

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2015: *Proverbs*

Lesson 7 “Dealing With Fights”

Read for this week’s study

Proverbs 17; 1 Cor. 13:5–7; John 8:1–11; Proverbs 18; Proverbs 19; Deut. 24:10–22.

Memory Text

“Better is a dry morsel with quietness, than a house full of feasting with strife” (Proverbs 17:1, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Sin and Friends
- III. Be Just!
- IV. Words, Again
- V. Two Sides to a Story
- VI. Be Truthful
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Proverbs, chapters 17 through 19. Most of the book of Proverbs (including this section) is made up of short aphorisms, nuggets of wisdom along the line of “tweets” today (tweets must be 140 characters or less). What parts of Proverbs contain connected narratives (there are three). Are the aphorisms in this section (Proverbs 17-19) structured in some theological order or are they simply random? Based on your reading of these three chapters, do you agree with this quarter’s lessons in treating this and other sections as if the proverbs were ordered with a theological purpose?
2. Read the memory text, Proverbs 17:1. What is this aphorism saying and do you find it true in your own life’s experience? (Sabbath afternoon’s lesson)
3. Read Proverbs 17:9. What does it mean when it says that one who covers an offense “seeks love?” Read Proverbs 19:11. What is the role of patience in overlooking offenses? How is it better for us to cover or overlook offenses than not to? (Sunday’s lesson)

4. What do Proverbs 17:17 and 1 Corinthians 13:5-7 tell us about love? (Sunday's lesson)
5. Read Proverbs 17:10 and 19:25. What is the relationship between covering offenses and confronting them? Can one do both at the same time? How? How does Jesus balance these two (covering and confrontation) in John 8:1-11? (Monday's lesson)
6. Tuesday's lesson invites us to read Proverbs 18 with a specific focus on words. What do the proverbs in this chapter tell us about words? What has life experience taught you about the power of words and how to use them in a godly way? What kind of words are the most hurtful? (Tuesday's lesson)
7. Read Proverbs 18:2, 8 and 20. Why are fools so quick to express their opinions? How does Proverbs 18:17 describe what happens in a typical Sabbath School class or church board meeting? (Wednesday's lesson)
8. Read Proverbs 19 and Deuteronomy 24:10-22 (which has a lot of similarity to Proverbs). How can we best apply such principles in today's world? (Thursday's lesson)
9. What are some ways that we can lie without ever using words? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

When Paul included a long list of sins at the end of Romans 1, he put gossiping right in the middle. No one will be admitted to heaven who cannot be entrusted with the knowledge of other people's sins and who will not wholeheartedly treat former sinners with full dignity and respect.

This is how it will be possible for David and Uriah to meet and not come to blows. Some day it may be our privilege to see those two men meet again for the first time in the hereafter. Think how David stole Uriah's wife and then arranged for the murder of the faithful soldier who had helped him become king (see 2 Samuel 11, 12; 1 Chronicles 11:10, 41)! Will the past be all forgotten?

Will Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, David's son, have forgotten she once was Uriah's wife? Will the prophet Nathan have forgotten his moving appeal to the king? Will David have forgotten his confession in the fifty-first Psalm? Will we have forgotten David's prayer for a new heart that has helped many of us pray the same prayer?

Or will it be possible for David and Uriah to approach each other, look into each other's eyes, remember, and once more become friends? To me that would be far more wonderful!

Could we begin to treat each other this way here and now in this life? It is surely not natural to do so. It would be a great miracle of healing, like the miracle that happened to John. At first,

Jesus called him Son of Thunder. But later John became “the beloved disciple” and wrote in his Gospel and Epistles so much about Christian love.

John watched the way Jesus received sinners, how he treated everyone with dignity and grace. Never had John seen such strength of character, and yet such tenderness; such fearless denunciation of sin, and yet such patience and sympathy. As he was moved to ever deeper admiration, John became more and more like the One he worshiped and admired.

It is true that on some very serious occasions Jesus had to call sin by its right name and publicly condemn it. One day some of the religious teachers, the ones so much trusted by the people, denounced Jesus’ picture of his Father. They even told him he had a devil to be so describing God. Think of rejecting Jesus’ picture of his own Father as false, even satanic! And those who opposed him were so pretentiously pious!

