

When Wisdom Hits Close to Home, part 1

(Proverbs 19:1-16)

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Introduction

Many people have been incorrectly taught that poverty is a sign of God's displeasure in a person's life.

In fact, there are numerous health and wealth preachers that see poverty as a curse of God..

What they forget is that Jesus was a picture of poverty during his ministry on earth...

Jesus couldn't even afford a bed, much less a home..

Yet, Jesus's poverty was not a sign of God's displeasure with Him at all..

In fact, the Father told the Son at his baptism that he was well pleased with him...

So it is incorrect to assume that poverty is directly related to lifestyle choices...

In a fallen world, poverty exists and will continue to exist to the very end of time..

And there are worse things in the world than being poor..

In fact, the opening part of Proverbs 19 is going to give us wisdom in regards to the poor...

But that is not all that we will see in chapter 19...

We will also see wisdom when a person has plenty along with wisdom in protection and parenting..

Let's dive into the first 7 verses of Proverbs 19 which seem to be tied to a theme of wisdom and poverty..

I. Wisdom in Poverty (1-7)

Verse 1..

*1 Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity
Than he who is perverse in [a]speech and is a fool.*

2

*Also it is not good for a person to be without
knowledge,*

And he who hurries [b]his footsteps [c]errs.

3

*The foolishness of man ruins his way,
And his heart rages against the Lord.*

4

*Wealth adds many friends,
But a poor man is separated from his friend.*

5

*A false witness will not go unpunished,
And he who [d]tells lies will not escape.*

6

*Many will seek the favor of a [e]generous man,
And every man is a friend to him who gives gifts.*

7

*All the brothers of a poor man hate him;
How much more do his friends abandon him!
He pursues them with words, but they are [f]gone.*

Though not every verse here is speaking directly to wealth, there are a number of verses that address a person's financial situation in these first 7 verses...

The first bit of wisdom in regards to poverty is going to tell us that poverty should be preferred over foolishness...

Verse 1 tells us that it is better to have little money and a lot character than to have a lot of money and little character...

The loud mouthed fool may have more money than the poor man, but he has much less control over his tongue...

It seems that as wealth grows, arrogance grows...

And as arrogance grows, so does the tongue of that person as well...

To meet a truly humble rich person is not the norm in life...

Because wealth usually leads to pride and arrogance and a loud mouthed personality...

In verses 2-3, Solomon writes this..

2

*Also it is not good for a person to be without
knowledge,
And he who hurries [b]his footsteps [c]errs.*

3

*The foolishness of man ruins his way,
And his heart rages against the Lord.*

Though neither of these verse speak directly of poetry and wealth, there seems to a possible connection here...

First, let's look at what these two verses teach, which is quite easy to understand...

Verse 2 describes a person who acts without getting all the necessary information...

In other words, a person who acts quickly often acts unwisely because there is often wisdom in waiting..

If you hurry your footsteps or act quickly, you often err in your decision..

And verse 3 is even a little more harsh in terms of a hasty decision by saying that the foolishness of a man in rushing to a decision can ruin his way...

You may have heard the advice that you should sleep on big decisions...

I think there is some wisdom in that, but not if you don't use that extra time to ask the Lord for wisdom or search the Scriptures for wisdom or seek the wisdom of family and friends...

But here is the hard part in gathering knowledge and seeking counsel..

You have to be willing to swallow your pride and act humbly in saying that you don't have all the answers..

And that takes maturity and discipline and humility...

Pride pushes us to act quickly...

Humility pushes us to think carefully before we act..

Now, notice what the end of verse 3 says...

The foolish man's heart rages against the Lord..

What is this all about?

Well, I think you have seen this in people or maybe in your own life before but people will refuse to listen to the Lord's wisdom and rush into a decision...

The decision will be the wrong one, but instead of admitting their responsibility in making a poor decision, they will blame the Lord for how things turned out.

This is the fallen nature of man...

He is never responsible for ruining his life..

