

Pondering Proverbs #4

Proverbs 26-27

MEMORY VERSE

PROVERBS 27:2

“Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A paper plate.

A chalk/dry-erase board and chalk or dry-erase markers.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Others Can Affect Me

In today’s lesson we are going to look at relationships with others. God has a lot to say about our friends and who are good friends. But sometimes others can have a “not so good” influence on us. Play this game to introduce today’s theme. You will need one paper plate.

Have the class split in half and stand in two lines. Have them stand about three feet apart, making an aisle. Choose one child to walk down the middle balancing the paper plate upside down on his/her head. The children in the lines will try to cause the paper plate to fall off of their head. They can only blow or fan with their arms. They cannot touch the person in the center or move out of line. Allow several students to go through the center. Then have the children sit down together and ask them about the effect that the children had who were trying to cause the paper plate to fall down. Was it effective? How is this game like peer pressure in the real world?

LESSON TIME!

NOTE TO TEACHERS: WE HAVE PROVIDED COMMENTARY ON ALL OF CHAPTERS 26 AND 27. PLEASE PRAY AND READ THROUGH YOUR LESSON ASKING THE LORD FOR WISDOM AS TO WHAT AREAS HE WOULD HAVE YOU SHARE WITH YOUR CLASS. DON'T FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE TO SHARE EVERY VERSE IN YOUR CLASS.

This week we are continuing our study in the book of Proverbs. A lot of Proverbs has to do with relationships. The Lord desires for us to have right relationships. We are going to learn that it is important to choose the right kinds of friends so we will not be led astray. We will also learn about how important it is to speak kindly towards others and not speak badly about people behind their backs. We will also learn that **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 26:1

As snow in summer and rain in harvest, so honor is not fitting for a fool.

If it were to snow in the summer, when it is hot, it would go against nature. If it were to rain during the harvest time, it would be a hindrance to the harvesting of the crops. What the writer here is saying is that honor does not go with fools in the same way. Honor and a fool do not go together. It is contrary to nature, and as the rain in the harvest is destructive, so is honor to the fool. We should want to spend time with those whose lives honor the Lord. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 26:2

Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight.

Here we see that he who is cursed without cause will not be harmed by it. It will be just as a bird flying over his head. Here we see that there is a safety when we are innocent, when our actions are

honorable. It shows us that we must walk in obedience to God, and He will take care of our integrity, and us.

PROVERBS 26:3

A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the fool's back.

A person can guide a horse with a whip, and a donkey with a bridle, but the only way to guide a fool is with a rod to his back. That may sound a bit harsh, but when a person hardens their heart and refuses to change their direction then difficult and hard things will come into their lives as a result. It is never fun to be corrected or disciplined, but it is how we learn obedience. So a fool needs to be dealt with harshly so they will learn to obey and have a blessed life.

PROVERBS 26:4, 5

Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him.

Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

These two verses may seem to contradict one another, but they really don't. What we must do is remember two things: 1) There is nothing to be gained in answering a fool in his own way. 2) There may be occasions however when the Lord calls us to speak out against what a foolish person may be saying. There are many examples in the Bible when God's people were used by God to stand up against wickedness and what is wrong. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 26:6-9

He who sends a message by the hand of a fool cuts off his own feet and drinks violence.

Like the legs of the lame that hang limp is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

Like one who binds a stone in a sling is he who gives honor to a fool.

Like a thorn that goes into the hand of a drunkard is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

These verses tell us that to trust a fool to deliver a message is just as ridiculous as cutting off your feet and drinking poison. This is a sharp warning, for Solomon tells us that a foolish person is good for nothing, not even delivering a message. There is no wisdom that comes from their mouths, and to give any honor to a rebel will backfire on you. We have to be careful trusting a fool and not choose them to be our friends. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 26:10

The great God who formed everything gives the fool his hire and the transgressor his wages.

We see in the Bible that God is over all His creation. Even those who refuse to serve Him receive their life and ability to work and earn money. People can seem to have everything in this world and even be successful, but still be a fool. Just because someone has money or is popular doesn't mean that they are wise. We have to be careful and not choose our friends based on the outward appearance, but by what is in a person's heart. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 26:11

As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.

