

May 21st of 2023

Proverbs

Sayings of the Wise



8th Commandment & Proverbs?

The 8th Commandment is you shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. This means that we are to fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

We scarcely use the word scoffer, but scoffing is scattered everywhere today. What is a scoffer? Meriam Webster has: an expression of scorn, derision, or contempt: to show contempt by derisive acts or language: to treat or address with derision: Mock. "Scoffer" is the name of the arrogant, haughty man who acts with arrogant pride. (See Prov 21:24) And so, Proverbs has much to say about scoffers. In other words, Whenever you sit in the cafeteria with colleagues and point out the imperfection of others, that is sitting in the seat of scoffers. Whenever you are on the internet and delight in the misfortunes of those who are popular, and then scroll down to the comments and delight in the mindless cold-hearted comments of modern-day scoffers, that is being in the seat of a scoffer.

STUDY 9

8TH COMMANDMENT &
PROVERBS?

LIE ARE QUICK; TRUTH IS
SLOW

WHEN LESS IS MORE

SECRET VS. PUBLIC SINS

HANDS, EYES, EARS, &
MOUTH

INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN
GUILTY

ASSASSINATION OF
CHARACTER?

Lies are Quick; Truth is Slow

Lies tend to spread fast, whereas it will take the truth weeks and months to put out a flammable lie. The Epistle of James says that a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire, and Proverbs 29:8 says, "Scoffers set a city aflame..." Furthermore, Proverbs tells us why lies spread so quickly, "*An evildoer listens to wicked lips, and a liar gives ear to mischievous tongues.*" And so, where gossip flourishes, the gossip says more about those that spread it than it does about the content of the gossip. In other words, whether it is in a local town, church, or organization - the presence of gossip reveals the wickedness of those hearing and repeating such gossip. If people did not have wicked ears and wicked tongues, gossip would not spread and flourish.

When Less is More?

Gossip, slander, and false testimony tend to use more words than truth. In other words, the truth tends to be pithy, factual, and to the point, whereas lies need to create a context, establish angles, etc. And so, Proverbs is correct; typically, when words are many, transgression is not lacking. (Prb. 10:19).

Secret vs. Public Sins

It is important to consider the difference between secret and public sins (see Prb. 24:24-25 & 25:7-10). That is to say, when the sins of a neighbor are not public, Matthew 18 is in effect. When sin occurs privately between people, it must be dealt with directly using the guidance of Matthew 18. However, if a sin is public, the sin then deserves public rebuke (see 1 Timothy 5:20 & Acts 16:37). In other words, talking publicly about private sins is gossip and slander. However, not talking publicly about public sins is also a failure. Where sin is public, it needs public rebuke; where it is private, it needs a private rebuke.

Hand, Eyes, Ears, and Mouth?

As we will learn in the weeks to come, coveting deals with the sins of the eyes. And, as we learned previously, the First Commandment concerns the sins of the heart, the Third Commandment concerns the sins of the ears, the Sixth Commandment concerns the sins of the sexual organs, the Seventh Commandment concerns the sins of the hands, and the Eighth Commandment confronts the sins of the mouth/tongue. Tragically, we sin with all of our senses and body parts; however, at the root, we have the wicked heart.

Innocent Until Proven Guilty?

The American legal sentiment, "innocent until proven guilty," flows directly out of the Eighth Commandment. Furthermore, due process flows out of the Eighth Commandment as well.

Assassination of Character?

At the heart of the Eighth Commandment is the attempt to prevent the assassination of a person's character. This does not negate sin; however, it goes the way of putting the best construction on a neighbor even when sin has been clearly committed. Tragically, if the Eighth Commandment is not upheld, it gives way for the Fifth Commandment to be broken. If you can assassinate a person's character, it is much easier to assassinate their life.

Honey Catches More Flies Than Vinegar

"The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is of little worth. The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of sense." (10:20-21)

"A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit." (15:4)

"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (15:1)