

“Ancient Wisdom for a Modern World”
A Study in Proverbs
Lesson #3 – Self-Control

Introduction: Webster defines *self-control* as “control of one’s feelings, desires or actions by one’s own will; the power of controlling one’s external reactions, emotions, etc.; equanimity.” Roget lists as synonyms: restraint, self-discipline, willpower, mettle, resolve, composure and reserved. The Bible has much to say and to teach us on this important subject. Both testaments are full of examples. The temptation ([Matthew 4: 2](#) and [Luke 4:4](#)) of Jesus is packed with personal applications. Self-control is taught, learned, acquired and practiced. Paul taught Felix ([Acts 24:25](#)). Peter urged the Christians to supply or provide self-control to their faith ([2 Peter 1:6](#)). Paul chastened the Hebrew Christians because they had not learned through the exercise of their senses to discern good from evil ([Hebrews 5:13-14](#)). Each of these examples demonstrates that self-control is acquired through a rigorous spiritual education. We acquire it as we become more and more familiar with God’s Word. Proverbs addresses Anger, Diligence, Drinking, Envy of Evildoers, Fear, Greed, Haste, Hate, Pride, Control of the Mouth, and so many more that our limited time will not allow.

Our Lesson for today we will consider some key Proverbs providing for our self-control.

1. The folly in one’s life without proper self-control.

Prov 5:23

Prov 16:32

Prov 25: 1-5 & 28

2. *The tongue. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell (James 3:6).*

Prov 10:18-21 (to hide hatred ...)

Prov 15:28 & 17:28 (retraining lips)

Prov 18:6-8 (the mouth / heart of fools)

3. *Jumping to Conclusions. How close have we come to a dangerously, unnecessary conflict? The Israelites did the same thing. They were ready to go to war because they wrongly assumed that the altar built by their brothers was a sign of rebellion against God (Josh. 22:9-34). To avoid making wrong judgments, we must be careful to get the facts right.*

Prov25:23 (backbiting, contentious and pride)

Prov 26:20-33 (bitterness)

4. Hatred and Strife. *We should take very seriously the admonitions of the psalmist, "You who love the Lord, hate evil!" (Psalm 97:10), and of the prophet Amos who urged his hearers to "hate evil, love good" (Amos 5:15).*

Prov 10:11-14

Prov 26:24-28 (how destructive is this attitude to the Church?)

Questions for Discussion

1. What are some NT scriptures that help us apply principles of Self-control in our every day life (be ready to explain in class)? Hint: 1Cor9:25; Gal 5:23; 1Tim3:2; 1Tim3:11; Tit 2:12)
2. How can our words build up or tear down the wayward and weak (Proverbs 15:4; Proverbs 16:24)?
3. To what two things does James compare the ability to rule one's spirit (Proverbs 16:32; James 3:3-5)?
4. Why is the poor man hated (14:20; 19:6-7)? Would you say hatred is a selfish emotion?

Study Notes for Class

"He who has no control over his own spirit is like a city without walls." Proverbs 25:28. This Proverb rings so true in all of our lives...our own self-control, or lack of it will determine the coming in and going out of positive and negative in our personal "city". Just as it is vitally important to protect the gates to the person, the eye gate, ear gate, etc, as to what enters. Our soul is effected and altered by what we allow in and out. "Out of the mouth comes the abundance of the heart" and if we choose to not practice self control on what goes into our soul, it will manifest itself by what comes out of our mouths. A wholesome tongue is a blessing to all who hear it, and "a word fitly spoken is as apples of gold in settings of silver." Be ye encouraged this day!