

Gv on Proverbs

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of integrity, seeking counsel, being a virtuous woman, overcoming pride and haste, and using pleasant words to build relationships and foster a positive environment.

Duration: 37:36

Scripture: Proverbs 14:12, Proverbs 15:1, Proverbs 15:18, Proverbs 16:24, Proverbs 16:28, Proverbs 28:26, James 1:19

Topics: "Proverbs"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker warns against the dangers of pride and emphasizes the importance of taking spiritual inventory. He encourages the audience to memorize scripture and use it as a weapon against temptation, just as Jesus did. The speaker also emphasizes the need for peace and integrity in our actions, citing the verse 'There's a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof is the way of death.' He concludes by reminding the audience that their time belongs to God and should be used wisely for eternal purposes, rather than wasting it on idle activities.

Transcript

We only got up to Proverbs 10 or 11, and we're just jumping from mountain peak to mountain peak in this amazing practical book that we would challenge you to take more seriously in the future days. And looking at chapter 11, I want you to especially look at verse 3. And here in verse 3, there is a very important word that I feel is one of the strongest words in the English language. It is the word integrity.

The integrity of the upright shall guide them, but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them. God is looking for men and women of integrity. What do we mean by this? Integrity speaks of a combination of honesty, purity and reality.

It's a strong word. If a man is a man of integrity, he can be trusted. Absolutely.

He's not the kind of man that is going to deceive you. He's not the kind of man that's going to let you down. And perhaps it's this kind of person that's lacking in many of our governments today.

Men of integrity, deep-seated, realistic honesty, straightforwardness. And this is what we find emphasized throughout the entire book of Proverbs. Chapter 11 is perhaps one of the highlights of the whole book because we have so many outstanding statements, like verse 13, A tailbearer revealeth secrets, but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

Where no counsel is, the people fall, but in the multitude of counselors there is safety. You know, it takes time to seek counsel, but often it's when we receive counsel from different people. Even though we may not be able to keep everybody's counsel because they may be actually counseling you in different directions, it helps keep things in focus.

And ultimately, as you make your decision, you'll have a lot more wisdom. Notice verse 22, a little touch of humor that goes like an arrow to the soul of some women, I'm sure, but men as well. As a jewel of gold in a pig's snout, a swine's snout, so is a fair woman who is without discretion.

You know, that may help you if someday you feel that you're in love with some overly attractive woman who just, you know, physically knocks you right out of your shoes. Beware, because she may be that bit of gold in the pig's nose. And if she doesn't have any brains, and if not only that, she is without discretion, which really means she's probably immoral.

And if she's interested in you, it may prove she's without discretion. At least until she gets to know your finer and deeper qualities, which do not always come out on the surface passing by. But the book of Proverbs is very blunt about certain kinds of women, and if you women don't understand this, then you don't understand men, and how stubborn we are, and how God has to really kick things into us, especially in this area.

It speaks about the blessing of being liberal. This is not liberal theology in verse 25. The liberal soul shall make fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

Some people rip this out of context and use it to preach their prosperity doctrine in the 20th century, but it's very much balanced off by other verses, and it is not necessarily true in every case, though it certainly is true in some cases, that men who have given and given, the Lord has just given back to them. This is an experience, not necessarily a theology. And then we have it balanced off by verse 28.

He that trusteth in his riches shall fall, but the righteous shall flourish like a branch. You can be on OM, living on a very basic standard, and be trusting in the little bit of money you have home, even more than someone who may be a multimillionaire. So don't judge people by the amount of money they have.

Men looketh at the outward appearance, but God looketh at the heart. I have a number of friends who are very wealthy, and some of them, I can tell you, there are aspects of their Christian life that I don't have yet, because God is working in different people in different ways. In some areas of your life, you may be going along very quickly, perhaps ahead of your wealthy friend, but in other areas, he may be going ahead of you, and he may be trusting less in his riches than you are in your last one hundred dollars, or in something else.

And then verse 30, the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise. Way back there in the Old Testament. He that winneth souls is wise.

Moving on to chapter 12, we're not going to be able to stop on as many peaks as we did in that chapter. Look at verse 4. A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband, but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones. You know, we often find some women feel they're not really active in the work.

They're not busy enough in the work. My wife is always going on with me about this. She wants to do more.

She doesn't feel she's doing so much. She's home or something else, and she doesn't feel that maybe she's doing her part. But, you know, women need to understand that God's first concern in you is not what you're doing, it's what you are.

And it doesn't speak here about an active woman. Of course, most women will be active, but it may be in the household affairs. It's just as important with God.

