

The Weekly Word
July 9-15, 2018

Summer continues to bath us in warmth. May the ‘warmth’ of God’s Word bath you daily as well. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, July 9: Proverbs 5- Warning against adultery...

The title of the chapter gives away its content, “Warning Against Adultery.” The entire chapter hammers home the dangers and snares of adultery.

I found myself thinking about the ministries, pastorates and denominational scandals brought on by adultery and illicit sexual activities. Add to that, the stories surfacing through the #MeToo movement and it becomes clear how pernicious illicit sex can be, whether adultery or other.

For me cultivating my love for the wife of my youth is my best defense. Love and fulfillment in marriage coupled with deep friendship with my wife is a safety net that helps guard my heart and my life. Constantly remembering that my ways *are in full view of the LORD* (21) helps, too.

Lord, I thank You for the gift of my wife. She has been a gift in so many ways... her faith in You, her love, wisdom, character and heart have all been gifts. I am so blessed. Thank You, Lord.

Please bless my wife and give me creative wisdom to know how to express my love for her in ways that bring her joy. I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Tuesday, July 10: Proverbs 6- Folly...

Folly and foolishness are the subject of today’s teaching. Avoid it like the plague counsels the proverb. But what is folly? The proverb outlines 11 facets of folly.

Putting oneself in debt to another. *My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor, if you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger, you have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth* (1-2). Do everything you can to extricate yourself from debt to others. Do not rest until you are free, counsels the proverb.

Laziness... too much resting and relaxing and not enough working. Follow the example of an ant who tirelessly works and gathers preparing for the days to come.

Villainy and with it keeping companionship with a villain. There is no shortcut to gain. Villainy is wrong.

The proverb warns of 7 other detestable practices, *haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community* (17-19), before he closes the chapter reminding us of the folly of adultery.

Folly is straying from the Lord’s path as well as being lazy about important tasks. Folly destroys lives!

Now comes the introspective work, hanging a plumb line and squaring my life (your life) against the counsel of the proverb...

Lord, You have given me a measuring stick, may I use it to measure and evaluate my life. I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Wednesday, July 11: Proverbs 7- Beware adultery...

This is the third chapter in a row with a strong warning against adultery, prostitution and wayward sex. BEWARE. BE CAREFUL, shouts Solomon. Seeking sex outside of the marriage bed *is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death* (27).

How many lives have crashed and burned on the slippery way of illicit sex.

Our world is enamored with sex. Sex and sensuality sells many products. Sex is prevalent in songs, on the silver screen, Internet and TV.

Solomon's warning is as apt today as in his day.

Heed God's warning...

Oh God, keep me from the path of impurity. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thursday, July 12: Proverbs 8- Hating evil...

An often repeated refrain is 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' What then is the fear of the Lord?

In this chapter we gain a partial definition, verse 13: *To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.* There we have it, fearing God equates to hating evil and the author then suggests some things to hate.

Pride and arrogance... pride, overly impressed with oneself and one's abilities. When we impress ourselves with ourselves we become self-center and self-focused. Pride can do this. Pride also blocks our ability to see areas where we need help or need work/maturity. Pride also blocks us from seeing our need for God or our need for help.

A partner of pride is arrogance. These two words are from the same root, so they are two sides of the same coin. Arrogance is self exaltation... and like pride it is not hard to see how that leads to evil.

Hating evil behavior and perverse speech is more obvious, particularly when illustrating hating evil. Perverse speech is fraudulent speech. Perverse speech turns good into evil... it is the kind of speech that harms.

Back to the main thought... *To fear the LORD is to hate evil.* I never processed the fear of the Lord this way. It makes sense, since evil is opposed to the Lord and it makes sense that hating evil in any form shows fear for the Lord.

This is a new way for me to think about fearing God and I need more time to let it sink and soak in...

Oh God, wanting to live for You means I need to hate evil. I need to despise evil in any form. It is not enough for me to work for good, I have to stand against evil, oppose evil not only not indulge in it. Help me, Lord, to spot and take a stand that honors You against evil. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Friday, July 13: Proverbs 9- The need for knowledge...

Wisdom and folly are compared and contrasted in this chapter. Like a broken record, Solomon makes the point again and again... avoid folly, embrace wisdom.

I guess you cannot overplay the need to embrace wisdom. Thinking about my own parenting, there were concerns and issues I continually hammered home. God through Solomon is hammering home the concern of folly and the need for wisdom.

Am I heeding God's Word? Am I seeking wisdom?

And what is wisdom? The often-used definition is given again in this chapter. Verse 10: *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

I have looked at the first half of that definition before so my eyes were drawn to the second half. (Reminder in Hebrew poetry couplets, like verse 10, are often used to make one point. The second couplet is often restatement of the first, using different language or another word picture.)

Knowledge of the Holy One is understanding... My first reaction is ‘Yes, Amen.’ Then as I pondered longer I realized that knowledge of the Holy One doesn’t drop on us like rain from above. Instead it is more like a garden that has to be worked and tended and cultivated. Knowledge takes work to amass. Knowledge takes thought and study and concentration.

Am I spending the time necessary with the Lord and His Word to gain knowledge of Him? Am I giving God’s Word the attention it deserves? Looking back over my life, am I growing in understanding?

Are you???

Lord, show me how to guard my time with You and Your Word. Give me attention when I am in thought and study. Burrow Your truths deep into my very being. I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Saturday, July 14: Proverbs 10- Integrity...

When I think of a Proverb, a short 2-line pithy statement comes to mind. Now that we have reached chapter 10, the chapters are full of those 2-line statements that bounce around from topic to topic.

Reading this chapter I was drawn to verse 9 and particularly the word ‘integrity.’ *Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.*

Uprightness, perfection and strength, 3 other options for translating the Hebrew word underneath ‘integrity’.

While I find the word ‘integrity’ full of meaning, those additional options add color and texture to the meaning of the Proverb.

Whoever walks uprightly walks securely...

Whoever walks in perfection walks securely...

Whoever walks in strength [of character] walks securely...

Solomon is pointing out that being a person of moral integrity, showing strength of character, right living and the keeping of God’s law is the right way to live. One is secure in God when one lives this way. But when we choose to live oppositely, choosing the ‘crooked path’, we are found out. We are exposed, which means we are prosecuted.

When I am walking with integrity it is like driving the speed limit. I don’t need to be looking out for speed traps and unmarked police cars, because I am not breaking any laws I have no worry about being ‘found out!’

Integrity is being an honorable person, a God-fearing person through and through.

Now flood the questions for my soul. Am I a man of integrity before the Lord? Is my life the same when I am in the light or in the shadows?

Lord, the joy of understanding and learning and growing in You is the joy of living life with integrity before You. May that be true of me. I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Sunday, July 15, 2018, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.