

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2015: *Proverbs*

Lesson 8 “Words of Wisdom”

Read for this week’s study

Proverbs 20; 1 Cor. 12:14–26; Jer. 9:23, 24; Proverbs 21; Matt. 25:35–40; Proverbs 22.

Memory Text

“Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man?” (Proverbs 20:6, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. We Are All Equal
- III. The Test of Life
- IV. Waiting for the Lord
- V. Compassion for the Poor
- VI. Education
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Zdravko Stefanović

A. Introduction

1. Title: A figurative way of speaking (Parables of Jesus).
2. Proverbs has no story line. In a story book we open up the first chapter, meet the characters, and wait in suspense to see what happens by the final chapter.
3. A collection of collections of wise sayings by kings such as Solomon, Hezekiah, Lemuel, and others.
4. The application of proverbs depends on the circumstances. Wisdom helps guide us in our use of any proverb.

B. Good Parenting (13:24)

1. Making the parents happy
“A wise son brings joy to the father,
but a foolish son grief to his mother” (15:1).

“To have fool for a son brings grief;
there is no joy for the father of the fool” (17:21).

“Listen to your father, who gave you life,
And do not despise your mother when she is old...
The father of a righteous man has great joy;
He who has a wise son delights in him.
May your father and mother be glad;
May she who gave you birth rejoice” (23:22, 24, 25).

“Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart;
Then I can answer anyone who treats me with contempt” (27:11).

The recurring emphasis on honoring one’s parents and making them happy may seem foreign to some readers. Over and over we read in Proverbs, do this and your father will rejoice. Or, if you don’t do something or if you do a bad thing your parents will be embarrassed. There is a lot of emphasis on filial obedience and a strong attentiveness to one’s parents. It seems that making the parents happy and proud by following their instructions is not always the most dominant theme in a culture that stresses being true to oneself and following one’s own dreams. **What is the reason for this?**

2. Physical Punishment

“He who spares the rod hates his son,
But he who loves him is careful to discipline him” (13:24).

“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child,
But the rod of discipline will drive it far from him” (22:15).

“Do not withhold discipline from a child;
if you punish him with the rod, he will not die.
Punish him with the rod
And save his soul from death” (23:13-14).

These words speak of physical punishment. **Do parents have the right, even the responsibility to spank their children?** If one followed the instructions of Proverbs literally, only a father could discipline his son and only with the use of a rod. But going beyond an absolute literal reading of the text we look for the principles. Life is short and children don’t need to repeat their parents’ mistakes. To spare their children from pain in the future they are willing to apply discipline in the present. Discipline can take many forms; some are more effective than others. There have been times when some parents have not used good judgment and have used force mindlessly or even in anger with disastrous consequences.

There is a story from the 1830's that is hard to forget. Parents traveling by wagon across the western territories lost their lives in a tragic accident high in the Rocky Mountains. The children were brought into the home of the Whitman's, in eastern Washington. In a tragic sequel the Whitman's were massacred by the Cayuse Indians who blamed Dr. Whitman for the diseases that their children were getting and for casting a spell on them. The adults and the males were killed, but the girls were spared. In the end, the US army found the children and brought them back. Without parents they were farmed out to foster families. In the memoirs of one of these young women, she describes being placed in the home of a seemingly devout Christian. The man read the words of Proverbs about the dangers that would result from "sparing the rod." He figured it was his job to beat this young lady regularly. The text in Proverbs doesn't say how often to beat the child. So he had to use his own judgment and he determined not to err on the side of leniency. Almost daily, she received regular beatings. He would beat her before he left on a trip, because he wouldn't be there to do it while he was gone on a trip. He would beat her when he came back. He thought he was doing what he was supposed to do. One day she decided she had enough, went away and got married at age 15. She could hunt, shoot, cook, build; she didn't need that man anymore. But, she said, "If that is religion, let me have less of it."

All this grew out of the gentleman's misunderstanding of the sayings in Proverbs that "you spare the rod and spoil the child." Doubtlessly, he lacked both compassion and common sense. **Is physical punishment a Biblical requirement? Should every child get a spanking? What are the principles for effective discipline of children?**

3. Train a child

"Train (or Start) a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not turn from it" (22:6)

The traditional reading of this verse has often been used as an unconditional promise that even the most rebellious child who grew up in a godly home would in the end come back to the faith of his/her parents. **Do you agree with this reading?**

There are questions about the precise meaning of the words in the first line of the verse: TRAIN, A CHILD, HE SHOULD GO.

Instead of being a promise, the verse could be a solemn warning: Let a lad have his own way and he will remain undisciplined even when he is old.

“Discipline your son, for in that there is hope;
Do not be a willing party to his death” (19:18).

“Discipline your son, and he will give you peace;
He will bring delight to your soul” (29:17).

4. The extremes to avoid

Absence of discipline vs. child abuse. Personal example and opportunities to get involved are the keys to success in dealing with young people. **Is this always right?**

Mother Teresa, the world famous Albanian nun who spent years working with the poor in Calcutta, traveled to Lebanon once during a conflict in the region that left many people wounded in the carnage. While trying to help children in the aftermath of an attack, she was discovered by a journalist. The little woman was trying to put a child on a stretcher when the journalist challenged her, “Mother Teresa, what are you doing over here? I thought your territory was India. You can’t go around helping everybody in the world.” He continued to harass her a bit. Finally she said, “Would you take the other end of this stretcher and we can pick this child up together.”

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Man’s capacity for free, creative, responsible thought and action is the image of God within him.

Sin has well-nigh robbed us of this Godlike power. By the sin of irresponsible, illogical, and rebellious thinking the first parents of the human race perverted the marvelous mechanism of their minds, beclouded their intellects, and passed on to succeeding generations a greatly dimmed reflection of our Creator.

But the plan of salvation provides for the recovery of this power. Its purpose is to restore our freedom and teach us to use it aright, to train people “to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men’s thought.” {Maxwell, A. Graham. *I Want to be Free*, 7. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1970}

How could Gentiles who don’t know the law, whether it be the Ten Commandments or the whole Old Testament, how could they do by nature what the law requires? Later Paul says in Roman 13:8 and 10, that “Love is the fulfilling of the law. He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled all law. Wherefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.” Now those of you who’ve been overseas in some underprivileged places, have you ever met people who don’t know the Old Testament but

they love? Ellen White says sometimes missionaries have arrived to bring the good news about God, to presumably underprivileged, unloving people; and these uninformed people have risked their lives to rescue the shipwrecked missionary so that he could come and teach them how to love. And they've already risked their lives for the missionary. That is a little disquieting, isn't it? How could you people be so nice, and I haven't even given you the gospel yet? And we wonder how this could be. And in many places Ellen White comments on this. One of the most potent places in *Desire of Ages*, 638, and in my margin I've put Romans 2: 14 and 15. "Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly." Now doesn't that fit? "Those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet, they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God." Why, she sounds just like Paul, doesn't she? "Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God." That is most specific, isn't it? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 2, recorded October, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links: <http://pkp.cc/3MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/4MMROMANS66> (Part 2)*

Further Study with Ellen White

Christ said, "It is expedient for you that I go away." No one could then have any preference because of his location or personal contact with Christ. The Saviour would be accessible to all alike, spiritually, and in this sense He would be nearer to us all than if He had not ascended on high. Now all may be equally favored by beholding Him and reflecting His character. The eye of faith sees Him ever present, in all His goodness, grace, forbearance, courtesy, and love, those spiritual and divine attributes. And as we behold, we are changed into His likeness. {RC 22.2}

