

Proverbs Chapter 20

We begin this chapter speaking of wine as a strong drink, thus beginning a new theme regarding temperance. Wine was grape juice mixed with water to dilute it, but strong drink was unmixed.

Eph. 5:18 “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit”.

While the use of these beverages is not specifically condemned, being intoxicated always is. Rulers were not to drink so that their judgment would not be clouded nor their behavior less than exemplary.

Proverbs 20:1 "Wine [is] a mocker, strong drink [is] raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

The meaning for “raging” is “arouses brawling”. A brawler is violent, loud and uncontrolled. This describes the personality of the drunkard.

One of the worse problems in our society today, many think, is the abuse of alcohol. My own personal opinion is that abuse of alcohol is a symptom of a much greater problem.

The problem is sin or lack of God’s security in our lives. Most people who drink heavily or in fact those who use drugs also, are running from reality. They feel that they cannot face their problems and they hide in alcohol and drugs.

Sin brings torment. The only way to stop drug and alcohol abuse is to have a national revival. Turn to God, away from sin, and He will bring you peace. There will be no reason to hide; you will have Jesus Christ as your help. Only a fool would refuse Jesus and live in the torment of drugs and alcohol.

This verse gives an example of what is and what is not the Lord’s will. Believers are not allowed to be intoxicated with alcoholic beverages; the reason for this prohibition is wherein excess; that is drunkenness leads to moral intemperance.

This is clearly contrary to God’s will. His will is the Christians be filled with (or by), the Holy Spirit. That is, they are to allow Him to fill them with God’s own life, character and virtues. The analogy between these two moral states is this: a person filled with wine is under its influence; similarly, a Christian is filled with the Spirit when He controls his thoughts, attitudes and actions.

Proverbs 20:2 "The fear of a king [is] as the roaring of a lion: [whoso] provoketh him to anger sinneth [against] his own soul."

We discussed that fear of the king is fear of what he can do to you on this earth. If you provoke him to anger, you could lose your head or spend a lifetime in jail.

Men who resist governmental authority injure themselves (this can be seen in Romans 13: 1-5).

Proverbs 20:3 "[It is] an honor for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling."

In our society today, many believe that they should avenge all wrongs themselves. The Bible teaches to be good to your enemies. Bless them that curse you. A fool keeps a strife going. He does not try to stop trouble. He meddles in other's business and causes strife.

Proverbs 20:4 "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; [therefore] shall he beg in harvest, and [have] nothing."

I see in this sluggard (lazy person), someone who looks for just any excuse not to work. In this particular case, fields need to be plowed when there is moisture in the ground to keep from breaking the plow. If you miss the plowing time, there will be no reaping time. The cold is just an excuse not to work.

The sluggard says it is too hot to work in the summer. As I said, this is just an excuse not to work. He and his family will suffer for his laziness in harvest time. There will be no crop to gather.

Proverbs 20:5 "Counsel in the heart of man [is like] deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out."

This is the very reason, I believe, and that it is so important to study your Bible every day. If some day we were not allowed to have a Bible we could hold in our hand, we that have studied regularly would still have the Bible hidden away in our heart. No one could take that Bible away from us. This "counsel in the heart" is that kind of counsel.

The wise man has keen discernment reaching to the deepest intentions of the heart to grasp wise counsel.

There's a song called "There is a River" and it speaks of a river from deep within that frees the soul from sin. This "counsel", flows from way down deep in the heart, from a pure heart, stayed upon God. The good things that we have stored in our heart can be drawn up whenever we need them.

The Holy Spirit will quicken to us Scriptures that we have hidden in our heart as we need them.

Proverbs 20:6 "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?"

We must be very careful not to go around bragging on ourselves. The way of the world is for a man to brag on his own good traits. These very same people who are continually telling how good they are, are sometimes found wanting when they are tested to see just how much faith they really have.

There seems to be a lot more people who are eager to brag about themselves than there are those who are truly faithful to testify of God's goodness.

Faith is not fact. Faith is believing when we cannot see with our physical eye. Just a few men in the Bible were listed among the faithful in the Old Testament (you can find a list of them in Hebrews 11).

Proverbs 20:7 "The just [man] walketh in his integrity: his children [are] blessed after him."

