

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

GUARD YOUR STEPS, PROVERBS 1:8-19

- A. This is one of ten *Fatherly Talks* (name coined by David Atkinson) in Proverbs.
1. They include 1:8-19; 2:1-22; 3:1-12; 3:21-35; 4:1-9; 4:10-19; 4:20-27; 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27.
 2. The basic pattern of *Fatherly Talks*.
 - a. There is an appeal.
 - b. The virtue of wisdom.
 - c. A main theme.
 - d. The destiny of the foolish.
- B. An examination of (1:8-19)
1. An appeal - from a father (8), ***Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching,***
 - a. Hear your father's instruction.
 - b. Do not forsake your mother's teaching.
 - c. Augustine, *There are two causes leading to sin: either we don't know our duty, or we don't perform the duty we know. The former is the sin of ignorance, the latter of weakness. Now, it is our duty to struggle against these things. But certainly we will be beaten in the fight unless God helps us to see our duty and to make our love of righteousness stronger than our love for earthly things.*
 2. The virtue of wisdom - good teaching adorns one's life (9), ***for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.***
 - a. Wisdom is like a garland.
 - b. It is evident to others.
 - c. Samuel Johnson (18th C.), *The supreme end of education is expert discernment in all things - the power to tell the good from the bad, the genuine from the counterfeit, and to prefer the good and the genuine to the bad and the counterfeit.*
 3. Main theme - beware of evil company (10-15)
 - a. Don't succumb to the enticement of sinners (10), ***My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.***
 - 1) Contrast between instruction of parents and the enticement of fools.
 - 2) Who should have the greater influence?
 - 3) Wisdom can defend itself.
 - b. Thought process of sinners (11-14), ***If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood; let us ambush the innocent without reason; like Sheol let us swallow them alive, and whole, like those who go down to the pit; we shall find all precious goods, we shall fill our houses with plunder; throw in your lot among us; we will all have one purse"—***
 - 1) He wants to tear down not build up.
 - 2) There is no value of human life.
 - 3) God is not feared.
 - 4) Material possessions are of greater value than humanity.
 - 5) There is no respect for the dignity of work.
 - 6) What the wicked promise
 - a) Group acceptance and identity
 - b) Promise of material gain
 - c) Excitement and sense of power
 - c. Command to stay away from such people (15), ***my son, do not walk in the way with them; hold back your foot from their paths,***
 - 1) Who we are is largely determined by the company we keep.
 - 2) Importance of accountability.

3) Gregory Nazianzen (4th C.), *Take my advice, my friend, and be slow to do evil, but swiftly run toward your salvation. For readiness to do evil and tardiness in doing good are equally bad. If you are invited to a revelry, don't be quick to go. If you are tempted to backslide, leap away. If a group of evildoers says to you, "Come with us, share our bloodguiltiness, let us hid in the earth a righteous man unjustly," don't even listen to them. Then you will benefit greatly in two ways: you will make the other people realize their sin, and you save yourself from keeping evil company.*

4. Destiny of the foolish - culmination of wicked intentions 16-19

- a. They pursue evil and don't hesitate to shed blood.
- b. Birds are not entrapped by nets they see but the wicked will entrap themselves.
- c. Those who pursue violence will be overwhelmed by it.

CONCLUSION

- A. Discipleship is never-ending. It is always a two-way street.
- B. I am my brother's keeper.
- C. Bad company corrupts good morals. But, that does not eliminate personal responsibility to be light in the darkness.