



Proverbs 18

Tape #7226
Proverbs 18
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now to Proverbs, and we take up tonight with chapter eighteen. This first proverb is a little difficult on the surface, to understand just what he is saying.

Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom (18:1).

Basically what Solomon is saying is, when a man separates himself to lust, or gives himself over to lust, to his own desires, he starts living after his own passions. That he intermeddles with all wisdom. A man who seeks only to fulfill his own passions, separates himself to a lustful life. He really is intermeddling with wisdom, or is far from real wisdom. It isn't wise to live after your own passions. It isn't wise to live after your own lusts. That's the life of the flesh, a life that's governed by your own lusts, by your own desires. It's not wise to live that kind of a life.

A fool hath no delight in understanding (18:2).

Now one of the real delights of life is to know, and to understand. To solve a problem, to figure out the solutions, to come to an understanding of a matter. "But a fool has no delight." He doesn't know that delight in understanding. So often as I'm reading the word of God, the Spirit of God will illuminate my heart, and give me an understanding of the scripture, and I'll see in it something I've never seen before. It's like finding a diamond, or a ruby. It's just a delight, it's a joy, I get thrilled! I just want to share it with someone! "There's a new thing that I have discovered!" It's not new, it's been there all the while, but I've just discovered it! It's just, I've just come to the place of the understanding, or, I've gotten an insight on it, and the Lord has just opened up mind to the understanding of it. It's a tremendous delight, a joy, it's a thrill! Poor fools don't have that kind of a joy. They could care less about the truth.

only that his heart may discover itself. When the wicked cometh, then also cometh contempt, and with ignominy reproach (18:2-3).

You know, a lot of times we think, "If we could just get our friends to church, you know, surely if they would just sit, and hear the word of God, and, and, and be ministered to, as you are ministered to when you come. Surely God would speak to them". But so often when the wicked comes, they just sit there with such total contempt, that they won't hear a thing. They don't receive a thing. They don't want to hear anything. They don't want to receive anything, and they, they sit there contemptuously. So, "when the wicked cometh, then comes also contempt". That's not just true in the assembly of the believers, but wherever they go, they have this seeming contempt for life itself, and they reproach everything that they see, everything that they hear. It's sad to be set in such a mental mode that you become contemptuous of everything, and you reproach anything.

The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters (18:4).

Deep waters are still, but they carry a lot of volume. So, "The words of a man's mouth can be as deep waters".

the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook (18:4).

Isn't it wonderful to be around those people who have walked with the Lord, and as they speak, you can sit there and drink in. I, I love being around Dr. Wilder Smith. I love sitting and talking with this man. I, I learn so much, I gain so much, his words of wisdom are like a flowing brook, they're like deep water. You've gotta sometimes think them through. You need to really record things so you can play them back a few times, and absorb it all. But it's a delight and a joy to associate, and to be around those who have walked with the Lord for many years. Who can share out of their experiences of walking with God. It's just a refreshing, a flowing brook, the refreshment that one gets from the flowing brook.

It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment (18:5).

Now sometimes, when a person is very influential, maybe very wealthy, there is a certain respect for that

person, just because of their wealth, and they get special treatment. There has been throughout our judicial history, especially of late, a pointing out of the fact that very few wealthy people ever get sentenced to death. It's usually the poor people. They point this out as an inequity in our justice system. That though we may not want to, yet there is, a certain favoritism, or you, if you are, have committed a crime, you're better off if you're wealthy, than if you're poor. Because you have a better chance of a more lenient sentence from the judge. But Solomon here is saying that's not right. "It's not right to accept the person of the wicked", they need to be judged according to the crime that has been committed. Justice should be equal. Also, "to overthrow the righteous in judgment".

