

PROVERBS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Proverbs chapter 24 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we have seen in our study on the book of Proverbs that Solomon is giving to us the wisdom of God. And make no mistake about it; we need the wisdom of God in our lives to help us to live a life that will glorify Him. And here's the thing. People today have this desire to live a long life and I don't think that is as important as how we live out the life that God has given to us! It is not the length of our life; it is the depth of our life you might say. That is what God is giving to us here, the tools to live out our lives to the fullest and to bring glory to Him in all that we do. With that said, let's begin reading in Proverbs chapter 24 starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word!

PROVERBS 24**VERSES 1-2**

1. People today tend to be drawn to "bad boys" you might say. They are intrigued by evil people; they are envious of what they do. And God's warning to us is to not be envious of them because they will drag you down to their level.

VERSES 3-4

1. This just makes sense. When you build a house you follow a set of plans. You just don't do things haphazardly! You also furnish your house the same way. You don't put your bed in the kitchen, unless you are in college. There is order, there are plans that you follow.

The same thing is true in our lives. As we build our lives we don't follow the ways of the wicked, being enticed by them. We follow the ways of the Lord, the plans you might say that He has established for us in His Word! We furnish our lives with the good things of God.

And the same is true with our families. A home that is built upon Christ, filled with the love of Christ, is more valuable than all the riches in the world. As Joshua said, “**... But for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**” Joshua 24:15. May we build our lives; our families by the plans of God found in the Word of God and opened up to us by the Spirit of God!

VERSES 5-6

1. When we think of strength today we tend to think of guys with big muscles and that is not the case. That is not what God is talking about here. A person is wise, he is strong because of the knowledge he has of the Lord and how he applies that knowledge to his life.

David did not defeat the giant Goliath in the power of his own strength, but we are told in I Samuel 17:45-47, “**Then David said to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord’s, and He will give you into our hands.’**” It wasn't about David's strength, his might, his power, but the Lord's working through him to defeat this enemy!

What is interesting today is that we fight these spiritual battles in the power of our strength and we are not winning. We need to come to the Lord, seek Him, be in His Word and listen to the counsel of the men and women of the Scriptures for they can teach us many things as Paul reminds us in Romans 15:4, “**For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.**” Also, you can read through Hebrews chapter 11 and see what is spoken of the men and women of faith and how they can teach us lessons of faith, how they can help get our eyes focused back upon the One who can help, the Lord!

And not only do we see wise counsel from the Scriptures; we can also receive it from our brothers and sisters in the Lord. Seek godly wisdom before you rush into a battle. That would just be foolish if you didn't!

VERSE 7

1. The picture here is that this wisdom of God seems to be out of reach for the fool. His speech is without authority. What is tragic today is that people listen to fools and they think they have the authority to speak. Now some may argue, “What gives you this authority to speak?” I think it is very simple, “**It is written!**” In other words, I don't speak on my own authority but on the authority of God found in the Word of God. That is why the fool cannot attain this wisdom; he does not seek it from God!

VERSES 8-9

1. God has gifted people and those gifts, those talents can be used for good or for evil.

Tragically many times they are used for evil. Think about the person who is good with computers. They can use that talent to bring glory to God or they can plot evil by trying to hack into people's computers, steal their identity, take advantage of them and-so-on. It is a sin and it is an abomination or a disgrace to men!

VERSE 10

1. Maybe you remember that old saying, my cross country coach use to say it to us a lot, "When the going gets tough the tough get going!" He was trying to push us forward, to get us to go farther, to improve our time and-so-on. And the idea here is that when it gets tough, when the heat is turned up, this person gives up, they don't continue on, they drop out in a sense.

Please don't misunderstand me. I am not talking about our strength, our power. I am talking about faith, faith in the Lord to see you through that time, trusting in Him. Make no mistake about it; our faith is tested in difficult times. Anyone can praise God during the good times, but our faith is really tested in the fire of trials and tribulations. And as we go through those times and we don't faint, we don't give up; our faith will shine forth to believers to encourage them and to unbelievers to draw them to Jesus.

In Jeremiah 12:5 we read the following, "**If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, Then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, In which you trusted, they wearied you, Then how will you do in the flood plain of the Jordan?**" In other words, the battle is going to be intense, tiresome, but don't give up, what do you expect in war? The key is that we need to look to the Lord to be the strength of our life.

Remember in II Corinthians chapter 12 as Paul is praying to the Lord to be delivered from this “**thorn in the flesh**” and listen to how the Lord responded back to Paul and then Paul’s response. We are told, “**And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**” II Corinthians 12:9-10.

