

PROVERBS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Proverbs chapter 26 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In Proverbs 26:1-12 Solomon is dealing with relationships with fools. Then in Proverbs 26:13-16 he deals with relationships with sluggards. And finally, in Proverbs 26:17-28 he is going to deal with relationships with gossips. I know, very uplifting and yet they are very important words of wisdom that God is imparting to us.

Let's face it, relationships are important. Let me show you what I mean with this story. We are told,

We can live only in relationships. We need each other. A rather crude and cruel experiment was carried out by Emperor Frederick, who ruled the Roman Empire in the thirteenth century. He wanted to know what man's original language was: Hebrew, Greek, or Latin? He decided to isolate a few infants from the sound of the human voice. He reasoned that they would eventually speak the natural tongue of man. Wet nurses [someone who cares for another's child] who were sworn to absolute silence were obtained, and though it was difficult for them, they abided by the rule. The infants never heard a word - not a sound from a human voice. Within several months they were all dead.

- Joe E. Trull

We do need each other, we need to have relationships. But let me also say this, we must be wise in those relationships and Solomon is going to expound on that for us. With that said, let's begin reading in Proverbs chapter 26, starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

PROVERBS 26**VERSE 1**

1. This just makes sense. If it were to snow in the summertime or rain during the harvest season, that would be disastrous. It would damage the crops. Solomon takes that picture and now compares that to a fool who is put in a place of honor, a place where people will look up to him. Just as the snow and rain can be damaging to the crops so too will the honor of fools be damaging to others and it will only encourage the fool.

And please understand when Solomon is speaking of a fool he is not speaking of someone with a low IQ score. A fool is someone who denies God, rejects God. We are told in Psalm 14:1, **“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ . . .”** In other words the Psalmist is saying that, ***“The fool has said in his heart, ‘No God.’ . . .”*** A fool here is not someone who is not only denying the existence of God but also they refuse to acknowledge God and obey Him. That is a fool!

VERSE 2

1. Once again Solomon is giving to us a picture and then he relates it to what fools are doing. Think about the sparrow and the swallow and how they dart back-and-forth through the sky but they never alight or land upon us. That is the picture and here is what Solomon likens this to.

When a fool curses you or tries to vilify you it is just like these birds. They might go here and there but they will never land upon you, they will not impact your life. Remember the story of Balaam in the book of Numbers and how he was hired by Balak to curse Israel. He couldn't do it even though he tried.

We should not worry about these things; the Lord will take care of them. Remember what we were told in Isaiah 54:17, “**No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me,’ Says the LORD.**” The heritage the Lord has given to us is that no weapon that the enemy puts together will prosper and overtake us. What a great heritage the Lord has given to us. Let these fools flutter around and do whatever they are doing, what they are saying will not land upon us because God is our fortress!

VERSE 3

1. Solomon has a way of painting these pictures for us and it really helps to drive home the point. For these wild animals, you need a whip; you need a bridle to keep them in line. As this relates to a fool, many times sharp correction is the only language they understand. But that is not what God wants to do in our lives. That is not how He wants to direct us. In Psalm 32:9 we are told, “**Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.**”

I love how the Lord wants to direct our lives, “**I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.**” Psalm 32:8. Look to Him, be in His Word and He will direct you. That is being wise and thus, may we not be like the fool!

VERSES 4-5

1. As you read these two verses they seem to contradict each other. One says that we are not to answer a fool and the other says that we are to answer a fool. So which is it? I believe in verse 4 Solomon is saying that we are not to respond like the fool with the way we talk, that we lose our temper, that we behave rudely, don't go down to their level. I think that makes sense.

Then, in verse 5 in regards to answering a fool, we are not to let them off the hook you might say with their foolish talk. We are to reprove them; we are to rebuke them according to the Word of God and not according to our emotions, which will bring us down to their level!

Let me share with you what we are not to do and then I will share with you what we are to do. In Numbers chapter 20 we see the children of Israel complaining again about not having water and Moses brings this request to the Lord and the Lord told Moses to speak to the rock and it will bring forth water. And we are told of the response of Moses to the people. He told them, **“... ‘Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?’ Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.”** Numbers 20:10-11.

Moses answered the people “according to their folly” and God was not happy with Moses. That is what we are not to do!