This of course has often been the case as they have overthrown righteous laws in judgment. We look at some of the decisions that came out of the liberal Supreme Court, that frankfurter bunch. We, we see how righteous causes were overthrown. We see how they, and you cannot, you cannot dodge the issue or the fact that it was the Supreme Court, and its decisions that opened the doors to pornography in the United States. It was the decisions of the Supreme Court that opened the doors to this horrible slaughter of babies through abortion. Those who served on that court, and made those decisions, are going to one day answer to the Supreme Judge of all. Thank God I don't have to sit in their shoes when they stand before God to give an account to what they have done, in overthrowing the righteous causes by the decisions that have come from that court!

A fool's lips enter into contention (18:6),

Ready to spout off on any occasion, and get you into so much trouble. Ready to say your peace, let people know your mind. Well that's sad. Said, "I'm gonna give him a piece of my mind!" Be careful, you don't have too much to spare. Just uh, keep quiet, you know, "fools lips enter into contention".

and his mouth calleth for strokes (18:6).

He, he, he gets himself into fights. His mouth opens the door for him to get into a fight, for strokes. To get beat up and all, because you just can't keep your mouth shut, you know. Then the next one is sort of corollary to it.

A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul (18:7).

He becomes entrapped by the things that he says. You trap yourself with your words. Your mouth becomes your destruction. James tells us that the tongue, just a small member of your body, but man, it can get you into more trouble than almost anything else! The power that is in the tongue, what kind of fires it can kindle! What kind of rages that it can embroil! So, "A soft answer turneth away wrath".

The words of a talebearer are as wounds (18:8),

Persons who go around spreading evil and, and stories about others. They may be true, but love will cover, love will seek to cover sin. But in opposition to that, there is the talebearer who loves to stir up strife, loves to get people opposed to each other. Loves to come and say, "Do you know what they said about you? I heard the other day, you know they were talking. They said this, they said that!", and they love to get things, they love to stir things up. The talebearer loves to stir things up! I know people that are like this. They, they love to get a whole issue boiling.

How great it is to use words to bring peace, rather than to stir strife. I have found that when someone comes to me, and tells me about someone else, "You know what I heard that they were doing?", and so forth, and they are a talebearer, and they tell me about someone else's activities, I like to say, "Well you know, I was talking to them the other day, and your name was brought up in conversation, and they told me just how great they thought you were!" To hear them say, "Well, you know they, they said that, but you know, they are pretty nice. I like those who like me! I am, you know it's human nature if, if someone's talking about me, then I want to talk about them. "Well yeah they said that, but do you know about them! How can you believe them! They're, they're a consummate liar!" You've got to get back! You've got to discredit them if they're talking about you. So that's how conflicts come. The talebearer, he creates wounds.

that go down into the innermost parts of the person (18:8).

They're cutting, they're deep, they can hurt. Actually, they can destroy.

He also that is slothful [The lazy person, slothful.] in his work is a brother to him that is a great waster (18:9).

In other words there are two things that go together. A fellow who is a great waster, and a person who is lazy in his work, or slothful, is careless in his work. He does waste. If you're careless in your waste, your work, you are wasting things. You have to do it over again, you've wasted all the time and the material.

The name of the Lord [The name Jehovah] is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe (18:10).

Strong towers were placed as a defense. You're talking now about conflict, you're talking about war, when you speak about strong towers. They were built on the walls of the city as places of defense. High enough that the person from the ground, cannot really throw his spear to the top of the tower. It expends its inertia before it gets there, and drops harmlessly back to the ground. But from that high tower, man you can throw your javelin, or your spear down on those below. So, to the mind of the people in Solomon's day, that high tower did represent the strong place of the city. Where in times of danger, the times of crisis, the people would run into these strong towers. It would be their final bastion of defense against the enemy.

Now Solomon said, "The name Jehovah is a strong tower". We, in life do have conflicts. If you are walking with the Lord Jesus Christ, you'll find yourself in conflict with the world. For the world is under the control, and power of darkness. Jesus, referring to Satan, called him, "the prince of this world". Paul calls him, "the god of this world". The god that the world serves. Thus, walking with Jesus, you're in conflict with this world. We realize that, as we seek to walk with the Lord. We realize that we're not in step with the world. That we are really going against the current, and the tide of the world. We're in conflict with those forces of darkness that are in control of the world.