Two points here. In our weakness we see the Lord’s strength made perfect, it is seen. In our weakness we are strong. I know that sounds wrong but it is only wrong if you take God out of the picture. We are strong in Him. May our faith grow, may it be strong in the Lord so that we don’t give up, we don’t throw in the towel, that we as Paul will be able to say, “**I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**” II Timothy 4:7. May we look to the Lord to be our strength and not give up but fight that good fight of faith and finish the race and not just finish but we need to finish strong!

VERSES 11-12

1. We know that people are dying and going to Hell apart from Christ. That really is not the issue. The issue is what are you doing about it? Your indifference speaks volumes and how can you ignore their plight? God is saying that He knows your excuses, He knows what you did and didn’t do and it is an issue. Think about a person who is drowning and you see him out there and you do nothing to save his life, are you responsible? You are because you did nothing to save him even though you had the resources to do so. Dante said, “The hottest places in Hell are reserved for those who in time of great moral crises maintain their neutrality.”

Is there Biblical support for our accountability to save people, share with them? I believe there is. In Ezekiel 3:17-19 the Lord tells him, **“Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.”**

You might say, “That is the Old Testament and God was speaking to Ezekiel and the children of Israel.” Then why does Paul say in Acts 20:26-27, **“Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”** I think Paul might be thinking of what Ezekiel was told and Paul said I am innocent of their blood because I have given to them the whole counsel of God; I have shared with them the Gospel message. If they receive it or reject it that is up to them, but he was cleared because he spoke forth the truths of God! May we do no less!

VERSES 13-14

1. Solomon is saying that just as honey is very sweet, it is pleasant to eat, the same should be true for the Word of God, the place we find wisdom and understanding for our life. We should desire it like honey. Psalm 119:103-104 tells us, **“How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.”**

May we have that kind of hunger as we dig into God's Word, as we read God's Word, as we study God's Word, that we have such an appetite for it just as I do for honey, it is sweet, it is pleasant and it will help me to grow!

VERSES 15-16

1. Do we stumble in life? Do we blow it at times in our walk with the Lord? Do we face trials and tribulations that test our faith? Sure we do, that is not the issue. The issue is what we do after these things happen to us. For us as Christians, we are only righteous in Him, we may fall but we get right back up again and continue on in our walk with the Lord. The Lord does not leave us down; He lifts us up if we allow Him to.

You see, falling is going to happen, that is the reality. What is really bad is just lying there and doing nothing about it. The trials of fire temper our lives just as steel is tempered in the fire. But for the wicked, things are different. When things happen upon them that are distressful, many times they don't get up. And ultimately they will face the fires of Hell apart from Christ. You see, they are wicked because they stand in their own righteousness, which are like filthy rags. Only the righteousness of Christ imputed into our lives by faith will be accepted by God as the blood of Christ cleanses us from all our sin!

VERSES 17-18

1. Have you ever said, “Good, they are only getting what they deserve! I am glad that happened to them.” The Lord is saying that we are “**not to rejoice when your enemy falls.**” Why is that? Because look at the mercy He has extended to you! And if you do rejoice, then to teach you about mercy, to teach you about the grace of God, God will bless your enemy! In other words, your actions are worse than his wickedness.

VERSES 19-20

1. The word, “**fret**” in the Hebrew is CHARAH, (khaw-raw’) and it speaks of being hot, blazing, growing warm and Solomon is saying that we are not to blow up against evildoers as well as not being envious of them. Why is that? Because in the end their lamp will be put out, they will be cast into outer darkness never to trouble anyone again! Perspective is everything. And instead of getting mad at them, blowing up at them, losing your cool over them, bring them the love of Jesus so their lamp will not be put out!

VERSES 21-22

1. I think we all are fine with the first point, “**fear the LORD.**” The problem comes when it says that we are to fear the king or the leader of our country. How can we do that, he is a wicked man? The reason is really very simple; it is because God has placed him in that position. We may not like it, but are you praying for him or complaining about him?

Paul said in Romans 13:1, “**Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.**” And Peter put it like this in I Peter 2:17, “**Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.**” If you refuse then you do not fear the Lord because you are going against what the Lord has said! That means we are not to try to overthrow civil governments. I realize that you may not agree, but did you ever see Paul plot to overthrow Rome? Well, maybe, by bringing to them the Good News of Jesus Christ! What about Daniel in Babylon? No, he brought the king to the Lord! What a lesson for us!