The Word of God says whatever you do, do it heartily as unto the Lord. If someday you're a housewife instead of a team leader, you're going to have to make some adjustments because I've had interesting fellowship with the women as they've gone through the various transitions. They've become the literature distributor and then the door knocker and then the team leader and then, boom, marriage.

And then the egg boiler and the diaper changer and nappy changer, we say in England. And they some... In fact, Ray's wife is one who went through quite a crisis. She was one of the first women converted to this work, Christa Eicher from East Germany, and was just jet-propelled from the day of her conversion until she met Ray.

She was still jet-propelled, but they got married and then... How many children you have, four? Three. I think Christa has other ideas, but they have three children. And she wrote me once about the great change this was.

But here's a verse that's so helpful. Not what you're doing, it's your heart, it's your reality, it's your love. You can worship God in the kitchen as well as you can worship Him in the pulpit.

And the virtuous woman, the godly woman is a crown to her husband. Praise God for that. Well, there's a lot of other material in this chapter.

But let's move on to chapter 13, verse 10. Only by pride cometh contention, but with the well advised is wisdom. So often when we really have discernment over a particular division in a church, and oh, how many churches in Britain are dividing these days.

Just unbelievable. And outwardly it's because of new blessing. One group gets a new blessing or a higher revelation about leadership, or a higher revelation about the Holy Spirit, or a higher revelation about the gifts of the Spirit, or a higher revelation about church government, or a higher revelation about worship.

But it's amazing how people with higher revelations can get into rather low motivation in what they do. And I have been observing it much to my own dismay. And often these divisions are not because of higher revelations.

They are because pride cometh before contention. And beware of the pride of your own heart. In Alan's closing part of the message last night, he gave us that list of areas where we need to take spiritual inventory, and most of them are very closely linked with the pride of our own heart.

May we beware of that. May we take heed lest we fall. Chapter 14.

I've tried to memorize at least one verse from every proverb, and I've found these verses flash back to my mind in a moment of temptation. If Jesus Christ memorized Scripture and used it to, quote, to stand against Satan when Satan was attacking Him in the wilderness, how much more should we memorize Scripture? 14, verse 12. There's a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the way of

death.

I often use this in witnessing to people, to the unconverted, but it's good for us as well. Notice verse 14, which is linked. I remember listening to a tape by Alan Redpath when he was sharing at Keswick, and he shared how some of us feel tremendous pressure in the work in which we're in, and we're tempted to quit.

And he said, yes, you go ahead and quit, and you'll feel wonderful for a while. The pressure will be off. The devil will let you run.

As it says here, you'll be filled with your own ways. But you'll be backslidden, because you'll have turned away from the purpose of the Lord. This is what happened in the life of David.

For a while, David quit. And all the price he paid, the price he paid. Buck Singh has written an amazing book about David.

It's called, David Recovered All. David is a picture of a backslider, a picture of the man who's wandered away from God. We have all of Psalm 51 to use to pray our own way back out of a backslidden condition, if we ever get there.

I love that emphasis that was given last night of continual repentance, because I found this, the need in my own life. Maybe it's because I'm a natural backslider. I don't go uphill spiritually, naturally.

I go downhill. I get into the blues. And I get mumbling within myself.

Those of us who are leaders, we know people are watching us. We don't want to offend anybody. We become inward.

We become inward mumblers. When we pass you, you know, walking up the road out there, praise the Lord, brother. And inside, we're mumbling, murmuring.

Or maybe fearful. Or maybe caught up with the praise of men. Running around trying to impress people.

This is one of my dangers. Because I know what it is when you fail to impress someone. Had another letter just yesterday.

Took the man days to get up strength to write it. Somehow his wife met me after a meeting, and apparently I was busy. Probably had about 10 or 15 people all trying to talk to me.

And I didn't give this woman, you know, attention. Maybe I didn't give her eye contact. Or I was probably caught up.

I think my children were with me, and I was chasing one of them. And so the husband has written me an exhortation. Couldn't actually understand his letter.

But I think it was that I maybe offended his wife. And when you go through that experience, the danger is then you'll run around trying to please people. And I don't know what the answer is to this.

But I know one thing. First of all, I've got to please God. And He is concerned about my heart.

And at the end of that meeting, if my heart is not right toward all the people that want to come up and say hello or ask questions, if my heart isn't right, and I'll tell you, the hour after the meeting is twice as hard for

me as the hour that I preach. Praying for people with special problems. Having others come sharing their problems you don't even know the answer to.

