

I wonder if it is “human nature” to ignore Lady Wisdom and her advice. Are we all still teen-agers ignoring the wisdom of our elders? Yes, we were told not to “play with fire”, but... There is something that draws us to what we were told not to do. We are wiser now but there is something that still draws us to the flame. We may hear the warning of parents, grandparents, teachers and mentors and the wisdom in their words but for reason we push them aside from time to time. Even as we grow older and wiser there are some things that don't make enough sense (from the world's view) and we ignore the advice of Lady Wisdom. The Proverbs are seldom read - yet, Jesus used them as a basis for much of his teachings. MMMMMMMM

One way to view Proverbs is as a practical approach to life, to community and to faith. We are in this together - life - there is no other planet we can escape to when this one comes to an end. Maybe it is time to leave our Lone Ranger mentality and begin to see our need for community again. Life cannot be lived out in isolation. We are interdependent on each other. Lady Wisdom's words are words for those living in community. And yet, we often ignore her words.

For example, who among us really sees wisdom in “feeding our enemies.” This goes against all that we have been taught (even in the church). Jesus however, sees wisdom in her words and even expands on them. Here in Matthew he teaches about the need to not only feed but to also love our enemies.

In Mark 3:5 Jesus says that “*a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.*” Is there a parallel in this to the loving and feeding of our enemies? What happens when enemies come together for the common good of all? There is something about working together, sharing together and in knowing that someone is looking out for us. We may not always agree but when you stand in need I am there for you. Might this not bring a divided kingdom together? How can we expect the world to get along when we Christians don't even play well together. We are too often a house divided rather than a house united through the love of Christ.

Wisdom though reaches out to almost all aspects of life. It occasionally makes us smile. Maybe she is too honest. Proverbs 25:24 (21:9) talks about marriage relationships (could go either way) or community relationships. Now it is amazing that men nod and women frown and preachers ignore. Yet, we know that constant nagging is seldom productive whether it comes from a spouse, boss, teacher, co-worker, preacher or friend. It is much better when we find ways to help and support one another.

We are living a day of “helicopter parents”. They are constantly after their children to perform better. They are constantly making sure that their kids are safe and often bully teachers, administrators, etc. to do everything to favor their kids (who are never wrong). Several Bellevue parents are now suing because they do not like the decision reached about their football team. How we act has a bearing on those around us and how our children will react as they grow.

Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 25:27 also touches on the whole concept of moderation. Her example is honey, which has some good qualities but like all things too much is not a good thing. We are living in a gluten free craze. Even though medical experts tell us normal bodies need some gluten, unless one has celiac disease. Still many are trying to be gluten free. Skipping the moderation part altogether and ignoring other warnings about the body's need for some gluten.

We know that salt has some value. We all need some - of course, we have gone overboard in salt usage and move from one extreme to another. Moderation is not seen as a virtue today. It is not a bad word - it is wisdom. A little honey is good but...

Looking back a few verses in this 25th Chapter finds some sage advice on the use of words: “A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver” (25:11). Words carry weight. Philip Yancey in one of his books writes about how hard it is to write and to find the right word(s). How hard it is to find just the right phrase to convey what one is thinking. How often do we get misunderstood because we used the wrong word or phrase? Our words may carry a far different meaning than we meant when we don’t choose them carefully.

We know words can destroy. They can add fuel to the fire of hatred, etc. I thought of a couple of our Wings kids. Some of them have been told that they are dumb, that they will never amount to anything. They have been told they will never be able to read, etc. Even as young as they are the words have had an impact on their lives. Part of our task in Wings is to encourage them, praise them each step along the way as they make progress, even slow progress. We seek to build up rather than tear down — words aptly spoken are like “*apples of gold in a setting of silver.*”

The Proverbs are intended to help building community. They are good guidelines for community and family relationships. They should make us smile from time to time. There is some truth even in their exaggerations. Like some cartoons do from time to time.

Baby Blues last Sunday caught my eye: He comes in:

“TADAA! I found that thing you were looking for!”

“What thing?”

“This thing” (showing whatever)

“Was I looking for that?”

“You said you were”

“When?”

“The other day! You said that you had to find it or you were going to totally freak out!:

“I don’t even know what it is.”

“Fine! I’ll just toss it then.”

“You can’t throw it away! What if I need it again?”

“GROAN”

Haven’t most of us been there!

Caught a glimpse of a Mariner’s game this past week, they were playing in Seattle and the camera was showing the crowds coming into Safeco Field. They showed a young mom, dad and baby. The baby was being carried by dad in a harness that allowed the baby to see forward. The baby was smiling as wide a smile as he could possibly smile showing his one tooth! His joy made my night.

There must be a Proverb in there somewhere.

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NIV, New International Bible Society, Zondervan, 1973, 1978, 1985  
NRSV, Division of Christian Education, NCC, 1988