

## TEXT — 27:1-9

1. Boast not thyself of tomorrow;  
For thou knowest now what a day may bring forth.
2. Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth;  
A stranger, and not thine own lips.
3. A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty;  
But a fool's vexation is heavier than they both.
4. Wrath is cruel, and anger is overwhelming;  
But who is able to stand before jealousy?
5. Better is open rebuke  
Than love that is hidden.
6. Faithful are the wounds of a friend;  
But the kisses of an enemy are profuse.
7. The full soul loatheth a honeycomb;  
But to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet.
8. As a bird that wandereth from her nest,  
So is a man that wandereth from his place.
9. Oil and perfume rejoice the heart;  
So doth the sweetness of a man's friend that cometh of  
hearty counsel.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 27:1-9

1. What would boasting consist of in v. 1?
2. What New Testament passage elaborates upon v. 1?
3. Why is such instruction necessary (v. 2)?
4. Why does God not want us to praise ourselves (v. 3)?
5. Heavier than what (v. 3)?
6. Do you detect the similarities and differences in the structure of vs. 3,4?
7. Better in what sense or senses (v. 5)?
8. Faithful in what sense (v. 6)?
9. What does "profuse" mean (v. 6)?
10. What does "loatheth" mean (v. 7)?
11. What is the comparison in v. 8?
12. What does the last statement of v. 9 mean?

## PARAPHRASE OF 27:1-9

1. Don't brag about your plans for tomorrow--wait and see what happens.
2. Don't praise yourself; let others do it!
3. A rebel's frustrations are heavier than sand and rocks.

4. Jealousy is more dangerous and cruel than anger.
5. Open rebuke is better than hidden love!
6. Wounds from a friend are better than kisses from an enemy!
7. Even honey seems tasteless to a man who is full; but if he is hungry, he'll eat anything!
8. A man who strays from home is like a bird that wanders from its nest.
9. Friendly suggestions are as pleasant as perfume.

#### COMMENTS ON 27:1-9

V. 1. Jas. 4:13-16 is an elaboration upon this verse: "Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that. But now ye glory in your vauntings: all such glorying is evil." The rich fool in the parable was boasting himself of "tomorrow" ("The ground of certain rich men brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry" Luke 12:16-19) when actually he had no "tomorrow" ("God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee"--Luke 12:20). "Pulpit Commentary:" "He boasts himself of tomorrow who counts upon it presumptuously, settles that he will do this or that, as if his life were in his own power, and he could make sure of time. This is blindness and arrogance."

V. 2. An old German proverb: "Self-brag stinks." How much better it sounded for the elders of the Jews, when entreating Jesus to come heal the centurion's servant to say, "He is worthy that thou shouldest do this for him" (Luke 7:4), than for the man himself to have said, "I am worthy that thou shouldest do this for me." There is that element of society that seems to think, "If I don't toot my own horn, it won't get tooted." We reply in the words of "Clarke" ("Self praise is no

commendation"). Jesus recognized the general truthfulness of this statement when He said, "If I bear witness of myself, (that is, if I am the only one saying good things about myself), my witness is not true" (John 5:32). Remember, too, that Prov. 25:27 frowned upon men's searching out their own glory.

V. 3. Work with stone or sand very long, and your hands, your legs and your back (in fact, your whole body) soon become weary and exhausted. But to be around a fool when vexed is even more wearying and exhausting. "Pulpit Commentary:" "The ill temper and anger of a headstrong fool, which he vents on those about him, are harder to endure than any material weight is to carry." Job 6:3 speaks of his grief and trials being heavier to bear than the sand of the sea. And Jewish literature contains this statement: "Sand and salt and a mass of iron are easier to bear than a man without understanding."

V. 4. Wrath and anger may arise and subside, but not so with jealousy. "Pulpit Commentary:" "These may be violent for a time, yet they will subside when they have spent themselves." It was such non-dying jealousy that caused Joseph's brothers to sell him: "The patriarchs, moved with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt" (Acts 7:9). One who commits adultery with another man's wife will probably encounter the never-dying jealousy of her husband mentioned in Prov. 6:35,35: "Jealousy is the rage of man; And he will not spare...He will not regard any ransom; Neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts."

V. 5. Christ said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" (Rev. 3:19). Prov. 13:24 says, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son" (no matter how much pretension of love he may claim); "But he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." It is in such a consideration that our verse exalts the love that rebukes over the love that does not. Thus gospel preachers and godly people who rebuke people for their sins really and truly love people more (and what they do is "better") than their pretended friends who say nothing about their sins and let them die and be lost.