2. Now let me also say this. We are to obey human government until the government tells us that we are to disobey the Lord. For instance, if the government says that you can't talk about Jesus, you can't share your faith, you can't read the Bible, then we must obey God rather than man. Not to overthrow the government but we humbly take the consequences for our actions. We really are not in a battle for this country, if you think about it. We are trying to save people out of this world and in doing so it may save this country!

VERSES 23-26

1. Starting here in verse 23 and on through verse 34 we are in a section that says, “**These things also belong to the wise.**” So if you are not wise, then I guess these things do not belong to you.

2. Here is one of those areas that our society has moved away from and we are seeing the consequences of that. We are not to have a different set of standards depending on who we are talking to or in the judgments that we are making. You don't call the wicked "*righteous*" and you don't call the righteous "*wicked*" that is wrong and the people will not like it even though there is not much they can do with this injustice apart from Christ! Now the wicked have no problem with the wicked, they love this. They call good evil and evil good.

Now let me give you a couple of verses to show you what God has to say about not showing partiality and judging fairly. In Deuteronomy 1:17 we are told, "**You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment is God's.**" Keep that perspective and be fair no matter what. Also, we are told in Deuteronomy 16:19, "**You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.**"

And there is a blessing to a society to have righteous judges, to be honest in the things that you say. Think about it this way as verse 26 tells us. A sincere kiss shows affection towards the person you are kissing and it is desirable. So too is an honest answer to a person, it is like a kiss on the lips you might say.

VERSE 27

1. What is Solomon talking about here when he basically says, “Take care of your business first, and then build your house”? I lean towards the idea of marriage and getting your life in order so that when you embark upon marriage you have gotten rid of a lot of that garbage in your life and you are ready to build. Too many today rush into marriage and they are not prepared. Not that any of us are really prepared for marriage but get your walk with the Lord right because marriage is not going to help it, it will test it!

How do you get your life in order? Simply, **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”** II Timothy 3:16-17. I think marriage is a good work and if you want to be ready, if you want to be complete, then be in God’s Word, apply it to your life, walk the walk of faith and God will take care of the rest.

VERSES 28-29

1. Paul said in Romans 12:19, **“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.”** The problem for us is that there are times we don’t agree with that and we strike out at others. We are not to bring false charges against anyone or spread lies about them no matter what they do to us. We as Christians do not return evil for evil! The best thing to do is to commit it to God and God will defend our reputation as long as we take care of our character, how we walk. Vengeance is not ours, it is the Lord’s!

2. Now Solomon is going to speak out of an experience he had in these next 5 verses, verses 30-34, and again he is going to deal with Mr. Slothful Man.

VERSES 30-34

1. As Solomon is walking down the road he walked by this lazy persons vineyard. And when he looked he saw that it was overgrown with weeds, thorns, the walls were broken down. The result is that his vineyard was not going to produce fruit because of his laziness.

2. Now as Solomon considered this, so should we, for we too can receive instruction from it. You see, what was true for this vineyard is also true in our spiritual life. You have to cultivate a daily walk with the Lord. If you don't your life will be overrun with weeds that choke out the growth, and the result is our life will not be fruitful, but broken and overgrown with weeds.

William MacDonald wrote this regarding how it applies to our lives,

When we succumb to laziness in spiritual matters, our life (vineyard) becomes infested with the works of the flesh (thistles and nettles). There is no fruit of God. Our spiritual defenses (the wall) are down, and the devil gains a foothold. The result of our coldness and backsliding is poverty of soul.

- William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary, p. 853

May we not become lazy in our spiritual life! Paul said in Galatians 6:9-10, "**And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.**"

May we not grow weary, may we not become lazy because there is an opportunity before us to serve the Lord. When Paul speaks of “**opportunity**” he is not speaking of doors that may open up, situations that arise. He used the Greek word KAIROS (kahee-ros’) and it speaks of a fixed period of time or the opportunities we have in this life. You see, once this life is over those opportunities are gone! We have a unique opportunity as Christians to serve Almighty God, don’t waste those opportunities you have because you are lazy but live your life to the fullest for the ***LORD!***

PROVERBS 25

VERSE 1

1. About 200 years after the death of Solomon, after he wrote these Proverbs, the men of Hezekiah’s day found them, copied them and put these Proverbs of Solomon together and this is found in chapters 25 through 29.

