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W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

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THE DANGERS OF THE ORDINARY LIFE

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS
NUMBER 110
PROVERBS 27:1-7

Dr. W. O. Vaught, Jr.
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

PROVERBS 27:1-7 "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips. A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both. Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy? Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."

We have come to that part of the Book of the Acts where we are studying "The Ordinary Life". We have studied the life of Ananias, who had such a tremendous influence on the life of Paul. Ananias influenced Paul greatly on the day of his conversion and for a short time thereafter. For this one study we are turning aside from the Book of the Acts to study "The Dangers of the Ordinary Life".

There is nothing ordinary about the ordinary life in the Church Age. The Church Age is the most intensive part of the angelic conflict. When Christ ascended and sat down at the right hand of God every believer became the direct target of Satan. In this intensified part of the angelic conflict, when the body of Christ is being formed, the issue is clearly drawn and the Devil makes his most intensified assault on the human race. The Church Age is the hidden part of the conflict, then the seven-year Tribulation period is when the Devil's intensified conflict comes out in the open. This will be seven years of concentrated horror, but for the sake of the elect, this period will be shortened so the human race can survive. We are living in the time of the most intensified spiritual battle in human history. Every believer is the target of Satan and the life of every believer is the battleground. We have fantastic hidden enemies but God has provided adequate resources for us to use against the enemy. In our last study we took up this subject and mentioned that every believer is in full time Christian service. Every believer is in full-time service under two principles--

- a. Every believer is an ambassador for Christ.
He represents Christ on the earth.
- b. Every believer is a priest and as a priest he represents himself before God.

The combination of these two principles makes the ordinary life extraordinary. You have been given assets that no one else was given. Since Christ ascended and was seated at the right hand of God everything has been changed. At that time greater resources were made available for every believer, such as the priesthood of all believers, the universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the personal indwelling of the person of Christ. At the moment of Christ's ascension for the first time in human history every believer was in union with Christ. Some other great assets that came at that time are these--a completed Canon of Scripture, every believer with a supernatural way of life, and every believer in full-time service. Now this was not true before the ascension of Christ. Our lives are nothing more or less than a battleground where this conflict has become intensified. There are six enemies to the ordinary life, to the ordinary believer in full-time service. We have six enemies apart from the world and the Devil. These five enemies are designed to make a casualty out of the ordinary believer and they are mental attitude sins. In Proverbs 27:1-7 we have these enemies outlined.

FIRST ENEMY--ARROGANCE AND PRIDE

PROVERBS 27:1 "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

"Boast not" is a hithpael stem of "Hallel" from which we get the word hallelujah and means "to praise". But the hithpael stem is reflexive and means to praise self, therefore this becomes boasting. To be conceited or arrogant is a mental attitude sin that can play havoc with the Christian life.

We have self-consciousness--The key word is "I am".

We have self-determination--The key word is "I will".

We have moral reasoning power--The key word is "I ought".

This is what the Bible is referring to when it says that we were created in the image of God. Pride is a lofty conceit and when it gets into the mental attitude it is dis-orientation to the grace of God. So we are commanded not to boast of tomorrow. The principle is this--God gives us one day at a time and we are not to boast of the next day. This means that we should avoid mental attitude sins and the first sin mentioned here is arrogance and pride.

The Doctrine Of One Day At A Time

1. The believer who is oriented to grace lives every day alike.
Romans 14:5-6
2. Every day is a gift from God given to us to be redeemed for the Lord.
Ephesians 6:16-18
Since God gives us one day at a time, He expects us to redeem one day at a time.
3. The only time we have to glorify God is the one day we have and every day is an intensified, hidden, spiritual conflict. We are now in the intensified part of the angelic conflict.
James 4:13-15
4. God provides the capital to make every day count for him and that capital is more grace.
James 4:6
5. Every day is a special day. No day is more holy than another as far as the Christian is concerned. The first day of the week, Sunday, is the Christian worship day but this does not mean we should have a different behaviour pattern on Sunday than on any other day.
6. Each day the believer is to avoid mental attitude sins.
Proverbs 27:1-7
7. It is only in TIME when we live on this earth that God can demonstrate his grace to us in our suffering.
Psalm 102:1-3
In eternity there will be no suffering.
Revelation 21:4

Now our problem in this first sin is pride. It is impossible for us to know what a day may bring. A day may bring shocks, tragedies, unexpected calamities, troubles and insurmountable difficulties. We may be healthy one day and sick the next day. Pride places you in a position so you cannot cope with your sins and pride throws you back on your own resources and you can't handle your problems with your own resources. This is where trouble begins. In Acts 22 Ananias is just an ordinary person. He had no way of knowing that Paul was going to turn out to be the most influential Christian in the world. But this ordinary man on a very ordinary day met a man named Paul, and he taught him doctrine and set him on the road to greatness. If Ananias had been a man of pride and had relied on his own resources he would have been no help to Paul. Every day when we wake up if we are filled with pride and feel we can make it on our own for that day, we fail and for that day we are no service in advancing the cause of Christ.