V. 6. Therefore, this verse exalts the same love that administers correction over the deceitful kisses of an enemy. Judas's kiss didn't fool Jesus, but people have been fooled by the "nice" treatment of people who really didn't love them like the person who corrected them. Time will sometimes open people's eyes as to who were their true friends: "He that

rebuketh a man shall afterward find more favor than he that flattereth with the tongue" (Prov. 28:23). Notice the triple contrast in this verse: "faithful" vs. "deceitful"; "wounds" vs. "kisses"; and "friend" vs. "enemy".

V. 7. Benjamin Franklin: "A hungry man never saw poor bread." People who complain about food would probably not do so if really hungry. When one is really hungry, just plain bread or dry crackers taste good, but after one has eaten a big meal at a family get-together, just to mention eating will fulfill the fact of this verse: "The full soul loatheth a honeycomb." In a sense this is why some are not hungry for the gospel: they feel no need, so they have no desire.

V. 8. Though we do not think of it as normal, there are birds who abandon their nest, their natural surroundings, and go elsewhere with sad results. In like manner do some men become wanderers and prodigals (like the Prodigal Son in the parable, Luke 15). Time has proven that strength of character is more often developed in a family and in children if they settle down to one community and make it their home than to move about from place to place. This general observation reflected itself in our forefather's maxim: "A rolling stone gathers no moss."

V. 9. They anointed their faces with olive oil and put on perfume to make themselves happy and light-hearted and carefree. Psa. 104:15 refers to this practice. What is sweeter and more burden-lifting than the good advice and counsel of a trusted friend? How much better one feels who has been burdened!

#### TEST QUESTIONS OVER 27:1-9

1. What man in a parable of Jesus boasted himself of "tomorrow" (v. 1)?
2. What did the German proverb say about the person who brags on himself (v. 2)?
3. How wearying can a fool be to those around him (v. 3)?
4. How do wrath and anger differ from jealousy (v. 4)?
5. What unusual fact is stated in v. 5?
6. What is the triple contrast in v. 6?
7. How can the first part of v. 7 be applied to people's appetite for the gospel?
8. Is it advisable to be a "rolling stone" in society (v. 8)?
9. How do friends help lift our burdens (v. 9)?

## TEXT — 27:10-18

10. Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not;  
And go not to thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity:  
Better is a neighbor that is near than a brother far off.
11. My son, be wise, and make my heart glad,  
That I may answer him that reproacheth me.
12. A prudent man seeth the evil, and hideth himself;  
But the simple pass on, and suffer for it.
13. Take his garment that is surety for a stranger;  
And hold him in pledge that is surety for a foreign woman.
14. He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early  
in the morning,  
It shall be counted a curse to him.
15. A continual dropping in a very rainy day  
And a contentious woman are alike:
16. He that would restrain her restraineth the wind;  
And his right hand encountereth oil.
17. Iron sharpeneth iron;  
So a man sharpeneth the countenance of a friend.
18. Whoso keepeth the fig-tree shall eat the fruit thereof;  
And he that regardeth his master shall be honored.
19. As in water face answereth to face,  
So the heart of man to man.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 27:10-18

1. How does v. 10 depart from the usual form of a verse in Proverbs?
2. What does v. 10 say about our friendship-ties?
3. In what sense should one not go into his brother's house during calamity (v. 10)?
4. What will people reproach a man because of his unfaithful children (v. 11)?
5. Illustrate v. 12 in various ways.
6. What is the meaning of v. 13?
7. What kind of person would bless his friend "with a loud voice (v. 14)?
8. Comment upon the comparison in v. 15.
9. What is meant by the last statement in v. 16?
10. Which iron sharpeneth iron (v. 17)?

11. Where does Paul state the same truth as in v. 18's first statement?

#### PARAPHRASE OF 27:10-18

10. Never abandon a friend--either yours or your father's. Then you won't need to go to a distant relative for help in your time of need.
11. My son, how happy I will be if you turn out to be sensible! It will be a public honor to me.
12. A sensible man watches for problems ahead and prepares to meet them. The simpleton never looks, and suffers the consequences.
13. The world's poorest credit risk is the man who agrees to pay a stranger's debts.
14. If you shout a pleasant greeting to a friend too early in the morning, he will count it as a curse!
- 15,16. A constant dripping on a rainy day and a cranky woman are much alike! You can no more stop her complaints than you can stop the wind or hold onto anything with oiled hands.
17. A friendly discussion is as stimulating as the sparks that fly when iron strikes iron.
18. A workman may eat from the orchard he tends; anyone should be rewarded who protects another's interests.

