

A Little Bible When You Rise Makes a Man Healthy, Wealthy and Wise, part 1

(Proverbs 18)

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Introduction

From a young age, kids learn to call each other names and say hurtful things...

My grandmother kept a number of children in her home for years, so the the nursery rhyme..

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.”

Was used very often by her to make us tough to other's hurtful words..

And in a sense, that may be good instruction on how to react to other's words..

But the reality of the rhyme is not all together true..

Words are very hurtful...

Now, we shouldn't react sinfully to people's words, but we must admit that words do wound us at times...

The Bible would affirm that truth from beginning to end...

Words mean something when spoken...

Encouraging words pick us up.

Angry words sadden our heart.

Loving words brighten our day.

Discouraging words lower us down.

Just as God's words are sharper than a two edged sword in a good way, man's words are equally sharp in an evil way at times..

If you have been with us through the book of Proverbs, God addresses our tongue, language, words, speech over and over again...

Tonight, we begin a look at Proverbs 18 and almost half of the verses deal with our words and speech...

Obviously, God would affirm that words mean something...

But that is not all that we will see in this chapter...

We will also hear the wisdom of God in other areas of life as well..

So, let's dive into this chapter in verses 1-8....

Let me read these verses to get us started with...

I. Wisdom and Words (1-8)

*1 He who separates himself seeks his own desire,
He [a]quarrels against all sound wisdom.*

2

*A fool does not delight in understanding,
But only in revealing his own [b]mind.*

3

*When a wicked man comes, contempt also comes,
And with dishonor comes scorn.*

4

*The words of a man's mouth are deep waters;
[c]The fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.*

5

*To show partiality to the wicked is not good,
Nor to thrust aside the righteous in judgment.*

6

*A fool's lips [d]bring strife,
And his mouth calls for blows.*

7

*A fool's mouth is his ruin,
And his lips are the snare of his soul.*

8

*The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels,
And they go down into the [e]innermost parts of
the body.*

Solomon sets the theme of this chapter with the majority of the first 8 verses offering wisdom about our speech...

In verse 1..

We see a person who separates by his words..

And how can words separate people?

Through arguing and disagreement..

An argumentative person is a selfish and prideful person who is seeking their own desires..

This person will even quarrel against sound wisdom..

In other words, this person will argue about the color of the sky or other common sense things...

Verse 2 says that such a person does not care about understanding...

In other words, they are interested in facts or reality or logic or reason...

Instead, they are only interested in revealing their own mind...

Which simply means that they are only interesting in sharing their own opinions..

And notice how people respond to an argumentative person..

***3 When a wicked man comes, contempt also comes,
And with dishonor comes scorn.***

Argumentative people tend to sour a conversation..

In other words, it is hard to talk to someone who always wants to divide with their words..

They often put people on the defensive...

And they create an environment where people lose respect for them and actually are filled with contempt for them...

This is why an argumentative man is not fit to lead the church...

In the qualifications for ministry, here is what the Lord tells us in 1 Timothy 3:2-3...

2 [b]An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not addicted to wine [c]or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

In fact, argumentative people need to be corrected even if they aren't in places of leadership in the church because argumentative people are divisive people...

Let me be clear...

There are times to argue, but they are far less than what most people practice..

Let's move away from the wrong use of the tongue to the proper use of the tongue..

In verse 4, we see that a wise man's speech are deep waters and a bubbling brook..

This is the picture of a wise man who is so full of God's wisdom that he speaks it all the time...

The wisdom of his mind is deep and his words are a constant source of refreshment like a spring of cold water on a hot day...

In verse 5, we see that wise words don't show partiality to the wicked, but instead, wise words offer a righteous judgment...

Don't you love people who can speak clearly about a situation and give you biblical advice...

You may have wrestled with all the issues, but then you lay it all out for someone and they offer a right judgment on the situation...

That is a blessing when people speak good words to a situation...

In other words, they judge with a righteous judgment...

Then in verses 6-8, we move back to the words of a fool..

And this time, Solomon shows us the consequences of speaking like a fool..

Verse 6...

6
*A fool's lips [d]bring strife,
And his mouth calls for blows.*

Foolish talk always leads to trouble and strife..

It may even lead to violence as what he says may lead people to hit him...

Verse 7..

7
*A fool's mouth is his ruin,
And his lips are the snare of his soul.*

Not only do foolish words bring trouble, foolish words are a trap for the fool...