We're in conflict many times with our own flesh. For the flesh lusts against the spirit, the spirit against the flesh. Sometimes in these conflicts, we, we get to the place where we just are weary, and we are almost in the place of despair, because of the forces and the powers that we are facing, and we run into the strong tower. The name Jehovah, the strong tower.

Throughout the biblical history, we find how men of God sought refuge in the name of Jehovah. Abraham, when called upon God, in that supreme test of faith, concerning his son Isaac, to offer him as a sacrifice. Isaac, through whom God had promised, that Abraham's seed would be called. Now, as God is calling Abraham, to offer Isaac, before he has any children! How can God keep His word? How can God keep His promise? Abraham doesn't know! His faith is being tested. All he knows is that God will keep His word. How, he doesn't know. That's the thing that often times bothers us. How's God gonna do it? I don't know how God is gonna do it! So, as Abraham and Isaac went up the hill, having left the servants there at the foot of the hill, Isaac said, "Dad we have the wood, we have the fire, but where is the sacrifice?", and he said, "God sees", or, "Jehovah sees". The name of Jehovah, a strong tower. "Jehovah sees." Thus they called the name of the place "Jehovah-Jireh", "the Lord sees". The name of the Lord, a strong tower.

Abraham was in that strong tower, as he was facing this dilemma of being required of God to offer his son as a sacrifice before his son had any children. But he was just resting in the name of Jehovah. "Jehovah sees. Jehovah's gonna take care of it." Thus, Jehovah-Jireh, Jehovah-Nissi, Jehovah-Shalom, the Lord is our peace, all of these compound names of Jehovah, until we get to the new testament, and we have Jehovah-Shewa, which in Greek is Jesus, the Lord is salvation.

The name of Jesus has become a strong tower for us, and how many times we run into it! I mean, we're, we're full blast when I get there! Just flee into that name of Jesus, and the security, the strength, the power that I receive in Jesus' name. For God has given Him a name, that is above every name, that at the name of Jehovah-Shewa, Jesus, every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess, that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father! Neither is there salvation in any other name, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. The strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and are saved.

The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit (18:11).

Or, the rich man trusts, he, he puts his trust in the strong city. That's his, that's his place of confidence, "as a high wall in his own conceit".

But before destruction the heart of man is haughty (18:12),

This one, again is sort of a sequel to that proverb, "Pride cometh before destruction". "He that exalted

himself", the scripture said, "shall be abased". So before destruction, there is this haughtiness, this pride in the heart of man.

and before honour is humility (18:12).

So, the scripture said, "Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord. He will lift you up". "He that exalteth himself, shall be abased. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." These are spiritual laws.

Now an interesting thing about spiritual laws is we, we cannot understand them always. We, we don't know how they work. But let me ask you this. Do you know how the natural laws work? Do you know how gravity works? Now we have the formula for gravity, but do you really know how it works? Why is it that mass attracts? You know, I can give you the formula for it, but I, I really don't understand it. I don't know why mass attracts. I know it does.

We understand a little bit about the laws of magnetism, but why pulls repel, and opposite pulls attract, I don't know. I do know that it happens, I do know that I can hold a magnet over a pile of nails, and I can make them draw to the positive pull of the magnet, as you know the attraction to the negative to the positive, and opposite pulls attract, and like pulls repel. I don't know why. I know they do.

I don't really understand electricity, the laws of electricity. I respect them, don't understand them. I use them, but I don't understand them. How the current runs through the wire, or around the wire, who knows? Nobody really knows I guess, but how you can transfer this current from a generating plant through your house, and you can plug in your refrigerator, your washing machine, or whatever, and you can take, and harness that electrical power, and make it run your motors, and operate your vacuum cleaner. We, we use it, but we really don't understand it. Sort of a mystery!

So with spiritual laws. We can use them, we don't have to understand them. There is, and these are spiritual laws. If you exalt yourself, you're gonna be abased. "Pride comes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." But, "If you will humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, you'll be exalted".

