

Nov 8 Proverbs 6-9

Chapter 6

Vs. 1-19, The writer's instructions now turn from external threats (violent men and seductive foreign women) to internal threats to the youth such as poor judgment, laziness, and evil character. We are warned not to make pledges to anyone, for in so doing we put ourselves in their debt and limit our own freedom, but rather (as Jesus says) let our yes be yes and our no, no. The specific kind of pledge that the writer is referring to is the common legal practice of being a 3rd party guarantor for a loan because it endangers the guarantor. Yes, the term "lazybones" is a biblical term. No, it's not a positive. The writer looks with disdain on those who are lazy, who reap their own ruin by not putting in the work necessary of a productive member of society, but rather preferring sleep and leisure. Finally, a scoundrel and villain are described by the characteristics of evil character. This is a person who is corrupt externally as well as internally, a person who is devious and two-faced, who says one thing but does another, a person who intentionally sows discord and division in society and within the family.

Vs. 20-35, The instructions of one's parents are a lamp for moral living. The writer now turns again to an external threat: the adulterous neighbor woman. Adultery is obviously a sin, and the writer strongly urges the youth to steer clear of this sin because it doesn't bring financial distress like the consequences of stealing, but rather destroys a person's honor forever (and could even lead to death in the case of a jealous husband). A comparison is drawn between satisfying one's physical hunger through stealing and satisfying one's sexual hunger through adultery. In the case of physical hunger, financial compensation makes everything alright. But in the case of adultery, nothing can undo the dishonor and nothing can make it right – especially if it leads to your death.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 continues the theme of warning against engaging in adultery by providing a vivid example of how the youth may fall into the trap of adultery. Of course everyone knows you shouldn't commit adultery, but the writer vividly describes just how compelling this sin may seem in the moment to an impressionable youth. Even if the husband is out of town, even if no one would find out about it, even if it seems like a dream come true: don't do it! The youth is imaged as a lamb being led to the slaughter in the house of the adulterous woman.

Chapter 8

Lady Wisdom returns in chapter 8 detailing her blessings for her disciples. She describes herself as being from before the foundation of the earth. Again, note the parallels between Lady Wisdom, and Christ (the incarnate Word who was in the beginning with God). Wisdom is free and available to all of humanity. She urges the simple to change their ways and to value and seek out wisdom to improve their lives. As opposed to the evil, crooked speech noted as an abomination in chapter 6's scoundrels and villains, Wisdom's speech is always the truth and always righteous. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the beginning of wisdom it would seem is also the hatred of evil (vs. 13) and perverted speech. Lady Wisdom is not only a treasure, but truly powerful in that she is the one who guides faithful kings and rulers in their decrees and in their governance. Lady Wisdom promises love, riches, honor, enduring wealth and prosperity to those who love her and seek her. Lady Wisdom is imaged as God's partner in creation, delighting God and cheering God on for all of the glorious things God created in our world. Lady Wisdom's authority rests on her intimacy and honored position with God. A moral life is not simply a series of right actions, according to Proverbs, but a fundamental lifestyle of seeking wisdom before all else.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 portrays Lady Wisdom as the hostess of a magnificent banquet to which she invites all to participate, especially the simple and immature. The wise love rebuke, or "constructive criticism" or "feedback" as we call it today because it helps you grow and mature. Whereas the scoffer, the proud, hates rebuke and thinks they know the only way to do things. This chapter really makes evident the intentional comparison between Lady Wisdom and Dame Folly. Dame Folly also has an invitation to those walking by, but hers is to adultery and death rather than wisdom and long life.