One of my favorite episodes of Judge Judy was a case where a young girl accused two guys of stealing her purse, which they denied.

Judge Judy asked her to give a list of all the things that were in her purse...

Girl answered, "my wallet was in there with \$50 cash, two gift cards, a necklace, my headphones..."

And as soon as she said headphones, one of the guys accused of stealing the purse said....

"That's a lie. There wasn't any headphones in there."

Judge Judy laughed and said, "Judgment for the plaintiff for \$500."

Fools are often trapped by their own words...

Their lips are a snare to their soul...

If you tell the truth, the truth sets you free...

But you will be caught by lies...

A final consequence of foolish speech is found in verse 8...

Foolish talk leads to trouble...

Foolish talk sets a trap..

And foolish talk leads to temptation..

Verse 8..

8

*The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels,
And they go down into the [e]innermost parts of
the body.*

Whispers are the work of a gossipy and slanderous person..

They whisper to avoid people hearing their sinful speech..

They will pull you aside and talk low as they attack the character or actions of another person..

And their words become a source of temptation in your life..

Like a dainty morsel...

When I hear dainty morsel, I always think of a Hershey's kiss...

It is just enough chocolate to tempt you to take a bite...

And gossip are just secretive enough to make you perk up your ears to what evil they are planning to spread..

And it is often their secretive nature that leads to temptation because you are honored that they think enough of you to tell you...

However, just the opposite is true...

They don't think much of you because if they did, they would know better than to spread their slander to you...

But often it works as their whispers look like a bite of sweet chocolate...

And worse than that, their gossip often goes down to the innermost parts of the body..

This is the idea of satisfaction that often comes with a juicy bit of information about someone else...

IT makes people feel important and "in the know" and gives them a little power over other people who don't know...

Foolish speech brings trouble, traps, and temptation...

And how dare the Christian being a source of sinful temptation to others by what our lips say...

Get wisdom and you will speak wisdom...

Reject wisdom and you will talk like a fool...

In verse 9-11, we move from wisdom and words to wisdom about wealth...

II. Wisdom about Wealth (9-11)

9

***He also who is slack in his work
Is brother to him who destroys.***

10

***The name of the Lord is a strong tower;
The righteous runs into it and is [f]safe.***

11

***A rich man's wealth is his strong city,
And like a high wall in his own imagination.***

In verse 9, we are reminded to a common theme of the book of Proverbs...

If you don't work, you invite destruction and trouble into your life..

Verse 9 says that the one who is slack at work is related to a person who destroys things...

So the clear teaching of wisdom is to work to avoid trouble..

However, you must not be addicted to the wealth that comes from work...

In verses 10-11, there is a danger that is tied to work and that is the danger of seeing the wealth of work as our source of security in the world..

Verse 11 tells us that a rich man sees his wealth as a high walled fortress around his life...

And that is often true...

The rich often see themselves as invincible...

Their money is their strong tower, yet verse 10 reminds us that the Lord should be the strong tower of all..

Here is one of those instances where we must exercise balance even in good things in life..

For instance, work is good...

God tells us to work so that we eat and survive and avoid the trouble of the lazy...

But God also says to be careful that the fruit of work doesn't cause us to lose sight of the God of our lives...

This is like the baby and the milk bottle...

The baby needs the bottle to eat and survive, but you can't let him go to bed with it every night or else his teeth will rot out...

Work is good and the wealth of work is good, but don't be lead astray to think that enough money will give you everlasting security...

The only security in this world is found in Christ...

How dare a man gains the whole world of wealth but forfeits his soul in the process.

Let's move to verses 12-13 for a moment and be reminded of another important theme of the book of Proverbs...

III. Wisdom and Humility (12-13)

12

*Before destruction the heart of man is haughty,
But humility goes before honor.*

13

*He who gives an answer before he hears,
It is folly and shame to him.*

Verse 12 is simply a repeat of the famous proverb in chapter 16 which says that pride goes before a fall..

In this case, a haughty spirit goes before destruction...

In other words, the lead up to a bad situation is often the pride of a person..

Think of our dear friend Peter...

“Jesus, they may all fall away from you but I never will..”

Less than 24 hours later...

“I do not know this man named Jesus.”

The clear bit of wisdom here is to stay humble to prevent an embarrassing downfall...

Verse 13 is another example of the prideful person.

In this case, pride causes them to answer a person before that person even finishes talking...