On the positive side we see this in the book of Job. By the time we get to Job chapter 2 we see that Job has lost his wealth, his children, his health, he is in a mess. And his wife tells him, **“... ‘Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!’”** Job 2:9. Now that was a foolish statement made by Job's wife.

Job could have responded back by coming down to her level, you know what I mean. After his wife said that he could have responded back by saying, “Oh yea! You mother wears army boots!” That would be foolish and maybe some of you have said something along those lines before. That is not how we are to answer.

Job spoke wisely and he put her foolish counsel to shame. He told her, “**... ‘You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?’ In all this Job did not sin with his lips.**” Job 2:10.

Thus, may we not answer a fool the way he is speaking to us but we may answer the fool in a way that corrects his error in accordance with the Word of God and not our emotions!

VERSE 6

1. The idea here is that if you give a fool a message to deliver for you it is only going to cause you more problems because they will mess it up, they won’t deliver the message properly, there will be problems. Don’t go looking for trouble, be wise!

VERSE 7

1. Once again look at this picture that Solomon is painting for us. A person who has legs that don’t work, limp legs means that his legs are useless, they can’t support anything. Now he relates this to a fool who has a proverb spoken to him, he doesn’t understand them and thus he can’t apply these things to his life. They don’t know when, where or even how to apply these things to their life!

VERSE 8

1. A sling had one long strap wrapped around your hand and a short strap which you held with your fingers. There was a pocket in which a stone was placed and as you swung this sling and let go of the short strap, the rock would fly towards its intended target. Now by binding the rock in this sling, when you let go, instead of the rock flying and hitting its target, it will hit you in the head. Not a wise thing to do!

How does this relate to a fool? By giving honor and praise to a fool it will only bring you harm, pain. Don't give him the ammunition to hurt you!

VERSE 9

1. If a person is drunk and they get stuck with a thorn, they may not feel it but it will affect them in the long run. For the fool, a proverb that he hears they don't feel in a sense. They are insensitive to the truth; they don't understand what is important and what is not. And in the end, it may be painful to him!

VERSE 10

1. Remember what a fool is? A fool is the person who says no to God. Thus, one day they will have to stand before Him, the God they said "No!" to and they will receive their due reward for their actions, for their rejection of the truth.

VERSE 11

1. Thanks for that picture Solomon; I am not sure he needed to paint this one. It is kind of a gross thought but I guess Solomon does drive home the point. A dog is not repulsed or disgusted by going and eating his own vomit! And thus, as Solomon applies this to a fool, they do not learn but they keep repeating their folly. They don't change their habits. Both the dog and the fool go back to that which is repulsive, that which is disgusting and they partake of it.

2. Peter picks up on this in II Peter 2:18-22 as he wrote, **“For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’”**

Who is Peter speaking of here. He is speaking of those who experienced a moral reformation but who were never truly born again. Yes, these people knew the truth, they may have even said they embraced the truth, but as you look at their lives you can see they are far from it.

And Peter illustrates this point by speaking of a dog who has vomited the corruption that was inside of him but then, because of his nature, he goes sniffing around that vomit and then he licks it back up, he takes it back in. Then Peter speaks of a pig, who is cleaned up, looks nice and you let him outside and he goes right back to the mud and gets dirty because that is his nature.

Listen to what John MacArthur had to say about this. He wrote,

“Contemporary Christianity, sadly, contains many people like the ones Peter describes in this passage. They have sought personal improvement and moral reformation in their quests for spiritual and religious experience. Many of them have become teachers, preachers, and self-styled prophets within the professed church. Tragically, like dirty dogs or unclean pigs, they eventually return to their old lifestyles – rejecting the only One who can truly reform them. Those who become spiritual leaders are in reality false teachers, motivated by their own selfish pursuits and sensual desires. In view of their appalling character and damning influence, Peter’s warning is clear: Stay away from false teachers and expose them! Believers are to listen to the true apostles and prophets, not the false ones.”

May we heed the warning! Don’t be a fool!

VERSE 12

1. Why is this person in more trouble than a fool? The reason is simple, this person is self-conceited. This person is prideful. Because of that this person is blinded in a sense, for their need for God. And in God’s eyes they are worse than a fool because a fool might turn from his folly through correction, but the conceited man is impervious to this kind of advice!

