

Eternal PERSPECTIVE Proverbs

BIBLE TEXT | PROVERBS 22:17-29

17 Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge,

18 for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, if all of them are ready on your lips.

19 That your trust may be in the Lord, I have made them known to you today, even to you.

20 Have I not written for you thirty sayings of counsel and knowledge,

21 to make you know what is right and true, that you may give a true answer to those who sent you?

22 Do not rob the poor, because he is poor, or crush the afflicted at the gate,

23 for the Lord will plead their cause and rob of life those who rob them.

24 Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man,

25 lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.

26 Be not one of those who give pledges, who put up security for debts.

27 If you have nothing with which to pay, why should your bed be taken from under you?

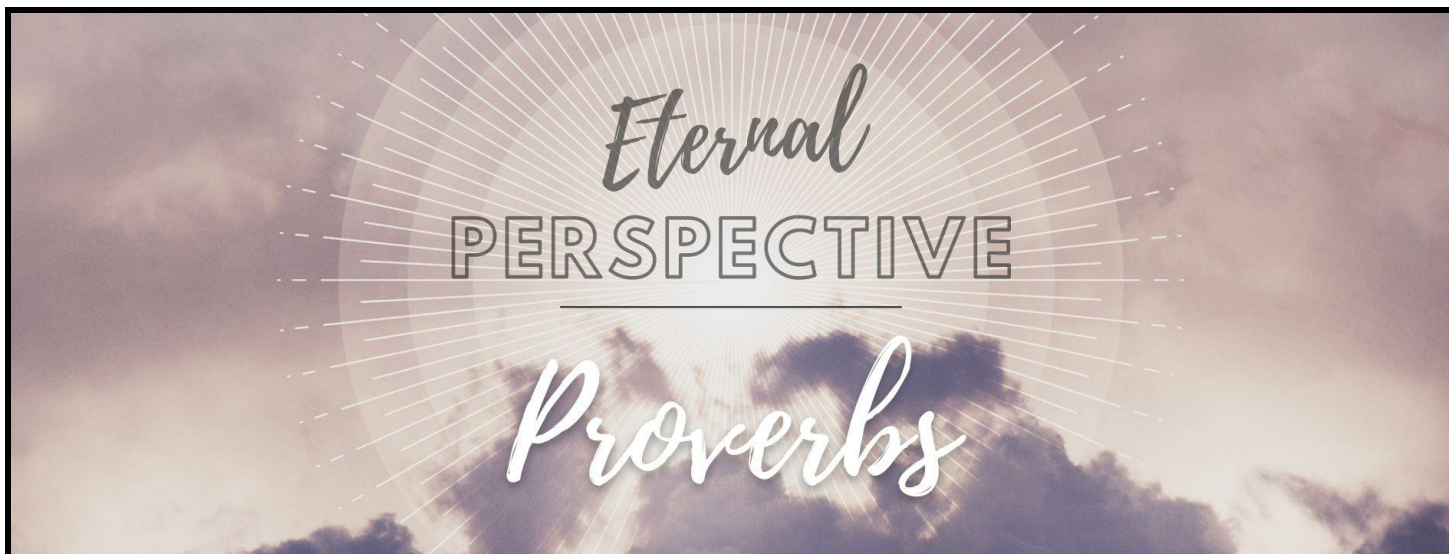
28 Do not move the ancient landmark that your fathers have set.

29 Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.

DEVOTIONAL FOR PROVERBS 22:17-29

AUTHOR: KELLEY BACHTEL

My last move, I had a friend that graciously helped me pack up my belongings. It was toward the end, and I was filling boxes full of empty baskets, bins, small acrylic dividers, and anything that an organizer's heart could desire. She gently looked at me and asked, "How many of these do you need?" We were substantially downsizing and moving to a house with only three drawers in the entire place. She also resided in a small space and knew many of the things I was holding on to would become overwhelming. I still love a good basket from an old estate sale but the advice from a gentle friend who responded in a kind and careful way reminds me to know the use or leave it behind.



First, the reader in Proverbs 22:17 is encouraged to hear the words of the wise. God is the giver of wisdom and has generously imparted His Word as our learning source. He wants to be known. James 1:5 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." God freely gives wisdom that leads us to what is pleasant, true, right, and helps us to trust Him more fully. Whether we receive wisdom through wise counsel or through God's Word, we should accept it with open ears and a heart that desires to follow Christ.

Second, the reader is told to "apply your heart to my knowledge." Apply is an action word. Much like the baskets that I was placing in a box never to be used, we can often fall short of application. God knew this about us so well that He gave us a warning to not merely be listeners of the Word, but to do what it says (James 1:22). Where does this action begin? It begins in the heart of the listener. God cares deeply about the condition of the heart. In fact, He doesn't tell us to follow our hearts- the world does. Instead, He instructs us to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5).

God's wisdom prepares us to give a true answer for the hope that we find in Christ (1 Peter 3:15; Proverbs 22:21). He makes us a vessel for honorable use, pure, set apart and ready for every good work (2 Timothy 2:21), definitely not an empty basket stowed away and forgotten. He teaches us how to give and receive wisdom with gentleness and respect. Finally, He reminds us we can, "Be completely gentle. Be patient. Put up with one another in love. (Ephesians 4:2, NIV)" because that is how He loved us.

Questions:

1. Is there someone that you have imparted wisdom to recently? Were you patient and gentle?
2. Read Colossians 3:16-17. Have you been gently admonished? How was your response?
3. God's Word is a gracious gift. Have you spent time delighting in it? Why or why not?