It is always someone else's fault, and most often it is the God's fault...

Where does that come from?

It comes from Adam.

Do you remember what he said to the Lord after he disobeyed God and ate the fruit?

He told God that he ate because of the woman that God gave to him...

Genesis 3:8-13..

8 They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the [c]cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

9 Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid be-

cause I was naked; so I hid myself.” 11 And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” 12 The man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.” 13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

In the very beginning, it was God’s fault that Adam ruined his life, and it has been the same way ever since in some people’s minds.

Yet, the truth is that people ruin their own lives by their own poor choices and hasty decisions..

Now, what does this have to do with poverty?

Well, many poor people blame God for their poverty..

Yet, sometimes their poverty the result of their own poor choices, and sometimes their poverty is simply the result of a broken world..

The lady who put in the last two coins she had was poor because the Jewish religious system was greedy and took advantage of people...

Wisdom tells us not to rush to judgment on a person's financial situation or even on our own financial situation..

You may not be rich because God loves you more or you may not be poor because God is punishing you...

Simply live for the Lord's glory and make decisions based on the wisdom that God has made available in the Bible, regardless of how much or how little you have.

In verses 4-7, Solomon address the friends of the poor and the friends of the rich..

4

*Wealth adds many friends,
But a poor man is separated from his friend.*

5

*A false witness will not go unpunished,
And he who [d]tells lies will not escape.*

6

*Many will seek the favor of a [e]generous man,
And every man is a friend to him who gives gifts.*

7

*All the brothers of a poor man hate him;
How much more do his friends abandon him!
He pursues them with words, but they are [f]gone.*

A simple principle of life is that rich people have many friends poor people have fewer friends..

And the reason for that is the greed of the human heart...

Some of you may know the story of Jack Whittaker, the West Virginia man who won the Powerball jackpot on Christmas day in 2002...

Though he was already a wealthy man when won, Whittaker let the winnings ruin his life and mainly it was due to the influx of family and friends after he was named the winner...

Though Whittaker helped many people, the money ran out and was gambled away...

In 2016, Whittaker had lost a daughter and grand daughter to drug overdoses...

He had millions of dollars stolen by friends, lost a house to fire, and eventually was left with little money and no friends...

Whittaker says today that he should have torn up the winning ticket instead of cashing it in..

But this is all too common in a fallen world, where friends show up for the rich man and then desert the poor man.

You see that right here in verses 4-7..

Verse 4..

Wealth add many friends, but verse 7...

The poor man loses his friends...

Now in the middle of these verse is verse 5, which teaches that liars will not escape the punishment of God...

And the reason that verse 5 is placed in this section may be that wealthy people are able to bribe others to lie for them so that they can keep their wealth...

Or it may be a warning to the poor not to lie in order to keep their friends...

It seems that the end of verse 7 is the picture of a poor man trying to keep his friends through his words..

He is chasing after them with words of sympathy or maybe words of deceit trying to convince them to stay but they are gone..

Whatever the reason, deceitful words by the rich or by the poor are going to be judged by God...

Let's leave wisdom and poverty and move to verses 8-16, which teach us about wisdom and protection..

II. Wisdom in Protection (8-16)

Look with me at verse 8...

8
*He who gets [g]wisdom loves his own soul;
 He who keeps understanding will find good.*

Now skip down to verse 16..

16
*He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul,
 But he who [j]is careless of [k]conduct will die.*

Personal protection and safety are on a lot of people's minds today...

We have talked about how to best protect the church in these days of active shooters and rising violence...

And the subjects of personal protection and public protection bring out people with a lot of opinions on the matter...

Well, verses 8 and 16 speak of a person protecting himself in the world...

In verse 8, the person who loves wisdom loves his soul...

The person who seeks understanding will find good...

Same with verse 16...

The person who keeps the commandments keeps his soul...

In other words, personal protection comes from getting wisdom and understanding and keeping the commandments...

In other words, people protect themselves best with Gods' wisdom and obedience to his commands...