Under such extreme circumstances Jesus was moved to reply, “It is not I who has a devil. You are of your father the devil. He is a liar and the father of lies, and you prefer his lies about God to the truth” (see John 8:44, 48, 49). But even then there were tears in his voice. {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 94-96. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-09>

It took the disciples a long time to learn the truth about God. Eventually eleven of them did, and it set them free to become men who could change the world.

Peter finally learned in the courtyard during Jesus’ trial. He had just denied three times that he even knew Christ, and he had cursed and sworn to prove it. Then the cock crowed-just as Jesus had predicted in the upper room. Stung with guilt and remorse, Peter looked to see if Jesus had noticed.

Indeed He had! Though He was on trial for His own life, and had been ‘beaten and insulted by the cruel mob, Jesus was more concerned about His erring disciple. “The Lord turned and looked at Peter.” Luke 22:61, NEB.

As Peter understood God so far, he expected to see in the Lord’s face an expression of anger, reproof, and offended justice. Instead he saw only pity and loving disappointment-the face of the One who just the evening before had knelt down and washed his dirty feet.

“Peter went out, and wept bitterly.” Luke 22: 62. But at last the truth had dawned on him that this was the kind of Person God really is. This is the way God feels about ungrateful sinners. And Peter was set free that night to become a new man. {Maxwell, A. Graham. *I Want to be Free*, 8-9. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1970}

Servants, he explained to his disciples, “do not know their master’s business.” They feel it is none of their business to understand what their master is doing. Their duty is to do what they’re told, and obey the rules—whether they agree with them or not.

Believers who think and act like such servants tend to be preoccupied with their legal standing with their Lord and Master, how to please him, and how to stay out of trouble. Sin is seen primarily as the breaking of the rules.

It is their understanding that by committing such transgression they will incur the wrath of God and find themselves in serious legal trouble. Unless something is done to remove their guilt, legal penalties will be imposed. And for the slightest infraction of the rules, the penalty is nothing less than painful execution—or even eternal torture.

Some servant-believers are so accustomed to this kind of government that they fervently defend it, all in the name of justice, as they understand that term. They will concede that in civilized courts of law, justice never justifies torture. But in God’s government?

“Well,” the servant says, “who are you to question his inscrutable ways? As a good and faithful servant, just bow your head and believe. Such fearsome treatment at the hands of God is not only the right but also the loving thing to do.”

I heard someone say this again just the other day. He was the kind of believer who surely qualifies as a “good and faithful servant.”

“God,” he went on to explain, “is required by law, by justice, and by the holiness of his own character and government, not only to destroy those who oppose his will, but first to painfully punish them for an appropriate length of time.”

When I asked him how he could consider such inhuman punishment the loving thing to do, he replied, “Don’t you believe the Scriptures? The Bible says God is love. That means that even if it doesn’t make sense to us, anything God does must be the loving thing to do.” It made me think again of that famous bumper sticker. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 108-109. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter8.html>

Graham: It’s just that if we really are sincere; if we’re really willing to listen, God has not left us in the dark. As John says, Christ is the light that enlightens everyone who comes into this world. And Paul says in Romans that there are Gentiles who know nothing about the Bible, who know nothing about God’s law and instructions. But they do by nature the things that the law requires, and they show that the law has been written on their hearts. And I love the paragraph that is familiar to us both, that says even among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly; those to whom the message was never brought by human instrumentality, but

they've heard the voice of God speaking to them in nature. And they've done the things that the law requires, which is love. And they're recognized as God's children. Anybody on this planet who is sincerely and humbly willing to listen; God is not going to abandon that person, and leave him in the dark.

Now it's a great privilege to be the one who gets there with the good news, but sometimes somebody else gets there first. Think of missionaries who have been shipwrecked on the reef as they're about to arrive on an island to somehow "turn those cannibals into Christians."

