

*The Book of*  
**Proverbs**  
*God's Book of Wisdom*

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BOOK III : PROVERBS 24 – 31

Kevin Swanson



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## Part 212 ~ The Evil of Fearing Evil

PROVERBS 24:1-2

*Be not envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.*

*For their heart studies destruction, and their lips talk of mischief.*

This verse expands upon the lesson from Proverbs 23:17: do not desire the company of wicked men or envy their pleasures. When confronted by evil men, there are two temptations that assail us. On the one hand, we may become angry and fretful towards them. We may fear their evil machinations and think for a moment that they act out from under God's all-controlling hand. While opposing evil men and their wicked deeds is not a sin, becoming anxious and fearful is dangerous. There is a psychological reaction known in present day parlance as the "Stockholm Syndrome." In 1973, bank robbers in Stockholm, Sweden held a few people hostage for a period of time. Over the length of the ordeal, the hostages began to express adulation and positive support for their captors. In other words, their fear turned into worship. It is also interesting that this nation's top leaders and populace are far more supportive of the Muslim religion today than they were before the terrorists destroyed the twin towers in New York in 2001. Very often the ethical systems of those who have little integrity will collapse in the face of powerful, wicked men who are self-confident in their agenda.

Then, there is this second temptation in regards to evil men, and that is to join forces with them. The familiar quip, "If you can't beat them, join them" is taken to task in this proverb. The warning is emphatic: don't you dare join these men! In fact, don't even spend much time thinking about the accomplishments and the power of evil men. Don't give them too much credit, but recall that God is still the Judge of the earth. This is also the sentiment of Psalm 37.

"Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither like the green herb."

Whether you are held hostage in a bank in Stockholm or shipped off to Siberia by some godless communist party, the message remains the

same. Get a backbone! Stand up against evil! And whatever you do, don't join the side of the enemy though they are ten times stronger than any righteous coalition or cause. In the eternal perspective, their life's work will amount to nothing. All of their plans and projects will come to nothing. Bank robbers will end up in prison, and communist dictators will see their pitiful empires come to nothing. Incredibly, the great dictator of Cuba, Fidel Castro, recently admitted to a correspondent from *Atlantic Magazine* that Cuba's economic system "doesn't even work for us."<sup>1</sup> Think of all the hundreds of thousands of communists that joined Castro in this horrible experiment that persecuted the Christian church and destroyed a national economy! What a waste of a life for everybody who supported this fiasco! What a horrible legacy! How much better it would have been for them if their parents had taught them the wisdom of the Proverbs, especially this verse!

*For related commentary, reference Proverbs 23:17.*

## Family Discussion Questions:

1. What's wrong with fearing evil?
2. What should our perspective be towards those who do evil?

## Part 213 ~ How to Build a Home

PROVERBS 24:3-4

*Through wisdom is an house built: and by understanding it is established;  
and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant  
riches.*

Wisdom, understanding, and knowledge are the three components of education. But what is the *goal* of an education? Ask the university presidents and the school principals about the goal of education, and most would say that it is to prepare a child for a career or to prepare them to be good citizens of the state. You can immediately

1. Associated Press Online, September 8, 2010, Paul Haven, "Castro's Model Doesn't Work"

see a sharp difference between the socialist model for education and life, and the order that God has established. God's educational program doesn't focus on preparing children for jobs, careers, and citizenship. What He wants are "houses." The biblical use of the word "house" conveys the idea of a family. But its essence goes deeper and includes the household economy with the members of the home functioning as a unit. At the basic level, the household is made up of a husband and wife—one flesh. Therefore, the household economy is a unit. If there are seven members of a household, there are seven people teaming up to bring in one income, functioning as one organization.

But a household is far more than income and the production of goods and services for the free market. The family is the seedbed for developing human relationships that are based on love, joy, peace, and longsuffering. Within the safety of a family, new generations and new families can grow. Healthy families form the basis of a healthy church. For if a man cannot rule his household well, he cannot rule in the house of God (1 Tim. 3:10). Also, the family home is typically where meaningful relationships are cultivated in regular times of hospitality.

According to this description of the "house," the only way to build upon a fruitful household vision is through wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. Foolish men will ruin their relationships, make rash decisions when it comes to marrying, and then watch their households fragment in divorce. They may be successful with their careers. They may even help to build a little piece of some big powerful empire. But in the end, their lives will be in vain because their families shriveled up and died.

So if we want our children building fruitful and blessed homes, we must give them this full-orbed education. We give them knowledge so they will know biblical principles, the nature of man, the laws of God, and the roles of husbands and wives. But they need understanding as well. They should also be able to discern error and recognize counter-worldviews. If the family is watching a movie, and somebody is taking God's name in vain, they should understand this as a violation of the third commandment. Should they happen to see a picture of a Proverbs 7 woman on a billboard, they should identify her as such. But even these two components aren't enough. If life is a journey, knowledge



comprehends the destination, and understanding charts the course, it is wisdom that navigates the waters. Our children need to know how to resolve conflicts in a peaceable way, how to be joyful in trials, how to nurture a two-year-old, how to love a five-year-old, how to fear God in the midst of temptation, and how to rightly prioritize their daily schedules. They need to know how to stay out of debt, how to disagree in a winsome way, and how to change oil in a car so as not to waste God's resources. Every part of life requires the simultaneous application of these three elements for our children to build fruitful families of their own.

### Family Discussion Questions:

1. What is the difference between knowledge, understanding, and wisdom? Give illustrations of each.
2. How do you build a home? Is our home a reflection of these things?

## Part 214 ~ Wisdom for Men and Nations

PROVERBS 24:5

*A wise man is strong; yes, a man of knowledge increases strength.*

**W**isdom provides an edge in whatever you set your hand to do. For lack of wisdom, men fail in their endeavors. They may even lose their lives if they do something brash. Some men will accomplish more in life because they are wise. They will have healthier families, spiritually strong churches, and nations established by robust character. "Strength" implies a resistance to destruction. For example, a strong iron bar is not easily bent. Some churches will be strong as iron, while others will be squishy like balsa wood. Wise pastors and elders will construct strong churches, and wise fathers will build strong families. It stands to reason, then, that we should seek to build our families and churches upon the wisest doctrine, the wisest counsel, and men disciplined in true wisdom. Wise men learn from their mistakes, and their strength increases throughout their lifetimes.