

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### First Quarter 2015: *Proverbs*

### Lesson 9 “Words of Truth”

#### Read for this week’s study

Proverbs 22; Proverbs 23; Exod. 22:21–27; Proverbs 24; Eph. 5:20; Ezek. 33:8.

#### Memory Text

“Have I not written to you excellent things of counsels and knowledge, that I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth, that you may answer words of truth to those who send to you?” (Proverbs 22: 20, 21, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Knowledge of Truth
- III. Robbing the Poor
- IV. Being Jealous of the Wicked
- V. What We Put in Our Mouths
- VI. Our Responsibilities
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Zdravko Stefanović

##### A. Wisdom and Universal Truth

Some ancient proverbs from Egypt sound much like those from Proverbs. Here are some:

“Don’t cheat your neighbors with false ledgers. Don’t bear false witness.”

“Don’t covet the goods of the poor, don’t hunger for their bread.”

“The goods of the poor will stick in your throat you can’t swallow them.”

“Make honesty your guide to life and you will sleep soundly and wake happily.”

“Better to be praised for loving your neighbor than loving your wealth.”

“Above all control your tongue. Don’t repeat what you heard.”

“A word is like a bird, once released it can never be recaptured.”

“Rulers are often soft spoken, but their words are two-edged swords.”

Some of these sayings are dated to an earlier period than the book of Proverbs.

When some people discover that there are striking parallels between what is found in the book of Proverbs in their Bible and what has been recovered from the land of

Egypt, they say, **“How can this be if Proverbs is God’s word or inspired?” Are the basic principles for life similar everywhere on the planet? Are there basic moral, ethical, and economic principles for success in all cultures? Is truth true no matter who speaks it?**

There are differences between the book of Proverbs and the wisdom literature of Egypt and even of Babylon. First, Proverbs places an emphasis on the relationship between God and His people. Then the source of even the practical wisdom of the Proverbs is directly traced to the Creator God, who made the world through His wisdom.

## **B. Proverbs and Health**

**What does Proverbs have to say about being healthy?** Let’s begin with medicines, “A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones” (17:22). Or, “A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit” (15:13). A positive attitude towards life often contributes to a longer and healthier life. **Does humor help?**

At the end of Proverbs, King Lemuel is advised by his mother not to drink alcoholic beverages (Proverbs 31:1-6). He is going to be the judge, even the supreme dispenser of justice in his land, so his mother says, “It’s not for kings to drink. Because they’ll drink and forget what they are supposed to do and they won’t give justice to the people who are in trouble.” **How much alcohol will distort one’s judgment (23:29-35)?**

**So what is suggested we do with alcoholic beverages?** Proverbs 31:6 says, “You give strong drink to the one who is dying, and you give wine to the one whose life is bitter, let him drink and forget that he is poor, let him drink and remember his trouble no more.” In this case alcohol was supposed to function like a drug, a pain killer or mental anesthetic. One should also keep in mind that without the technology of distilling, alcoholic beverages in the ancient world were limited to beer and wine. Even their “strong drink” did not have high alcohol content like whiskey or vodka. It also was typical to dilute the wine with several parts water. Some sources indicate that water with small amounts of alcohol in it was safer to drink. (1 Timothy 5:23).

## **C. Attitudes**

So much in life depends on one’s attitude. Proverbs talks about some attitudes that are destructive:

1. Anger (14:17; 15:1; 16:32; 15:16-17; 17:1)
2. Pride (11:2; 13:8; 15:25; 16:18-19; 21:4)
3. Contention (3:30; 10:12; 17:1; 22:10; 28:25)
4. Envy [and envying the wicked] (3:31; 14:30; 23:17; 24:11)

5. Laziness (6:6; 10:26; 13:4; 20:4)
6. Dishonesty (11:1; 12:22; 17:5)

A wise person does what is right and rejects all wickedness. Proverbs offers some positive attitudes:

1. Self-control (23:1-8; 25:16)
2. Kindness to the poor (11:25; 19:17; 21:13; 22:2)
3. Learning wisdom (9:9; 10:17; 12:1)
4. Diligence (10:4-5; 12:11)
5. Respect to the enemy (25:21-22; 20:22)
6. Choosing peace over adversity (17:1; 20:3)