But character is not inherited. It cannot be bought. Moral excellence and fine mental qualities are not the result of accident. The most precious gifts are of no value unless they are improved. The formation of a noble character is the work of a lifetime and must be the result of diligent and persevering effort. God gives opportunities; success depends upon the use made of them. {PP 223.1}

By faithfulness in little things, Elisha was preparing for weightier trusts. Day by day, through practical experience, he gained a fitness for a broader, higher work. He learned to serve; and in learning this, he learned also how to instruct and lead. The lesson is for all. None can know what may be God's purpose in His discipline; but all may be certain that faithfulness in little things is the evidence of fitness for greater responsibilities. Every act of life is a revelation of character, and he only who in small duties proves himself "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed" can be honored by God with higher service. 2 Timothy 2:15. {PK 218.2}

To make God's grace our own, we must act our part. His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. {PK 486.3}

The angels who do always behold the face of the Father in heaven would prefer to remain close by the side of God. But the Lord gives to every angel his work for this fallen world. Divine help is provided for men. They have the opportunity of cooperating with heavenly intelligences, of being laborers together with God. The possibilities of gaining a fitness for the presence of God, of being enabled to see His face, are placed before them. Heavenly angels are working to bring the human family into a close brotherhood, a oneness described by Christ as like to that existing between the Father and the Son. How can men so highly honored by God fail to appreciate their opportunities and privileges? How can they refuse to accept the divine help proffered? How much it is possible for human beings to gain if they will keep eternity in view. {UL 68.2}

Satanic agencies are ever warring for the mastery over human minds. But the angels of God are constantly at work, strengthening the weak hands and confirming the feeble knees of all who call upon God for help. The promise to every child of God is, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7). The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. Then ask; believe what God has said. He will surely fulfill His word. {UL 68.3}

Will human beings now act their part in resisting the devil? If they will do this, he will surely flee from them. Angels will do for you the things you cannot do for yourselves. They are waiting for your cooperation. . . . {UL 68.4}

The Father's presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us. He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. The blow that is aimed at him falls upon the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Whatever comes to him comes from Christ. He has no need to resist evil, for Christ is his defense. Nothing can touch him except by our Lord's permission, and "all things" that are permitted "work together for good to them that love God." Romans 8:28. {MB 71.2}

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. {MYP 136.1}

Jesus spake as never man spake. He poured out to men the whole treasure of heaven in wisdom and knowledge. He had not come to utter uncertain sentiments and opinions, but to speak truth established on eternal principles. He could have made disclosures in the sciences

that would have placed the discoveries of the greatest men in the background as utter littleness; but this was not His mission or His work. He had come to seek and to save the lost, and He would not permit Himself to be turned from His object. He revealed truths that had been buried under the rubbish of error, and He freed them from the exactions and traditions of men, and bade them stand fast forever. He rescued truth from its obscurity, and set it in its proper framework, that it might shine with its original luster. What wonder that crowds followed in the footsteps of the Lord and gave Him homage as they listened to His words! {CT 29.2}

Jesus assumed humanity that He might meet humanity. He brings men under the transforming power of truth by meeting them where they are. He gains access to the heart by securing sympathy and confidence, making all feel that His identification with their nature and interest is complete. The truth came from His lips beautiful in its simplicity, yet clothed with dignity and power. What a teacher was our Lord Jesus Christ! How tenderly did He treat every honest inquirer after truth, that He might gain admission to his sympathies and find a home in his heart. {TM 190.1}

God might have committed the message of the gospel, and all the work of loving ministry, to the heavenly angels. He might have employed other means for accomplishing His purpose. But in His infinite love He chose to make us co-workers with Himself, with Christ and the angels, that we might share the blessing, the joy, the spiritual uplifting, which results from this unselfish ministry. {SC 79.2}

True sanctification unites believers to Christ and to one another in bonds of tender sympathy. This union causes to flow continually into the heart rich currents of Christlike love, which flows forth again in love for one another. {SD 102.2}

The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in human hearts, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness. {COL 386.1}