

Gleanings from the Book of Proverbs: A Productive Life

Scripture Reading: Psalm 104:1-35 (Part 1) – Proverbs 6:6-11; 27:23-27 (Part 2)

As we did previously, when covering the subject of *“Pride and Humility”* (Psalm 10 cp. Psalm 9), we are choosing a psalm (Psalm 104) that is not credited to David but is strongly tied to the previous psalm (Psalm 103) which is a Psalm of David. Both Psalms are designed to exalt the Lord and call for the praise and worship of Him who (Psalm 103) deals graciously with mankind and (Psalm 104) has created all things wonderfully and continues to sustain His creation until the final time of judgement. Note that Psalm 103:22 introduces the theme of *“...All His works in all places of His dominion...”* – which is a natural lead into Psalm 104. We can trust that both psalms were a beneficial influence to Solomon.

Before we consult the book of Proverbs on the topic of *“A Productive Life,”* let’s highlight a few things from Psalm 104. God is our faithful and productive creator and sustainer:

- We can parallel the acts of God’s creation, as found in the first chapter of Genesis.
- We can also see that God manages, and sustains His creation. This also includes His judgement of the world in Noah’s day through a world-wide flood (Genesis 6 – 8).
- We should praise the Lord for His abundant productivity. His wisdom and power is seen in His creation. We should celebrate the Lord’s joyful attention to His glorious works (Psalm 104:24, 31-34 cp. Romans 1:18-20; Psalm 33:1-8; 92:1-6; Psalm 107:1-43; 111:1-10).
- We should anticipate the future judgement of God and bless Him for it. He will purge the earth of sinners and restore order in a new heaven and a new earth (Psalm 104:35 cp. Romans 8:16-23; II Thessalonians 1:7 – 2:17; Revelation 11:15-19; 15:1-4; 20:11 – 21:8).

All of this has been presented so that we might appreciate the industriousness of God. He has done, and is doing, and will do many, many wonderful, glorious works. We are made in His image and should be like Him (Psalm 104:24 cp. Psalm 104:23). The following is **a warning and a promise**, from the Book of Proverbs concerning how we should be industrious people.

The Warning: Behold the ant! – Proverbs 6:6-11

- How humbling to be taught by an ant! (Proverbs 6:6)
- Ants are industrious. They go about their work without anyone telling them what to do. They work first and enjoy the rewards of their labors later (Proverbs 6:7-8).
- Calamity will come to those who are lovers of ease and who do not redeem their time (Proverbs 6:9-11).

The Promise: A watchful eye and a steady hand will yield much. – Proverbs 27:23-27

- Riches are gained and spent. Constant attention to our business is needed to keep the wealth flowing (Proverbs 27:24a).
- A government needs to maintain constant vigilance to sustain itself – ministering to the nation’s needs internally and defending / promoting its interests externally (Proverbs 27:24b).
- Sowing and reaping good things, along with harvesting things that naturally grow, are a gift of God. Let us labor to receive these benefits (Proverbs 27:25).
- Animals need care and protection. Then they will yield profitable things for their owners (Proverbs 27:26-27).

Both the warning (Proverbs 6:6-11) and the promise (Proverbs 27:23-27) apply to all forms of possessions, work, and business for the care of our physical needs on earth (Ecclesiastes 9:10; Zephaniah 3:16b; Romans 12:11,17; Colossians 3:17-25).

This also applies to our spiritual work on earth:

- **Priority:** Our need to seek the Lord and enter into a vital relationship with Him:
 - Isaiah 55:6
 - Matthew 16:24-26 (What profit, if we gain the whole world and lose our own soul?)
 - Luke 12:13-21 (Let us not lay up treasure for ourselves and be not rich towards God!)
 - John 6:27-29,35; 5:24
- **Balance & Motive:** Our opportunity to gain reward in heaven:
 - Matthew 6:19-21,33
 - I Corinthians 15:51-58
 - I Timothy 6:17-19
 - II Timothy 4:7-8
 - Hebrews 6:10-12
 - Revelation 14:13

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.” – Revelation 14:13