#### **D. The Closing Prayer: Proverbs 30:7-9**

##### **Thoughts from Graham Maxwell**

Faith is our conviction. It's being certain about things that at the moment we cannot see. And if you know the background of that verse in Hebrews, you know that this goes back to Habakkuk; chapters one and two where Habakkuk says to God, "Why aren't you going to do something?" And God says, "I am. But you wouldn't believe it if I told you." And Habakkuk says, "I do. And I'm going to wait and see." And God says, "If what I have predicted seems slow, wait for it; it will come. My righteous One will live in trust."

That famous verse, "the just shall live by faith," is not discussing forgiveness or justification. The background for that verse is the one who is right with me—and my friend, will trust me and be willing to wait. And that's the kind of trust, and right relationship with God, that really counts. And when we come to Romans, (to look at that verse a little later) that's the background for it.

The angels had such trust; the loyal ones. They had questions! But they said to God, "We trust you enough that we're willing to wait," and they waited all the way to Calvary for some of their answers. They even heard the promise to Adam and Eve that God was going to do something. And they were willing to wait because they trusted God. It certainly helps to understand "salvation by faith" and "righteousness by faith" to understand faith as trust in this way. We're not saved by faith; that is, faith does not save us. God saves us. But God can only save those who trust Him. Like a physician, God stands ready to heal all the damage done. But He cannot force us to be well. If we don't trust Him enough to listen, and to cooperate, and let Him heal the damage done, there's no way He can heal us. Physicians cannot heal rebellious patients who stay away because they think the doctor is a quack. Only if there is trust there—there needs to be mutual trust—can healing really take place. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, session 3, "All God Asks Is Trust" 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/3MMCAG>*

The Bible is very candid in its depiction and description of sin. But it always presents sin in the setting of the remedy. Otherwise the Bible would not be fit to read. That's why we must read it as a whole. Do you know that there are two books in the Bible that don't even mention God? Not once. But if you take the whole book and put it in the larger setting, those two books, Esther and Song of Solomon, say wonderful things about our God. You see, to be fair with the evidence we must read it as a whole. Or maybe could I read the statement I wrote at the bottom of the Bible Reference Sheet? After going through 108 times, this is my firmest conviction about the Bible:

The great purpose of the Bible is to reveal the truth about our heavenly Father that we may be won back to Him in love and trust. This truth, this everlasting good news, is to be found in every one of the sixty-six books. But to discover this truth we must learn more than just what happened to Samson and Delilah, to David and Bathsheba, to Gideon and his fleece. The all-important question is, what do these stories tell us about God?

If one does not ask this question, much of the content of Scripture may seem unrelated to the plan of salvation, even perplexing, sometimes even contradictory. But when one learns to view the Bible as a whole, there emerges a consistent picture of an all-wise and gracious God who seems willing to go to any length to keep in touch with His people, to stoop and reach them where they are, to speak a language they can understand. And the further one reads on book by book, the more one is moved with love and admiration for a God who would be willing to run such risk, to pay such a price, in order to keep open the lines of communication between Himself and His wayward children. God will save all who trust Him. But He has not asked us to trust Him as a stranger. The Bible—all of it—is a record of God's revelation and demonstration of infinite trustworthiness. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, session 6, "Evaluating the Evidence" recorded February, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/6MMCAG>*

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

There are many who fail to distinguish between the rashness of presumption and the intelligent confidence of faith. . . .

If men needlessly place themselves in peril, and go where God does not require them to go, and self-confidently expose themselves to danger, disregarding the dictates of reason, God will not

work a miracle to relieve them. He will not send His angels to preserve any from being burned if they choose to place themselves in the fire. {Con 85.3}

He maintained His disguise till He had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in His life, His character, His mission to earth, and His death and resurrection. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, **not** because it was supported by His personal testimony, but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of His life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth. (ST Oct. 6, 1909). {5BC 1125.12} (Emphasis supplied)

That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. . . The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. . . The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. {ST, December 30, 1889 par. 4}

Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, "Love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts. {DA 641.3}