

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

FATHERLY TALK ON DO AND DON'T DO, PROVERBS 6:1-19

A. Do (1-15)

1. Be prudent (1-5)

- a. Warning against binding agreements (1-2), ***My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor, have given your pledge for a stranger, if you are snared in the words of your mouth, caught in the words of your mouth,***

- 1) L. D. Johnson, *There is first of all a warning here not to make a rash commitment in which we may find ourselves ... unable to keep.*
- 2) Gregory the Great, *To be surety for a friend is to take charge of the soul of another on the guarantee of your own conduct.*
- 3) This is not a declaration to never put up security for another person but rather that it is generally unwise to do so.

- b. Exhortation to get out of such agreements (3-5), ***then do this, my son, and save yourself, for you have come into the hand of your neighbor: go, hasten, and plead urgently with your neighbor. Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber; save yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the hand of the fowler.***

- 1) ESV Study Bible, One who puts up security is trapped because he is at the mercy of a debtor who no longer has any stake in satisfying the debt.
- 2) Sid Buzzell, *Just as a gazelle or a bird, if trapped, would immediately begin struggling for its life, so a person snared by a foolish debt agreement should frantically fight to be free of it.*

2. Be industrious (6-11)

- a. Example of the ant (6-8), ***Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.***

1) Self-motivation

- a) Ambrose, *The ant is a tiny creature, yet it ventures to achieve things beyond its strength. It is not driven to labor as a slave is. Rather, without compulsion and with freedom of foresight, it lays up provision for a future day.*
- b) Chrysostom, *Marvel at your Lord, not only because he has made heaven and the sun, but also because he has made the ant. For although this creature is small, it affords much proof of the greatness of God's wisdom. Consider then how prudent the ant is, and consider how God has implanted in so small a body such an unceasing desire for work!*

2) Proper planning

- a) Illustration of harvest, Augustine, *In winter, the ant falls back upon that which in summer it has gathered.*
- b) View toward testing - time is well-spent in good times preparing for future trials.
- c) Sid Buzzell, *The virtue of wisdom is not in being busy but in having a proper view of forthcoming needs that motivate one to action.*
- d) Chrysostom, *Let us give the first-fruit of our hands, feet, mouth, and all other parts to God. Such a sacrifice is well pleasing.*

- b. A warning to the lazy (9-11), ***How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.***

1) Question: When will you get up?

2) Answer: I am going to sleep a little longer.

3) Result: Laziness will bring poverty

- a) Chrysostom, *The consequences of idleness are poverty and trouble,*
- b) Proverbs 24:30-34, *I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.*

3. Be sincere (12-15)
 - a. A worthless person is insincere 12-14, *A worthless person, a wicked man, goes about with crooked speech, winks with his eyes, signals with his feet, points with his finger, with perverted heart devises evil, continually sowing discord;*
 - 1) What he says can't be trusted.
 - 2) His body language is deceptive.
 - 3) His actions are destructive.
 - 4) Augustine, *Take away love and all that you do evaporates.*
 - b. The fate of such a person is his destruction (15), *therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly; in a moment he will be broken beyond healing.*
 - 1) Proverbs 29:1, *He who is often reprov'd, yet stiffens his neck, will suddenly be broken beyond healing.*
 - 2) 2 Chronicles 38:16, *But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, until there was no remedy.*
- B. Don't (16-19)
 1. Seven things God hates (16), *There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him:*
 - a) Be prideful, dishonest, murder (17), *haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,*
 - b) Make wicked plans with wicked actions (18), *a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil,*
 - c) Be a false witness and stir up discord (19), *a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.*
 2. Emphasis
 - a. There is a heart problem
 - 1) John Cassian (4th), *No tower of righteousness can possibly be raised in our souls unless the foundation of true humility is first laid in our hearts.*
 - 2) Venerable Bede, *The six capital crimes enumerated here are nevertheless like minor faults when compared with the sowing of discord, since the deed that fractures the unity and fraternity which were achieved by the grace of the Holy Spirit is surely a greater sin.*
 - 3) Lactantius, *The power of divine wisdom is so great that, when infused into one's heart, it expels foolishness...*
 - b. Behavioral problems are the result of a heart problem.
 - 1) Chrysostom, *...since the heart was impure, it also made the limbs impure, so that it shed the poison to its extremities.*
 - 2) Rufinus, *Crime doesn't consist in the deed but in the will.*
 - 3) Gregory of Nyssa, *One stone doesn't make an entire tower any more than obeying one commandment lifts the soul to the required height of perfection.*

CONCLUSION

- A. Wisdom is the skill of living one's life well in the light of eternity.
- B. Lactantius, *The power of divine wisdom is so great that when infused into one's heart, it expels foolishness...*
- C. Be prudent, be industrious, be sincere.
- D. Pride stirs up discord which results in damage to others and destruction to oneself.