It's not about the best security system or door locks or gun or pepper spray...

God simply tells us that our best protection in this world and in the world to come is his wisdom our our obedience to it...

And we have already seen this in the book of Proverbs, where foolish behavior often leads to illness and death...

The simple bit of wisdom is that our security in this world is never sure but the best form of security is to know the wisdom go God and live by it...

Now in between verses 8 and 16, we find some wisdom that in my view is vital to our own safety...

Let's look at verse 9...

9

***A false witness will not go unpunished,
And he who [h]tells lies will perish.***

In this context, if we love our own soul and value our safety, we need to be people who tell the truth..

How many lives have been endangered by lies and deceit..

How many people have been killed due to a lying tongue...

Dishonesty does not protect us; it endangers us on all sides...

The truth increases our security because God honors those who are honest in all their dealings...

Another area of life that we must consider if we love our soul and value our safety is found in verse 10...

10

***Luxury is not fitting for a fool;
Much less for a slave to rule over princes.***

The way to understand this proverb is to look at the second half of it first..

In general, servants don't rule over princes...

Instead, it is the other way around.

Princes rule over servants...

In the same, it is not fitting for fools to live lives of luxury...

In God's wisdom, delight and luxury are meant for the wise and righteous...

So what does this mean in terms of our protection as people in the world?

Simply put, wisdom tells us to live within our means...

Fools seek luxurious living and often that lifestyle leads to their own ruin..

Just like a servant knows his role in a home, we must know our limits of living in this world..

If we seek to live above what God has allowed, we often find those luxuries pull us away from the Lord..

Protection is found when we have enough wisdom to know our place in the world and find contentment in it..

Verse 11 continues to offer wisdom that will preserve our souls in a dangerous world...

Not only should we be truthful and live within our means, we must also self controlled and forgiving...

Verse 11..

11

***A man's discretion makes him slow to anger,
And it is his glory to overlook a transgression.***

I don't think it is necessary to even tell you that anger can have direct impact on your own security..

I will use just one example from our culture, but how many people have been killed in road rage incidents where two drivers get mad at each other because of something that happened on the road..

One may have pulled out in front of the other one or was driving too fast or too slow and tempers flare...

And there have multiple cases where one party shoots the other party over something really silly as an incident on the road...

Personal protection is in jeopardy when someone has a short fuse...

Likewise, personal protection is threatened when someone can't let another's sins go...

The second half of verse 11 says that it is man's glory to overlook a transgression...

In other words, forgiving and letting others sins against you go is to your benefit in many ways..

It prevents your anger from rising..

It prevents bitterness from growing...

It prevents rivalries from starting..

To overlook an offense against you is one of the greatest things you can do on earth...

Listen to what John MacArthur says about the forgiveness of overlooking a sin against you...

“Forgiveness is required of a believer because forgiveness is the most godlike act a Christian can do. It is the most godlike act a Christian can do. No act is more divine than forgiveness. Never are we more like God than when we forgive.”

Maybe that is why Solomon calls it man’s glory to overlook a transgression..

Maybe forgiveness is the most glorious thing we can do on the other to show God’s glory to the world...

Unbelievers don’t forgive...

Very few folks who claim to be Christians practice forgiveness...

But forgiveness is blessed by God and can even lead to our our personal safety in this world...

If you love your own soul and want to keep your soul safe, offer forgiveness frequently to others.

Verse 12 gives us another way to protect our souls in this world and that is simply living in submission to government...

Verse 12..

12

*The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion,
But his favor is like dew on the grass.*

Romans 13:1-7.

13 Every [a]person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except [b]from God, and those which exist are established by God. 2 Therefore [c]whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. 3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for [d]good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; 4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. 5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. 7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

I cannot stress this enough, but government has the God given right to punish those who don't obey their laws...

It is amazing to me how many Christians have a problem with that...

As long as their laws do not require us to disobey God or prevent us from obeying Him, we are to submit to them..