We need to put these into practice. People are always trying to promote themselves, promote their own causes, but the bible says, "promotion doesn't come from the east or the west, it comes from the Lord". Just humble yourself before the Lord, He'll lift you up. He'll exalt you in due time. So they are just spiritual laws that work, we don't really understand them fully.

He that answers a matter before he hears it, it's a folly and a shame (18:13).

You know, there are people that have a quick answer. You, you haven't even told the whole story, and they, "Well, you ought to do this!", "Wait a minute! Let me finish the story!" They are, they are so quick to judge. I mean, they can spot a person coming down the road, and they've got them all pegged, and all worked out, and they don't even, haven't even heard the matter fully.

I had a great dad, but he had weaknesses. One of his weaknesses was that he was prone to answer a matter before he heard it. To respond too quickly, without really knowing what was going on. My youngest brother knew how to take advantage of that. My youngest brother, who was several years younger than I was, he was one of those late comers in the family, and as those late comers are, they're just the joy and the blessing of the parents. You know, they just sort of dote on those late comers. And, so was my little brother. But we all doted on him, I mean we just loved that little guy. He grew up to be a big guy, but we loved the little guy, loved the big guy too. Anyhow, as we were growing up, he learned that if he would just start screaming, and crying, you know just start yelling like he was really hurt, my dad would come running out, and, and uh, dad used a belt, now I don't believe that he really abused us as children. But, he used to belt, and spank us, and my dad would come running out, and he would, he would take the belt to my brother. My other brother, and I. Then after he had belted us, he'd say, "Now what happened!"

He would respond, or he would answer a matter before he heard it! My littlest brother would just be sitting over there, just you know, and he would use that. He'd say, "I'll get you guys in trouble, you know you'd better do what I want, or I'll start screaming!" Just one of the weaknesses of, of my dad. Answering a matter before he hears it. "It's folly, and a shame unto him." A lot of times he'd end up apologizing to us, when he'd hear that you know, Bo was just screaming, nothing really wrong, but, it was too late at that point.

The spirit of a man will sustain his weakness (18:14);

You know, it's an interesting thing that many times physical weaknesses do create a tremendous depth

of character. Suffering, and I don't know why, but it seems that suffering has a way of developing a depth of character within a person, like nothing else. Some of the people that I have known through life who have had some of the deepest spiritual character, are those people that have gone through deep suffering, deep hurt. This proverb sort of addresses itself to that. "The spirit of a man will sustain his weakness." If you have that strong spirit, it will, it will sustain you, and help you in overcoming the physical weakness that you might experience.

but a wounded spirit [A person's spirit who has been wounded or destroyed, they,] they can't bear it (18:14)?

They, they're, they're just, you know, if you're spirit is wounded, you are a destroyed person.

The heart of the prudent gets knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge (18:15).

Now the greatest knowledge that any of us can attain and achieve, is the knowledge of God. You may have all of the knowledge of the world, you may know all about insects, and stars, and the sciences, but if you don't have the knowledge of God, you're missing the most important knowledge that a man can attain. "The heart of the prudent gets knowledge", knowledge of his creator. "And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge."

A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men (18:16).

This is an observation, it's not, it's not necessarily good. It's evil in some ways, that people buy themselves into favor of others. "A man's gift makes room for him", and the gift here in the Hebrew, is the sense of a bribe. The gift is to buy favors, to get you into a good position. To open doors for you, "makes room for him, and it brings you before great men".

He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour comes and searches him (18:17).

When you hear the first person tell the story, you're convinced, "Well that's, that, yes! That's terrible that, that should happen!" You hear the guy's story, and you get all upset you know. The first story that you hear, you know, the first guy that gets a chance to tell the story, he can convince you that he's, but then someone else comes along, "Oh that's not the way! This is what was happening!", and the neighbor comes and cross-examines, and gives you the other side of it, and what a difference it makes, when you get the whole story! Thus, it's good not to react, or respond until you get the whole story. Hear the other side. There are two sides to every story. The wise person will listen to both sides of the story before he will make any judgment.

