

Day 379 - SUNDAY: March 3rd

Proverbs 17

Proverbs 17:1-28 NKJV

Better is a dry morsel with quietness, Than a house full of feasting with strife. A wise servant will rule over a son who causes shame, And will share an inheritance among the brothers. The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, But the LORD tests the hearts. An evildoer gives heed to false lips; A liar listens eagerly to a spiteful tongue. He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker; He who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished. Children's children are the crown of old men, And the glory of children is their father. Excellent speech is not becoming to a fool, Much less lying lips to a prince. A present is a precious stone in the eyes of its possessor; Wherever he turns, he prospers. He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates friends. Rebuke is more effective for a wise man Than a hundred blows on a fool. An evil man seeks only rebellion; Therefore a cruel messenger will be sent against him. Let a man meet a bear robbed of her cubs, Rather than a fool in his folly. Whoever rewards evil for good, Evil will not depart from his house. The beginning of strife is like releasing water; Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts. He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD. Why is there in the hand of a fool the purchase price of wisdom, Since he has no heart for it? A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity. A man devoid of understanding shakes hands in a pledge, And becomes surety for his friend. He who loves transgression loves strife, And he who exalts his gate seeks destruction. He who has a deceitful heart finds no good, And he who has a perverse tongue falls into evil. He who begets a scoffer does so to his sorrow, And the father of a fool has no joy. A merry heart does good, like

medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones. A wicked man accepts a bribe behind the back To pervert the ways of justice. Wisdom is in the sight of him who has understanding, But the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth. A foolish son is a grief to his father, And bitterness to her who bore him. Also, to punish the righteous is not good, Nor to strike princes for their uprightness. He who has knowledge spares his words, And a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; When he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: “**34. Remarks on Behavior (Proverbs 17:2-8)**

"TYPE: RANDOM PROVERBS....Although these verses contain the hint of an inclusio [as 'wise' in verse 2 and ' prospers' in verse 8 are both translated from the Hebrew word *skal*, referring to wise perception and dealing leading to success] and repeat certain themes and terms [family matters (verses 2, 6), divine judgment (verses 3, 5), the lips (verses 4, 7)], no specific pattern is apparent" (NAC).

Verse 2 shows that "ability and character can overcome the disadvantages of birth. At the same time, those born to advantage can forfeit their birthright through immorality and incompetence" (note on verse 2). We don't have to stay where we are in life.

Through wisdom we can rise above our circumstances.

Conversely, through foolish disgrace, we can lose what we have.

Verse 8 apparently says that a gift given to others is very valuable to the one giving it—as it leads him to success. This is not the same as Christ's general maxim that "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). The point in Proverbs 17:8 is not altruistic giving generally but a strategy of using gifts for gain. This

could be a mere observation about the power of bribes (compare NIV), but it need not be so. While bribery to pervert justice is condemned (verse 23), other proverbs note that there is a proper social context for giving gifts to promote good relations and open doors (see Proverbs 18:16; Proverbs 19:6; Luke 16:9). It was proper in ancient times to come before kings with gifts—and perhaps more mundane occasions called for this as well. Also recall Jacob's giving of gifts to Esau to placate him and reconcile with him (Genesis 32:13-21).

35. Four Conjoined Collections (Proverbs 17:9-26)

"The proverbs of vv. 9-16 have many interconnections, but it is difficult to tell if any specific pattern is intended. It appears, however, that these verses divide into four inclusio or chiasmus collections (vv. 9-13, vv. 14-19, vv. 20-22, and vv. 23-26) on the basis of thematic parallels or catchwords. The connections among the proverbs are as follows:

"COLLECTION I

"A: Gracious forgiveness (v. 9)

"B: The irrationality of a fool (v. 10)

"C: Just punishment carried out (v. 11)

"B: The behavior of a fool (v. 12)

"A: Irrational retaliation (v. 13)

"COLLECTION II

"A: Quarrels (v. 14)

"C: Perversion of justice (v. 15)

"D: Poor use of money (v. 16)

"D: A friend in adversity (v. 17)

"D: Poor use of money (v. 18)

"A: Quarrels (v. 19)

"COLLECTION III

"E: Heart and tongue (v. 20)

"B: Foolish son (v. 21)

“E: Heart and spirit (v. 22)

“COLLECTION IV

“C: Perversion of justice (v. 23)

“B: The eyes of a fool (v. 24)

• "THE SOCIAL AND ANTISOCIAL. *Type: Chiasmus (Proverbs 17:9-13)*. This section describes those who are or are not sociable and easy to live with. The implied warning is that one should beware of antisocial, incorrigible, or vindictive behavior in oneself or others" (NAC).

Verse 9 on covering a transgression recalls Proverbs 10:12.

Verse 11, as *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* notes, shows that "those bent on rebellion will surely meet with severe retribution.... That retribution will be sent in the form of a ['cruel messenger']...(mal'ak 'akzari). This expression could refer to a pitiless messenger that the king would send; but it also could refer to storms, pestilence, or any misfortune that was God's messenger of retribution."