So our great enemy is in the realm of mental attitude sins and mental attitude sins keep us from utilizing the resources provided for us by the grace of God. God knew every problem we would ever face and he made provision for us with more than adequate grace to care for all of our needs. But pride keeps us from using this provision and pride cuts us off from relying on God's adequate supply.

PROVERBS 27:2 "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." Here we are reminded we are not to boast about the past. If someone else praises us then let it come from them and not from us. There is no place for boasting in the Christian life. Don't take seriously the compliments of others. Move on and rely each day on the provision God has made for you. So let others praise you, but don't praise yourself. So a good motto for each of us is this-- "Don't toot your own horn". No one should fail to be grateful for compliments and praise. Receive praise graciously, but quickly forget the praise and realize that all you are comes from the workmanship of God.

SECOND ENEMY--WRATH AND ANGER.

PROVERBS 27:3-4 "A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both. Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?" The first part of verse 3 is the illustration, and the last part of the verse is the principle.

The illustration is this--When a rock hits you it injures you, but when you are hit with sand it buries you. The rock illustrates wrath, which refers to quick and sudden action. This is referring to the explosive type of wrath. This he calls being hit with a rock. Then the slow kind of anger is the sand that buries you. Anger is a slower activity, but it is deeper. Wrath explodes and it is very destructive. But anger that persists is even worse. Wrath is cruel but anger is outrageous because it goes on and on. King Saul had anger toward David and it went on and on and finally took the life of King Saul.

THIRD ENEMY--ENVY.

PROVERBS 27:4b "but who is able to stand before envy?" Envy is one of the most destructive mental attitude sins. Envy leads to jealousy and it can bring misery and hurt to every area of one's life.

FOURTH ENEMY--PSEUDO LOVE

PROVERBS 27:5-6 "Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." Possibly a better translation here is "Better naked or open communication and demonstration than secret love".

This means that as long as you have mental attitude sins you are not capable of true love. "Agapao" is the kind of love we need for salvation. But "Phileo" is the kind of rapore love we need to live with others and to express our love for them. It is the "Phileo" love that produces a relaxed, mental attitude and this makes it possible for us to have an amazing capacity for love. If we are to have true love for anyone, we must have a relaxed, mental attitude. Therefore, true love cannot be built on mere physical attraction, but it is built on mental attraction. If this mental attraction is genuine, then the physical attraction is the natural sequence. ~~Some~~ love leads to the right kind of relationships, but physical love apart from soul love is detrimental both to the woman and to the man. There is so much pseudo love in America now it is exceedingly difficult for young people to discover true love or to recognize it when it comes. Physical attraction is love without soul love and is very destructive to

the human body and the human mind. This is why the Bible says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery". The point is your soul is destroyed by such activity and your capacity for love can be so impaired that you destroy any future opportunity for true and genuine love. Mental attitude sins can wipe out true love. Pride and wrath and anger and jealousy and envy make for pseudo love and destroys the capacity for genuine love. The application of this truth is in verse 6.

The kiss of the enemy here is the one who makes love without being genuine. Faithful are the wounds of a friend--This means to be honest and genuine even though it hurts. This is mental attitude fellowship and it is genuine. Deceitful kisses refer to pseudo love of a person who has no real capacity for love. This is why this is so important for the ordinary Christian. Once you have capacity through Bible doctrine for true love for God, then you are ready for true love for man.

FIFTH ENEMY--INDIFFERENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD.

PROVERBS 27:7 "The full soul loatheth an ^{word of God} honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." A "full soul" refers to one who is occupied with the details of life. This is the one who is too busy running his own life and doing his own thing to ever get with Bible doctrine. In the Book of Proverbs the word "Honey or honeycomb" always refers to the Word of God. So if your life is taken up with details, such as making money and reaching for fame and living for pleasure, then you are a "full soul". So the full soul loathes the Word of God. He seeks pleasure in the wrong things.

In the last phrase of this verse the "hungry soul" is the one who is on positive volition toward Bible doctrine. The hungry soul refers to the person who learns Bible doctrine and has an obedient mental attitude. So when the bitter things come such as tragedies, troubles, disappointments, heartaches--these things are sweet. So this final enemy is the worst one of all--negative volition toward Bible doctrine. Paul said it this way--

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-10 "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."