



1 Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. 2 Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips. 3 A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both. 4 Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy? 5 Open rebuke is better than secret love. 6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. 7 The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. 8 As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place. 9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel. 10 Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off. 11 My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me. 12 A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished. 13 Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman. 14 He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him. (Proverbs 27:1-14)

There are three main and salient observations propounded by this Proverb: 1) **Observations on Self-Love;** 2) **On true love;** and 3) **On care to avoid offenses.** 'Propound' may seem to be a word too weak in reference to God's Word, but that is what it becomes when it is presented to the human mind - it must be considered as the best possible rule of life for mankind. God does not dictate, but when we listen to His Counsel and Coaching, our lives will take a turn toward joy and not despondency. There is more than one verse in today's devotion that has gained common acceptance even beyond the borders of Christendom - the world has been forced to admit of their validity and veracity. Read these words of Solomon carefully; reason with them; chew them well; digest them; and make them a part of every cell of your soul.

## ON SELF LOVE:

1 "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." A great man or woman has no need of boasting; in fact, it is so out of character that it detracts from whatever great reputation they have attained through meritorious acts and work. This is especially true when it involves future accomplishments. It is far better to plan a great thing, labor to realize it, and then gain the respect of others than to boast of some future plan and then have it fall in ruins about one's neck. If my future plans in life are concentrated on wealth only, then I shall be very poor indeed when I must leave this world with only those treasures that I have laid up in heaven for I may have NONE.

When the bell tolls (John Donne) for us, we shall go as we are carrying no earthly riches in our hand basket - but only those things that will endure the fires of the Refiner. *"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."* (Luke 12:16-21) James repeats the counsel: *"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."* (James 4:13-15)

2 "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." Here we find a follow-up reinforcement of the principle presented in the first verse. The praise of others has great credibility, but when we sing praises of ourselves, it has the opposite effect. Every parent boasts of his children, but when others boast of them, it is a sign of genuine worth.

3 "A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both. 4 Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?" After due consideration of the ways of a fool, we should have no hesitation in realizing that the fool cares only for himself. He not only has no charitable feelings for others, but displays a maliciousness toward all but himself. Envy is the father of anger (as before stated). Wrath takes unthinking revenge on its object, and anger does not discriminate between good and bad in satisfying its expression, but wrath and anger resulting from deep-seated envy is a firestorm that is beyond man's capacity to control. Paul warns: *"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."* (Romans 13:13)

Let me give an example of how envy might be best addressed: A prominent clergyman and prolific writer of England, F.B. Meyer, relates this account of his handling of envy: *"It was easy," he said, "to pray for the success of G. Campbell Morgan when he was in America. But when he came back to England and took a church near to mine, it was something different. The old Adam in me was inclined to jealousy, but I got my heel upon his head, and whether I felt right toward my friend, I determined to act right."*

*"My church gave a reception for him, and I acknowledge that if it was not necessary for*

*me to preach Sunday evenings I would dearly love to go and hear him myself. Well, that made me feel right toward him and to God. But just see how the dear Lord helped me out of my difficulty. There was Charles Spurgeon (great English preacher) preaching wonderfully on the other side of me. He and Mr. Morgan were so popular, and drew such crowds, that our church caught the overflow, and we had all we could accommodate." - from Minister's Research Service.*

## ON TRUE LOVE:

5 "Open rebuke is better than secret love." Why is this true? It is true because an open rebuke is an honest expression of our hearts, and a secret emotion of our hearts (even love) does not benefit its object. 6 "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." If a friend criticizes, the criticism comes from a devotion that is intended for your good. It is honest and open; but a kiss from a secret enemy is a devastating deceit. Need I remind you that the Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed with a kiss from the traitor?

7 "The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." I was speaking with my son, Michael, in Birmingham by phone the other day when he said he really got hungry around 11:00 AM each day. He said it felt good to be hungry because he had lunch to look forward to. I had not thought of it that way, but hunger is evidence of a healthy appetite. A healthy appetite is one thing that those who live in opulence will never know for their appetite is constantly satisfied to the full. Those who are wise unto themselves feel full of wisdom and knowledge - they are fools! But those who love the Sweet Bread of Life are never filled enough. They always hunger for more of God's Word - even if the Word condemns their sins.