You know people like this...

They hear half your sentence, and they begin to answer you by talking over you..

That is not the result of a bad habit but rather the result of pride which tells that person that they dont need to hear anything else to know what is going on..

They know enough with part of the story to make a judgment since they have such a gift of being able to spot the problem and offer a solution or comment before they hear the whole story...

Pride tells us that our words are more important than the words of the person speaking to us..

A fourth bit of wisdom in Proverbs 18 is found in verses 14-15...

I call this..

IV. Wisdom and Wellness (14-15)

14

***The spirit of a man can endure his sickness,
But as for a broken spirit who can bear it?***

The Bible tells us in numerous places that sin affects us spiritually, but it is also clear that sin can affect us physically as well..

Many sexual sins have physical consequences in the form of diseases and illnesses..

Lack of self control in our eating can lead to health problems..

It is also true that our spiritual condition can help us when we have physical problems as well..

Even unbelieving doctors and scientists have proven that people of faith tend to recover quicker than those without faith...

David was a man broken by his sin so much that his body ached..

But once he repented of his sin and confessed it to God, he got up and went back to doing his work as king..

I think we see this principle in verse 14....

The spirit of a man can endure sickness is the principle that people who are walking with the Lord are better equipped to deal with physical problems than people with a broken spirit...

In other words, those who are walking in the Spirit, which would describe the person who is reading their Bible, communicating constantly with God in prayer and living in obedience to the commands,...

Those people are better equipped to endure physical problems than the person who has no relationship with the Lord or a very strained relationship with the Lord...

People with a broken spirit dont hold up well when physical problems come...

They physical pain only adds to the spiritual pain they have due to their lack of a real relationship with the Lord...

So how does a person acquire a spirit to endure sickness?

Verse 15..

15

***The [g]mind of the prudent acquires knowledge,
And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.***

Fill your life with the knowledge of God...

Fill your life with the wisdom of God...

This is why Bible reading is such an important discipline for the believer...

As you read of the Lord, you are constantly praising him in prayer and being filled with the desire to obey Him..

Proverbs 4:5-7 says this..

5

***Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding!
Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my
mouth.***

6

***“Do not forsake her, and she will guard you;
Love her, and she will watch over you.***

7

***“The [d]beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom;
And with all your acquiring, get understanding.***

We need to remind ourselves that wisdom and knowledge have spiritual benefits but also physical benefits would sickness come to us...

Proverbs 3:7-8...

7

*Do not be wise in your own eyes;
Fear the Lord and turn away from evil.*

8

*It will be healing to your [c]body
And refreshment to your bones.*

Conclusion

Let's stop at verse 15 for tonight...

We will finish up chapter 18 next week...

Let me leave you with a few practical applications of the first part of Proverbs 18 tonight..

#1 - The Christina life calls for balance.

If we think of the wisdom of our words and the wisdom of work, both require a balanced perspective in our life..

For instance, words are good and necessary in our lives as believers..

People need us to encourage them with our words...

To instruct them with our words...

To comfort them with our words...

To fellowship them with our words...

You shouldn't get saved and become someone who rarely talks...

Being a Christian in the world, we still talk, but the balance is that we don't talk like the world talks..

We aren't argumentative...

We aren't gossips.

We aren't slanderers..

We don't have to give our opinion on every matter all the time..

WE don't speak in a way that finds trouble, sets a trap for us, or acts as temptation for others to commit sin..

The balance is this..

Words are good, but too many or the wrong words are bad...

The same is true of work and wealth..

Working to get wealth is better than stealing to get wealth or deceiving in other ways to get wealth...

But the balance is not to let work and wealth become your god...

#2 - *The Christian life calls for imbalance.*

As much as we must balance words and work, it is fine to be out of balance in other areas of the Christian life..

For instance, go overboard with humility because there is no room for pride in the believer..

Also go overboard in Bible study and prayer and obedience to the commands of Scripture because there is no room for the uncommitted believer..

I see so many Christians that perceive Christianity to a good balance in their life...

They can live like sinners all weeks and then come to church to feel better about themselves and their families...

That is not the point of Christianity...

Christianity is all out radical commitment to following Christ..

You don't lay down part of your life and part of your week and part of your day..

You lay it all down all the time all your days.

So when it comes to humbly and bible knowledge and prayer and obedience, don't be in balance, go overboard every day in every way.

Let's pray.