Nor do you have time to always minister. Yes, those hours after preaching are much more difficult than preaching or preparing the sermon. But the danger is we will start just pleasing men.

And I think generally when I finish preaching, I have to repent. Say, now Lord, give me the right attitude toward all these people. Toward those that come and have totally misunderstood what I've tried to say.

And all the rest. And I will tell you, verse 29 has been one of the verses that the Spirit of God has used to break into my heart. He that is slow to wrath is of a great understanding.

But he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly. How many of you, be honest, feel that at times you're a little hasty in your words and in your actions? Raise your hand. Yeah.

A few of you. Join the club. International president of the hasty tasty club.

You're hasty and someone else gets the tasty of your carnality. And so this is a verse you want to memorize. It's connected with verse 18 in chapter 15.

A wrathful man stirreth up strife, but he who is slow to anger appeases strife. And verse 1 of chapter 15, a soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger. Verse 4, a wholesome tongue.

Verse 7, the lips of the wise. Verse 23, a word spoken in due season. How good it is.

So much about the tongue. Oh, many times I've prayed, and I hope you do as well, with faith. Oh, Lord, crucify my tongue.

And I'll tell you, the Lord can do this. The Lord can do this. I guess it's linked with a sense of humor sometimes, to be able to even laugh at yourself.

Notice what it says in verse 13 and verse 15 of chapter 15. A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance. A merry heart.

But by sorrow of heart, the spirit is broken. Verse 15, all the days of the afflicted are evil, but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast. It's the will of God, that life.

Whatever trial we may be going through is a continual feast. And only God himself can do this. Chapter 15 is a chapter, perhaps, of 33 mountain peaks.

Study it. It's right there in the middle of the Proverbs. You can't turn to that chapter any morning and read it and not get something.

It's very difficult. It's very difficult. And I'm going to it all the time.

Chapter 16. A little more about the tongue. Like verse 24, to find verse 24, just look right in the middle.

Not quite in the middle. Pleasant words are like honeycomb. Sweet to the soul and health to the bones.

And I want to tell you something this morning that can make you a blessing to hundreds of people. Now, if you haven't been awake yet, though you look very awake, I'm quite surprised. I don't know whether

someone's passing out pills here or what.

But if you want to be a blessing to hundreds of people, then take seriously verse 24. Pleasant words. Pleasant words.

I used to recommend to our leaders in training to read Dale Carnegie's book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Because I heard about a great missionary leader, Arthur Glasser, actually, who in teaching his classes at Columbia Bible College many years ago, 25 years ago, would make them put scripture references next to most of the paragraphs in that secular book. Why? Because Dale Carnegie took biblical principles and secularized them.

Many of these books on how to get ahead are secularized biblical principles. And people in the world take biblical principles and they use them. Because, of course, these things are true whether put into practice by a Christian or a non-Christian.

And people in the secular world learn the value of pleasant words. Just write some pleasant words to your parents. Tell them you've really been thinking about them.

Tell them how much you've appreciated some of the things they've done. Forget the negative things and bring out some of the positive things. How you'd like to be with them or whatever else you can think of.

What about pleasant words to someone who's shown you a favor in the last month? What about pleasant words to someone who's been a blessing to you? Sometimes I write to an author. I just wrote a letter to John White because his books have been a blessing to me. My letter was a blessing to him and his letter back to me was a blessing to me.

Pleasant words. Pleasant words. Even when we're with one another on the team.

Now some of you who don't get many pleasant words, you need to understand that many people do not find it easy. This may sound funny to you. I do not find it easy to walk up to people and to compliment them.

Especially in something more serious. You know, really, really making it clear that I appreciate them. I appreciate their being on the team.

They've been a help to me. I easily get touched by people. I used to just look at the deck men on the ship and start weeping.

You know, you think you've got emotional problems. You know, I hear the guy's painting away and he looks at the big dynamic international director and he's there looking at him painting. Suddenly big, you know, big drops are clumping down wetting the deck.

And, you know, he doesn't understand it. This is probably linked with an admiration of my father who was a hard-working man and a deep emotional attachment I have with my father who I don't see which is spread over to a great respect of people who do physical work. And just think of these people working eight, ten hours a day.

Here I am sitting in my little air-conditioned cabin dictating letters. I go out and see these people sweating it out. Probably there's guilt there.

Probably there's other emotions that I won't understand. But I believe we need to learn to communicate. And often I found it impossible just to walk up to somebody in the deck department and say, look, I really appreciate you and what you're doing.

