

Principles from Proverbs: Taming the Temperament

Understanding Grief, Sorrow, and Depression—Part II

Introduction: The previous lesson addressed both attitudes and actions that lead ultimately to sorrow. Barring extraordinary circumstances, most people bring most of their sorrows upon themselves. (Denial of this fact only prolongs and deepens the journey into sorrow.) In addition to attitudes and actions, the Proverbs identify certain people whose company results in sorrow and depression.

II. Relationships That Bring Sorrow and Depression

A. Untrustworthy Friends, Coworkers, and Associates

Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint. (Proverbs 25:19)

1. Because no man is an island, it is incumbent upon each of us to lean on others—more or less—throughout life.
2. Some relationships are beyond our choosing (coworkers, for example), but many are a matter of choice.
 - a. We may be forced to deal with an “unfaithful man” because of providential proximity.
 - b. In relationships where choice is an option, we should avoid close ties with untrustworthy individuals.
3. Even if one can not avoid an untrustworthy individual, one can withhold confidence from him. Don’t depend upon him regardless of his station, position, etc.
4. Remember, if a man can not be trusted when times are good, he will be doubly useless when times are bad!
5. Leaning on an untrustworthy man will always result in a grinding, agonizing pain. Learn where *not* to lean!

B. Foolish Children

A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him. (Proverbs 17:25)

He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy. (Proverbs 17:21)

...a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother (Proverbs 10:1b)

1. The idea of “foolish” in the Proverbs carries an immoral connotation. It is more than just a lack of common sense. Rather, it is willful participation in immoral activity.
2. A child has the power to embitter his mother and to rob his father of all joy. How careful we must be in the rearing of our Children! A good retirement involves more than your 401 K.

C. Talebearers

The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. (Proverbs 26:22)

1. The talebearer is one who delights in the spread of “news” with no concern for helping the situation. Notice that the “words” are wounds, indicating a malicious tone to the spreading of the “word.”
2. Gossip always wounds. It is unnecessary to discuss personal, embarrassing, or hurtful matters with uninvolved persons—even if every detail you give is *true*.
3. Gossip always wounds *deeply*. Most folks wouldn’t “knife” someone in the literal sense, but sometimes their words wound deeper than even a knife can reach.
4. Gossip hurts so deeply because its chief concern is entertainment at another’s expense. Gossip shows no compassion for its object, and often holds its object in contempt.

D. Evil Authority Figures

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn. (Proverbs 29:2)

1. The emotional health of a nation is largely determined by the morality of its leaders. Bad men make bad leaders. Characterless men make bad leaders. You must *NOT* divorce a man’s “personal life” from his public life.
2. Character counts because character has far reaching consequences. When a man of questionable character occupies a position of high authority, his negative influence will ultimately reach to the masses. Adolph Hitler’s twisted vision for the German race ultimately perverted the character of his people—allowing him to commit mass murder under their noses and with their approval.
3. Christians should always vote for character and conviction. Frequently, we are left deciding between the lesser of two evils. However, every Christian should exercise his right and responsibility to vote!