

PROVERBS:
THE DARK SIDE

Monday, April 27

Reading: Proverbs 21:5-8

Proverbs 21:8 The way of the guilty is devious, but the conduct of the innocent is upright.

In *The Empire Strikes Back*, the 2nd film of the original Star Wars trilogy, Luke Skywalker trains with Master Yoda in the ways of the force to become a Jedi Knight. At one point in his training, Luke asks if the dark side of the force is stronger. Yoda replies, “No...quicker, easier, more seductive...If once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny.” This is an apt warning for anyone travelling the ‘dark path’ of sin. These verses begin and end with positive statements about the person who follows God’s way. In between are negative descriptions of the dark path.¹

PRESUMPTION (21:5) – Pride was seen as a root cause of sin in verse 4. Now presumption is added to the list. Those who are on the dark path do not weigh their steps but instead leap ahead without thinking, presuming they know best. They do not consider the consequences or the right path God would have them journey. This will eventually lead to poverty and ruin.

PERVERTION OF TRUTH (21:6) – In their haste to get what they want, those on the dark path will lie, cheat, and steal. But what they gain by such actions is only temporary; it will not last. It is a trap that leads to destruction. Jesus warned about chasing the things of the world when He said, “Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?” (Mark 8:34-36).

PERSISTANCE IN SIN (21:7-8) – They do not sin in ignorance or act in ‘the heat of the moment.’ They deliberately “refuse to do what is right.” They are dragged away by their own evil desires, like fish caught in a net. Verse 8 describes their way as “devious” – literally ‘perverted or crooked.’

Notice the three ways sinful people try to get ahead: hastily (21:5; see also 19:2), deceitfully (21:6), and violently (21:7; see also 12:6). By contrast, the diligent and pure who follow God’s path will have profit instead of poverty; they are upright (literally ‘straight’) instead of crooked.

The path of sin is quicker, easier, and more seductive! To live for God is more difficult because it fights against our old sinful nature and our sin-corrupted society. But God has given us His Word and the Holy Spirit to help us in our journey. And the end results of following God’s path are life in His presence. We must remember that the Lord “weighs the heart” (21:2) and God is pleased with those who live for Him (21:3).

¹ Parts of this outline are from A. J. Higgins. *What the Bible Teaches: Proverbs* (Ritchie Old Testament Commentary), p. 226-227