So, "he that is first in his own cause", he who is the first one to tell you in his own cause, tells you it from his side, he seems to be just, but then the neighbor comes along and tells you, "Yeah but uh", you know he comes along and says, "You know these little kids were throwing rocks at my, broke my window! Throwing rocks at my house!", and you say, "Oh those little kids! Call the police! It's terrible!" But then the neighbor comes along and says, "Oh but wait a minute, they were just skating on the sidewalk, and this guy came out and he put a hose across the sidewalk, and he started squirting them with water and everything else!", and oh, makes a difference! But the first one doesn't give you the whole story, you know, he just gives you his side to make himself look justified, and then you get the rest of the story.

Now the lot causes contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty (18:18).

A lot of times when there's an argument, "Well, what should we do?", "Well I want to do this!", "I want to do that!", "Well, let's flip a coin." It's amazing how many arguments can be settled with the flip of a coin. That was the casting of the lot, same idea. The flipping of a coin, or casting of lots, same idea. So my wife wants to go to El Torito, I want to go to Reubens. I'll flip you for it, heads, we go to Reubens, tails, we go to El Torito, you know. We can settle, we don't argue then. I mean, if it's heads, we just go to Reubens. We don't argue about it anymore, it settles the argument. So, "the casting of the lot just causes contentions to cease". You just leave it with chance and don't argue about it anymore.

A brother that has been offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle (18:19).

When you offend a brother, to try to win him back again, hard! So it's better to try not to offend, because, "once a fellow has been offended, he's harder to be won than a strong city".

A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be

filled (19:20).

So, again our words, and what they say, and the value that they can bring, and the help that they can bring. For the next proverb is tied to it.

A death and life are in the power of the tongue: [The fruit of your mouth are the words that you speak, increase of your lips, for death and life are there in the power of the tongue.] *and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof (18:21).*

Your words can tend towards death, destroy a person, destroy their spirit, destroy their courage and all. Or, by your words, you can lift up a person, someone who is just down, and discouraged. You can come along, and with your words, you can bring life, you can bring hope. The power of the tongue, to heal. The power of the tongue to destroy. How important that we use our tongues as instruments to lift up, to help, to strengthen.

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord (18:22).

Now, Solomon seems to be a little ambivalent in his feelings towards women. That's certainly understandable! A man who has a thousand wives, has surely experienced every kind of woman that has ever lived! And, Solomon's experiences were, some of them very good, and then with some of them, they were not so good. So he speaks really out of both sides of his mouth probably, from two types of experiences with women. Some of his wives were a joy, "good thing". They brought blessings of the Lord. But, some of those wives that he had were contentious, "they were like a continual dropping", that is the Chinese torture. But, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, has obtained favor of the Lord". How true that is!

The poor uses entreaties; [Or he begs] but the rich answereth roughly (18:23).

God does take up the cause of the poor. In the seventeenth verse of the next chapter, "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again". In other words, God considers what you've given to the poor, as a loan to Him. God will repay you. Now that's pretty neat, to be able to lend to God. So in giving to the poor, you're lending to the Lord. The Lord will repay. So God takes up the cause of the poor.

So often as God was announcing the causes for His judgment, it was because of the oppression of the poor. How the wealthy were many times taking advantage of the poor. They were oppressing the poor and all, and thus God, in speaking up, and standing up for the poor, brought judgment because of their actions against the poor. So, Solomon observes how that the poor are in such a tragic position sometimes, as they are entreating for help, and how that the rich so often answer them roughly.

There surely are inequities in this world. But what would you expect of a world that's governed by Satan? It is not right that people pay eighty five million dollars for a Van Gogh painting, to hang on a wall, which is rather ugly to begin with! Ha, ha! When there are so many people who are starving to death! I mean, that, there's, see, we're living in a world that isn't fair. Don't look for fairness in this world, because this world is being governed by Satan!