And as they're drowning out there, here come these cannibals paddling their canoe. And they say farewell to each other; they know what's going to happen shortly. But instead, the cannibals put them in their canoe and take them to the beach and revive them. And finally when they're comfortable, the missionary says, "Now let us assemble these people and give them the truth." And he starts to preach to them about love.

His missionary wife nudges him and says, "Wait a minute. These people risked their lives to rescue us from the reef!"

The minister says, "But nobody's preached to them yet."

Well, remember Romans 2. "The Spirit of God in many and various ways has approached people."

So I would say if one is really sincere, one will not wind up sincerely wrong. If one is "sincerely wrong," one has been saying no to truth for a long time.

Lou: Oh, I see. This thing about sincerity has a healing quality about it. But sincerity must also involve a careful look at the evidence, you're saying. There must be an openness to grow, to learn.

Graham: That's the real meaning of sincerity. You'll accept correction if you're wrong.

Lou: Whereas the temptation might be to say, "Well, I'm just very sincere. I don't want to take the time to look at all of this, or think about it," and so forth. And it would be a very dangerous position.

Graham: There is a humility to sincerity. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, session 2 with Lou Venden, "What Went Wrong in God's Universe" recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/2MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another—this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. Only in the heart where Jesus reigns is it found. “We love Him, because He first loved us.” In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around. {AA 551.2}

It should be our aim to bring all the pleasantness possible into our lives, and to do all the kindness possible to those around us. Kind words are never lost. {OHC 293.5}

There is a wonderful power in silence. When impatient words are spoken to you, do not retaliate. Words spoken in reply to one who is angry usually act as a whip, lashing the temper into greater fury. But anger met by silence quickly dies away. Let the Christian bridle his tongue, firmly resolving not to speak harsh, impatient words. With the tongue bridled, he may be victorious in every trial of patience through which he is called to pass. {RC 293.2}

In his own strength man cannot rule his spirit. But through Christ he may gain self-control. In his strength he may bring his thoughts and words into subjection to the will of God. The religion of Christ brings the emotions under the control of reason and disciplines the tongue. Under its influence the hasty temper is subdued, and the heart is filled with patience and gentleness. {RC 293.3}

God’s ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. {RC 293.5}

Christianity will make a man a gentleman. Christ was courteous, even to His persecutors; and His true followers will manifest the same spirit. Look at Paul when brought before rulers. His speech before Agrippa is an illustration of true courtesy as well as persuasive eloquence. The gospel does not encourage the formal politeness current with the world, but the courtesy that springs from real kindness of heart. {GW 123.2}

True refinement will never be revealed so long as self is considered as the supreme object. Love must dwell in the heart. A thoroughgoing Christian draws his motives of action from his deep heart-love for his Master. Up through the roots of his affection for Christ springs an unselfish interest in his brethren. Love imparts to its possessor grace, propriety, and comeliness of deportment. It illuminates the countenance and subdues the voice; it refines and elevates the entire being. {GW 123.3}

True courtesy blended with truth and justice makes the life not only useful but beautiful and fragrant. Kind words, pleasant looks, a cheerful countenance, throw a charm about the Christian that makes his influence almost irresistible. In forgetfulness of self, in the light and peace and happiness that he is constantly bestowing on others, he finds true joy. {HP 180.5}

We may never know until the judgment the influence of a kind, considerate course of action to the inconsistent, the unreasonable, and unworthy. If after a course of provocation and injustice on their part, you treat them as you would an innocent person, you even take pains to show them special acts of kindness, then you have acted the part of a Christian; and they become surprised and ashamed, and see their course of action and meanness more clearly than if you plainly stated their aggravated acts to rebuke them.—Lt 20, 1892. (MM 209, 210.) {2MCP 432.3}

God has called human agencies to be laborers together with Him in the work of salvation. He uses men encompassed with infirmities and liable to err. Then let us not censure those who have been so unfortunate as to make mistakes. Let us rather seek to be so transformed by the grace of God as to become compassionate, touched with human woe. This will cause joy in heaven; for in loving our fallen brother as God and Christ love us, we give evidence that we are partakers of Christ's attributes. {6T 455.3}