

Compassion Demonstrated

June 21, 2020

Proverbs 3:21-35

Proverbs reminds us that the wisdom of God, perfectly manifested in Jesus, bears heavily on how we are to treat others. We are to treat neighbors with respect and compassion. We are to speak truthfully. These seemingly obvious commands represent the character of God Himself.

"Whenever anyone needs help, and you can help them, never hesitate to do so" (Prov. 3:27-30): If you can give help immediately, don't say, "Come back later".

From Texas, Lucien Coleman shares this true story; "A poor man clad in ragged clothes knocked on the door of the room in which they were meeting and said to the deacon who went to the door, *"I'm sorry to bother you, but we have no food in our house and our children are hungry. And we heard that your church gives food to poor people."* The deacon said, *"Our food pantry isn't open on weekends. You'll have to come back on Monday."*

The reward for showing kindness and compassion to others is sweet rest from fear. Sleeping in the times of ancient Israel brought real physical fear – snakes, robbers, death... Yet the Lord's beloved enjoy a pleasant sleep. That is, despite whatever circumstances surround them, they find themselves secure in the Father's embrace.

The Lord's blessing is for the righteous. We experience this blessing most clearly at the cross, where the only righteous one suffered our punishment and in return shares His inheritance with us. That's true compassion! *"When He (Jesus) saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."* Matthew 9:36

[excerpts from Manny Prieto and Lucien Coleman]

Confidence Gained (Proverbs 3:21-26)

- Loving people is not always easy, but Love for God is expressed by loving others.
- Like any parent, Solomon wanted his son to be happy (blessed).
 - Thus, he taught his son to give special attention to wisdom and discretion.
 - Wisdom we have discussed – wise application of knowledge.
 - Discretion nourishes good sense and sound judgement.
- When we live (walk) with Him we can be confident He will lead us through challenges safely.
 - We trip and fall when we lose sight of God's wisdom and discernment.
- ***"The Lord shall be thy confidence"***
 - Solomon urges his son to live by faith, not fear. Contentment will replace worry.
 - ***"thy sleep shall be sweet"*** – Trust in God leads us to lie down with peace.
- When we seek and apply wisdom that comes from the Lord, our confidence in Him makes us aware that nothing matters more than His presence.
- The path of foolish people, those who reject God's wisdom, leads to judgment not blessing.
 - **When have you had to exercise discretion in dealing with others? Did you express love or anger?**
 - **How does confidence in the Lord differ from self-confidence in one's own abilities?**



Proverbs 2:10-11

When **wisdom** enters your heart,
And **knowledge** is pleasant to your soul,
Discretion will preserve you;
Understanding will keep you,



Kindness Expressed (Proverbs 3:27-30)

- Solomon used four areas of daily life to provide insight.
- The first is a picture of those who work for us.
 - Employers have the power to pay their workers the agreed upon wage. When a job is finished, the money rightfully belongs to the worker.
 - It is an injustice to withhold someone's wages
- The second picture involves a neighbor.
 - Neighbors have needs. When a neighbor asks and we have the ability to help, we are obligated to help immediately, not tomorrow.
 - A similar situation arises if our neighbor works for us. We must not fail to pay them.
- The third picture is of neighbors again – some good (kind) some mean (evil).
 - One neighbor finds another planning to bring harm to them for no reason
 - Christians, because they trust the Lord, show it by being kind to people around us.
- The fourth picture shows how selfish people accuse innocent people of crimes. (v. 30)
 - Malicious accusations against someone who has done no harm.
- These four pictures can be reversed to define a good neighbor. Jesus defined our neighbors in Luke 10:25-37.
 - God intends for His people to be kind to everyone as an expression of our trust in Him.

➤ **Who in your life has been mistreated by others? How can you show them kindness?**

Blessings Secured (Proverbs 3:31-35)

- Following the path of an oppressor may be tempting to some. They do not have to earn or wait for whatever they want. Solomon had already warned his son about the temptation.
 - Do not envy the lifestyle of those who are criminal in their actions.
 - God's people must not give in to the temptation to be like them.
 - The Lord is disgusted by the lifestyle of people who cause others to suffer.
 - The Lord looks upon a righteous person in a different way all together.
 - **How will God deal with the detestable individuals of verses 31-32?**
 - The curse of the Lord will be upon them. He would make sure they are held accountable for their evil actions. They would suffer the consequences of their criminal behavior.
 - In sharp contrast, God's people would enjoy the benefits of His blessing.
 - **"He scorneth the scorers; but he giveth grace unto the lowly"**
 - **"The wise shall inherit glory; but shame shall be the promotion of fools"**
- **Should Christians want immediate judgment for wrongdoers?**
- **Should Christians want immediate blessings from the Lord for actions they take on His behalf? Why or Why not?**

Biblical Truth: Following God's wisdom is demonstrated in how a person treats others.

com-pas-sion (noun)

sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others.



What Proverbs Teaches about Bad Neighbors

- *Bad neighbors betray their neighbor's trust (3:29)*
- *Bad neighbors say bad things about their neighbors (11:9,12)*
- *Bad neighbors try to entice their neighbors to sin (16:29)*
- *Bad neighbors lie to their neighbors (26:19)*
- *Bad neighbors are loud and obnoxious neighbors (27:14)*

A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.
-Proverbs 18:2

Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the good sense of your words.
-Proverbs 23:9