VERSE 2

1. There are two ways to look at this and I think both do apply. First of all think of all that our God knows! He knows everything and thus, some of the things of God are hidden from us. We can't know everything about an all-knowing God. Thomas Cartwright put it like this, "He would not be God if His counsels and works did not transcend human intelligence." Absolutely that is true. In Deuteronomy 29:29 we are told, "**The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.**" And that really leads us to the last half of what Solomon said, that we are to search out the things of God and he will reveal to us the things we need to know.

2. The second point is just as important. First of all the word "**conceal**" speaks of a covering up or hiding. And I believe Solomon is speaking of our sins. God has covered them up - then temporarily by the animal sacrifices - today completely by the blood of Christ.

David put it this way in Psalm 32:1-2, "**Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.**" You see, we don't come before God asking for justice to be poured out upon our life, for we deserve death. We come before God asking for mercy, that we don't receive what we deserve. Thus, because of His great love that He bestows upon rebellious man, His free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ, He is glorified.

And once again, that last half of this verse is played out like this. We need to search out a matter before giving judgment so that we can make the appropriate judgment. In regards to our sins, we are guilty before God, that is where we need to come to before we can come to the Savior, come to Jesus! God will show us who we are if we are willing and He will show us who He is if we are willing to come to Him!

VERSE 3

1. Solomon is saying that these three things are unsearchable. Where does the universe end? We keep expanding it farther and farther as our instruments get more sophisticated. We know the depth of the earth but we have never been able to probe it or search it out by drilling down to it. And lastly, the heart of a king, many times their actions, their ideas are hard to figure out.

VERSES 4-5

1. Here the idea is removing impurities from metal so it could be used to bring honor to the one who purchased it. That is what God is doing in our lives, purging out the impurities so that we may bring Him honor, the one who purchased us by His sacrifice. Paul said in Ephesians 2:10, **“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”** That word **“workmanship”** is POIEMA in the Greek, and it speaks of a masterpiece, a poem. God has taken us and made us into a masterpiece to bring glory to Him by the things we do.

Now like taking the dross from the silver, you need to remove the wicked before you, especially before leaders because it will not help you but it will hurt you! And for leaders, when the wicked are removed then the kingdom you might say is established on righteousness!

VERSES 6-7

1. Too often people see themselves bigger than they are, deserving all kinds of honor and placing themselves in positions that will give them the most attention. The warning is not to be proud, but to humble yourself and let others move you to a place of honor so you won't be embarrassed and moved to a seat of lower honor.

Jesus picked up on this same thought in Luke 14:7-11 as He spoke how the religious leaders tried to sit in the chief seats, the seats of honor. We are told, **“So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: ‘When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; and he who invited you and him come and say to you, “Give place to this man,” and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, “Friend, go up higher.” Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”** In other words, humble yourself in the site of the Lord and He will lift you up higher than you have ever been before. But if you try to exalt yourself, you will be brought down. God will not share His glory with anyone!

VERSES 8-10

1. Once again Solomon is trying to give us some godly wisdom here. If you have a problem, a dispute with a neighbor, go and talk with him, work it out privately with them. Don't make this a big confrontation because in the end it may lead to your humiliation as he starts talking and revealing things that you may regret!

One writer put it like this regarding this idea of gossip, of not dealing with the person yourself but telling others, “A little disagreement arises with some friends, and you have not the courage to go and speak about it to that friend alone, but mention it to another. The principle laid down in God’s Word is forgotten, and mischief follows. Talking about a thing of this kind does no good, and in the end widens the breach. If we would only take such a passage as our guide, and regulate our conduct by it, we would lay aside many trivial ‘causes’ of offense, and spare ourselves many disturbing’s of mind.” (Unknown author).

VERSE 11

1. Along those same lines Solomon now speaks of what our words are like or what they should be like. They should be sweet; they should be delicious to the person receiving them, like an **“apple of gold”** or more likely a citrus fruit like an orange is what is being spoken of here! The words we speak should be pleasant, refreshing to those around us and as we allow the Spirit of God to work through us, He will give us the right words to say at the right time to minister to those around us. And if we don’t listen to Him then what comes from our mouth will be bitter, distasteful, it will not be refreshing.

VERSE 12

1. A person who brings words of correction to another and they receive those words and apply them to their life and they get back on track is as beautiful as a gold earring!

VERSE 13

1. Now having snow come when you are trying to harvest your crops would be a disaster. That is not what this is saying. Keep in mind that during the months when the crops would be harvested, they were some of the hottest months. Also, Mount Hermon would have snow on it most of the year. Now as you are working in the field how wonderful it would be to have a tall cold glass of water, how refreshing that would be.

