

DESIRING GOD

Tuesday, January 20
Reading: Proverbs 13:12-21

Proverbs 13:14 *The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death.*

These middle verses stand at the heart of Proverbs 13. How are we to have the proper appetites and desires? By focusing on God and His Word. These verses focus on the spiritual appetites that can shape our lives to be more like Jesus Christ.

DESIRE PRAYER (13:12, 19) – These two verses speak of hope and longings fulfilled. The word ‘hope’ in Hebrew has close links to the ideas of truth and waiting. The prophet Isaiah would later write, “Yes, Lord, walking in the way of Your laws, we wait for You; Your name and renown are the desire of our hearts. My soul yearns for You in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for You...” (Isaiah 26:8-9).

Sometimes we must wait for God to answer our hopes and desires and that can be discouraging. And sometimes our desires do not match with His (see James 4:3). But if we trust in God, He will fulfill His purpose and we will flourish like a tree of life. His answer will bring sweetness to our soul. Fools, however, refuse to turn from their own evil ways and plans. It has been said that prayer doesn’t change things as much as it changes me! Prayer aligns us with the heart of God. Pray changes us to be more like Him. Do you desire to be a better ‘prayer warrior?’ Are you willing to wait and trust in God’s answer and God’s timing?

DESIRE GOD’S WORD (13:13-14) – What is the “teaching of the wise”? Proverbs 14:27 repeats verse 14 except it replaces “the teaching of the wise” with “the fear of the Lord.” The instruction and teaching in these verses is speaking about the Word of God. Obeying its commands brings reward, while those who despise and show disrespect for God’s Word will pay a terrible price. They are rejecting the very “fountain of life” that can save them from death. Does studying God’s Word give you joy and reward? How is God’s wisdom like a fountain that bubbles up in your life and overflows to others?

DESIRE GRACE (13:15-17, 21) – The word “favor” means acceptance and grace. We are saved by God’s grace and we live holy lives by His grace. “Good judgment” begins from the inside out. It is transforming our lives so that we are people of grace. We live in such a way that God’s Word shines out through us. The fool however does the opposite. Given a chance, a fool will make a fool of himself. Instead of good things, they are followed by trouble. Another word for “envoy” is ambassador. We are ambassadors for Christ to bring His healing to the world (2 Corinthians 5:20).

DESIRE DISCIPLINE (13:18, 20-21) – One of the mottos at Shiloh Church is: “We do it better when we do it together.” That is what it means to “walk with the wise.” We need the encouragement, correction, support, and advice of our brothers and sisters in Christ. “The spiritual man or woman will build bridges to the unsaved and to those who need spiritual help. But he or she will walk together with those who are spiritual.¹

¹ A. J. Higgins. What the Bible Teaches: Proverbs (Ritchie Old Testament Commentaries), p 151