

EVERYDAY WISDOM

By Carl McMurray

“The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, to turn aside from the snares of death.”
Prov. 13:14

The text above as well as the first few verses in Proverbs chapter one indicate to us the wisdom of this book. Sometimes I wonder if we do not spend so much time considering the weighty, eternal ramifications of God’s love and mercy and grace that we forget the daily applications of God’s wisdom that is given to guide, guard, and direct our conduct with others. To that end, we offer a few chosen morsels of wisdom to remind us of our need to meet others “halfway” in our relationships with them.

“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.”
Prov. 12:15

“The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; the one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.” *Prov. 13:13*

These lines point out the not-so-obvious value of listening instead of talking, receiving counsel instead of directing others. Touted as one of the most important tools of good communication, real listening seems to be a tool that is not used enough today.

“The naïve believes everything, but the prudent man considers his steps.”
Prov. 14:15

This is good advice in our day and age when people seem to be judging their lives, marriages, careers, and values by fantasy plays on TV. It has become very clear that Satan will use every effort to bend our thinking to his will. Solomon says, “Don’t believe everything you hear.”

“Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed.”
Prov. 15:22

Wisdom is seen here for the one who tries to do everything by himself. Whatever the area, if you need help, don’t be too proud to get it.

“He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him.” *Prov. 18:13*

In dealing with others, one of the most obnoxious habits that we come in contact with is the person who has an opinion about everything. They always have an answer, always know the situation, and always reveal themselves sooner or later as having shallow, prejudiced minds.

“A foolish son is destruction to his father, and the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping.” Prov. 19:13

“It is better to live in a corner of a roof, than in a house shared with a contentious woman.” Prov. 21:9

“A constant dripping on a day of steady rain and a contentious woman are alike.” Prov. 27:15

Ouch, ladies. Can't add much to the words of a man with almost a thousand women except to draw the conclusion that we all can wear others out and drive them away by scolding and fussing. Better to make our words sweet and uplifting.

“Like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar on soda, is he who sings songs to a troubled heart.” Prov. 25:20

“He who blesses his friend with a loud voice early in the morning, it will be reckoned a curse to him.” Prov. 27:14

Believing that an exuberant, silly, grinning, loud, and laughing attitude is the way to approach others at all times is foolishness. You can be warm and friendly without being “over the top” and at times compassion and empathy is the need rather than laughter.

“Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend, and do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity.” Prov. 27:10

Be careful about unloading all your troubles on others or looking for help too quickly. A family relationship is wonderful, but if others perceive that they are always there for “your” calamity, then one's “welcome” can get worn out quickly. Devote time to listening and helping others, develop strength from trials instead of being quick to off load them onto the shoulders of others, and use the help of others sparingly so as not to use it up.

“Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding.” Prov. 23:23

The message of Proverbs is daily wisdom in our dealings with others - sometime humorous, surprisingly accurate, and always valuable. It is worth your trouble to do some regular reading here. Whether in the family devotional or in your personal meditation, I hope this short taste of God's word will whet your appetite for more.