2. Now in Proverbs 26:13-16 we will deal with the sluggard, and again, Solomon must have had a lot of problems with people like this because he speaks of the sluggard a lot!

VERSE 13

1. Please understand that there is no lion in the street, maybe a stray cat but not a lion. Then what is the point? The lazy person has all kinds of excuses why they can't work and most of the time they are imaginary! Benjamin Franklin said that, "A man who is good at making excuses is seldom good for anything else!" How true that is. We can complain about the work we have to do or we can do the work. One gets the work done, one just complains!

VERSE 14

1. This is a funny picture to me. Here is this lazy person, anchored to his bed like a door is anchored to its hinges. And he turns on his back, he turns on his side, he rolls over but he never makes any progress toward getting up! The lazy person is anchored to his bed just as a door is anchored to the hinges!

VERSE 15

1. Okay, he made it out of bed, he is at the table eating and he is so lazy that he can't even get his hand out of the bowl to bring the food to his mouth! I guess he wants to be spoon fed!

2. Now we may laugh at that but let's think about this spiritually speaking. How many people today are so lazy that they want to be spoon fed their entire Christian life, they never want to grow up and dig through the Word of God for themselves. They never want to mine out those treasures that God has for them in His Word. May we grow in the Lord, may we be students of His Word and learn those lessons He is showing us as we read through the Bible!

Paul rebuked Christians for this very thing, being spiritually lazy in Hebrews 5:12-14, **“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”** May we feed our souls on the Word of God, dig into the Scriptures so we can taste and see that the Lord is good!

VERSE 16

1. This sluggard is wise in his own eyes; he does not see he is wrong no matter who tries to tell him. And in his own eyes I guess he is wise because he has figured out how to live without working. They may be smart in their own eyes, but they are also lazy and God does not approve of that kind of behavior!

2. Now in Proverbs 26:17-28, the rest of the chapter Solomon is going to deal with relationships with gossips!

VERSE 17

1. Solomon is saying that we need to be wise and stay out of things that are of no concern to us because if we don't we may get bitten!

VERSES 18-19

1. When you say things that will harm another person and then realize what you have done but instead of apologizing or correcting the problem, you say, "I was only kidding!" "You didn't think I was serious?" "I didn't mean anything by that!" that is not good. There are people that cause all kinds of destruction and then act like it was a big joke. There are consequences to our actions, and it doesn't matter if you were joking or not! Be careful what comes forth from your lips, there should be no deceit that comes forth. Peter tells us in I Peter 2:1-3, "**Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.**" May the language of Christ flow from our lips!

VERSES 20-21

1. Again, this just makes sense. If you don't add fuel to the fire the fire will eventually go out! Solomon's point is that we are not to fuel the fires of contention, of gossip because if we don't then those fires will eventually die out. Why is that? The reason is simple, the fuel has been removed! Very wise words and the reality is this, don't get involved in this kind of behavior because if you are doing this, if you are listening, if you are repeating these things, then you are adding fuel to that fire and in the end someone will get burned!

2. Some years ago the following appeared in the Atlanta Journal and I think it nails this idea of what gossip can do. We are told, “I am more deadly than the screaming shell of a howitzer. I win without killing. I tear down homes, break hearts, and wreck lives. I travel on the wings of the wind. No innocence is strong enough to intimidate me, no purity pure enough to daunt me. I have no regard for the truth, no respect for justice, no mercy for the defenseless. My victims are as numerous as the sands of the sea, and often as innocent. I never forget and seldom forgive. My name is Gossip!” May we learn the lesson!

VERSE 22

1. Isn't it amazing what the flesh loves to feed on, gossip! They see this garbage as a tasty treat. And look at the magazines and the television shows that love to dish this garbage out to you. Magazines like The Star, The National Enquirer, In Touch Weekly, People, Globe, National Examiner and one that is called Ok! And please understand, I googled this, I have no idea about some of these but what is amazing is there are volumes of this in print, on the web, on television and they are just a bunch gossip that are filled with garbage that we take into our lives and don't think it won't affect you, it will! And think about it, all these gossip shows and magazines and the like would be gone if no one was watching them or reading them!

And people read this stuff as the Gospel truth and they believe these lies. We must learn to go against this and allow the Spirit of God to make gossip displeasing to our taste!

