

“Humility: The Pathway to Honor”

Scripture Reading: Ecclesiastes 12:8-14

Introduction: The Proverbs: Interpretation and Use

1. The name “Proverbs” comes from the Hebrew word “mashal” which means “a comparison of one thing to another.” It is also the first word of the book.
2. The Proverbs are unique amongst Biblical Books:
 - A. In many instances the verses can be taken out of context without damaging the teaching or interpretation.
 - B. The Proverbs could be called “God’s Book of Bumper Stickers”
 - C. H.A. Ironside says that the Book of Proverbs “abounds in pithy truisms and common sense epigrams.”
 - D. Samuel bar-Nachmani= “each separate verse may be divided into two or three allegories.”
 - E. It has also been said that:
The Psalms portray Solomon’s youth
Proverbs portray his manhood and
Ecclesiastes show him in his old-age.
3. Proverbs is one of the books of poetry:
 - A. Not that it has rhyming words (as in English)
 - B. But that it has complementary thoughts:

Some are synonymous, some are contrasting and some are complete
i.e. the second line completes the thought or lesson of the first line.
4. Ironside also says that the Proverbs “increase...every day godliness; and the book is a distinctively practical portion of the Word of God.... The divine reason for the Book of Proverbs= God would save all who heed...from the heart-breaking experiences and aimless wandering of...” Solomon the preacher of Ecclesiastes. The Thompson Chain Study has this comment, “Solomon was a guide-post, rather than an example. He pointed the way to Wisdom but in the later part of his life he did not walk in it; hence his son, Rehoboam, followed his example, rather than his counsels, and became a foolish and evil ruler.”

5. W.E. Osterley calls the book of Proverbs, "A manual of sanctified common sense."
6. And Charles Bridges states that the book contains "terse sentences, expressing a striking sentiment in the fewest words."
7. Solomon himself, describes his maxims as "apples of gold in pictures of silver" Chapter 25, verse 11. "This book shows the real intent of the Scriptures—not to teach philosophy, but religion; not to make men of science, but men of sound godliness."
8. An illustration would be to consider the people of the past=
 Very few could read or write
 Even fewer could afford to own a book
 Less that these could spare the time to study what God had said; hence the prophets.
 The book came into existence during the 7th century B.C. long before literature was widespread.
9. Proverbs, as such, would be very helpful in learning: examples=
10. From Ethiopian, "Slowly, slowly, the egg grows legs, and then suddenly one day, it walks away" to teach patience.
11. In today's parlance, "Don't count your chickens before they're hatched."
 "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink." "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen."
12. Almost every culture and language of the world uses short, pithy proverbial statements to try to pass on commonsense wisdom from generation to generation. In ancient times they were "rational guidelines for right living.'
13. However, we must also remember, that Proverbs are not promises, but guidelines and advice, **Generally speaking**, they prove to be true in our lives.

I. Humility: What?

- A. Definition= "to be afflicted, to stoop down; to be concerned about, worried about, subdue, deny one self."
- B. "to submit, humble oneself to be lowly, submissive, to be cowed."
- C. A prime example= Isaiah 53:7, "He was **oppressed**, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth...."

- D. Judges 16:19= What Delilah did to Samson when she cut his hair.
- E. Another prime example= Psalm 105:17-19 where the word is used of Joseph in the Egyptian prison.

II. How?

- A. In our text of Proverbs 15:33, the thought is that we humble ourselves rather than being humbled by others. There are many biblical examples of devout people humbling themselves in the sight of God and enjoying the blessings that follow. The most important of these would be when individuals repent of their sins and become saved because of it.
- B. The men of Nineveh in the book of Jonah and Jonah himself, in the belly of the fish come to mind. David when confronted by Nathan the prophet over his sin with Bathsheba; Israel in II Chron. 7:14; see also Isaiah 57:15.
- C. The opposite of this is pride which is one of the 7 things the Lord hates in Proverbs 6:17 and one of the sins listed in the indictment of the whole world in Romans 1:30 “..haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, etc. This was also mentioned last week in James 4:6 and I Peter 5:5.

III. Why?

- A. To have honor.
- B. Ex. 20:12, “Honour thy father and thy mother....” and we will be honored.
- C. Balaam & Balak in Numbers 22: 17, 37, and 24:11.
- D. I Sam. 2:27-36= Eli’s choice between honoring God or his sons.
- E. Psalm 149:1-9, especially vs. 9