

MONDAY, August 10, 2009: *"To the world you might be one person, but to one person you might be the world."*

Proverbs 22:4 By humility *and* the fear of the LORD are riches and honor **and life**.

Today let's talk about something more important than riches and honor; let's talk about "life." What is meant here is more than just going through a dreary drizzle of days. The writer is offering a life that is full and fulfilling; a life that brings happiness and joy.

And how does this happen? One of the vital ways is by being humble (living life not thinking of one's self). Another way of putting this is living life not being self-centered, but being "other-centered."

The most miserable people in all of the world are those that are self-centered. They are miserable and it is miserable being around them. They can have all the money in the world, be in a position of power and influence or whatever else the world claims to bring happiness. But at the end of the day, a self-centered person does not experience the fullness of life promised in this proverb.

In contrast, the happiest people and the most loved people are those that live life thinking of others (humbly). Everywhere they go life improves for others. They bring hope, they bring love, they bring help to others and – paradoxically – they in return receive abundant, joyful life themselves.

I know this is hard to understand. The temptation is to look out for self first and then if there is time and resource left, to think of others. But God has so designed the universe that it is the humble that receive life. Trust Him; not your instincts.
SCRIPTURE: Luke 22:24-26, James 4:10, I Peter 5:5

TUESDAY, August 11, 2009:
"Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others." _Jack Welch, Winning

Proverbs 22:12 The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, but He overthrows the words of the faithless.

This proverb is a reminder that God holds us accountable for what we know. First, God wants us to learn – "He preserves knowledge for us."

However, notice with me the second part of this proverb. It informs us that God works against us when we use that knowledge in the wrong way – when we are "faithless."

The "faithless" person is the person that uses knowledge to take advantage of people. We all have superior knowledge that others do not have. Many people get paid very well for this (educators, salesmen, tradesmen, law, insurance, financial and medical professionals, and many others). Being paid well is not a bad thing; but being paid well because we use what we know to take advantage of other is!

Remember, we are placed on this earth to serve. When we become "self-serving" God becomes our enemy (not a good thing!)

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 1:16-19; Ezekiel 22:23-30

WEDNESDAY, August 12, 2009:
"You will become as small as your controlling desire, as great as your dominant aspiration."
_James Allen

Proverbs 22:24-25 Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, ²⁵ lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.

Today I want us to take seriously the warning Solomon gives us about choosing friends. He warns: **Do not make friends with an angry person.**

Let me say here first of all, that the Bible is not telling us that we should never get angry – that is a natural response that God put in us. There are appropriate times to be angry. But Solomon is not writing about a person that occasionally gets angry; but rather a person that is angry – that is what/who they are. Underneath is a smoldering anger that leaves a burn mark on almost everything they touch.

I make no claims to being a psychologist, but my years of experience in serving people as their pastor has given me the unique position of observing people on a level that most never do. It has been my experience that people who are angry are so for a couple of reasons. We will discuss these reasons later but for today, let me ask you – are you angry? Getting angry from time to time is natural and even justified; but if anger is a frequent experience in your life, then know that it is destroying you and those you love. If God prompts your heart in this area today, please cry out to Him and ask for help to be set free. Stay tuned for more...

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 37:8, Philippians 4:4

THURSDAY: August 13, 2009: *"Prayer is the slender nerve that moves the muscle of omnipotence in accomplishing His re-creative work in the lives of His people."*
_Jim Shaddix, The Passion Driven Sermon

Proverbs 22:24-25 (See Wednesday)

We are discussing angry people. I mentioned yesterday that I have found that there are a couple of reasons that people are angry. The first is: Unresolved painful issues from their past

We must understand that angry people are most often hurting people. God programmed us to get angry when injustice has been done (this is a good thing). But when an injustice has been done to us and we can't do anything about it – it festers in our soul and begins to shape us. Instead of being shaped by love and grace, an angry person is shaped by the injustice done to them. This is both a sad and bad situation.

I would give two words of advice to someone like this: First, living in a sin-cursed world means that bad things happen to people who did not deserve it – this is a sad fact of life but it does not have to destroy you or define you.

The second thing I would say to the angry person is: the pathway to freedom and release from the unresolved issue(s) in your life is to forgive – let it go, give the past to God – only he can execute vengeance – that is not our domain.

I feel that I am writing to someone in particular – God knows your pain. What you were put through was not because He did not love you or because you are a bad person – it was just a sad part of living in a sin-cursed world. But God is a redeemer – he can turn your pain into a possibility. He can take the scars and use them for your benefit. Today in prayer, release your past to God – give it to Him and don't go back there. May God help you right now as you pray (In Jesus' name)

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 54:1-2, Isaiah 41:10,13