Have you ever seen a dog get sick, vomit and then go back to that vomit and eat it? It is really pretty disgusting to us, but that is the picture that the Lord wants us to have here. Foolish people do exactly the same thing with their lives. They get sick of their sin, and yet they go back to their disgusting sin over and over again. Matthew Henry says, "As the dog, after he has gained ease by vomiting that which burdened his stomach, yet goes and licks it up again, so sinners, who have been convinced only and not converted, return to sin again, forgetting how sick it made them. The apostle Peter (2 Peter 2:22) applies this proverb to those that have known the way of righteousness but are turned from it; but God will spew them out of his mouth, Rev. 3:16."

PROVERBS 26:12

Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

This verse tells else that there is one thing worse than a fool, and that is a man who is prideful. If a man is wise in his own eyes and conceited, there is more hope for the person that is an overconfident fool than the man wise in his own eyes. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 26:13-15

The lazy man says, "There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!"

As a door turns on its hinges, so does the lazy man on his bed.

The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl; it wearies him to bring it back to his mouth.

These verses paint for us a picture of a lazy person. First we see that he will make any excuse for not working, even ridiculous ones. He says that there is a lion in the streets, so he cannot go outside.

Then we see him, as a door that turns on its hinges, so the lazy man doesn't move from his place on his bed. A door hinge turns back and forth, but it doesn't go anywhere. Then we see that the slothful and self-indulgent man buries his hand in his bosom, and he won't even bring it out again to feed himself.

PROVERBS 26:16

The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.

Here we see that the sluggard thinks himself as wiser than seven men, who can answer any question. It speaks of the pride of the sluggard, who thinks he is so smart, yet he is not smart at all. We need to be careful of people who think that they are smart when they really aren't. True wisdom comes from following the Lord, not trying to see how much work we can get out of. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 26:17

He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a dog by the ears.

Have you ever yanked a dog's ears? That would be a very foolish thing to do, wouldn't it? The dog is going to turn around and want to bite you. Yet, it is as foolish as interfering in an argument that is not any of your business. You will get dragged into it and it will end up biting you.

PROVERBS 26:18, 19

Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death,

Is the man who deceives his neighbor, and says, "I was only joking!"

Here we are told how bad it is to deceive our neighbors - it is like madmen that throw firebrands and arrows. We cannot lie to our neighbor and say that we were just fooling, or joking around. It is wrong. It is never right to tell a lie. It is a willful sin, and it does not please the Lord at all.

PROVERBS 26:20-22

Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; and where there is no talebearer, strife ceases.

As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body.

If a fire has no fuel to feed it, it will eventually go out, oftentimes very quickly. So, when contentions stop, gossip also stops. Gossip needs fuel to spread, so if someone wants to tell us gossip, we can just refuse to listen to it, and it will stop. Many hearts can be kept from being hurt by putting out the fuel of gossip.

As quickly as a match sets fire to a piece of paper so does a man that likes to quarrel, start fights. It only takes a little thing to set him off. God gives to us His Holy Spirit to help us not get angry and start fights. James tells us in chapter 1:19, 20, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God."

The words of slander are as beautiful tidbits to those who speak them, but they can go down into the heart of the person slandered and cause deadly wounds. How important it is that we speak words of truth and love to one another. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 26:23

Fervent lips with a wicked heart are like earthenware covered with silver dross.

A person can say nice, pretty words, but just as a beautiful glaze covers a common clay pot, so the nice words can hide a wicked heart. People can say insincere words of love but their hearts are full of hatred. It is all fake and not their true heart. Yet, God always sees what is in a person's heart, no matter how hard they try to cover it.

PROVERBS 26:24-26

He who hates, disguises it with his lips, and lays up deceit within himself;

When he speaks kindly, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart;

Though his hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness will be revealed before the assembly.

A person can have hate in his heart and yet say pleasant things; but if you are wise, you will not believe them. He may pretend to be very kind, but in the end, his true hatred will be revealed for all to see.

PROVERBS 26:27

Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him.

