

Reading Proverbs - A Study in The Contradictions of Life

The Purpose of Proverbs

How do you teach another generation and beyond?

Beyond children who accept rules to youth who test their critical thinking and require guidance?

How do you come to understand the relationship between Faith & Culture

Proverbs is about the passing on of faith, character and wisdom.

Faith, Language and Articulation

The Way of Indirection

The way of poetry & literature is the way of indirection

It is actually the way of God.

It requires patience, development, time and focus.

The spiritual life is all about attentiveness, direction, awareness.

Which is why it is so weak and absent in church culture.

Even secular culture is able to manufacture spirituality

but taking the outward forms of attentiveness.

Yoga, meditation, nature - focus on things other than God but attentive, patient.

Without the Holy Spirit, however, these are but shells that become self-reflexive.

Quote books

Culture of celebrity & therapy - Oprah, Dr. Phil, Deepak Chopra, Steve jobs, not Jesus.

Indirection is the way of the Holy Spirit.

It is about those who seek finding.

It about being surprised.

Dynamic Tensions

Understanding truth not as a list of congruent propositions but as a dynamic web

That there can be tension between two concepts

The ability to comprehend the dynamic tensions of life and its seeming contradictions

Allows us to navigate its complexities and be aware of where it gets knotted and twisted.

It is about courage in engaging what is seeming uncomfortable because it generates tension.

But like the in the physical world where your body becomes stronger as it adapts to stresses

The spiritual psychological and internal world of mind, spirit and character require exercise.

Control vs. Freedom

I have often wondered why saccharine spirituality,

simplistic models often cannot generate deep faith.

We have used cheap tools, fast food, to shovel what we think is faith into the church.

We feast of unhealthy, nutritionally empty theologies.

We have placed knowledge before wisdom.

Why? Because knowledge is power. It is about control.

Control grips, clutches, is anxious.

It feeds the illusion of significance, of fame and success.

On a planet with 7.3 billion people, we want to be somebody.

We want to stand out.

And so we get anxious, compulsive.

Wisdom is about faith and faith releases, frees, brings rest and peace.

Godly wisdom has a clear moral centre outside ourselves.

Control places the centre on shaky ground inside ourselves and is driven by our own version of resonance.

Control can't abide dissonance.

And so it's external reality is exuded by pride - confidence in the self, self reliance.

Faith and wisdom by contrast, is marked by humility - confidence in the Trinity.

In yourself, you are nobody, but in Christ you are somebody.

It is about redefining not only success but the very meaning of your existence.

The Divine reversal is that the first will be last.

Things are not as they seem.

A Study in Dynamic Tensions - Friendship

Proverbs 12:26

The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

Proverbs 17:17

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.

Proverbs 18:24

One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Proverbs 14:20

The poor are shunned even by their neighbors, but the rich have many friends.

Proverbs 19:4

Wealth attracts many friends, but even the closest friend of the poor person deserts them.

Proverbs 19:7

The poor are shunned by all their relatives— how much more do their friends avoid them! Though the poor pursue them with pleading, they are nowhere to be found.

Proverbs 22:11

One who loves a pure heart and who speaks with grace will have the king for a friend.

Proverbs 22:24-25

Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person,
do not associate with one easily angered,
or you may learn their ways
and get yourself ensnared.

Proverbs 27:6

Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

Proverbs 27:9

Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice.