

Relationship Advice
Proverbs 10:12-19
Berean Baptist Church
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INTRODUCTION

Proverbs 10:12, and 10:18-19 contain perhaps the best guidance on relationships ever written. These two sections book-end great practical advice about discerning people's character and having the right perspective on money. All in all, this is fantastic advice about identifying and maintaining good relationships with good people, just as we expect from the Doctrine of Life.

From 10:12 and 10:18-19 see that you must protect your relationships from your own sin by having much charity, few words, and learning to deal with anger without blowing up or clamming up.

But don't pursue relationships with just anyone...

From 10:13-17 see that you should mark the wise and cultivate relationships with them; when looking for friends, don't be impressed by money.

Vs 12 What Sustains Good Relationships?

Tucked away here in Proverbs 10:12 is one of the greatest statements in the Scripture. This at once practical advice for improving relationships at home and also profound theological truth.

How does hatred stir up strife? In many ways, but the way most in view in this line is the opposite of covering sin. Hatred brings up the past sins and uses them to tear down relationships.

“He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends (Pr 17:9).”

If you want to destroy a relationship, keep bringing up past failures.

How does love cover sins? From a big picture, theological perspective, the love of God covers the sins of the believer. But Proverbs is more concerned with the practical, day to day, doctrine of living. Peter quotes this proverb in the context of living the life of the church.

And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins (1 Pet 4:8).”

Charity (or “love”) is choice to be patient, kind, hopeful, focused on the good of others, and hard to provoke (1 Cor 13). When we sin we harm our relationships, hatred brings up past injuries to continue the harm, but charity covers, binds, and heals the injuries in our relationships.

Practically....a short memory for injury indicates charity and a long memory for injury indicates hate. Not that charity demands that we give up on justice or recklessly put ourselves in dangerous positions. But you will have to let go of hatred before you can grasp charity, and clinging to your past injuries does not seem to help you let go of their hate.

This is not to teach that hiding sin is good. "He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy (Prov 28:13)." Sin should be confronted and dealt with biblically. The approach of charity ensures that you are actually confronting sin and not just personal annoyance. And the approach of charity paves the way for restoration after repentance.

If you want to preserve and grow a relationship, be patient, kind, hopeful, focused on the good of the other, and hard to provoke.

Vs 13-14 Why Should We Care Who Are Wise and Who Are Fools?

This is stark cause and effect. Notice that you can be the kind of person who stores knowledge and speaks wisdom, or you can be the kind of person who gets hit with sticks and digs their own grave with their mouth.

This also provides a very useful test for discerning the wise and the foolish:

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh (Luke 6:45).”

If you see someone suffering self-inflicted injuries and running their mouth to their own destruction, that person is probably a fool.

If you see someone sharing wisdom and collecting knowledge, that person is probably wise.

What does the Scripture work so hard to teach us how to identify the wise and the fools? Consider Prov 13:20, 22:24-25, and 1 Cor 15:33. You become like those you spend time with.

Illustrate racquetball.

Mark the wise by what they say and course of their life, and build relationships with them.

Vs 15-17 The Strength and Weakness of Riches

Vs 15 Could be understood in a couple of ways. It may just be a standalone statement that strength and wealth often go together just as poverty and destruction do. This is true but must be tempered with Proverbs 10:2-3. **Have them read**

“**Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death. The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked (Prov 10:2-3)**.”

Being rich is not always safer than being poor.

Alternatively, **Vs 15** might characterize how a rich man tends to think: he makes wealth his source of security and thinks that the poor have no security because they are poor. We see this sort of error in Proverbs 18:10-12.

¶ **The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.**

¶ **The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.**

¶ **Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.**

If **Vs15** is an example of a rich man putting too much stock in riches and despising the poor, then **Vs 16** is a clear correction. Whether a person is rich or poor, their work tends to life if it is righteous and death if it is evil. And **Vs 17** reminds us all that being teachable is the way to life. Riches do not make a fool wise, and poverty does not make the wise a fool.

Do not despise riches, but know they do not bring lasting security or life.

More on Good Relationships Vs 18-19

This completes the start of the excellent relationship advice in Vs 12.

Vs 18 There are two ways people tend to get angry: they either “clam up” or they “blow up.” This verse deals with both of them.

“**He that hideth hatred**” This person has is hateful to another but they cover up that hatred. “Hideth” is the same term as “cover” in **Vs 12**. So this makes it clear that the action of love in covering sin is not to hide sin. Clamming up and letting bitterness grow in your heart is linked with lying and foolishness.

Illustrate everything's fine!

Ok so better out with it...well...

“**and he that uttereth a slander**” This person is open about their contempt. “Slander” is an evil report made in public. In Numbers, the 10 unbelieving spies told the entire camp of Israel that the people of the Promised Land were too strong to conquer, and they made all of Israel fearful by their “evil report” (Num 13:32)- this is the same term as translated “slander” here. Blowing up and publicly venting is at least as foolish as clamming up.

When angry, don't blow up, don't clam up. Be filled with the Spirit, put on charity, and carefully, humbly express how you feel. But...

Vs 19 Don't be unfiltered. The more talking the more opportunities for sin. Be very intentional with your words. And be humble enough to realize what you desperately want to say might be completely useless. Remember: “**he that refraineth his lips is wise**”

The wise listen more than they talk, and the fool talks more than they listen.

We talk a lot about being transparent and by that, we mean that we don't want to hide things, or appear that we are hiding things; the Berean way is honest and forthright. But transparent does not mean unfiltered. Just because I don't want to hide my heart does not mean that I think everything in my heart is worth sharing.

Be honest and forthright, but also let God's word filter you. Use words very carefully.

CONCLUSION

Be careful about your relationships. Don't be impressed by money. And don't go hand in hand with fools, because you will become like them. Find people that you want to be like and spend time with them. Build relationships with them based on charity and profitable discussion. When sin enters into your relationships, as it will, don't blow up or clam up. Instead, apply yourself to fervent charity, biblically deal with your anger, and be sparing with words.

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