• "QUICK TO QUARREL. *Type: Inclusio (Proverbs 17:14-19)*. The boundaries of this text are set by the inclusio on quarreling in vv. 14, 19" (NAC).

Regarding verse 16, *The NIV Application Commentary* states:

"The point of this satiric proverb is two-sided: It is folly to think one can buy wisdom since it is a gift of God and must be acquired through study (Proverbs 2:1-6), and even if wisdom could be bought, the fool lacks the sense (lit[erally], 'heart') to know what to do with it. The sharp juxtaposition of having money and lacking sense makes it clear that heart, both as 'desire' and 'mind' (NRSV), is the prerequisite for learning wisdom. Some see a dunce showing up at the door of a teacher with fee in hand, but evidence for this in Israel is lacking. Rather, we see a fool who does not know what to do with good things like money,

responsibility, or even a proverb (:Proverbs 26:6-9)!" (note on Proverbs 17:16).

Speaking of both quarrelling and money, we may note that money can lie at the root of tension between friends, as verse 18 warns about. The caution about becoming surety for a friend, such as in cosigning a loan, recalls Proverbs 6:1-5 (and Proverbs 11:15 warned against becoming surety as well, there in the case of a stranger as well as generally). The proverb does not mean you should never help out a friend in this way if you are well off and the friend defaulting would not hurt you or the friendship. But you had better know what you're getting into. And odds are that this is generally an unwise course.

Verse 19 speaks of one who "exalts his gate" seeking or inviting destruction. The *Soncino Commentary* notes on verse 19 that "his gate" is literally "'his opening' which the Jewish commentators apply to the mouth (cf. Ps [119:]130), understanding the phrase as 'talking big, in loud and arrogant language.' Another explanation is: living in an ostentatious manner which attracts envious attention and can easily be the cause of ruin" (note on Proverbs 17:19).

- "HEART AND FAMILY. *Type: Inclusio (Proverbs 17:20-22)*" (NAC). The foolish and scoffing son of verse 21 is probably one with a deceitful heart and perverse tongue as in verse 20—a source of great sorrow to parents, in line with verse 25 and the opening proverb of Solomon's core collection (10:1).

Proverbs 17:22 shows, in contrast, that a happy heart is the key to a full and healthy life. We may observe, too, that this proverb indirectly speaks well of the use of medicine. For consider that it does not say that a merry heart does good like a medicine *poisons* you. Rather, it implies that a merry heart does

good like a medicine does good. This is not to say that everything labeled medicine is good for you, but clearly the use of some medicines promotes the wellness of the body—as does staying happy.

- "JUSTICE AND FAMILY. *Type: Chiasmus (Proverbs 17:23-26)*.... Verse 25 would appear to have nothing to do with bribery and the miscarriage of justice [making it an exception to the other proverbs in this short section], but with v. 21 it provides a link to the previous text [see again the chart on the four conjoined collections here]. The 'foolish son grieves his father' verses in the contexts of vv. 20-22 and vv. 23-26 thus serve a didactic [teaching] purpose; they urge the reader (the implied 'son') not to become the evil man described in these verses [of all four conjoined collections] and thus not to grieve either his real father or the implied father behind the Book of Proverbs" (NAC).

36. *Appropriate Use of Words (17:27–18:4)*

"TYPE: INCLUSIO AND PARALLEL.... Sometimes the Book of Proverbs seems to value nothing so much as appropriate words. This is because it views words as the index to the soul. By paying attention to what a person says (and indeed to how much he or she says), one can determine whether a person is wise or a fool. Words are the fruit that show the quality of the heart. A parallel structure (17:28–18:3) is imbedded in an inclusio (Proverbs 17:27; Proverbs 18:4). The structure of the whole is as follows:

“A: The wise person’s restrained use of words (17:27)

“B: A silent fool appears wise (17:28)

“C: A schismatic person is irrational (18:1)

“B’: A fool cannot remain silent (18:2)

“C’: A base person is shameful (18:3)

“A’: The wise person’s words are profound (18:4)” (NAC).

The value of being reserved in speech (Proverbs 17:27) is bolstered by the fact that "even an imbecile can appear intelligent if he can avoid putting his foot in his mouth, but this is all but impossible for a fool (17:28:18:2 [compare 15:2])" (note on 17:27–18:4)." [END]

Verse 1 – This verse in the NKJV at first seems to be comparing a house of “quietness” (being a good thing) to a house of strife (being a bad thing). The Hebrew translated “quietness” comes from a root meaning “security” (Strong’s) and contains the idea of “peace” and prosperity.

It seems to me to be a better comparison of a house at “peace” versus a house with “strife” (a number of other translations choose to translate it that way).

Verse 9 – This scripture is worthy memorizing and meditating on where we may be guilty of “repeating matters” that we shouldn’t.

Verse 28 – One of my favorite proverbs, although, I would be wise to practice it more.