

The Book of Proverbs

Lesson 11: More Proverbs of Solomon Copied by Hezekiah's Men -- Proverbs 25:1-27:27

Imagine a room full of scribes, generations after Solomon has died, bent over old scrolls with careful pens. The kingdom around them is in trouble. Assyria is on the move, the northern tribes have already fallen, and good King Hezekiah is trying to call a forgetful nation back to God. And what do his men do? They sit down and copy proverbs. They preserve the words of a dead king because they believe those words are alive. Proverbs 25:1 names them for us: 'These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied.' Across the centuries, in the quiet labor of faithful hands, God was keeping His word for you. The very sayings you are about to read reached you because someone refused to let them be lost.

And what they preserved is some of the most vivid, picture-rich teaching in all of Scripture. These chapters do not lecture you; they paint. A word fitly spoken is 'like apples of gold in a setting of silver' (25:11). Good news from a distant land is 'like cold water to a thirsty soul' (25:25). A person without self-control is 'like a city broken into and left without walls' (25:28). A fool who repeats his folly is 'like a dog that returns to his vomit' (26:11). You can see every one of these. They lodge in the memory because they are drawn from the world you already live in, the kitchen and the well and the city gate.

But these are not just clever images. They press on the tenderest places of an ordinary life. How do you handle the person who has wronged you? What do you do with the whisper that just landed in your ear about a friend? How do you talk about tomorrow when you do not even own today? Who is allowed to tell you the truth about yourself? These chapters answer with a startling honesty. They tell you to feed your enemy. They tell you that the wounds of a friend are faithful and the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. They tell you not to boast about a tomorrow you cannot promise yourself.

At the heart of it all stands one breathtaking command, the kind that only makes sense if you know the God behind it: 'If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink' (25:21). This is not weakness. It is the very logic that would one day hang on a cross and pray for the men driving in the nails. Long before Jesus said 'love your enemies,' Proverbs was already teaching the people of God to overcome evil with good. So we come to these old, copied, lovingly preserved words not as collectors of wit, but as people learning to live the everyday with the heart of God Himself.

Group Discussion: When someone has wronged you, what is your most natural first instinct, and what would it cost you to respond instead with simple, practical kindness?

Personal Reflection: Where in your life right now are you most tempted to boast about tomorrow as though it were already yours, and how would living before God change the way you plan?

Read Proverbs 25:1–27:27

Study Questions

1. In 25:6–7, why does true honor come from humbly taking the lower place rather than exalting yourself, and how does this wisdom expose the difference between seeking status and being given it?
2. Reflecting on 25:6–7, where are you tempted to push yourself forward or angle for recognition, and what would it look like this week to genuinely take the lower seat?
3. According to 26:20–22 and 26:23–28, how does Proverbs portray the gossip, the whisperer, and the flatterer, and why does God treat these quiet sins of the tongue so seriously?
4. Considering 26:20–22, when did you last carry a piece of gossip, even gently, and what would it mean to be the person who lets a quarrel die for lack of fuel?
5. Looking at 27:1 alongside 27:23–27, how does Proverbs hold together the warning not to boast about tomorrow with the call to diligent, faithful stewardship of what God has placed in your hands today?

6. Thinking about 27:1, how does honestly admitting that you 'do not know what a day may bring' change the way you hold your plans, your possessions, and your very breath before God?
7. In 27:6 and 27:17, why are the faithful wounds of a friend better than the easy kisses of an enemy, and how does 'iron sharpening iron' describe the kind of friendship that actually makes us holy?
8. Considering 27:6 and 27:17, who in your life is allowed to wound you with the truth and sharpen you, and are you that kind of friend to anyone else?
9. Proverbs 25:21–22 commands, 'If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink, for you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you.' Paul takes up these very words in Romans 12:20–21, and Jesus presses even further in Matthew 5:43–48. Taking these together, what do they teach about overcoming evil with good rather than repaying it, about leaving vengeance to God, and about how a child of the Father is to treat an enemy?
10. Looking back across Proverbs 25–27, name one specific way Jesus, who fed and forgave His enemies even from the cross, is forming you through this passage, and what first step of obedience will you take this week?

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Luke 14:7–11, Jesus teaching guests to take the lower place rather than exalt themselves; Romans 12:19–21, leaving vengeance to God and overcoming evil with good; Matthew 5:43–48, loving enemies as children of the Father; 2 Peter 2:20–22, the dog returning to its vomit as a picture of falling away after knowing the truth; James 4:13–16, the folly of boasting about tomorrow when life is a vapor

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