

May 23

Proverbs 3, 6, 10-29

Hello Christ Community Church, my name is Danny Jacobson and I am the College Intern. Today is May 23rd and the last few days we have been reading Proverbs and hopefully by now you've noticed that they are laid out in topical sections. So, what THEY have done is decided upon a fairly inclusive classification and then moved through the book placing each verse in the appropriate classification. And then, here we are reading them in a topical format. This may be something that you want to come back to whenever you read this book – it does make it easy to grasp.

Anyways, today, I am excited to unpack the book of Proverbs a bit with you. Proverbs has always been one of my favorite books because it is so rich! It's been a book that I have been encouraged with and encouraged others with. And I need a lot of wisdom. There is so much in Proverbs. I know that through Proverbs, God can make you into a man or woman of knowledge and wisdom. And through that, we can experience the incredible blessing of being a person who blesses and encourages others which will lead people to experiencing a relationship with Jesus.

So, jumping in. The past few days of Proverbs, I think it's interesting. We've been seeing what topics are talked about and then how much they are talked about. So today in our reading, we covered 6 topics, but there are 2 that were talked about a whole lot more. And these were WEALTH and POVERTY and INDUSTRIOUSNESS. These are linked together. Meaning Wealth comes from being industrious.

Wealth and Poverty

Now I noticed in this reading that when Solomon wrote about Wealth and Poverty, he contrasted them. A lot of warnings here for rich people. Don't depend on it.

In Prov. 10:15 "The wealth of the rich is their fortified city, but poverty is the ruin of the poor." And then in 13:8 it says "A man's riches may ransom his life, but a poor man hears no threat."

Jesus said "blessed are the poor in Spirit" which means poverty leads us to recognize we can't take pride in resources. We see the real value of life and that is not in wealth. It looks to me like the indication is that there are so many warnings for the rich.

Our human tendency is dependent on materials. These proverbs are a warning to the wealthy...to not look to it for security. 14:20 "The poor are shunned even by their neighbors, but the rich have many friends." This is telling us that we are deceived into thinking that materials are what make people valuable.

The other topic that really challenges me is the picture of a sluggard...Some of these make me laugh. There's humor in this section along with truth. One of my

favorite which I think is the premier verse for the sluggard is Prov. 26:14, "sfsdfjsd." So the sluggard is someone who likes rest. He enjoys taking it easy. He likes to take a lot of naps....and eat a lot of comfort food.

We have been given this great book to help us no longer live a life of laziness. But here's the thing, if you are a sluggard, you more than likely aren't going to admit it. Being a sluggard is not a desirable thing – not something you want to put on a job application. You will hesitate to say "ya, that's me." Also, you probably will develop an excuse. If someone asks you for something, you aren't going to say "you know actually, I am lazy so I'd rather not help you out." What you'll more than likely say is "I'm really busy." The people who are lazy are usually the people that feel busy, and the reason is because they aren't proactive about life. To them, life keeps happening...and then they feel unorganized. Sluggard always has an excuse.

Here are a few signs that you might be a sluggard. Just because you match up with one of these things, this doesn't mean you ARE a sluggard, but it means you should examine yourself.

1. Poor Work Ethic – this person doesn't enjoy working. He or she has no joy in working – and because of this, they are not generous with others. He or she is always maneuvering a way out of working. This person is unwilling to work.
 - a. 22:13 "Sluggard says, there's a lion outside" - obviously this is implied humor. It's implying that people who are sluggards come up with lame excuses. If you have lame excuses about why things aren't finished, it might be because at the root of your heart you are a sluggard.
2. Debt – consumer debt. 13:4 "SOUL OF SLUGGARD CRAVES AND GETS NOTHING, BUT SOULS OF DILIGENT are satisfied"
 - a. A wise person makes money first, and then spends it. Debt is a huge trap and this is a current theme that we need to learn from.
3. Poverty – now most people in the world who are poor aren't poor because of their own laziness. It's usually do to oppression and lack of resources. So laziness is not the only thing that leads to poverty.

So, a great verse to remember from this section is this:

Prov. 6: 6-9

"Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep?"

Basically, what it's saying is, look at the ant. Learn from the ant. It works hard. Provides for its need. The ant here in v. 9 is contrasted with the sluggard.

We all have tendencies..maybe yours is to trust your wealth. But the fact is that we are supposed to keep our focus on Jesus and proactively and intentionally follow Him!

So as you're reading through proverbs, my hope is that you are praying that God would make you wise like Solomon. May the Lord encourage you today.