When Jesus reigns over the earth, then look for fairness. Things will be equitable then! There will be a joint sharing by everyone, of the resources of the world, the earth. There will be a renewing of the earth, a renewing of the desert waste, and the deserts will bloom, and blossom, and bud. The wilderness areas will be like the garden of Eden. There will be the righteous reign of the Lord, but don't look for that now. If you're looking for some kind of equity and righteousness now, you're gonna be sorely disappointed.

That was the whole thrust of the communistic system, the whole idea was bringing in equality among all men, getting rid of the Tsarist, and those rich, rich, rich people, who were just lavishing themselves with all kinds of delicacies and luxuries, while the people were starving around them. The communists pointed out this inequities, and they had the Bolshevik revolution, and the whole idea was, "There's enough for everybody if we would just distribute it around equally. Then there's enough for all." But the system didn't work. What you did was just create a new elite group, and the communists were the elitist, and they were the ones that began to hoard.

Look at Chichescu, and how he lived so lavishly while the Romanians were subjected to such poverty, absolute poverty! So, it was the just the replacing of the elitist of the Tsar reign, to the elitist of the communist reign, and you had just as much of a, of a plundering of the people, and the exploiting of the

people, as you ever did under any Tsar.

Don't look for equity in this world, it is governed by Satan. It's not going to happen! Men may have dreams, and they may have ideals, but it's not gonna happen as long as Satan is in control. But thank God it is going to happen, when Jesus establishes His righteous reign, then righteousness will cover the earth, like the waters cover the sea! He will rule, and He will reign in righteousness, and in justice, from henceforth, even for ever! But you're only destined for disappointment, if you're looking for it before He reigns, because the world under Satan's power and control, will never be fair. There'll always be the exploitation of the weak.

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: [Greatest way to get friends, is just to be friendly.] but there is a friend who will stick closer than a brother (18:24).

We have that glorious friend Jesus Christ who said to His disciples, "You've not chosen me, I've chosen you". He said, "I don't call you servants anymore, because a servant doesn't know what his master is doing. But I call you friends, because I'm going to tell you what I am doing". So Jesus has chosen you to be His friend. He is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. One who said, "I will never leave you or forsake you". One that you can count on to be with you through thick and thin. One who will never desert you in the hour of crisis. One who will always stand with you, and stand by you, and stand for you, even when you're wrong.

For when I am wrong, Jesus stands for me before the Father, and He pleads my case. He says, "Father, put that on my account. Charge that one to me". For there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ who has died, yea, rather who is risen again, even at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for me."

When that day comes, that August day, when the Creator and the Judge of the universe sits upon His throne, and all of the dead small and great, will be brought to stand before the throne, and death and hell deliver up the dead that are in them, and before this assembled multitude of people that have lived upon the earth, when my name is called, and I have to stand before the Judge of the universe, so conscious and aware of my sin, and my failures, knowing that He sees and knows, everything I've ever thought to do, and I stand there guilty, condemned, Jesus is gonna step up and say, "Father, charges are dismissed. He's one of mine". Ha, ha! Now, I'm not given to shouting too much, but believe me, that's something to shout about!

"Oh how happy is the man to whom God does not impute iniquity!" My friend, sticks closer to me than a brother. He understands my weaknesses, my moods, my failures, but He loves me in spite of that. He stands by me in spite of them. He never gives up on me, He's always there. I'm so glad that I have such a friend!

We'll plod through chapter nineteen next week. Ha, ha! One day, we're gonna speed things up maybe. I don't know, as I get older, I get slower, I guess. Maybe we're doomed for a chapter a week now on. I can't seem to get out of my tracks anymore. The gun goes off, and I can't get out of the blocks!

May the Lord richly bless you with a closeness of His fellowship. May you come to know this friend in a more intimate, special way, as you walk with Him this week. May He surround your life with His love, with His blessing. May it be a good week, a week in which you experience spiritual growth, victory, in those areas of weakness, as the Spirit of God works in you, conforming you into the image of Jesus Christ. So, may the Lord watch over, and keep His hand upon you. In Jesus' name.