

Read the Room: Communication in Proverbs

Today we're checking our hearts and communication skills. We'll do so by going to the book of Proverbs. Proverbs are general truths. Some of the truths aren't pleasing to God . . . they're simply truths. Like rich people who make friends because of their wealth. It's just a general truth. I say this because this isn't to be viewed as a book of formulas. They're truths, generally, about our lives. We cannot hide from one another. Better to desire pure hearts and effective communication! We need God's guidance to build our homes, friendships, and the church.

- Proverbs 17:1 Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.

Watch your heart

- Proverbs 30:33 For pressing milk produces curds, pressing the nose produces blood, and pressing anger produces strife.
 - Am I someone who enjoys fighting?
- Proverbs 24:29 Do not say, "I will do to him as he has done to me; I will pay the man back for what he has done."
 - Another thought: are we taking out past hurts on those we love? Are paying back the wrong person?
- Proverbs 24:17-18 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles, lest the Lord see it and be displeased, and turn away his anger from him.
 - If someone is truly doing you wrong, learn to trust in God's judgment and timing.

Listen

- Proverbs 20:12 The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both.
- Proverbs 13:18 Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is honored.
 - Good to remember that in the art of communication, you have one who speaks, and one who listens. Both parties play a part in effective communication. Wisdom must be exercised on both sides.
- Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.
- Proverbs 15:31-33 "The ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise. Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence. The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor."
- Proverbs 25:12 Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprover to a listening ear.
- Proverbs 19:20 Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.
- Proverbs 18:13 If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.
 - Don't jump the gun.
- Proverbs 20:5 The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.
 - How can you understand without listening? You could save yourself a lot of heartache.

Remain Quiet

- Proverbs 18:2 A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.
- Proverbs 18:6-7 A fool's lips walk into a fight, and his mouth invites a beating. A fool's mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to his soul.
- Proverbs 21:23 Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble.
- Proverbs 10:19 When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.
 - Matthew 12:36-37 "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."
 - James 3:2 "For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body."
- Proverbs 17:27-28 Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.
- Proverbs 29:11 A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.
- Proverbs 29:20 Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- Proverbs 11:13 Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.
 - Leviticus 19:16 You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord.

Give thought

- Proverbs 18:4 The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.
- Proverbs 15:28 The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.
- Proverbs 16:21 The wise of heart is called discerning, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.
- Proverbs 16:23 The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips.
- Proverbs 25:20 Whoever sings songs to a heavy heart is like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, and like vinegar on soda.
- Proverbs 27:14 Whoever blesses his neighbor with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, will be counted as cursing.
 - Read the room!

And finally: wise words from one of your shepherds: "To truly find yourself, you should play hide and seek alone." *Billy Briggs*