Look, I don't like every law of our own government..

I don't like every bill that our Congress passes...

But I submit to them in obedience to Romans 13 because God is crystal clear..

If you dont submit, government doesn't bear the sword for nothing..

In order words, you endanger your own life to refuse to submit to the governing authorities that God has placed over you...

If you value your soul and desire to preserve your life, avoid the king's wrath and seek his favor...

A fifth way to keep and protect your soul is found in verses 13-14...

13

***A foolish son is destruction to his father,
And the contentions of a wife are a constant drip-
ping.***

14

***House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers,
But a prudent wife is from the Lord.***

There is protection for our souls when we honor
God in our family relationships...

Foolish sons destroy fathers, but wise wins protect
them...

Foolish wives destroy husbands with their quarrel-
some ways, but a sensible and prudent wife protects
her husband...

Foolish fathers destroy families when when they
aren't able to leave an inheritance to their children,
but wise fathers look to the next generation...

In a very real way, our families are God-given
sources of protection in our lives...

If we love our soul and want to protect and keep our
soul, we must live wisely in our families...

Foolish family members in the form of foolish chil-
dren, foolish spouses, and foolish parents open up a
family to destruction...

Wisdom tells us to protect ourselves by making our family relationships a priority...

A sixth and final way we see in verses 8-16 to protect our souls is found in verse 15...

15

***Laziness casts into a deep sleep,
And an idle [ij]man will suffer hunger.***

A constant theme of the book of Proverbs from beginning to end is the value of work...

Work solves so many problems in our lives...

It keeps our minds busy so that our thoughts don't turn to sin...

It keeps our families fed so that they don't suffer from hunger...

It keeps us out of financial trouble because work leads to wealth...

But an additional benefit of work is that it keeps and protects our souls...

Lazy and idle people often are forced to crime to survive which clearly is a danger to personal security...

Lazy and idle people are often surrounded by other lazy and idle people which also is a threat to personal security..

Lazy and idle people are often hungry which can lead to other health problems...

But look what we also see here...

Laziness can lead to deep sleep...

Now you may say that doesn't make sense, but often times, idleness leads to depression which can be marked by periods of long sleep...

Work is the antidote to hunger, the solution to gaining wealth, the medicine for the depressed, and the way to stay away from a life of crime..

In other words, work protects us from all sorts of personal sin and evil in the world...

And that leads us back to verse 16 which serves as a summary to this section...

16

***He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul,
But he who [j]is careless of [k]conduct will die.***

In other words, following the wisdom that we see here in verse 9-15...

Telling the truth in verse 9..

Living within our means in verse 10..

Controlling our anger and offering forgiveness in verse 11...

Submitting to government in verse 12...

Being a godly family member in verse 13-14...

And working in verse 15...

These are all example of the right conduct that preserves our souls...

Wisdom calls us to be careful with our conduct in order to keep us safe in this world...

Wisdom calls us to obey the commands of God to enjoy true protection in this world..

Conclusion

We will stop right there for tonight and finish up chapter 19 next week...

For tonight, let me end with this thought...

Just last week in Florida, a guns show was held at the Tampa was packed with people...

As Dick Sporting Goods decided to sell less guns, others decided to sell more guns...

And business was booming in Tampa even though it was only a few hundred miles from Valentine's Day massacre in south Florida..

You see, this is the rush of people who want to increase their protection in the wake of a more violent society...

More and more people are realizing the dangerous world in which we live...

And though there is nothing wrong with defending life, we must make sure that we aren't rushing to guns into of rushing to the protection found only in God's wisdom...

The best protection in this life is not found in a gun or a knife or a lock or a bullet proof vest...

In it found in the wisdom of God...

It is the found in the gospel of Jesus Christ..

It is found in living life in obedience to the word of God..

May we seek to trust in the Lord more than we trust in the sword..

Let us pray.

III. Wisdom in Plenty (17)

IV. Wisdom in Parenting(18-29)