

Self-Leadership from Proverbs

Positioning for increase

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Intro: Get ready for increase

- Building
- TSM course.
- Influence.
- The prophetic

Proverbs is a great book for understanding how the values of God's kingdom work, the principles by which God operates. And the more we can get in line with them then the more fruitful we will become.

31 chapters. 31 days between now and start of term.

Proverbs is a book full of truisms rather than promises. E.g.

10:27 "The fear of the LORD prolongs life,
but the years of the wicked will be short."

Life is seen as a series of choices, and Proverbs helps us to make those choices.

Self-leadership advice.....

1. Get Wisdom.

Our society has information available at its fingertips like never before.

Information rich but wisdom poor.

Wisdom is available to all who will live by it. ***Proverbs 9:6 "leave your simple ways and live, and walk in the way of insight"***

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. James 1:5

Wisdom is available.

The question is do you want it?

The starting point as a choice.

Either Fear God and live our lives in reference to Him OR we can choose to fear man which operates as a snare to our lives.

(The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. Proverbs 9:10)

The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe. 29:25)

- God wants to entrust his church to who aren't impressed by man.

Matt 10:28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

2. Beat laziness.

The sluggard

Proverbs 26:

14 As a door turns on its hinges,
so a sluggard turns on his bed.

The sluggard isn't just anchored to his bed he's hinged to it

Sluggardly characteristics

- **won't start things.** When we ask how long? When? He won't have an answer **6:9,10**
- **won't finish things.** So his quarry goes bad on him **12:27**
- **Won't face things:** " Perhaps there is a lion out there". **22:13**
- **Ultimately unsatisfying.** So lazy people end up restless and dissatisfied. **13:4 21:25,26**

Getting free from laziness

i) **Recognise the times.** Proverbs 6:6 says prepare bread in summer and gather food in harvest. proverbs 20:4 (English Standard Version)

4(A) The sluggard does not plow in the autumn;

(B) he will seek at harvest and have nothing.

Rest in scripture is seen as both a reward (as in proverbs) and also preparation for what lies ahead. There is a balance to be struck.

We don't want to be driven, but we do want to be deliberate.

ii) Proverbs 24:30–34– “I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, and behold it was all overgrown with thorns.

In other words **look after what you have.**

iii)– stop rationalising your behaviour

13 The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road,
a fierce lion roaming the streets!"

iv) Passivity often comes from fear. Frightened of taking a risk. Ask “What am I frightened of?”. Go back to the beginning of wisdom– fear of the lord.

v) Take practical steps. Vary your tasks, set achievable goals, make some plans, be accountable.

vi) Sluggards won't listen to others.

*16 The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes
than seven men who answer discreetly.*

Recognise you don't have all the answers– seek advice

3. Cultivate friendship:

The Hebrew word here can equally be translated friend or neighbour.

i) loyalty

“there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (18:24)

***“ A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for adversity” 17:17***

The bible talks about getting friendship by giving it away. Give away friendship and faithfulness indiscriminately and you get some back.

I think loyalty is something that has been largely lost to the church in the Western world but its something that we're going to regain through our culture of honour in this church.

1 John 3:16 says " this is how we know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us (so far so good) and we also ought to lay down our lives for one another.

What's the standard of Christian friendship. You lay down your life for one another.

That we're meant to be attractive to the world not just because we have the power of God but that we have the presence of God amongst us.

So David and Gail come back from Cambodia, with pretty much the clothes they're stood up in. Sarah Adams is co-ordinating getting everything from sofas to fridges. I didn't even know about it. I hear in one of our small groups a guy is losing his job. His small group arrange for hundreds of pounds to go into his account.

Loyalty is meant to characterise us.

ii) Secondly and briefly, honesty.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend (27:60) he that flattereth his friend spreads a net for his feet (29:5)

When was the last time you challenged the attitude or behaviour of one of your friends?

Lets say it was more than 6 months ago. The reason that they haven't challenged you recently is that either a) they're perfect or b) you're too chicken to tell them.

Which is it?

Guys its not enough to just hang out and have a beer. You need to be asking "how's your marriage going?" Where's your relationship with God at? What's he speaking to you about? Take things below the superficial.

iii) Peaceable, reluctant to cause strife 3:29

iv) Disarmingly kind 24:17, 25:21 +22

v) Integrity 6:1-5, 3:28+28

vi) Demonstrates sensitivity 26:18 = 19

25:20

25:17

4. Use words wisely.

words are:

i) powerful

“life and death are in the power of the tongue” (18:21)

Proverbs encourages us to think of our tongues like a sword. (stick your tongue out at the person next to you). You can either use that sword to stab someone or you can use that same sword to cut them free.

Pain or healing can emanate from the same tongue.

12:18 “the tongue of the wise brings healing” your words can be either really destructive or healing.

10:20

16:24 gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.

There is power and authority in the words that we use. When Jesus calls the disciples together in Matt 10 it says

“And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction.”

There is power in the words we use.

Story: Wendy and I praying for girl in my office. The declarations we make carry power.

ii) use them sparingly and wisely. ***17:27 “whoever restrains his words has knowledge”***

***15:23 To make an apt answer is a joy to a man,
and a word in season, how good it is!***

Don't go for volume, go for impact.

iii) Look for your words to bear fruit.

“From the fruit of his mouth a man is satisfied with good”

Story me in US prophecying over a guy, hear back from him years later.
“That's great, I didn't put “I've no idea who you are.”

5. Seek advice

13:20 Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise,

but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

for by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory. 24:6

e.g. parenting– I'll ask people who've got children older than mine “ how do you handle this?” “ how have you handled talking to you kids about allowances, the facts of life, relationships.” Where are you drawing the line on video games and how late they could stay out?

Because to do otherwise is madness. Find people in the same stage of life as you and draw out wisdom from them.

5. Guard your heart.

4:23 “keep your heart with all vigilance for from it flow the springs of life”

Means in this context our whole ‘inner being’. Not to become ‘guarded’ but to feed on truth– character and nature of God and who he says we are. To live in true reality.

“ Jesus taught and demonstrated that the Kingdom of God is a present -tense reality– it exists now in the invisible realm and is superior to everything in the visible realm..... That is normal Christianity.... To return to that original mission we must radically change the way we think.”

What are you feeding on?

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iii) seeking counsel. Seeking advice from people. God places around us people who can help inform and instruct us. Take advantage of who God gives you.

5. Take responsibility for homelife.

– Raising children---

parents 1:8-9, 4:1-5, 4:20-5:1, 6:20, 13:1, 24, 15:5, 19:18, 23:13, 22-25, 29:15, 17

References:

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