God's word here tells us that the man who sets a trap for others will get caught in his own trap. Roll a boulder down on someone, and it will roll back and crush you. We should never plan bad things for others; it will come back on us. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 26:28

A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

A lying tongue hates those whom it has wounded and crushed, and the person who flatters with their mouth is working towards another person's destruction. Flattery is when we say nice things to others to get them to do something we want. It is the same as lying and can hurt others very badly. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

Mixed-Up Proverbs

Have the class split into two or three small teams. Before class, choose four or five verses from the Proverbs that we are studying. Write the entire Proverb on the board not leaving any spaces in between words. Explain to the children that this verse is in the two chapters we are studying. Tell them to keep their Bibles closed and when you say, "go" they are to open their Bibles and find what verse is written.

The first team that can come up with the verse wins that round. Play four to five rounds and talk about the meaning of each verse.

PROVERBS 27:1

Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.

This verse tells us not to brag about what you will do tomorrow, because you do not know what will happen tomorrow. James 4:13-15 tells us, "Come now, you that say, today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; Whereas you know not, what shall be on the next day. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. For you ought to say, 'If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.'"

PROVERBS 27:2

Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.

Humility stands out in this scripture, for it tells us to let other people praise us, and not praise ourselves. It's easy for us to want others to notice the good things we do, but we need to allow the Lord to see them, and even if no one else notices, we still need to rejoice in the fact that He does.

If we praise ourselves, we are focusing on ourselves. We need to esteem others better than ourselves. Philippians 2:3 tells us, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." James 4:10 also tells us, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up." God sees all we do, and He will honor us as He sees fit. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 27:3, 4

A stone is heavy and sand is weighty, but a fool's wrath is heavier than both of them.

Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, but who is able to stand before jealousy?

Here we see that when the anger of a fool is provoked he doesn't care what he says or does, and it is more painful than a great stone or a load of sand. It weighs heavy on him. The people who cannot control their anger or jealousy hurt themselves by sinking under the load of it. It is wise for others not to give them any provocation to anger, and also to get out of their way and pray for them.

PROVERBS 27:5, 6

Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

Open rebuke is better than love that is hidden. It is good for us to be corrected and told our faults by our friends. True love will speak the truth, because it puts the other person first, above our own comfort level. Secret love is a love that is hidden and does not show good fruit, for it will not correct one that is wrong.

We also see that the wounds of a friend are faithful. The word wound indicates pain and hurt. At times, the truth hurts us, but if we take our pain to the Lord, and commit it to Him, He will help us. There is a contrast here between the wounds of a friend and the kisses of an enemy; one would think that it would be the other way around. Truth may hurt us, but it does us good, while flattery (kisses of an enemy) can destroy us. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 27:7

A satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb, but to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

Here is a warning that the man whom God has richly blessed with good things should guard himself against ingratitude towards the God who has blessed him so well. He must also guard himself against forgetting how valuable each gift is from God. If they are spiritual blessings, he must be careful to not be self-satisfied and self-contented, which in reality, is the path of the worst poverty. Without the Lord, our lives are always hungry and thirsty, but He is the living water that satisfies our soul.

PROVERBS 27:8

Like a bird that wanders from its nest is a man who wanders from his place.

There is a safety in our homes, a place of protection and comfort. Many people do not realize when they have that protection or comfort. They are not content and want to go all over the place, not caring or committing to the work at home. This does not refer to the person who is called by God to another place, but of the wanderer who avoids or tries to escape their work. Just as a bird that leaves the nest is in danger of being hunted and killed, the person who wanders from God's call in their lives places themselves in great danger. It is always best to be obedient to God's call upon our lives.

PROVERBS 27:9, 10

Ointment and perfume delight the heart, and the sweetness of a man's friend gives delight by hearty counsel.

Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend, nor go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity; better is a neighbor nearby than a brother far away.

Perfume is a pleasant thing to all of us; the smell is sweet. It is good to have a friend that we can be free to communicate our heart to. We should never abandon our friends. If we build our friendships, then in difficult times, we can go to our friends who are close by us, rather than to a relative who is far away. Friendship is truly a gift from the Lord. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 27:11

My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him who reproaches me.

It is a true joy for a parent to know that their children are wise and sensible. It is actually an honor to have children that walk in the ways of the Lord. Sometimes people can think that a parent is too hard on them, but if the child is raised in the Lord, their good

conduct will save the parent from being blamed for bad behavior on the part of the child. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 27:12

A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself; the simple pass on and are punished.