VERSES 23-26

1. This is a heavy section on gossip, how we relate to people. You see, people may try to disguise their motives; they may try to cover-up their real intentions. And as they do God may give you discernment about them. He may warn you to be careful. And the crazy thing is that they have done nothing wrong that you know of and yet God is warning you. Pray about it and wait, for their true motives will be manifested for all to see. God will expose their heart if it is wrong. I have seen this played out and I have to admit that I did not want to believe it but I did wait upon God and He did reveal the truth.

VERSE 27

1. The idea here is that man's evil will eventually recoil upon himself. Look at the picture that Solomon is painting here. First of all a pit was dug to catch an enemy and rocks were rolled down a hill to crush an enemy. Thus, those who try to cause others to stumble will fall into their own pit. Those who roll a stone for some kind of a trap, that stone will roll back on him.

You see, God will deal with those who wrongly come against you. Psalm 7:15-16 says **“He made a pit and dug it out, And has fallen into the ditch which he made. His trouble shall return upon his own head, And his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown.”** God has a way of turning the tables on them.

2. Let me share this story and you will see what I mean. Louis the Strong was asked to make chains that would hold the most desperate prisoners during one of the early French wars. He tempered some very fine steel and made chains that were unparalleled for strength. Later on in life Louis himself was found guilty of treason and sent to prison. He was heard to moan, “These are my own chains! If I had known I was forging them for myself, how differently I would have made them!” Learn the lesson, God is not mocked, what a man sows he will also reap!

VERSE 28

1. Solomon is speaking of the slander or the lying tongue and the flatterer. Slander or the lying tongue comes against the character of the person. Flattery is used to manipulate people to do something for you. God wants us to build people up, to encourage them, to help them. Don't use the tongue to destroy people's lives.

PROVERBS 27**VERSE 1**

1. I think if we have this perspective we will worry less. If you truly understand and believe that all our days are numbered by God what do you have to worry about? Nothing! James reminds us, **“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit’; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.’”** James 4:13-15.

Now in knowing that God is in control of our days, that He has numbered our days, may we live this life to the fullest in serving Him. In Psalm 90:12 we are told, **“So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.”** We need to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior. May we not put off till tomorrow what we can do today because tomorrow may never come!

VERSE 2

1. It is interesting how things change over the years. When I was growing up we called that kind of behavior “bragging.” But times have changed and because of our so-called fragile self-esteem, the psychologists call it “positive self-talk.” It is still bragging and you don’t need to praise yourself, let your character do all the talking. And the reality is we can’t do anything apart from the Lord that He will accept. So there is no room for boasting, for bragging, just praising the Lord for using people like us!

VERSE 3

1. The idea here is that the provocative, provoking remarks of a fool are harder to put up with than having a heavy physical burden. It is better to carry a stone or some sand than it is to be constantly annoyed by a fool.

VERSE 4

1. Yes wrath is bad, so too is anger but jealousy is worse because it keeps gnawing away at a person until it consumes them! Think about the brothers of Joseph as they sold him into slavery because they were jealous of him. And in Mark 15:10 listen what caused the Jewish religious leaders to send Jesus to the cross, “**For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.**” When a person is afraid of losing what they have the affects can be deadly.

VERSES 5-6

1. How important it is for a person to speak the truth in love, there is a benefit if the person listens and does what is right. But if you conceal the truth because you say you love the person, what you are really saying is you don't love them because you are not telling them the truth.

Think of it this way, if you had skin cancer you would not want to go to a doctor who patted you on the back and said, “Don’t worry, take 2 aspirins for the pain, you’ll be fine!” Or, you would not want to hear that he was going to take your whole arm off, when that was not necessary. We are to speak the truth, no more or no less. Tragically the church is afraid to confront any sin and in doing so the kisses they are giving to those living in sin are deceitful and harmful. It is as Psalm 27:6 says, “**Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.**” A friend will tell you what you need to hear, not necessarily what you want to hear and they do it because they love you!

VERSE 7

1. There is a physical and spiritual truth in this. First of all a person who is overfed tends to lose his appreciation for food. He is stuffed, and there is no real satisfaction when he continues to eat, he just eats. A person who is hungry, who is not a glutton, appreciates what he does have and it may not be the choicest of food, but he is satisfied.

