

Discipline or Disciplined?

Text: Proverbs 23:1-35

Introduction

One important trait that is greatly neglected today is that of self-discipline. Our modern society operates on the basis of its fleeting desires and flirting passions. Our young people are not being instructed in the matter of self-discipline. Children are being taught to always satisfy every whim. Some children only have to whimper the words, “I want,” and mommy and daddy run out and buy it. Children are being taught to waste countless hour of precious time, because they are not taught the art of discipline by saying “no” to the latest video game, movie, cd, etc. Children are being raised to be lazy and irresponsible, because mom and dad fail to teach them the benefits of a disciplined life by giving them responsibilities. The Bible has much to say concerning the disciplined, self-controlled life (cf. Pro. 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11). Here, in this passage, Solomon continues to expound upon the virtues of the wise versus the foolish.

The wise, disciplined, self-controlled life is identified by the following principles:

I. Be Disciplined in Our Appetites (vv. 1-8). —i.e., “Desires”

In these verses, Solomon provides a scenario where a man is the guest of a “*ruler*,” i.e., someone in authority. He states that such an occasion should cause a man to “*consider diligently*” the circumstances around him. The phrase means “to mentally separate, understand, and discern” (Strong’s Concordance). Many a man has made himself the victim, because he failed to be discerning in what he permitted his appetite to consume. In these verses, Solomon gives warning concerning...

A. The uncurbed _____ of men (vv. 1-3). —*They reveal...*

1. Lack of _____ and discernment (v.2).
2. Lack of caution and _____ (v.3).

ILLUSTRATION: Haman (Esther 5:9-13).

One, who is controlled by his appetite for food, can be referred to as gluttonous. Gluttony is referred to four times in the Bible (Deut. 21:20; Pro. 23:21; Matt. 11:19; Lk. 7:34). It is defined by the dictionary as “over-eating, or eating to excess.”

B. The unrelenting _____ of money (vv. 4-8). —*Giving one’s life to the pursuit of money reveals...*

1. Wrong _____ (v.4a, “*Labour not to be rich*”).
2. Lack of _____ (v.4b).
3. A _____ for the temporal (v.5).

QUOTE: “*Money cannot buy happiness, and it cannot buy holiness*” (John Phillips).

C. The _____ associations of men (vv. 6-8).

1. The invitation of the evil eye (v.6).
2. The intention of the wicked heart (v.7).

ILLUSTRATION: King Saul’s invitation to David (1 Sam. 18:8-11). David was at Saul’s table by his invitation.

3. The irritation of the deceived life (v.8).

ILLUSTRATION: Esau was a man given to his appetite and he demonstrated his lack of wisdom and discernment when he bargained with a man with Jacob, a man with a “evil eye” (Gen. 25:29-34; cf. Gen. 27:36; Heb. 12:16-17).

II. Be Disciplined in Our _____ (vv. 9-19).

In these verses, Solomon gives warning concerning the commitments we make to others. Often times we can be rash in making a commitment that proves to be futile or even dangerous to ourselves. There are commitments we should make, but there are many we should not make. We must not commit to...

A. Teaching a _____ (v.9).

1. The _____ against it (v.9a).

—Many times, a person may be tempted to try and “_____” a fool.

—Trying to teach a fool will prove a waste of your time, and it will cause _____ for you.

2. The _____ for it (v.9b)

—Unsolicited advice is, generally, _____ advice.

—The fool will refuse to listen, because he “despises” any implication that he needs _____.

NOTE: You can always recognize a fool; by the way he refuses to _____.

B. Compromising our life (vv. 10-21). —*We must not compromise in our...*

1. _____ (v.10a; cf. 22:28).

2. _____ (vv. 10b-11).

3. _____ (vv. 12-16).

a. Concerning _____ (v.12).

b. Concerning our _____ (vv. 13-16).

—The _____ of correction (v.13).

—The _____ of correction (v.14).

—The _____ of correction (vv. 15-16).

LIFE PRINCIPLE #90 — _____

4. _____ (vv. 17-21) — *i.e., relationships*

People will compromise in relationships because they are...

a. Envious of the wrong _____ (vv. 17-19; cf. Psa. 73).

b. Desirous of the wrong _____ (vv. 20-21; cf. vv. 1-2).

III. Be Disciplined in Our Instruction (i.e., being a learner; vv. 19-35).

In the remaining verses of this chapter, Solomon continues his thoughts on the value of listening and learning. There is an old adage that says “*People have to live and learn.*” The problem is the far too many people *live and never learn.*

Here, we are reminded of *Life Principle #8* that states, “*Never Stop Learning,*” and is based on Proverbs 4:7, “*Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding.*” There is never a point in live when a person can say “I’ve learned all there is.” There is always something that needs to be learned. When we stop learning, we have ceased to grow. When we have ceased to grow, we are starting to die.

In this passage, Solomon exhorts his son to “*Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old*” (v.22). He reminds his son that parental wisdom is timeless and should always be desired. There is never a time when a child is not to honor his/her parents and pay no attention to their wisdom.

Some of his “fatherly” wisdom is detailed in the remaining verses. He exhorts his son concerning...

- A. The value of _____ and character (vv. 23-26).
1. The purchasing of that which has _____ (v.23).

Solomon list four things that of such value that they must never be “sold.” These are things that, once they are parted with, the life is never the same. The person who lacks character offers his integrity to the highest bidder.

- a. Truth — *The _____ of Life.*
- b. Wisdom — *The _____ of Life.*
- c. Instruction — *The _____ of Life.*
- d. Understanding — *The _____ of Life.*

The Law of the Third Generation¹

John Phillips

In the case of Rehoboam we see an illustration of the law of the third generation. David represents the first generation, Solomon the second generation, and Rehoboam the third generation. The third generation always stands in peril. It always needs a Holy Ghost revival.

In the first generation, the truth is discovered. People are willing to die as martyrs for that truth. In its defense, no price is too high to pay. People are willing to fight fiercely for newly discovered truth and they hold onto it tenaciously.

In the second generation, passion for the truth moderates. What was a conviction in the first generation becomes a belief in the second generation. The cutting edge is blunted. People know some of the pioneers who fought for the truth, but are not as fanatical as their forebears. People will profess belief in principles they have inherited and will defend them in debate, but in the second generation there is more tolerance of other views.

In the third generation there is more deterioration. What was a conviction in the first generation, then a belief in the second generation, becomes an opinion in the third generation. Some truth is held casually, but much is up for sale and can be comfortably bartered away.

¹ John Phillips, *The John Phillips Commentary Series – Exploring Proverbs, Volume Two: An Expository Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2002), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 232-233.

NOTE: Judges 2:10 should serve as a fitting warning that a nation is always within a generation of apostasy.

2. The _____ of a life of value (vv. 24-26).
 - a. _____ relationships (vv. 24-25).
 - b. _____ relationship (v.26, "...give me thine heart...").
- B. The danger of _____ and _____ (vv. 27-35).
1. The pretention of the strange _____ (vv. 27-28).
 - a. Warned concerning the _____ (v.27a, "a deep ditch").
— _____ and death follows this morally bankrupt path.
 - b. Warned concerning the _____ (v.27b; cf. 22:14, "strange woman")
—Divorce and _____ follows this wretched path of living.
 2. The perversion of the strong _____ (vv. 29-35).
 - a. The _____ of the drink (vv. 29-30).
 - b. The _____ of the drink (vv. 31-32).
 - c. The _____ of the drink (vv. 33-35).