Here we see that evil can be seen ahead of time. If we give in to temptation, we can know that there will be sin, and then the result of the sin. The wise man will watch for problems ahead of time and prepare himself to deal with them. The fool never looks, and therefore suffers the consequences.

PROVERBS 27:13

Take the garment of him who is surety for a stranger, and hold it in pledge when he is surety for a seductress.

It is never a wise decision for a person to pay a stranger's debt. It is a good way to get into trouble. It is a warning to be so careful in our business dealings as not to lend money to people who we know just waste their money, unless they can give very good collateral for the loan.

PROVERBS 27:14

He who blesses his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it will be counted a curse to him.

It is rather foolish to yell out a pleasant greeting to a friend too early in the morning. The other people will think it a curse rather than a blessing.

PROVERBS 27:15, 16

A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike;

Whoever restrains her restrains the wind, and grasps oil with his right hand.

A nagging woman can be very annoying. Here she is compared to a continual dripping in a very rainy day. A friend may annoy you, but you can get away from a friend, but you cannot get away from a wife. It is sad and there really is no hiding her, and everyone knows. Even friends that would love to protect her, cannot, for who can stop a continual rain? **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

Here we see the joy of talking. A good conversation is as stimulating as sparks that fly when iron hits iron. As iron hits another piece of iron, it sharpens it, and makes it of good use. Wise discussions sharpen one another's intellects. We should be careful with whom we spend our time. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 27:18

Whoever keeps the fig tree will eat its fruit; so he who waits on his master will be honored.

A workman who takes care of another person's fig tree, or orchard may eat freely of it. If the same person is wise in listening and obeying their master, will be rewarded for their care, concern, and good work.

PROVERBS 27:19

As in water face reflects face, so a man's heart reveals the man.

When we look into a mirror, it shows us what we look like on the outside. One way we can see what we are really like inside is by the friends we choose to be our friends. The relationship we have with them will reflect our true hearts, and who we really are. **We should be wise in our relationships.**

PROVERBS 27:20

Hell and Destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.

There are two things here that are said to never be satisfied, death and sin. No matter how many people die, there is always room for more souls that have never been saved. Sin also is never satisfied. It never has enough. The carnal appetite never has enough. Yet we know that those who have their eyes toward the Lord are always satisfied.

PROVERBS 27:21

The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, and a man is valued by what others say of him.

We can test the purity of silver and gold by putting them in the refining fire, which will bring out all the impurities of the metal. A man is tested by his reaction to other men's praise. A man can become full of pride because of men's praises, or he can give thanks God.

PROVERBS 27:22

Though you grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, yet his foolishness will not depart from him.

You can never separate a foolish man from his foolishness, even if you try to crush him to powder, he will never give up his foolishness, for his heart is determined to do evil. Even though he is crushed, he is not humbled or refined.

PROVERBS 27:23-27

Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, and attend to your herds;

For riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to all generations.

When the hay is removed, and the tender grass shows itself, and the herbs of the mountains are gathered in,

The lambs will provide your clothing, and the goats the price of a field;

You shall have enough goats' milk for your food, for the food of your household, and the nourishment of your maidservants.

Here we see that we are called to be diligent in everything we do. To be diligent means to pay attention and work hard. Whatever we are called to, we must apply ourselves to the best of our ability. We are not to be lazy. We should not expect others to do what we are responsible for.

A Word of Wisdom

Have your class divide again into the same teams as the "Mixed-Up Proverbs" game. Choose four or five additional verses from the two chapters we just discussed. This time tell the teams to open their Bibles. You will write one word from the verse on the board. The teams may not yell out the answer. They will only get one guess

per round so they need to join together and make sure that is their answer.

If no one can guess based on one word, write down another word from the verse. Keep going until the correct verse is guessed. You can do a point system if you like awarding more points to the team who guesses with fewer words. In other words you might award 100 points to the team who guesses with 1 word, 75 points to those with 2 words, 50 points with 3 words, etc. Play several rounds, then add up the points and declare a winner.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be wise in their relationships. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.