

Something You Should Know about Generosity

How do you weigh the truth of the proverbs?

In my experience the vast majority of discussions, Bible classes, and sermons on the Proverbs have been more evaluative. What I mean is that the tendency is to read a proverb and then try to validate it by personal experience, and subjective reasoning. For example:

A Bible class teacher reads a proverb:

*A hot-tempered man stirs up strife,
But the slow to anger pacifies contention.
—Proverbs 15:18*

He then comments by relating a story about a hot-tempered acquaintance that started a fight. Following that example he relates another story about another acquaintance who showed patience and restraint in a difficult situation; tempers were calmed.

There is nothing wrong with using *illustrations*, but I have a question: “What is the purpose of the illustration: to clarify or validate?”

What if we read a proverb and cannot think of a real-life parallel, is it still true?

Solomon did not introduce the Proverbs as some sort of game. He did not say, “Let me propose some thoughts. If you can validate them with your own personal experience or the experiences of others, then the sayings must be true. If not, discard the saying.”

Solomon begged his son to listen because the proverbs contain the wisdom of God.

They are true regardless of my experience or yours. They do not need validation. In fact, anyone who relies on modern-day validation is the fool. The purpose of the Proverbs is to offer wisdom through verbal instruction so that WE do not have to learn ‘the hard way’: Experience.

So, what do you want to do with the Proverbs?

Test each of them?

Refrain acceptance until you can validate?

Trust, listen, apply?

Now, here’s a proverb for today:

**He who gives to the poor will never want,
But he who shuts his eyes will have many
curses.**

--Proverbs 28:27

Would we be so foolish as to think that ‘curses’ only applied during Bible times? Would we dare think that God would not curse a person today?

We pray for and expect God's blessings...his 'good words' for our benefit. Do we really think that we are somehow immune to God's words of discipline or anger if we oppose the things He values?

If you are a skeptic, perhaps you should 'open your eyes' and err on the side of *generosity*.

Be wise.