

Proverbs Chapter 17

Proverbs 17:1 "Better [is] a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices [with] strife."

Part of the thank and peace offering was eaten by the family of the offeror. When these offerings were made, it would have been feast day in the home. This much beautiful food would have meant nothing if arguing and turmoil was in the home.

Prov. 15:17 "Better is a dish of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith".

Many people of that day sopped their bread in water before they ate it like our fathers ate bread softened by coffee in their day. This scripture is saying that peace in a family is more important than the food and drink.

Our homes should be a place of peace to get away from the troubles of the world, not a battle ground.

Proverbs 17:2 "A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren."

We remember that the prodigal son who left his home and fell into terrible problems said, "the servants of my father have plenty to eat and more". He left this sinful life and came home to be a servant, because it was better than the life he was leading.

A really good example of a slave who was elevated by his master was Abraham's slave who Abraham entrusted everything to. He even trusted him to choose a wife for his beloved Isaac.

In Genesis, we see just what Abraham entrusted to this servant.

Genesis 24:2 "And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:"

This eldest servant was in charge of everything and now Abraham has him to swear to him that he will go and get Isaac a wife.

We see here, the value of trusted servants. A faithful servant will rise above an unworthy son and receive an inheritance.

Proverbs 17:3 "The fining pot [is] for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts."

Silver and gold are made pure by melting them down with great heat. The impurities come to the top when they are melted and can be skimmed right off the top.

I believe this is saying that we may go through fiery trials (to make us more pure in heart). The Lord burns all the impurities out of us and makes us pure before Him.

Proverbs 17:4 "A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; [and] a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue."

A wicked person travels with wicked people. Their understanding is so twisted that they cannot tell the difference between someone lying and telling the truth. They believe every word these liars are saying, because they want to believe it. They lie too, and have gotten where they cannot determine the difference.

Proverbs 17:5 "Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: [and] he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished."

It is a terrible thing to look down on those less fortunate than your own self. The only reason you are not the poor one yourself, is by the grace of God. We must take tender mercy for all the down trodden if we are to be like our Maker.

I cannot imagine anyone being glad at calamities. This would have to be a very cruel person who would enjoy seeing others suffer. God wants us to love our fellowman.

"In as much as you have done it to the least of these you have done it unto me", is what Jesus said.

Proverbs 17:6 "Children's children [are] the crown of old men; and the glory of children [are] their fathers."

Children's children are grandchildren, and they named them correctly, grand. It seems we have more time for our grandchildren than we did for our children. For an old man to be with his grandson, it helps him remember his own youth; and he wants for him to have the things that he was never able to have. Perhaps, this is why we spoil them so. Children look to their fathers as an example of what they want to become. A truly good father brings joy to his family.

Proverbs 17:7 "Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince."

We know that a fool cannot speak excellently, because an excellent speaker (first of all), tells the truth in its entirety. We have been reading all through these Proverbs that the truth is not in a fool. A fool has no understanding as well. Whatever comes of his mouth should not be heeded. You cannot depend upon what he says.

Someone like a prince, whom God has put in authority, must be above reproach. As we said before, they must be an example for the rest of us. It is even more important that they speak truth. They directly affect the lives of so many who depend on their integrity.

Proverbs 17:8 "A gift [is as] a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth."

Gifts sometime can turn the head of the receiver. Whether this above is a bribe or just a gift to a friend is not known, but either way, a gift sometimes softens up the receiver to be more cooperative with you.

This scripture could be referring to a bribe that brings prosperity to its recipient.

Proverbs 17:9 "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth [very] friends."

Here we see that we are not to pass on negative statements. If we hear something bad about someone, we should just let the story stop with us and not go any further. This shows that we love the person being talked about.

If we spread the tale, all it can do is cause us to lose a friend. This is what is called a gossip or whisperer.

Proverbs 17:10 "A reproof entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool."

We see here that a fool is so used to being punished that even a hundred stripes won't even affect him very much.

A wise man, who carefully considers everything before acting, is not used to even being scolded; and it is a great shock to him to be corrected. Just a word of correction hurts the wise man more than a whipping bothers the fool.

This is the theme of a teachable spirit.

Proverbs 17:11 "An evil [man] seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him."

Rebellion is another form of witchcraft and is very evil.

1 Samuel 15:23: "For rebellion [is as] the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness [is as] iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from [being] king."

A person who rebels against God will miss heaven. A person who rebels against society will wind up in jail. A person who rebels against his family will find himself alone. A person who rebels against his teacher will find himself unlearned. You see, rebellion is very destructive.

The cruel messenger here is probably coming to tell him of the punishment awaiting him for his rebellious act. Just retribution comes against people who rebel and thus the king's messenger will have no mercy.

Proverbs 17:12 "Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly."

We all know that a bear whose cubs have been taken is a very dangerous animal. If you were to meet this mother bear, you would be in danger of great harm.

This Scripture says that a fool who is trying to get you involved in his folly is even more dangerous to your well-being than this bear. Or another way of putting it is, fools are less rational in anger than wild bears.

Proverbs 17:13 Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house."

Being unthankful for someone doing good is a certain way to make sure they will not be doing much good. The Lord rewarded His people for good behavior. He blesses those who follow His commandments.

Solomon knew this proverb well, since his father mistreated Uriah. Contrast this with the man who repays evil with good.

Proverbs 17:14 "The beginning of strife [is as] when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with."

We see here that the time to stop strife is before it starts. This being compared to water reminds me of the little boy who had his finger in the hole in the dike holding back the flood. The minute he took his finger out and the water poured forth, the hole got bigger and a great flood came and destroyed the town he lived in.

This is saying that once it begins, even the smallest break in the dam sets loose an uncontrollable flood force that can't be stopped.

We must not open up and let angry words fly loose; if we do, someone will be destroyed and usually we are destroyed right along with the others. Leave off the strife before it starts.

Proverbs 17 Questions

1. What is a dry morsel better than?
2. What 2 offerings had part of the sacrifice eaten at home?
3. What does "sopped" mean?
4. Our homes should be what, instead of being filled with strife?
5. Who shall rule over a son who brings shame?

6. What story brings this to light for us in the Bible?
7. What had Abraham entrusted his oldest servant with?
8. What makes silver or gold pure?
9. Why do Christians go through fiery trials?
10. When we mock the poor, who are we reproaching?
11. What will happen to those who are glad at calamities?
12. Who are the crown of old men?
13. A truly good father brings _____ to a family.
14. Why should a prince be more careful not to lie than others?
15. What is a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it?
16. How can we show that we love someone who we hear something bad about?
17. What is harder on the wise than a hundred stripes to a fool?
18. Who seeks to be rebellious?
19. What is rebellion a form of?
20. A person who rebels against society will do what?
21. A person who rebels against God will miss what?
22. A person who rebels against family has what happen?
23. What condition will the one who rebels against his teacher find himself in?
24. What then can we assume about rebellion?
25. What attitude does a mother bear have when her cubs are stolen?
26. What is even more dangerous to you than a mother bear without her cubs?
27. Being unthankful for good actions causes what?
28. What is the beginning of strife compared to in verse 14?

29. What happened when the boy took his finger out of the dike?

30. When should we leave off strife?