I just couldn't verbalize it. Plus the fear of standing in front of this big deckman and starting to cry, you know, sent me down to my cabin. Sometimes we find it difficult even to communicate to our own partner, the one we are married to.

We may appreciate them and love them and yet not find the words easy. This is part of God's training. Learn to verbalize.

Learn to verbalize when you're hurt. But learn to verbalize and show appreciation and affection. And it will be a ministry.

Picking up the phone. Now this is where I have more gifts. I pick up the phone and just tell someone I've been thinking about them.

I tell you, I've won more friends I'm sure that way than I have face to face. I must be a little hard to take face to face. People get their eye poked out with my nose if I get too close.

But there's no problem on the telephone to just call someone up and I hope you'll learn especially later on in life you're in your own home you have your phone to make use of the telephone. Chapter 17. By the way, it's especially encouraging you get in the States and get on somebody's Watts line.

For Europeans, a Watts line is an unlimited telephone call line. The man pays one fee at the beginning of the month and you talk unlimited. Ken Taylor, the president of Tyndall House is a close friend of mine and after 10 o'clock at night he gives me his Watts line any time I'm in Chicago from 10 to 4 in the morning.

And 4 in the morning in Chicago is still just 12 or 1 o'clock in California. And you can make arrangements for people to stay up and talk. Boy, what a blessing I had there just slept in the office after making about 25 phone calls encouraging people.

We're told in the book of Hebrews that we should be encouraging one another. You know, some of you when it comes to letter writing you know what your problem is? You're too idealistic. You want to write some modern book of Romans and because of that you don't write anything.

Even a postcard. The average person don't want to shock you does not care about whether your letter is three pages or four pages. That's not the main thing.

They like to just hear from you. Just a word means a lot. Even a postcard.

How many of you have any aunts who are alive? Aunts, we're supposed to say. Any aunties? Okay. When's the last time you wrote your auntie? How many have written one of your aunts or uncles in the last 10 days? You know, you don't have this vision.

We pay the postage. It's crazy. I hope you'll do that.

Let's move on quickly. Time's going. Chapter 17.

Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith than a house full of sacrifices with strife. The Living Bible says a dry crust eaten in peace is better than steak every day along with argument and strife. How true this is.

And we've known a little in our house of having a nice meal with much strife and much argument. Doctors say it's actually bad for the stomach. And if you have a verbal family, I have an incredibly verbal family.

Even my wife who tends to be quiet around the table with only her children as spectators, she is very gifted in speaking. All the children are very gifted in speaking. Actually, around the table, I am the most quiet.

This is unbelievable. I've already been verbalizing all day. When I get to the table, I'd rather just shut up and eat.

And everybody starts going. And my daughter reacts to my son. And my other son then calls her something.

And then they start having these names they picked up at school. And it's very interesting. You can actually get indigestion.

If I usually invite a visitor, it's quieter. There it is. We need to learn to have quietness around the dinner table as much as possible.

You can have good conversation without argument. And on your team, watch out for the heavy conversation around the table. You're trying to eat a meal.

There they are, the brethren in the Pentecostals and the Baptists eating their rice. This real intensive brother looks across. He's been wanting to say this for several months.

He's been repressing it since the conference. Hey, brother, have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit? This is not the time to bring up this heavy theological question that you have been carrying around. As his rice knots in his esophagus choke, then you think probably he's got an evil spirit.

So try to make your table conversation more pleasant. And you'll all be happier and have less indigestion. Chapter 18.

Again, pride is condemned in verse 12. And I want to look at verse 19. Again, if you can learn this little secret, you could save yourself a lot of trouble and a lot of enemies.

One of my joys in life is that I don't have... I don't have many enemies. I've always had the vision for peacemaking. I have very few people that want to really get at me.

And very few people that really are on the war path against O.M. Very, very few. Even people who have had totally disastrous experiences with us, because of our efforts in this direction, basically they're at least in neutral, or in some cases they're saying nice things about us. And this is one of the verses God has used in my own heart.

A brother offended is harder to win or to be won than a strong city. And their contentions are like the bars of a castle. I remember a brother from a particular country who was very upset because his leader, a westerner, got upset with him in a moment of temper, and he laid hands on him.

I don't know whether he hit him or just shook him. I tell you, those of you who have any difficulty with your temper, one of the most disastrous things you can ever do is lay hands on someone in a moment of temper or to hit them, because they will never, never forget that experience. Especially people from certain countries where that is considered five times greater, five times worse than, say, in the West.