The point that Solomon is making from this is that the words we speak to another who is dry, who is parched can be as refreshing as a cold glass of water. May we refresh people with the words we speak and not bring them down or dry them up!

VERSE 14

1. The Indians had a name for this person, “Heap big wind – no rain.” In other words there are people out there who speak of giving so much of themselves for the work of the ministry, in supporting the church, and many times their talk is empty. They are clouds without rain, empty and very disappointing.

And we can apply this to the winds of doctrine that blow through the church also. Think about all the promises from the Brownsville revival or the Toronto blessing and when you look at how arrogantly they spoke and you see the results, they were clouds and wind without water, nothing good can come from it. If you want revival to take place get back to the Word of God because God’s Word is not empty and as we study and apply God’s Word we have the water or the rain of the Holy Spirit that is applied to our hearts to keep them soft and pliable for the Lord to mold and shape us! Let us not be, “Heap big wind – no rain.”

VERSE 15

1. Remember what we read back in Proverbs 15:1-2, “**A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.**” We can allow our speech to break a person’s hard heartedness by using kind words or we can be unwise and speak harsh words that will promote a fight and cause your heart to become hard. We don’t want to crush a person but we want to bring them to the place where they can receive the forgiveness of God in Christ and be restored!

VERSE 16

1. As you look at our society do you think gluttony is a problem? I don’t even think I have to answer that. Have you seen how big the hamburgers are getting and they are putting so much stuff on them that it is dripping off of them. I don’t know, that doesn’t look good to me but I guess it sells. Lets’ face it, and I think we know this, gluttony or overdoing anything can harm you. Many people have been so careful not to eat fat, no cholesterol for them, and now we find out that our body needs some fat, we need to take in some cholesterol or it will be harmful. Keep a balance in your life with your relationship with the Lord as your number one priority. Overdoing things can be dangerous to our health and I don’t even think it is possible to do that with the Lord. You can never get too much of Him; our problem is we get too little!

VERSE 17

1. We can overdo our eating and we can overdo our welcome. Don’t go visiting your neighbor with your pillow and sleeping bag in your hand, they may not appreciate it. In other words, don’t overstay your welcome.

Now as true as that is with our neighbors, it is not true with the Lord. We can never overstay our welcome with Him and I think most of the time we don't even spend as much time with Him as we do with our neighbors!

VERSE 18

1. Solomon is speaking of bearing a false witness against his neighbor and he makes three points regarding what this does. Bearing a false witness can damage a person as much as if he were beaten with a club, being smashed to pieces. Bearing a false witness can damage a person as much as if you sliced him with a sword, cut him to pieces. And bearing a false witness can damage a person as much as if you pierced him with an arrow, wounding him! Be careful of what you say for our words can be very damaging.

VERSE 19

1. Putting your trust in someone who is unfaithful, someone who can't be trusted will only bring pain to your life like a bad tooth and will be unstable as a foot that is dislocated. You know who you can trust and who you can't trust. How do you know? Remember what Proverbs 17:17 says, **"A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity."** A true friend will be there in the good times and bad. A true friend will stand with you and lift you up when you are down. A true friend is someone who is in love with Jesus, at least they should be!

VERSE 20

1. Sometimes people are insensitive and unsympathetic to what others are going through. It is not time to party and laugh it up when something tragic has happened. Paul said in I Corinthians 12:26-27, **“And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.”**

You see, we as individuals are part of the body of Christ and a healthy body works together for the betterment of the entire body. When one suffers, we are all there with that person, when one rejoices, we rejoice with him. You see, there is a time to laugh and a time to cry, don't be insensitive to what others are going through. But that is not always the case as this story tells us.

Keith Weston told of a fellow minister who was making his first hospital visit. “He found a poor patient with both legs strung up to pulleys, both arms in plaster, and an intravenous in one of them. And he said with his big evangelical smile and taking out his big evangelical Bible, ‘Brother, are you rejoicing?’” Weston said, “The minister never told me what the patient said, but it wasn't very polite.”

- William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary, p. 856

I bet it wasn't. May we be careful and be appropriate as we minister to people, as we speak to people. May we have the love of Christ and the compassion of Christ towards them!

