BIBLE GATEWAY Proverbs 25 :: NASB.

Unlike the beginning of other chapters on Proverbs, Proverbs 25 begins with a historical reference in verse 1,

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"These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied."
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1 Kings 4:32 states of Solomon that

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"He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five."
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The ancient courts would have numerous scribes in attendance to record what was said or done within the kingdoms. Solomon had spoken 3000 proverbs and scribes would have written down his words as part of the official records of the kingdom.

Over 240 years later, Hezekiah became king. According to ***II Kings 18:3***,

> “Hezekiah was a king that did *“right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done.”*

He must have directed men in his court to go through the official records to collect and copy proverbs that Solomon had spoken.

Verse 2 states,

> *“It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.”*

There are points things to consider here. First, God does not have to search out anything. He is all powerful and all knowing. God has hidden things from mankind. Paul wrote that the message of the Gospel was a mystery until it was revealed in the fullness of time.

There are things that mankind is not meant to know. Many things are alluded to in the Old and New Testaments without any explanation. But it is not necessary. God has revealed what is needed for salvation and how to serve Him. That is enough.

However, for kings, or any person in a position of authority, the opposite is true. Decisions should be based on the best, and most accurate, information available. Unfortunately, some will make a decision without a good reason.

King Saul was guilty of that in *1 Samuel 14:24*,

> *“And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, ‘Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies.’ So, none of the people tasted food.”*

When fighting an enemy, the last thing is to leave your own fighting force hungry. Yet, because of Saul’s rash decision, his army became faint from hunger.

A matter must be “searched out”. In other words, find the details, then decide on a course of action. Bad leaders guilty of pride and arrogance have made caused widespread suffering which did not have to occur.

Verse 8 states,

“Do not go hastily to court; for what will you do in the end, when your neighbor has put you to shame?”

It seems a little odd to see a passage about going to court, but in every age, people have gotten into arguments and disagreements that require someone to decide and rule in the favor of one or the other. Any government must have systems in place to examine and judge in legal arguments. This is true for a small village to a nation or even an empire.

In this case, it seems that an individual was angry or offended at what someone else had done and made the decision to take at person to court. The motive may have been jealousy, revenge, or simply for harassment. Whatever, the reason, the claimant was not prepared, and testimony was given that destroyed that person’s position.

Whatever the reason for the case, it was clear that the person did not attempt to resolve the issue according to either the Law of Moses, or today, according to the New Testament.

What steps had the person taken first?

Had he gone to the person seeking to resolve the problem individually?

If unsuccessful, had he then taken two or three and again tried to settle the disagreement? Was forgiveness considered?

For Christians, was the other person a brother or sister in Christ?

Paul was very clear about a Christian taking another Christian before a secular court. In *1 Corinthians 6:1-8*, Paul wrote,

> *"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you*

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not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? No, you yourselves do wrong
and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren!”
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If Christians treat one another as the New Testament commands, such controversies will not occur. Such animosity is one of the most effective tools of the Devil.

Verse 11 is one of the precious gems of the Proverbs.

Advertisements

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“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.”
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One of the main disciples involved in spreading the Gospel in the early days of the Church was a man named Barnabas. Anyone that has read Acts is familiar with that name. Yet, Barnabas was not his “official” name.

Acts 4:36 states,

> *“Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement), and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet.”*

This is the first mention of Barnabas, but he must have already been known by the Apostles, because they called him Barnabas, or Son of Encouragement.

What greater title can be given to a person! One of the Devil’s is discouragement. During trials, it is easy to focus on what is happening at the moment, and with that comes a growing sense of despair and isolation. But a few words of love and real concern can lift that person’s spirit. The key to Christian love is lifting up and encouraging one another.

How many people can look back on their lives and remember times when one person said a few simple words that made all the difference in the world? It even may have been a stranger that offered that critical comfort. But regardless the circumstances, that person’s gift is not forgotten. What a beautiful commitment to practice the words of verse 11.

Verse 16 states,

> *“Have you found honey? Eat only as much as you need, lest you be filled with it and vomit.”*

One of the few sweeteners in the ancient world was honey, and people enjoyed the taste of something sweet just like today. Of course, today the main sources are sugar and chocolate – specifically milk-chocolate. Parents often limit the amount of sweets their children can eat because they know too much will make them sick.

So, what is the principle behind this passage in Proverbs? The answer can be found in one word – moderation. There is nothing wrong with eating food, but if the preparation and eating of food becomes the focus of a person’s life over anything else, then that becomes a real problem.

There is nothing wrong with working at a job. In fact. Paul criticized the Thessalonians in that they were waiting around for the Lord’s return and were becoming idle busy-bodies. But if a person’s entire life is focused on work, to the exclusion of family or God, then that becomes sin.

The principle found in both the Old and New Testaments shows that a righteous person will live a life of moderation. If ANYTHING becomes so important in a person's life that it overshadows God and the Will of God, then that person cannot please God.

Yes, there are certain attitudes and practices that Christians are encouraged to practice. Paul wrote in *Galatians 5:22-23*,

> *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."*

But aside from these types of attributes, Christians are expected to conduct their lives in such a way to bring glory to the Father.

Verse 25 reads,

> *"As cold water to a weary soul, so is good news from a far country."*

Today, rapid communication is becoming more widespread throughout the world. But until 25 to 30 years ago, that was not true. Most

communication was by regular mail or through newspapers. In some cases, a response to a request for news could take weeks or even months.

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the church in Corinth, and he covered several attitudes and practices that were not only wrong, but against the inspired teachings of Paul. While his letter was pointed and stern, his motive was the love he felt for the members there in Corinth. There letter was delivered, and Paul waited with some anxiety not knowing how they would respond.

As Paul travelled from Ephesus, he expected to meet Titus in Troas where he expected to receive a report on how the church in Corinth reacted to his letter.

In *2 Corinthians 2:12-13*, Paul wrote,

> *“Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord, I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia.”*

No finding Titus, Paul's anxiety grew, but he also reported how he felt when he finally connected with Titus in *2 Corinthians 7:5-7,*

> *"For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within. But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more."*

One can only imagine the great load that was lifted at the news he received!

Despite the more rapid communication that exists today, most have experienced what Paul experienced so long ago. An application is mailed, a resume sent in, a request for a review of some decision is made.

Then the waiting begins. A person may pray for God's help. Will the answer be good or bad? Finally, a reply arrives. If the answer is good, there is a great sense of relief and happiness.

Paul's concern was for the spiritual well being of the church in Corinth. Today, each Christian can send good news to a friend, a brother

or sister in Christ, or possibly a family member where there has been disagreements in the past. It takes so little to bring a sense of relief or joy into a person’s life.

While every person appreciates the good news from a far country, one would do well to remember that good news of love and encouragement can be sent to another as well. When a person is hot, sweaty, and tired, nothing tastes better than a drink of cold water. When a person’s spirit is sad, lonely, or anxious, nothing is better than a message of good cheer and love.