

A Guide To The Reader

Pastor recommends that to obtain maximum benefit from his comments you read in full from the Bible every reference whenever one appears. Otherwise the reading of the comments is simply a skimming over the surface. They are rather designed to make you stop and meditate and even look up further references as the Holy Spirit guides you. Do pray before you read that the Holy Spirit will be your Tutor and that the time you spend will be time spent with Him.

Ecclesiastes 10

10.1. As a little leaven leavens the whole lump (1 Corinthians 5.6) so the whole reputation is brought into disrepute. There is perhaps a little difference in the picture language. Leaven speaks, maybe, of something fundamental, thoroughly mixed whereas flies arrive out of the blue and may draw attention more particularly to external influences. But, either way, our characters prove to be flawed. We need to resist temptation and those things which, if indulged, would disqualify our work or our walk.

10.2. If we are wise all our powers, head and heart, are engaged to govern our affairs. If we are foolish then we give way to every lust the heart feels drawn to.

10.3. You may note a foolish man by his demeanour. His words, his gait (Proverbs 6.12-14), all he says and does, will reveal his crass stupidity. What a change the gospel brings! "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah 35.8).

10.4. If a ruler speaks angrily and leaves it at that without sentence of banishment and death, it would be good to remain loyal, constant and faithful. His anger will subside and, if he be of that sort of disposition, he may even later value that loyalty and so you will be more trusted. Those in authority who have outbursts of temper are sometimes glad of those who put up with them when many wouldn't and so one's position is safeguarded. At all events, we should think twice before walking out on any responsibility because of the character failings of those in charge.

If the King of Kings convicts of sin, through the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, a sincere, unfeigned repentance "pacifieth great offences" through the blood of His everlasting covenant (Hebrews 13.20).

10. 5-7. Those in authority make errors when they appoint by favouritism, friendship, kinship or bribe those who are unsuitable in ability or temperament to bear responsibility. It often happens and is detrimental to the best interests of the nation, or local community. Should we be in a position to make appointments let us see to it that we appoint those of true, tried intrinsic worth and ability.

10.8-9. Here are four examples of a settled plan to harm others. They serve as examples of any form of evil which "the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do" (8.11). The warnings

of scripture, of whatsoever sort they are, should be heeded carefully, for there is a sting at the end of them and the sting of death is sin” (1 Corinthians 15.56).

Each of these examples would be very vivid in the experience of countryside dwellers. Some would have been digging a pit and at some point slipped or seen others do so. There was a very great risk, as they were only too well aware, of disturbing snakes in their natural habitat while extending one’s property. There is a real possibility of dropping a heavy rock on one’s foot and perhaps being lame for the rest of life. Perhaps a finger might be chopped off while using the axe or cleaver, or a splinter fly into the eye. These things all readily happen and demonstrate the real possibility of “having our fingers burned” by involvement in sinful activity.

10.10. This is an elegant proverb. If the scythe or sickle is not sharpened then much more brute force is required to secure the desired purpose. Those who plan the management and logistics of any job will always have the upper edge over those whose labour is manual. “Wisdom is profitable to direct.” Let us seek the wisdom of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ to guide us unerringly through our lives – its conduct and its work.

10.11. A snake needs no invitation to bite; it is its instinct. Those who need no invitation to talk on and on are time wasters at the very least and, more seriously, purveyors of malicious gossip. Paul cautions Timothy concerning those who have time on their hands through widowhood, “they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not” (1 Timothy 5.13).

10.12-14. The inhabitants of Nazareth heard the words of the Lord Jesus Christ “and all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth” (Luke 4.22) though they rejected them and Him. “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4.6). The speech of a foolish person goes from bad to worse, gaining momentum in its excess of foul thoughts and language. He has so much to say of no consequence that it is impossible to tell what he is going to say next. There is no stopping him or correcting him. In all these proverbs, while it is not stated, it is implied that we will ensure that we do not fall into the errors spoken of.

10.15. There is a wry humour here similar to that of Proverbs 21.25 and 26.15. Any excuse for not rising to go to work will do. If it is meant that those who are wearied are the onlookers or employers or fellowlabourers, the meaning is that the foolish need to ask instruction so often about how to do a thing, never learning, that it is not worth the bother of employing them.

10.16-17. In later years there would be two young kings, Joash aged 7 (2 Chronicles 24.1); and Josiah aged 8 (2 Chronicles 34.1) both reigning into manhood. Jehoida was the regent for Joash and while he was alive all went well; but the minute he died Joash went astray. On the other hand when Josiah was 15 or 16 “he began to seek after the God of David his father” (2 Chronicles 34.3). If a child king is treated as a king while still a child in matters of state or pandered to, things are likely to go wrong, but if well advised it bodes well for the future.

10.18. Getting behind with one’s work through illness can be very depressing, but when it is through laziness the matters get worse and worse and the jobs which need to be done mount

up. Where there is no effort and no plan it is a recipe for failure and, perhaps, personal disaster.

10.19. The money that is wasted on extravagance might well be spent more profitably on necessities or be needed for essentials in days to come. Laughter and merriment may provide light relief from the stresses of work but should not be procured at great expense.

10.20. It was the fear of Job that, “it may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts” (Job 1.5). For that reason he offered burnt offerings for them. Who knows what a person may think in the heart? Our burnt offering is Christ, sacrificed on Calvary, who is the atonement for all the unseen thoughts of the heart and to Whom we should constantly resort in repentance for cleansing. Secret thoughts are known to God; and when thoughts become words or actions they are soon betrayed; to our great detriment and danger.