VERSES 21-22

1. Paul quotes this in Romans chapter 12, and the point is this. We are to treat our enemies with compassion and not have an attitude of revenge towards them. Jesus tells us to love our enemies, to pray for them. You see, that is not the attitude of the world but a godly characteristic that should be manifested in our lives. Now this idea of heaping hot coals on a person's head has a couple different views. One is that this action was a sign of repentance. Another, and one I lean towards, is that in this period of time you didn't have matches or lighters to lite your stove or fires. Using flint rocks or sticks would take time but hot coals would be used to rekindle a fire quickly and thus, if you gave your enemy hot coals you were extending kindness to them, and even if they don't change, God sees your heart, He knows what you are doing, and He will reward you.

2. Maybe some of you are skeptical about this and if you are then you need to discuss this with the Lord. But let me give you an example to show you what I mean and how at times God will use this to minister to people. And please understand that God is always working and if they don't receive what you have God is still working, in you! We are told,

An irate neighbor called a new believer and delivered a violent tirade against the believer's five-year-old daughter for trampled flowers, a broken window, and other offenses. When the neighbor came up for air, the Christian asked her to come over to discuss the matter.

By the time the neighbor arrived, the table had been set for coffee and sweet rolls. "Oh, I'm sorry – you're having company." "No," replied the believer, "I thought we could talk about my daughter over a cup of coffee."

The Christian gave thanks for the food and asked for God's wisdom. When she opened her eyes, the visitor was crying. "It's not your daughter, it's mine," blurted the neighbor. "I don't know why I lashed out at you. I just can't cope with my children, my husband, or my home!"

As soon as the neighbor made this admission, the young believer started sharing Christ. Within six weeks the neighbor and her family had been born again.

- William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary, p. 856

May we remember it is not about us, it is about others and showing them the love of Christ and seeing what He will do in them and through them and in us and through us for that matter! Win them over with love because you will not win them over with hate!

VERSE 23

1. Just as you can count on certain wind conditions to bring forth rain, you can count on slander, backbiting, an evil tongue to bring forth anger.

VERSE 24

1. This is what we read back in Proverbs 21:9, why did he repeat it? Maybe it was an issue for him. And as bad as it might have been for Solomon, ladies remember that we don't have Proverbs from any of his wives. I bet they could have given us an ear full of what Solomon was like on his bad days! The reality is this. No marriage is going to grow, blossom unless Jesus is in the center and He will produce the beautiful fruit of the Spirit in your life as you surrender to Him!

VERSE 25

1. Cold water is refreshing on a hot day and so too is encouraging words from afar. I love getting letters from Pastor Paul out in India, from the children we support at Bridge of Hope, of the other missionaries that we support. I find it encouraging seeing how things are going and what God is doing in that part of the world, and how we are part of that work. Those words are refreshing to my soul.

Now you don't have to be thousands of miles away to bring refreshing water to a weary soul. You can call them on the phone, you can e-mail them, send them a card, there are so many ways that you can reach out and touch someone with the love of Christ. And if all of a sudden you are thinking about someone that you have not talked to in a while, maybe the Lord is putting them on your heart so you can pray and call them up and talk with them! Be open and be refreshing.

VERSE 26

1. When a Christian falls the unsaved love to exploit their failures and it truly clouds the picture of what Christianity is all about. You see, Christians who fall are not doing anything worse than the rest of the world. So what's the big deal? We should be held to a higher standard than the unsaved.

If Christ has made an impact in our life then it should be manifested in our actions. And when we sin we give the enemies of God an opportunity to blasphemy God. Peter admonishes us in I Peter 2:11-12, **“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”** Instead of giving people polluted waters to drink from may we give them the pure refreshing waters that God has given to us and let them see what God has done in our lives!

VERSE 27

1. People who promote themselves are striving after vain glory. And if you do that enough it will make you sick or maybe those around you! Remember what James said, **“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”** James 4:10.

VERSE 28

1. A person who has lost control, is out of control, who can't control his temper is a person who is not under the control of the Spirit of God. What he is doing, what he is saying is the evidence for that. And like walls that are broken down you have no real defense and you are open for anything and everything that is out there because you are exposed. You need to come back to God and surrender to Him. A life lived out of control will not be good.

As I close let me leave you on a positive note. We are told in Proverbs 16:32, “**He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.**” The only way to win this battle is through surrender. I know, that sounds strange, but until you surrender your will to God you will never be able to control your anger! Wise words that we need to apply to our lives. “Lord, help us to learn these lessons so we may grow in our walk with you. Help us to learn these lessons so we may shine for you. And Lord, help us not to try to accomplish this in our own strength, but by your Spirit working in us and through us for your glory!”