

Articles and Sermons :: Words of Wisdom by Zac Poonen

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Proverbs 10:12 - "Love covers all sins." Peter quotes this in his epistle (1 Peter 4:8). If you really love a person you will cover his weaknesses and not expose them. That is how God has dealt with us. He has not exposed our past sins to anyone. We must treat others in the same way that God has treated us. If you want to be wise, let me give you one bit of advice in your youth. If you know a bad story about someone, let that story die with you. Don't go around talking about it. God will honour you if you do that, especially if it is a bad story about one of His children. He will love you especially. Think of a father whose child has done something wrong and I know something about it; but I never tell anyone what his son did. Don't you think that father will love me very much for that? It's like that with God too, when He sees that we treat His children with love.

Proverbs 11:24 - "There is one who scatters, yet increases all the more." This is one of the paradoxes of the Christian life that one who gives receives more, because God blesses him. And the one who is stingy becomes poor. When a miser gets converted, he becomes generous. Jesus said to His disciples, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). God has freely given us so many things. We must give to others freely too. The widow in the gospels, had only two mites. She gave what she had, and I am sure that God honoured her and she suffered no lack. "He who waters others will himself be watered" (Prov. 11: 25). If you want God to water you and keep you fresh, you must water others. Why are many Christians so stale and dry? Because God is not watering them. And why is God not watering them? Because they are not watering others. Begin to think about the needs of others and see how you can bless them. You will then find that God blesses you abundantly.

Proverbs 15:13 - "A joyful heart makes a cheerful face." It is joy in the heart that brings brightness on our faces. "A cheerful heart has a continual feast" (Prov. 15:15). There is a great emphasis in Proverbs on having joy in our life. "A joyful heart is good medicine" (Prov. 17:22). So joy can make us healthy too. The kingdom of God is not just righteousness, but righteousness with joy in the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament they had righteousness without joy. Now we have righteousness with joy. There is a spring in our steps, a song in our hearts and a light on our faces as we follow Jesus.

Proverbs 18:16 - "A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men." It is through the gift God gives us that He makes room for us to serve in the church. It's pathetic to see many today who have no God-given gifts, who are seeking and fighting for place and honour in the church. We are urged to "pursue after spiritual gifts, especially that we may prophesy" (1 Corinthians 14:1). To prophesy is to speak the Word of God in a way that challenges, convicts, comforts, encourages and builds up (1 Corinthians 14:3). God doesn't give His gifts to those who don't value them. People will travel hundreds of miles to listen to a man who has a message from God. John the Baptist was in the wilderness and people from all over Judea went out there to hear him, because he had a message from heaven.

Proverbs 18:21 - "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." On the day of Pentecost, tongues of fire appeared over the disciples to show that God wanted to set their tongues on fire with the fire of the Holy Spirit. James 3:6 says that the tongue can be set on fire with the fire of hell too. Given the corruption of our flesh, it is only if our tongue is controlled by the Holy Spirit that we can be saved from spreading death through our tongues.

Proverbs 22:4 - "The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honour and life." Spiritual riches, spiritual honour and spiritual life come from God and are given on the basis of two qualities that He looks for in man: Humility and the fear of the Lord. These are the main qualities that we should look for, when considering someone for a position of leadership in the church.