

Day 385 - SATURDAY: March 9th

Proverbs 24

Proverbs 24:1-34 NKJV

Do not be envious of evil men, Nor desire to be with them; For their heart devises violence, And their lips talk of troublemaking. Through wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established; By knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong, Yes, a man of knowledge increases strength; For by wise counsel you will wage your own war, And in a multitude of counselors there is safety. Wisdom is too lofty for a fool; He does not open his mouth in the gate. He who plots to do evil Will be called a schemer. The devising of foolishness is sin, And the scoffer is an abomination to men. If you faint in the day of adversity, Your strength is small. Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, "Surely we did not know this," Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds? My son, eat honey because it is good, And the honeycomb which is sweet to your taste; So shall the knowledge of wisdom be to your soul; If you have found it, there is a prospect, And your hope will not be cut off. Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; Do not plunder his resting place; For a righteous man may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity. Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; Lest the LORD see it, and it displease Him, And He turn away His wrath from him. Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the wicked; For there will be no

prospect for the evil man; The lamp of the wicked will be put out. My son, fear the LORD and the king; Do not associate with those given to change; For their calamity will rise suddenly, And who knows the ruin those two can bring? These things also belong to the wise: It is not good to show partiality in judgment. He who says to the wicked, "You are righteous," Him the people will curse; Nations will abhor him. But those who rebuke the wicked will have delight, And a good blessing will come upon them. He who gives a right answer kisses the lips. Prepare your outside work, Make it fit for yourself in the field; And afterward build your house. Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, For would you deceive with your lips? Do not say, "I will do to him just as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work." I went by the field of the lazy man, And by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding; And there it was, all overgrown with thorns; Its surface was covered with nettles; Its stone wall was broken down. When I saw it, I considered it well; I looked on it and received instruction: A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest; So shall your poverty come like a prowler, And your need like an armed man.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "**Saying 19: Evil Associations (Proverbs 24:1-2)**. Whereas saying 14 (Proverbs 23:17-18) invokes the future in discouraging the envy of sinners, this saying just says not to envy them or want to be with them because they are up to no good. The point is to see what they're really all about—and to not want any part of that. A benefit of moral learning is that one comes to hate and reject evil simply because it is evil.

Saying 20: Reward of Wisdom (Proverbs 24:3-4). Verse 3 says that through wisdom a house is built. Some take this as a dwelling place or a household, a family. However, verse 4 says the rooms are filled with riches. While this could be a domestic abode, taken together the verses seem to speak of a treasure house. This may correspond to the conclusion of the first chapter of the Instruction of Amenemope: "If you spend a lifetime with these things in your heart, you will find it good fortune; you will discover my words to be a treasure house of life, and your body will flourish upon earth" (3:17–4:2). In both cases, it is most likely that the treasures are metaphorical for wonderful understanding and rich blessings in life—especially in light of saying 7 about not setting one's eyes on material wealth (Proverbs 23:4-5). Of course, as in other proverbs, the blessings may include material increase. And ultimately, as noted elsewhere, all of God's people will jointly possess all things—the whole universe.

Saying 21: Wisdom Over Strength (Proverbs 24:5-6). True strength lies in wisdom rather than mere brute force. While the verse might seem to apply to rulers only, since only they would be waging war, "the majority of the thirty sayings are clearly addressed to someone who is not in high office. A metaphorical sense that one should engage life with discernment rather than by exercise of force is therefore likely" (NAC). Consider the Christian life as one of waging spiritual warfare. Here we have the third proverb advising a "multitude of counselors" (the first two being Proverbs 11:14 and Proverbs 15:22).

Saying 22: Fools Contribute Nothing (Proverbs 24:7). The NKJV and other versions show the fool here as not speaking up at the city gate, where community decisions were made—wisdom being beyond him (so that he is out of his element). However,

other passages show fools having much to say all the time, no matter the setting. Do civil government meetings today proceed with fools keeping silent? *The New American Commentary* offers a slightly different translation of the verse: "Wisdom is too high for a fool; let his mouth stay shut at the gate." Either way, the point is that fools have nothing worthwhile to contribute. By contrast, the wise, though often reserved in speech, have a responsibility to contribute wisdom in critical situations.

Saying 23: Disapproval of Evil Men (Proverbs 24:8-9). Plotters and troublemakers will eventually be discovered and subject to public scorn.

Saying 24: Test of Adversity (Proverbs 24:10). The verse uses a play on words: "If you faint in the day of adversity [*sarah*], your strength is small [*sar*]." While trials can expose one's lack of mettle, the point of the proverb is to encourage people to muster courage to make it through the hard times (compare Jeremiah 12:5). God is ever there to see us through.

Saying 25: Preservation of Life (Proverbs 24:11-12). This saying makes clear the responsibility before God to do what we can to rescue those in mortal peril. On one level, as we have opportunity we must work to prevent murder in all its forms, including genocide and abortion. As Christians we do not take up arms in such causes—nor can we individually crusade around the earth to stop all unjust killing in this age. But, as God empowers us, we are to proclaim and teach His will in these matters and do what we can to stop such things from happening. If we lived in Nazi Germany during the Holocaust and knew what was going on, it would be our responsibility to hide and deliver neighboring Jews slated for the gas ovens. The passage also applies to helping those who are jeopardizing their own physical lives through vice

or imprudence. On another level, the saying concerns those in spiritual peril, stumbling toward destruction. We are to warn this world of its fatal path (like watchmen, as in Ezekiel 33:1-11) and proclaim the way of salvation—and we must especially help spiritual brethren who are neglecting their salvation (compare Galatians 6:1-2).