#### COMMENTS ON 27:10-18

V. 10. This verse contains three lines instead of the customary two. This is a great verse on friendship, even stating that we should value the long-time friendships of our family as well as those of friends we have personally made. On the puzzling statement about not going into your brother's house in time of trouble, "Pulpit Commentary" observes: "The mere blood-relationship, which is the result of circumstances over which one has had no control, is inferior to the affectionate connection which arises from moral considerations and is the effect of deliberate choice. We must remember, too, that the practice of polygamy, with the separate establishments of the various wives, greatly weakened the tie of brotherhood. There was little love between David's sons; and Jonathan was far dearer to David himself than any of his numerous brothers were."

V. 11. Saying "My son," and then urging him to listen to

what the father was about to say was common in the first part of Proverbs (1:8-10; 2:1, 3:1,2; 4:1,2; 5:1,2; 6:1,2; 7:1-3), but in this verse is the only time it appears in this latter part of the book. Good children are one of a man's best recommendations. A wise son not only makes a glad father (Prov. 10:1), but fathers with good children "shall not be put to shame, When they speak with their enemies in the gate" (Psa. 127:5). Many leaders, even in religion, have been put to shame by the bad behavior and reputation of their sons.

V. 12. This saying is also given in Prov. 22:3. A prudent man is a man who has his eyes open and sees (in this verse he foresees the evil coming), and he acts in wisdom (he hides himself from the evil rather than walking right into it). But the simple man doesn't see the evil, doesn't pay any attention to it, and he suffers for it. Picture evil as a trap that is set; there is as much difference between men who can and cannot be caught in the trap of evil as there is between animals. Mink, foxes and a few other animals are difficult to get into a trap--it can be sometimes done by shrewd and careful means. But no ingenuity is required for getting a possum or a skunk into a trap--just put the trap in the mouth of his den and he will step on it as thoughtlessly as he would on a stick. The truth of this verse is seen in people in regard to their physical, moral, spiritual and financial life.

V. 13. This verse is very similar to Prov. 20:16. If one has become surety for a stranger or for a foreign woman, the creditor should and will hold his garment in pledge just as he would the stranger's or the foreign woman's. Exo. 22:26 shows that they took one's garment as security when loaning money.

V. 14. Haven't you seen this character who talks louder than is appropriate seemingly with the idea of drawing non-related parties' attention to what he is saying or doing? And, oh, as he talks, how he casts his eyes here and there to get other people to listen to what he is saying! Very similar to the hypocrite of Matt. 6:2 sounding a trumpet among people just before giving alms to a poor person. Jesus said not to do it (Matt. 6:1,2). and if one dies, whatever praise he might get from men will be the only reward he will get (Matt. 6:2). To rise "early" to bless a friend was as much a part of the put-on righteousness as the blessing with a "loud voice".

V. 15. "The ill-constructed roofs of Eastern houses were very subject to leakage, being flat and formed of porous

material" ("Pulpit Commentary"). But even our own type of roof can spring a leak and "drip! drip! drip!" as long as there is water to drip. Such is unwelcome and wearying, and so are the contentions of a contentious woman. It is a poor way to treat a husband or anyone else. Prov. 19:13 says, "The contentions of a wife are a continual dropping."

V. 16. There was an old adage that said there are three things which cannot be hidden but always betray themselves: a woman, the wind, and ointment. This verse may have reference to this since it involves those three (all three) and nothing else. One has as much chance of stopping the wind as stopping the mouth of an angry, fretful and unreasonable woman. That's why most men married to such often say nothing back but keep on reading the paper or working at whatever they are doing. Their thought: "She'll run down in time" (like the wind). What is meant by the statement about "oil" is not so clear, some thinking it refers to the impossibility of concealing the smell of the ointment one has put on his hand and some that it refers to her slipping through his hand if he tries to do anything to her. "Clarke" confesses: "The Hebrew is very obscure and is variously translated." But we know whatever the figure, it would be attempting the impossible.

V. 17. "The proverb deals with the influence which men have upon one another" ("Pulpit Commentary"). See the harder steel file sharpen the softer steel knife edge, or watch the butcher as he sharpens his cutting knife by the use of polished steel. This is not to say that men do not use stones to sharpen knives, but the fact that they also use iron upon iron shows that things of the same material can also affect one another--just as men can affect men from sadness to gladness. And ability to cheer up a sorrowful human heart becomes a responsibility to do so. Thus, Jesus referred to our visiting the sick and those in prison (Matt. 25:36) and Heb. 12:12 to our lifting up the hands that hand down.

V. 18. One who carefully tends his fig tree will in time be rewarded for his patient effort, and one who faithfully serves his master will also find that he will be honored for it. Jesus is our Master, and to each who has faithfully served Him here on earth will hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:21).