In the West, if that happened in the States, you probably could, you know, recover from it. But in some other cultures, it wouldn't be so easy. And I remember dealing with this brother who one of my leaders had laid hands on.

I knew the other side of the story, and I tell you, I felt almost in my heart he needed the hands. He needed to be bent over the knee with a 20-foot paddle. And I remember myself, I was really tense when I encountered this brother, and I really wanted to charge him.

And yet I knew that I would only put fire on fire. And so I talked it out with him, and I listened to him, and I listened to his grievances. And slowly he did begin to acknowledge that some of it was his fault.

You see, if you take it slow with someone, they'll end up admitting their fault rather than you forcing them. Because remember, sometimes repentance, you're wanting a brother to repent, is a deeply emotional thing that he is not able to do mentally and emotionally. I've had people share with me, I don't think this particular brother has repented.

And I said, look, I believe to the degree that mentally he is able, he has repented. Let's accept that repentance, and work with him as much as we can. Not force him to get on his face, eating dust at our feet.

And because many, many people, when it comes to these heavy areas, have emotional problems, and psychological problems. That's why it says, a brother offended is harder to win than a strong city. That's why it says in Romans, Seek for peace with all men, as much as lieth within you.

Live at peace with all men. And even in your witnessing to unconverted people, even in your witnessing to false cults, some people have been very harsh with the false cults. And they have got these people, their backs up, and they are on the warpath.

And personally, I don't believe that's the approach, even to people. In our culture, where people will drag you into legal cases. Do you know the Scientologists specialize in taking people into legal cases? I wanted to write a strong letter back to one of the Witness Lee crowd from Germany, who wrote me a strong letter.

I had one little paragraph in my letter about them, and they wrote me. And Brother Fritz from Germany, he warned me, he said, Look, it's better not to say anything. They are taking people to court.

What good is it going to do? Well, I don't have the total answer. There are times we must speak, we must speak, we must write, we must preach in our own meetings. But on an individual basis, I believe that we can be firm and say, look, we don't agree with you.

We feel that what you are teaching is wrong. We don't have to be harsh, vindictive, and make even more enemies. Some of the countries we go to, one enemy can go to the government and can present a case, and as foreigners, we won't have a chance.

Believe me, you are getting some basic orientation here. OM has been spared court cases for 20 years or more, except in vehicle accidents, which we've had a few of. And I believe it's linked with this verse and many other verses about peace.

And going the way of peace. And we'll close with chapter 19. Again, the word integrity there in verse 1. And verse 15, slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep, and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.

And can I say something about the so-called free time in OM? Let me make the policy clear. There's no free time. There's no free time.

Your time has been bought with a price. Don't go around saying your body is bought with a price, but your time is your own. We aren't bought with a price.

Our time belongs to God. Some of your teams, you will not have much what the world calls free time. Other teams, a number of teams now, in the evenings, you are relatively free.

But I believe it's even more important on those times to do that which is going to count for eternity. It may be letter writing. It may be study.

It may be giving an extra night in the office when there's an overload. It may be going out visiting contacts. But you're responsible for all your time before the Lord.

And I've heard last year of people night after night just sitting around blowing the time in the name of relaxation. I don't believe in that. I don't believe that's God's way.

One night, fine. Sit around and, you know, have a really unwinding time and talk about things that aren't, you know, that significant. I'm not against that.

But night after night, or games. Some people like to play games in O.M. And there are some games that are legitimate for Christians to do that maybe one night a week, a relaxing time. Fine.

If you feel that's your recreation because we want people to have recreation. But night after night in an O.M. team for people to sit around playing games, I tell you, to me, that is a sign that we are going backwards. That people have missed the point when there's so much to be done.

And when you get involved, you will enjoy some of those things more than some little game that you've learned how to play. And maybe if you're gonna play a game, go off to the local hospital, go off to some unconverted person, take a contact out bowling, do something in which maybe you relax, but also get contact with unconverted people. Rather than in our little holy huddle sitting around and playing Monopoly.

I believe one of the greatest challenges in this work is a challenge to redeem the time. And I want balance more than anyone else. But if we ever get into a state where we don't know what to do with our free time and we're bored.

Imagine being on OM and being bored. You gotta have a real problem spiritually to be bored in this work. You just phone me, you know, we'll give you something to do.

I know it can happen, it can happen. Let's pray. Father, we thank you and praise you for this great book of Proverbs.

We praise you for the balance we find in this book. The challenge about the tongue, about laziness, about drifting, cause us, Lord, to obey. For we pray in Jesus' precious name.

Amen.

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