

Desire of desires
Proverbs 3:13-18

Introduction

Does your notion of paradise revolve around the God of paradise?

That's the comparative analysis being raised in this text.

It's an infomercial on the good life. Notice the two words which frame it:

v.13 *How blessed* v.18 *Happy*

So what is the core issue at the center of the good life? desires. V.15

nothing you desire compares with her.

Let's examine five questions the text raises about desires :

1. What do you desire?

Desire is longing for that which is sweet to the soul:

Prov. 13:19 *a desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul*

Prov.13:12 *a desire fulfilled is a tree of life*

This text assumes that most of us have an inner desire for the good life- however we measure it. Verse 17 calls it *pleasantness*.

Notice how the sage unpacks the main components of pleasantness by what Lady Wisdom is associated with:

v. 14 Silver and gold: emblematic of power, security, peace

v.15 Jewels: beauty, relationship:

v. 16 long life: longevity, permanence, stability:

v.16 riches: wealth, abundance, choices.

v.16 honor: esteem, significance, competence, approval:

2. Why do you desire these things?

The text answers that question with the words *gain* and *profit* in v.14. You desire what you desire because you have an estimation of their value, or their power to *profit* you. They are your *gain*, they increase your "pleasantness level."

3. Are these things getting you peace?

I say peace because v.17 refers to *paths of peace*. The Hebrew is shalom, a

state of well-being physically, spiritually, emotionally.

4. Is there anything that compares with your desires?

Why is that an important question? Because you wouldn't settle for an inferior product if you had equal access to a better one.

The text says, meet Lady Wisdom. How does what I desire compare with her? See the challenge:

v.15 *Nothing you desire can compare with her.*

v. 8:11 *all that you desire can't compare with her*

Do you appreciate how outrageous that claim is?

How could that be true?

1. You weren't built to be satisfied ultimately with things.

2. Things may profit you temporarily, but can't eternally. 1 Tim. 6:7

Eccl. 3:11 *God has set eternity in the heart of man*

3. The pleasure of things is fleeting.

Prov.23:5 *When you set your eyes on wealth it is gone; for it certainly makes itself wings, like an eagle that flies toward the heavens.*

For by what a man is overcome, to this he is enslaved. (2 Peter 2)

4. Lady wisdom is the inventor and ultimate source of all pleasure, and therefore only she can set the terms by which you can profit from your desires.

5. How does Lady wisdom transform your desires?

Lady wisdom gives you freedom of desire, that is, gaining legitimate or true profit.

What does that look like?

Enjoying created things but NOT in such a way that you are satisfied with so little of God.

The text invites you to compare.

Who is she that I would desire her so highly?

Because she is wisdom personified, she has the wisdom to tell us how to profit from what we desire. How? They are in her hand.

That implies two things:

- a. To be in her hand means she owns them
- b. The fact that they are in her hand means we find true pleasure only balanced on a three-legged stool:

Humility: I'll misuse these without you present in my thinking

Gratitude: I don't deserve these. (1 Tim. 4:4: *everything created by God is good, if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.*)

Worship: I need to adore your beauty above all things.

How do we profit from what Lady wisdom has in her hand?

Verse 18 says, *lay hold of her, hold her fast.*

The bible calls that faith.

First, you trust that God's ways are the authentic ways, the ones that comport with reality.

Second, faith believes the promise of God. The promise of this text is, v.18 *she is a tree of life to all who hold her fast.*

Lady wisdom is a tree of life. Lady wisdom prefigures Jesus Christ, *in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* (Col.2:3)

The grace of God is this:

He got us the maximum good- forgiveness, perfect righteousness, eternal life in paradise- by experiencing the maximum pain, bearing in his body the wrath of God for our sins.

Here are three markers implicit in: *Nothing I desire compares with you.*

1. You experience the sorrow of inferior desires.
2. You come to grips with the power of your desires over you.
3. You value Jesus above all else.