When a land transgresses, it has many rulers, but with a man of understanding and knowledge, its stability will long continue*" (v. 2). Righteousness promotes stability. Second, the people fear when an unrighteous person rules. Twice in this chapter, this identical statement is made: "...*when the wicked rise, people hide themselves*" (vv. 12, 28). Ungodly leadership causes the population to live in fear. On the other side of this repeated statement about fear is the response to godly leadership: "*When the righteous triumph, there is great glory*" (v. 12) and when the wicked ruler is no more, "*the righteous increase*" (v. 28). Who is ruling the nation you live in? Are they wise, understanding, and caring? Or are they like "*a roaring lion or a charging bear*"? (v. 15). Tomorrow's chapter begins with this same theme: "*When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan*" (Prov. 29:2). This should remind us to pray for godly leaders to rise in our country and that those who are in power will lead in a way that is pleasing to God. Take some time right now to pray for the moral health and stability of your main leaders! It is ironic that this subject comes up on the day that income taxes are due to be paid to the USA government.

April 16 Th Reading B106 — Proverbs 29 — The Value of Discipline

Audio: [Prov. 29 \(ESV\)](#)

Discipline's Benefits — This final chapter of Hezekiah's collection has much to say about the danger of having one's own way versus having the ability to restrain oneself. Which direction one goes is formed in childhood. The "*child left to himself brings shame to his mother*" (v. 15), but "*Discipline your son, and he will give you rest ... [and bring] delight to your heart*" (v. 17). The same was true in ancient times for a young servant: "*By mere words a servant is not disciplined*" (v. 19), and "*Whoever pampers his servant from childhood will in the end find him his heir*" (v. 21). A disciplined youth learns to restrain anger, in contrast to the undisciplined one who withholds nothing: A fool "*rages and laughs ... [and] gives full vent to his spirit*" (v. 9), while "*a wise man quietly holds it back*" (v. 11). The undisciplined person "*is often reprovved, yet stiffens his neck*" (v. 1), he "*is hasty in his words*" (v. 20), "*stirs up strife*" (v. 22), and will "*set a city aflame*" (v. 8). How disciplined are you? Were you raised through painful discipline? If not, there is still hope. We are still children in our relationship with God. Jesus said, "*Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent*" (Rev. 3:19). Being "*zealous*" has to do with obedience, and to "*repent*" involves confessing and turning away from the wrong that we have done. We mature through discipline.

April 17 F Reading B107 — Ecclesiastes 1 — There is Nothing New

Audio: [Eccl. 1 \(ESV\)](#)

Dealing with Vanity — The title of this book (Ecclesiastes) is the later-attached Greek word for the Hebrew term translated "*Preacher*" in the opening verse, who clearly seems to be King Solomon, "*the son of David, king in Jerusalem*" (v. 1). Later, he added, "*I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me*" (v. 16). God had promised Solomon that He would give him wisdom and riches "*such as none of the kings had who were before you, and none after you shall*

have the like" (2 Chron. 1:12), so this could not be a king who lived after Solomon. How could this wise king then say that *"to know wisdom and to know madness and folly ... is but a striving after wind"*? (Eccl. 1:17). Some have concluded that Solomon had become a pessimist or had been led away from truth by his association with false gods. It seems to me that it is better to see this Preacher's message of vanity as a recognition of the reality of living in a fallen world where, despite a positive relationship with God, we still must endure the mundane and painful consequences from the Fall in the Garden of Eden. These first two chapters focus on examples of *"vanity,"* but lights of hope will become more obvious in later chapters.

April 18 Sa Reading B108 — Eccl. 2 — Pleasure Versus Permanence

Audio: [Eccl. 2 \(ESV\)](#)

Working for Eternity — There are two main issues in this chapter that frustrated Solomon. For both, he concluded that they were *"vanity and a striving after wind"* (vv. 11, 17). The first one concerns living for pleasure and possessions. After seeking to enjoy himself with laughter, wine, houses, slaves, herds, gold, and singers, it seemed only temporary to Solomon. A life centered on pleasure or possessions does not result in deep satisfaction. The second frustration was that Solomon had to leave it all behind for someone else. He *"must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity..."* (v. 21). That is a rather selfish viewpoint because it focuses on what is limited to our life on earth. Heaven is going to be so much better than anything we have enjoyed or collected on earth. We should be working here for heavenly benefits. You should *"work heartily, as for the Lord ... knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward"* (Col. 3:23-24). In Jesus' parable of the talents, the faithfulness of a servant was rewarded: *"Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master"* (Matt. 25:21). We may need to adjust our focus.
