

Proverbs

Knowing the God of Prudence

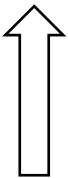


Lesson 2 *Understanding Folly*

Proverbs gives us wisdom on the folly or foolishness of seven sins that we all struggle with to some degree or another. They are known as the seven deadly sins.

Day 1- Anger

Proverbs 14:29, 29:11,22 15:1,18, 12:16, 19:11



Father, open my eyes to see and delight in the beauty of your ways and to hate the sin in my life. Help me diligently dig for meaning in these proverbs and give me understanding through your Spirit.

1. What do we learn about wisdom and foolishness from Proverbs 14:29 and 29:11?

For Discussion

Why does being slow to anger show great understanding or wisdom?

2. Proverbs 15:1b, 18a, and 29:22 show us the foolishness of being quickly and easily angered. What does being hot tempered accomplish according to the wisdom of these proverbs?
 - a. What benefit results from being slow to anger according to 15:18b?

3. How have you experienced the truth of 15:1 on either the giving end or receiving end?
 - a. How does 12:16 and 19:11 compliment the truth of 15:1?



Resolve, this week, to practice giving a soft answer when anyone speaks harshly to you. Pray and ask God for his help in remembering and doing this.

Day 2- Pride

Proverbs 15:25, 16:5, 11:2, 18:12, 30:11-14, 25:6-7, 27:2

1. How does God feel about pride according to 15:25 and 16:5?
 - a. What are the implications of this for your life?

2. What is the pathway to disgrace and destruction and what is the pathway to wisdom and honor in the proverbs in 11:2 and 18:12?

a. Why is this true?

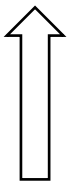
Picture and Ponder

If you are not constantly battling pride in your life, then it is likely making headway in your heart.

3. Proverbs 30:11-14 describes a person filled with pride and arrogance—verse 13 says *how lofty are their eyes and how high their eyelids lift*. What are the symptoms of a prideful heart in these verses? Do you recognize any of these symptoms in yourself?



How can you practice the wisdom of 25:6-7 and 27:2?



Father, help me to be so sensitive to pride in my heart that I can detect it quickly and renounce it and turn from it to Jesus for forgiveness and healing.

Day 3- Envy

Proverbs 14:30, 23:17-18, 24:19-20

Scholar's Note: Envy- a feeling of discontented or resentful longing aroused by someone else's possessions, qualities, or luck.

1. In 14:30 what does this proverb contrast with envy?
 - a. Based on this comparison, how would you describe a tranquil heart?
 - b. In what way does envy rot your bones?

For Discussion

What are you saying to God when you are envious of someone else?

Digging Deeper

Read Paul's testimony in Philippians 4 below. What is Paul's secret to contentment or a tranquil heart?

Philippians 4:11-13 *Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

Picture and Ponder

"To be well skilled in the mystery of Christian contentment is the duty, glory, and excellence of a Christian."¹

2. What wisdom do the proverbs in 23:17-18 and 24:19-20 give about envy?
 - a. What is there to envy of sinners that these proverbs imply?

 - b. Are you ever envious of people who are not believers? What might being envious of people who are not following God's ways indicate about one's heart?



- ◆ How have you observed the destruction caused by envy?

- ◆ How does being envious of someone make it hard to love them like we should?

- ◆ How have you dealt with envy in your life? What practices combat envy?

Day 4- Greed and Lust

Proverbs 15:27, 28:25, 11:24-28, 5:15-17, 23:26-28

1. Greed rationalizes money gained unjustly. What does this lead to according to the proverb in 15:27?
 - a. How have you ever been tempted to unjust gain?

2. In 28:25, what is the opposite of greed? Why is this true?
 - a. How do you think greediness stirs up strife?

3. We often think of greed as wanting more and more, never being satisfied. But Proverbs 11:24-28 tells us there is another side to greed. What is it?

For Discussion

Why should generosity be a trademark of God's people?



Do you find yourself wanting more and more money, or more and more of whatever money can buy? Or do you tend to be stingy, hoarding the money and material blessings you have received? "The promises of money are powerful, and they are only broken by the power of the gospel's superior promises."² We will always want more and more of the things of the world because those things never satisfy. Only in Jesus will we be truly satisfied. Get more and more of him.

- ◆ How are you tempted to greediness? What habits can you practice to combat this?

- ◆ What promises in God's word can you cling to, to fight against the two sides of greed?

4. 5:15-17 uses the metaphor of water from a well to represent marital fidelity. What is your marriage lacking that you are tempted to look to in other men? Are there ways you are undermining your marriage because of lust? If you are single how could this also apply to you?

Scholar's Note: "Lust is the realm of thought, imagination, and desire that leads to sexual misconduct."³

Picture and Ponder

"Despite the variety of specific addictions women face, there's a common root: women want to be desirable and desired. This adds an emotional and relational layer to female sexual addiction. The stories we conjure in our minds usually require two people. It means that our lust can more easily hide behind the guise of friendship and story."⁴

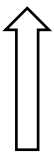


In Proverbs 23:26-28 a father is imploring his son to use his eyes to watch his father's ways. But it is not only men who struggle with lust. Proverbs 23:26 could also say, *My daughter, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.* Married women and single women alike struggle to keep thoughts, imagination and desires pure.

- ◆ How do emotionally and sexually charged movies and stories affect your heart?

- ◆ How does the *lust of the eyes* (1 John 2:16) make you dissatisfied with your own marriage or singleness?

- ◆ How can the desire to be desirable be satisfied in the gospel?



Father, you say blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Help me to be "thrilled with the reward of purity"⁵ which is seeing you. Help me to watch your ways instead of the ways of the world.

Day 5- Gluttony and Sloth

Proverbs 21:20, 23:19-20, 29-35, 21:25-26, 18:9, 12:27

1. How are the wise and the foolish compared in the proverb of 21:20?

2. The proverb in 23:19-20 warns us that overindulgence is not wise. What does gluttony have to do with wisdom and foolishness?

- a. What phrase in Proverbs 23:29-35 depicts gluttony?

For Discussion

How could denying ourselves something that in and of itself is not sinful be good for our souls?

3. Proverbs 21:25-26 makes observations about the sluggard—someone who is lazy or slothful. What kind of desire is involved with sloth or laziness?

- a. Verse 26 contrasts someone who is righteous with someone who is a sluggard. What is the difference? How does the righteous person reflect Jesus?

4. Why do you think the wisdom of 18:9 is true?

5. How is the wisdom in 12:27 true in spiritual terms?



God has given us the good gifts of food, drink and rest; why do we use them so poorly sometimes?!

- ◆ What does overindulgence in food, drink, or rest take away from God?

- ◆ If you struggle with laziness or gluttony, ask God for help discerning what is at the root it. What boundaries can you put up to help with moderation or diligence?

- ◆ What common thread have you seen in any of the seven deadly sins?

¹ Boroughs, Jeremiah. The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment

² Akin, Daniel L., and Jonathan. Exalting Christ in Proverbs. P. 251. B & H Publishing 2017

³ Piper, John as quoted in the article You Are Not Alone, For Women Fighting Every Man's Battle by Calley Sivils
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/you-are-not-alone>

⁴ Jacobs, Marian. Every Women's Silent Struggle, Fighting Lust with Sisters in Christ.
<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/every-womans-silent-struggle>

⁵ From a prayer by John Piper <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/women-increasingly-pursue-porn>