We see by this that a just man lives his Christianity. He walks in his salvation every day. He walks uprightly before the Lord. People have great respect for him because they know that he walks uprightly before God.

Even his children are highly thought of by the community because of their father's walk before God. We see this blessing of children from their father's pleasing God in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Those who have integrity or who live what they believe, exist without fear of some evil being discovered, while those who are perverse and have secret wickedness will not be able to hide it.

Proverbs 20:8 "A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes."

The king as judge "winnows" or "sifts" data as he discerns evil and good.

We know that the King of kings (Jesus Christ), can see directly through those who would stand before Him and lie. There is nothing concealed that He does not know. An earthly king, who was used to judging, would be pretty well able to tell the truth from a lie also.

If they have been judging very long, every story in the world has already been tried on them. Their experience with people would tell them who is telling the truth. No one would dare do evil in his sight for fear that their punishment for their sin would be even greater. Just one look in the king's eyes and you would be compelled to tell the truth.

Proverbs 20:9 "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"

The answer is no one can make himself sinless. Only Jesus can cleanse our heart from sin. Our heart must be washed in the blood of Jesus to make us free of sin. His blood doesn't just cover our sin; it does away with it entirely.

Those whose sin has been forgiven are pure before God.

Proverbs 20:10 "Divers weights, [and] divers measures, both of them [are] alike abomination to the LORD."

God hates dishonesty.

This sin does not just bring harm to the sinner, but to the person he has cheated by false weights and measurements as well.

Proverbs 20:11 "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work [be] pure, and whether [it be] right."

Children do not conceal what they are. At a very early age, character starts forming, and a child is known as a good child or a bad child by the things he does and says.

Only the rod of correction and or God can change a bad child into a good child.

Proverbs 20:12 "The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them."

God truly made our eyes and our ears, because we are His creation. Because God has given man the ability to hear and see, it should be obvious that He hears and sees everything.

I believe this is intended to mean the spiritual ear that listens and receives and the spiritual eye, as well, that sees things everyone does not see. In Revelation, over and over we are told that they have eyes to see and they see not and ears to hear, but they hear not.

These eyes (in verse 12), see and these ears hear. I believe this is saying that it is God that opens our understanding. We see spiritually and hear spiritually, because He opened our understanding to His secrets.

Proverbs 20:13 "Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, [and] thou shalt be satisfied with bread."

If you lie around sleeping all the time instead of working, you will not earn any money and you will be poor. If you work hard, you will have at least enough money to eat on.

Remember the ant back (in Proverbs 6:6-11)? There we said that "Folly" sends a lazy man to learn from an ant.

Proverbs 20:14 "[It is] naught, [it is] naught, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth."

This is saying that it is wrong to run someone else's merchandise down just so you can buy it cheaper.

The condition of the merchandise (in this verse 14), suddenly changes to better when ownership is changed as the buyer begins to brag about his cleverness.

Proverbs 20:15 "There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge [are] a precious jewel."

Gold and rubies are very valuable, but it is possible to have them if you have enough money. If you have enough money, they can be found.

I believe this Scripture is saying that a person who speaks in God's knowledge is very scarce and hard to find. Wealth is a blessing when honestly gained, but wisdom is more desirable.

Proverbs Chapter 20 Questions

1. What is wine in verse 1?
2. Strong drink is what?
3. What do most people think our greatest problem is today?
4. What is it really?
5. Why do people hide in drugs and alcohol?
6. What does sin bring the sinner?
7. How does the author think is the only way to stop drug and alcohol abuse?
8. Who is the only person who would refuse salvation through Jesus?
9. It is an honor for a man to cease from _____.
10. Why will the sluggard not plow?
11. If he doesn't plow, what will he do in harvest?
12. Counsel in the heart of man is compared to what?
13. What is faith?
14. Where in Hebrews can you find a list of the faithful of the Old Testament?
15. In verse 7, the just man walketh in his _____.
16. A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his _____.
17. Who is King of kings?

18. Who can say, "I have made my heart clean"?
19. How is the only way to cleanse the heart from sin?
20. What kind of weights and measures are an abomination to God?
21. A child is known by his _____.
22. Who made the seeing eye?
23. If you love sleep, what shall you come to?
24. Trying to run a person's merchandise down to buy it, is what?
25. In verse 15, what is more precious than gold and rubies?