On the spiritual side, you can take the Word of God into your life and the problem comes when you don’t apply it, you don’t have an outlet you might say. You keep taking it in which is good but if you don’t use it, then it truly just becomes empty words. You see, there is no exercise for your faith. Thus, if you sit around just getting fed you may not appreciate what you have. But it is when you exercise your faith you are hungry for more and more as you grow in the Lord!

I remember Jan Markel speaking of all the churches that are in her area and how many, most of them do not teach the Word of God. She said that many don’t appreciate what they have until they don’t have it anymore!

VERSE 8

1. Let me start out by saying this. If you are a person who is discontent then there is something wrong with your walk. Let me explain it like this. Because of that discontentment you become restless and then you begin to wander and you start doing things that are not good. Let me give you this example in marriage because it is such an issue in the days we are living in. If you are not content in your marriage you will become restless and then you begin to wander and before long you have moved away from where you should be! That is a warning folk's!

We need to learn to be content in the Lord. Paul put it like this in Philippians 4:11-12, **“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”**

That is not only the best place to be but it is also the safest place to be. You see, the reason Paul could say that is he was satisfied in the Lord and whatever else he was blessed with was just icing in the cake. What he didn't have, it didn't bother him, he was content, he was not restless, he was not looking elsewhere for satisfaction because he was content in the Lord!

David was also able to say this in Psalm 17:15, **“As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.”** His desire was to be conformed into the image of God, and that should be our desire. We should be satisfied in that.

VERSE 9

1. What a joy it is to be amongst the brethren and share the things of God. It is refreshing, soothing, sweet smelling. And as iron sharpens iron we keep each other strong in the Lord, strong in our walk. A true friend is such a blessing because you know that they will call you out if you did something wrong and they will do it in love. David said in Psalm 133:1, “**Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!**” And the unity David is speaking of is not ecumenical but based in the truth of God’s Word!

VERSE 10

1. I think that this is something we have learned here at Calvary Chapel over the last several years. People are sticking around after church, they are sharing things going on in their lives with others, they are getting to know people, they are sharing what God is doing, they are praying together. Friendships are growing.

Make no mistake about it, close Christian relationships are important. That means we need to take the time to invest in them and build them up! And in reality we build each other up! A true friend is there in the good times and the bad, they are a comfort to our lives.

Now your brother may live far away, so he won’t be there when you need him like a friend. Thus, build those relationships. Remember what Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 4:12, “**Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.**”

VERSE 11

1. It seems like Solomon was a strict disciplinarian with his children. And some may have come against his actions. But Solomon wants his children to bear the fruit of a good upbringing. It is as one person put it, “The teacher’s one defense - the success of his students.”

My desire here at Calvary Chapel for all of you is to make sure you are the best fed, the best warned and the best loved sheep in town. And because I love you there are times I have to correct, but it is out of love. If I didn’t love you I wouldn’t care what you did!

VERSE 12

1. How wise it is to evaluate a situation before you get involved and it is too late. That is the prudent man, the sensible man. But the fool just jumps in and suffers the consequences of his actions. Noah was a prudent man, he heard from God, obeyed God and hid in the ark while the rest of the world turned their backs towards God and drowned in their sin!

VERSE 13

1. Solomon has warned us many times not to be responsible for another person’s debt, and if you do, make sure you have some collateral so you are not taken. The first part of this verse is basically saying that the person who is surety for a stranger will lose his shirt. The second part of this verse is basically saying that you need to make sure you have a legal claim on the property of anyone who will guarantee the debts of unworthy people, strangers. Why is that? Because if the debtor can’t pay then the one who guaranteed the loan will have to! The idea is this, “When you make a deal with a stranger make sure you get something from him and any other foreigners with him to make sure he will pay you.”

VERSE 14

1. There is a time for shouting and praising the Lord and then there are times you need to be respectful of those around you. For instance, when I get up at 6:00 am, if I were to shout out “Praise the Lord!” my wife would not appreciate that because she is not up at that time. Be respectful to those around you. That also goes for those that are grieving over a loss, it is not time to quote to them Romans 8:28 that all things work together for good, it is time to love, them, listen to them, and show them the love of God.

