



Eternal PERSPECTIVE Proverbs

BIBLE TEXT | PROVERBS 19:16-29

16 Whoever keeps the commandment keeps his life; he who despises his ways will die.

17 Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.

18 Discipline your son, for there is hope; do not set your heart on putting him to death.

19 A man of great wrath will pay the penalty, for if you deliver him, you will only have to do it again.

20 Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.

21 Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

22 What is desired in a man is steadfast love, and a poor man is better than a liar.

23 The fear of the Lord leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.

24 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish and will not even bring it back to his mouth.


25 Strike a scoffer, and the simple will learn prudence; reprove a man of understanding, and he will gain knowledge.

26 He who does violence to his father and chases away his mother is a son who brings shame and reproach.

27 Cease to hear instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.

28 A worthless witness mocks at justice, and the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity.

29 Condemnation is ready for scoffers, and beating for the backs of fools.



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DEVOTIONAL FOR PROVERBS 19:16-29

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My grandparents bought land on a mountain outside of Durango, Colorado before I was born, so I grew up going to Colorado almost every summer. Now I get to take my family there and share memories from my childhood with my husband and kids. This summer, I took my five year old daughter, Aria, kayaking on the river for the first time. I had this built up in my mind as this great thing we could share whenever we visit Colorado. In my kayak, I had Aria and my 14 year old cousin who was truly a trooper for putting up with us. We started out on the river with me showing them both how to paddle and steer the kayak. Everything was going great...until it wasn't. We hit some small rapids, that someone later told us they call "pinball alley". You can see where this is going, we ended up dumping out. I had Aria in one arm, and my paddle in the other, while also trying to keep hold of the kayak. We eventually got everyone back in, but my cousin had lost her paddle in the mess of it all. We continued in the river, no problem, except, Aria was a little scared and said, "I'm never doing this again." Hearing this broke my heart because I had been looking forward to this trip with her all week and thought I had planned it out perfectly. As we kept going, she seemed like she was having fun. We were almost finished when we got stuck on a rock. With only one paddle and two kids in the boat, I couldn't get us unstuck so I just hopped out and steered them toward the shore. I had to fight hard to swim, since the current was strong, which also scared Aria a little. In the end, Aria ended up saying she would love to go again, as long as she could have a helmet like the people who were white water rafting.

As I read through this passage, God really highlighted a couple of verses for me. The first one I want to look at is verse 21: "Many are the plans in the mind of man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand." If you don't know me well, I love to make plans and I love to be in control of a situation. I had my "perfect plan" for how our kayak trip was going to go and when it didn't go that way, I had a decent little meltdown about how I had ruined a memory with Aria that I could never get back. Yet, God continues to be kind and patient with me as I learn to trust Him and His plans, not my own.

I love how God ties things together for me. I just finished studying the Sermon on the Mount, which addresses "anxieties about tomorrow" in Matthew 6:34. You also see in the Lord's Prayer, that Jesus says, "Give us our daily bread" (verse 11), not "Give us a meal plan for the next two weeks". God provides for our needs today. We see it again in Exodus 16 when the Israelites were in the desert and God provided manna. They were only to collect what they needed for that day. God wanted them to trust that He would provide for them the next day, and the day after that. This idea is summed up well in James 4:13-15. God's plans are bigger than ours and tomorrow is never promised. It doesn't mean that we can't make plans, however, it does mean that we have to trust Him. Our plans should be "if it is



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the Lord's will," constantly seeking Him in what we do. A friend of mine said that she starts her day praying, "God, this is the list of what I think I need to get done today, but if You have something else for me, I'll do that. Your will and plans, not mine." And that is exactly what the posture of our hearts should be.

Verses 20 and 27 of this passage really go hand in hand. If you know anything about swimming against a current, you know that you have to keep pushing. If you stop swimming, you will get swept away. If I had stopped swimming toward the shore, the current would have carried me downstream away from my family quickly. Verse 27 says if we stop listening to instructions we will stray. This is so true, not only when it comes to wisdom, but to all good things from God and to God. The flesh quickly leads us away from the good things God has for us. If we are not actively pursuing and listening, we will drift. Matthew 6:24 tells us we cannot serve two masters. If we aren't pursuing God, even if we would just say we are "stagnant in our faith", we are actually being pulled away from Him and toward worldly things. May we choose to pursue Christ each day and continue to listen to the counsel and instruction of the wise.

Questions:

1. Verse 17 is a great verse to ponder. Do you give generously? Do you believe that God will repay you for that? If you have time, read through the Book of Ruth. How did God repay Ruth's generosity in staying with Naomi? How did God repay Boaz's generosity in letting Ruth glean in the fields?
2. Do you tend to make plans without consulting God? Do you get bent out of shape when plans change? Consider starting your morning with my friend's prayer: "God, this is the list of what I think I need to get done today, but if You have something else for me, I'll do that. Your will and plans, not mine."
3. Are you pursuing God, godly instruction, and wisdom right now or do you feel like you're drifting? What is one step you can take toward God this week?