Saying 26: Good Future of Wisdom (Proverbs 24:13-14). Honey is sweet and enjoyable, and so is wisdom and the life to which it leads. This way leads to a wonderful, profitable outcome with hope not cut off—wording also used in saying 14 (Proverbs 23:17-18).

Saying 27: Treatment of the Righteous (Proverbs 24:15-16). As *Expositor's* notes on this verse: "It would be futile and self-defeating to mistreat God's people, for they survive—the wicked do not! The warning is against attacking the righteous; to attack them is to attack God and his program, and that will fail (see Matthew 16:18). The consequence, and thus the motivation, is that if the righteous suffer misfortune any number of times (= 'seven times,' v. 16), they will rise again [seven being symbolic of completeness]; for virtue triumphs in the end.... Conversely, the wicked will not survive—without God they have no power to rise from misfortune. The point then is that ultimately the righteous will triumph and those who oppose them will stumble over their evil" (note on verses 15-16).

Saying 28: Misfortune of an Enemy (Proverbs 24:17-18). This proverb warns against gloating over an enemy's downfall, with the threat that God will be unhappy with us and cease to afflict the enemy. We should not take this to mean that we should avoid gloating just to make sure God keeps afflicting the enemy—for that amounts to silently cheering on the affliction. The implied

threat in God relenting from afflicting the enemy is that the enemy will return to troubling us. In the meantime, instead of gloating we should just be thankful for God's protection and leave all to His judgment—praying that God will use any affliction He brings on our enemies to lead them to change for the better.

Saying 29: Envyng the Wicked (Proverbs 24:19-20). The words of verse 19 are nearly the same as King David's in Psalm 37:1. We must not fret over the wicked, or being envious of them (compare Proverbs 3:31; Proverbs 23:17-18; Proverbs 24:1-2), because they are doomed if they will not reform.

Saying 30: Fear God and the King (Proverbs 24:21-22). In this last of the 30 sayings of the wise we are told to fear God and the king, a phrase the apostle Peter likely quoted from in 1 Peter 2:17. In the same proverb we are instructed to not associate with "those given to change." The latter phrase probably means more than merely the fickle. Given the context, it is taken by some to mean revolutionists or "the rebellious" (NIV)—those who subvert society. They will be brought to ruin by both God and king.

TYPE: PARALLEL. Following the 30 Words of the Wise (22:16–24:22), Proverbs 24:23a marks a new section with a new title or subheading: "These things also belong to the wise." Some paraphrase this as Further Words of the Wise. "The structure of this text is as follows:

"A: On the law courts (vv. 23-26)

"B: On economic priorities (v. 27)

"A': On the law courts (vv. 28-29)

"B': On laziness (vv. 30-34)

"There is no intrinsic link between these two concepts; the parallel structure exists simply for organizational purposes" (NAC).

The wording of verse 26 perhaps sounds odd to us today: "He who gives a right answer kisses the lips." *The NIV Application*

Commentary says: "The kiss in the ancient world communicated loyalty as well as affection. The honest answer comes from one who (lit[erally]) 'returns words that are right' (cf. Proverbs 22:21). Interpreters debate whether the legal context of Proverbs 24:23-25 determines the meaning. The main comparison is that of doing good for another with one's lips, a strong contrast to the deceitful lips of Proverbs 24:28. *The New American*

Commentary, however, argues that the phrase translated "kisses the lips" should actually be "seals the lips" and renders the verse as: "He who gives a proper verdict silences {hostile} lips" (note and footnotes on Proverbs 24:23-26).

Verse 27 "does not address laziness in the direct terms that vv. 30-34 do, but it relates the principle that one should not provide for personal comfort until a means of income is established here. As such, it emphasizes a practical rule of producing before consuming, a rule the slothful do not accept. It is possible that 'building a house' refers not just to the building in which one lives but to the establishment of a family. If so, the guideline is even more appropriate: one should be able to provide for a family before starting one" (*NAC*). As *Expositor's* notes on this point, "Before entering marriage one should have a well-ordered life." In verses 30-31, a short anecdote shows that lazy people are not properly attentive to their personal concerns. It causes one to recognize the truth of the proverbial maxim expressed here (verses 32-34; compare Proverbs 6:9-11)." [END]

Verse 21 – Regarding the line: "Do not associate with those given to change" the John Gill commentary states: "in political things; that are for new laws, new forms of government, a new ministry, and a new king; never easy with the government under which they are, but are continually entering into plots, conspiracies, and

rebellions, who, instead of fearing God and the king, change the laws and commandments of God and the king, and therefore to be shunned.”

Verses 30 – 34 – This is another Proverb in a long list of Proverbs we’ve read about sowing and reaping. God intended the consequences of bad choices to lead us to make better choices.