

PROVERBS:
KNOWING IS HALF THE BATTLE

Friday, May 1

Reading: Proverbs 22:10-16

Proverbs 20:8 When a king sits on his throne to judge, he winnows out all evil with his eyes.

In the 1980's, 'G.I. Joe' was a popular cartoon on TV. At the end of each episode, there was a public service announcement about things kids should look out for or avoid – things like not talking to strangers or staying away from downed power lines. Each announcement ended with the phrase, "Now you know... And knowing is half the battle." As Solomon concludes this section of Proverbs, he reviews some of the personalities and attitudes we have observed up to this point. He wants us to know and remember what we have learned.

THE MOCKER (20:10-11) – The goal of mockers is to stir up trouble. They are to be avoided because they are not interested in bringing people together, but only in tearing them apart. Those with a pure heart speak with grace. Their words are honest and uplifting. A leader should not want a group of "yes men" but those who can give him honest and open feedback and advice. This is true in any relationship. The Apostle Paul reminds us, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit (literally minister grace to) those who listen." (Ephesians 4:29).

THE SLUGGARD (20:13) – The lazy person rears their head again here. This time we see that they are always full of excuses for why they won't work. These excuses usually come off as rather silly. Why would a lion be in the public square of a town?

THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN (20:14) – Though she has not been mentioned since chapter 8, Solomon wants us to remember the dangers of falling into her trap. Her mouth speaks "seductive words" (2:16; 7:5) that seem sweet as honey and smooth as oil (5:3) but always end in disaster and the wrath of God.

THE WAYWARD CHILD (20:15) – This verse reminds us that we are all born with a sin nature. Godly parents will instruct (22:6) and discipline their children in God's way. Both are necessary in child-rearing. Instruction without discipline will lead to an uncontrolled, selfish attitude. Discipline without instruction will lead to a resentful attitude in your kids (Colossians 3:20-21). Parents need to not only discipline their children when they do wrong but also lovingly explain why it was wrong and what the right path should be.

THE ABUSER (20:16) – This verse describes a 'Reverse Robin Hood' syndrome. They rob from the poor and give to the rich. They do this in an effort to "increase their own wealth." God promises that these actions will not result in the desired wealth but in ruin.

Solomon wants us to know that God approves and guards those who faithfully follow His wisdom. But He turns the words and plots of the unfaithful back on their own heads (22:16). Knowing is half the battle. The other half is to apply and live out God's wisdom in our lives.