8 "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place." There are those who are known experts on every subject, and are eager to share their expertise with every listener. But I would prefer a surgeon to perform my brain operation than a plumber. There is no greater cause of ridicule than a man who wanders beyond his level of expertise in boasting. 9 "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel." Ointment is medicinal and may not be as pleasant as perfume, but so are the compliments and the criticisms of a friend of like sweetness. Both are intended to mend the soul. 10 Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off." Proven friendship is like gold and silver tried in the furnace for purity. It is invaluable to have an old friend who has proven his metal. A close friend is of more value than a brother who is distant in his affections.

There is a story my father told me of Father Edward J. Flanagan, the Roman Catholic priest who founded Boy's Town in 1917 in Omaha, Nebraska. One cold winter, two boys appeared at the gate of the orphanage. The older boy of perhaps 14, was carrying a young lad of five or six on his back. Father Flanagan inquired of their purpose. The older boy told him that both mother and father were dead, and they wanted to live at Boy's Town. Fr. Flanagan asked where they had come from, to which the older responded, "Chicago." "Surely you didn't walk all that way in this weather?" Fr. Flanagan remarked. "Yes, I did," said the older boy. "Well, did you carry your little brother all of the way?" "Of course, he is too small to walk such a distance." responded the older. "Well, he must have been a very heavy burden," said the good priest. "Naw, he ain't heavy, Father, he's my brother." said the older brother. This is the true example of love - sacrifice that is not even a burden. Christ made such a sacrifice for us, and

carries us when our spirits are worn and weak.

**And on care to avoid offenses:**

11 "My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me." A false defense of our children is never worthy of a good father, but a child whose behavior is commended of even strangers is of great worth. "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father." (2 John 1:4) But when the evidence of good character is overwhelming in the reputation of his children, a father is delighted at his ability to offer a sound defense against the mockers. We must be careful not to bring shame upon the name of the mother and father who gave us life and sustenance. All that we do, good or bad, is a direct reflection upon them. So is all that we say, do, or think (good or bad) a direct reflection upon our Father in Heaven who gave us life and sent His only Begotten Son to be a Savior for us.

12 "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished." When we are in too big a hurry to heed wisdom and care, we are rushing to our own demise. I have mentioned before the bugle call sounded by the British Navy when an unexpected contingency arises: The Still! If a fire, or other potentially catastrophic event, occurs, the Still is sounded at which time every seaman stops what he is doing completely, collects his thoughts, and then proceeds to address the emergency. How wise is the still of the Spirit in our hearts that tells us to pause and act according to wisdom. Those who ignore the "Detour or Bridge Out" sign is headed for a miserable end. God places these signs all along the way for those who heed wisdom.

13 "Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman." This same warning has been given in Proverbs 20:16. 'But what conduces to the happiness of life it is needful to inculcate again and again, to fix it deep in the mind.' The wisdom of this proverb descends from the same principle of the previous verse. It would be the height of folly to trust, with open heart, the honesty of a stranger. If he receives a loan from you, be sure to get some assurance in the way of collateral to back up the loan and reduce the possibility of loss.

14 "He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him." How impolite and discourteous to shout loudly at a friend at first waking. The same is true of those who play loud and discordant music in the quiet hours of the morning. If another proposes to bless us with flattery and compliments from the early hours until the setting of the sun, and loudly, it will be obvious that the man is not sincere and his flatteries are curses rather than of benefit. We can see the parallel of this principle in prayer as well. How many unfeelingly recite the words of the Lord's Prayer from rote memory and give no thought at all to the meaning of the words recited? Is this not taking the Name of the Lord in vain. "*You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.*" How disgusting of a parent to have a child respond in false sincerity to correction, so how do you believe God will feel?