VERSES 15-16

1. The drip, drip, drip of water through the roof is irritating and that is what Solomon is saying about this kind of woman. This woman irritating, it is difficult to restrain her, she does and says whatever she wants. Trying to control her is like trying to catch the wind, you can't. It is like trying to grasp oil with your hand, it is not going to happen. Hang in their ladies, we will get to Proverbs 31, there are plenty of good things to say. I think Solomon, having 700 wives and 300 concubines, was speaking from experience. All I can say is that I am blessed with my wife, the woman that the Lord has given me!

VERSE 17

1. I remember as a kid and going to the barber shop and the barber would be sharpening his razor on that leather strap on the side of the chair. You wanted a sharp razor if you were getting a shave. And make no mistake about it, and we have talked about this already, it is so important to have people in your life that will keep you in line, that will sharpen your mind through conversation, and yes, there may be even sparks at times, but the end result, if received, is you will keep yourself sharp instead of being dull. In fact, you will keep each other sharp!

VERSE 18

1. If you take care of the fig tree you will be rewarded with good fruit. The idea is being diligent in the work that God has placed before you. If you are, you will be fruitful. Jesus said in John 15:5-8, **“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”**

Not only that but a person who faithfully waits upon his employer, does what he is supposed to do, that person will be rewarded. Jesus said in John 12:26, **“If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.”**

VERSE 19

1. We can look into a pond of water and see our reflection, a very accurate reflection of our appearance. Now we can't see what is in our heart, only God knows. But what happens is many times what is in our heart is reflected in our actions, it shows people who we really are. Now here is the wonderful thing about our God. He will show us what is in our heart if we allow God's Word through the power of His Spirit to speak to us. He will reveal to us what is in our heart, what needs to be purged.

VERSE 20

1. Remember that Twilight Zone episode where the stewardess says "Room for one more!" Well, sad to say, there is always room for one more in hell, it is never satisfied in the lives it has already destroyed. And a person who is not focused on the Lord will never be satisfied; they will always want bigger, better, prettier, faster things.

Arthur G. Gish illustrates it for us in this powerful way. He wrote, "Tolstoy tells of a farmer who had a lust for more and more land. Finally he heard of cheap land among the Bashkirs. He sold all he had, made a long journey to their territory, and arranged a deal with them. For one thousand rubles he could buy all the land he could walk around in one day. The next morning he set out and walked far in one direction and then turned left. He made many detours to include extra areas of good soil. By the time he made his last turn, he realized he had gone too far. He ran as fast as possible to get back to the starting point before sunset. Faster and faster he ran and finally staggered and fell across the starting point just as the sun set. He lay there dead. They buried him in a small hole, all the land he needed."

The craving of our heart must be, and will be *ONLY* satisfied in Christ! As Psalm 107:9 says, **“For He satisfies the longing soul, And fills the hungry soul with goodness.”**

VERSE 21

1. Just as the refining pot and the furnace removed any impurities from these metals, praise will show what is in a man’s heart. What do I mean by that? In other words, if he lets it go to his head, it shows his pride. If he receives praise in humility, giving glory to God, it shows that he has a humble heart.

We must be careful of praise and not let it make us prideful. Dr. Ironside put it like this, “There is no hotter crucible to test a man than when he is put through a fire of praise and adulation. To go on through evil report, cleaving to the Lord, and counting on Him to clear one’s name is comparatively easy, though many faint in such circumstances; but to humbly pursue the even tenor of his way, undisturbed and unlifted up by applause and flattery, marks a man as being truly with God.”

- Dr. Ironside, Notes on the Book of Proverbs, pp. 390–391

VERSE 22

1. It seems that Solomon did not have very much patience for fools. For those of you who are unfamiliar with a mortar and a pestle, the mortar is a bowl and the pestle is a short, thick rod with a globular end and it was used for pulverizing things in the mortar, like crushing pills. And what Solomon is saying here is that you can’t beat the foolishness out of someone, they just will continue in their folly. What a sad picture that is.

VERSES 23-27

1. This is just a very wise outlook on life. Evaluate where you are and what you are doing. Don't take anything for granted. God wants us to do our part and He will do His. It is as Solomon said in Proverbs 16:1, "**The preparations of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.**"

Also, Jesus said in Luke 19:13, "**... 'Do business till I come.'**" Continue working, preparing as a farmer does, and in time the harvest will be gathered in. May we continue in the work that God has for us until we hear those words, "**... 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'**" Matthew 25:23.