## TEST QUESTIONS OVER 27:10-18

1. Whose friend should we regard as well as a friend of our own making (v. 10)?
2. Why not go to your brother's house in a time of trouble but to a friend's (v. 10)?
3. How many times is "My son" used in the last part of Proverbs? how many times in the early part (v. 11)?
4. What is one of the best recommendations any man can have (v. 11)?
5. What does the prudent man see and do in v. 12? what about the simple?
6. What was sometimes taken as security for a debt (v. 13)?
7. While it is good to bless a friend, what is wrong in v. 14?
8. Who is compared with a leaky roof (v. 15)?
9. What about the statement about "oil" in v. 16?
10. What is impossible to do according to v. 16?
11. What is the lesson of v. 17?
12. What is our obligation to sorrowing, discouraged people about us (v. 17)?
13. V. 18 shows that righteous labor in time brings its .....

## TEXT — 27:19-27

19. As in water face answereth face,  
So the heart of man to man.
20. Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied;  
And the eyes of man are never satisfied.
21. The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold;  
And a man is tried by his praise.
22. Though thou shouldest bray a fool in mortar with a pestle along with bruised grain,  
Yet will not his foolishness depart from him.
23. Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks,  
And look well to thy herds:
24. For riches are not for ever;  
And doth the crown endure unto all generations?
25. The hay is carried, and the tender grass showeth itself,  
And the herbs of the mountains are gathered in.
26. The lambs are for thy clothing,  
And the goats are the price of the field;

27. And there will be goats' milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household,  
And maintenance for thy maidens.

## STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 27:19-27

1. Elaborate upon the comparison in v. 19.
2. What New Testament word from Greek is a parallel to "Sheol" in Hebrew (v. 20)?
3. What does "Abaddon" mean (v. 20)?
4. In what sense is the last statement of v. 21 true?
5. What do "bray", "mortar," and "pestle" in v. 22 mean?
6. Why such instruction as is found in v. 23?
7. Illustrate v. 24 by Charlemagne's offspring.
8. What is the point of v. 25?
9. What is the meaning of "the goats are the price of the field" (v. 20)?
10. Why did they not use cows' milk like we do (v. 27)?

## PARAPHRASE OF 27:19-27

19. A mirror reflects a man's face, but what he is really like is shown by the kind of friends he chooses.
20. Ambition and death are alike in this: neither is ever satisfied.
21. The purity of silver and gold can be tested in a crucible, but a man is tested by his reaction to men's praise.
22. You can't separate a rebel from his foolishness though you crush him to powder.
- 23,24. Riches can disappear fast. And the king's crown doesn't stay in his family forever--so watch your business interests closely.
- 25,26,27. Know the state of your flocks and your herds; then there will be lamb's wools enough for clothing, and goat's milk enough for food for all your household after the hay is harvested, and the new crop appears, and the mountain grasses are gathered in.

## COMMENTS ON 27:19-27

V. 19. See a man looking at himself in the water. It is almost as if he is talking to himself. Even so as people look at each other, it is almost as if a silent message is being sent between them.

V. 20. "Sheol" is the Hebrew word for the place of departed spirits (the same as "Hades" in Greek). "Abaddon" is the Hebrew word for destruction (the same as "Apollyon" in Greek; Both forms of the latter are found in Rev. 9:11. "Sheol and Abaddon" are used together also in Job 26:6 and Prov. 15:11. Just as death is personified here as never satisfied but always wanting more souls, so man's eyes are never satisfied. The more he has and sees, the more he wants. This fact is also mentioned in Eccl. 1:8. Heb. 2:5 uses this same language in describing the greediness of the Chaldeans.

V. 21. "As silver and gold are tried by the art of the refiner, so is a man's heart by the praise he receives. If he feel it not, he deserves it; if he be puffed up by it, he is worthless" ("Clarke"). "Pulpit Commentary": "As the processes of metallurgy test the precious metals, so a man's public reputation shows what he is really worth...As the crucible brings all impurities to the surface, so public opinion drags for all that is bad in a man, and he who stands this test is generally esteemed."

V. 22. "Bray...mortar...pestle"--these are strange words to our modern way of living. Whenever you put something into a container and pound or mash it with something in your hand, you are "braying" it, what you are braying it with is the "pestle", and the container is the "mortar". When our mothers used to mash potatoes by hand, that was the same figure, only we didn't use those words to apply to the action and the various pieces. This verse shows that no matter how you might beat on a confirmed fool, you cannot get rid of his foolishness. Consider the drunkard in Prov. 23:35 and Judah in Isa. 1:5 and Jer. 5:3.

V. 23. From here to the end of the chapter the material has to do with shepherding and agriculture except for the illustration in v. 24 that explains this present verse. This verse presents Hebrew parallelism in which the second statement is a restatement of the first. Whatever a person's business, he must "tend to business", or he will have no business to tend. The shepherd was ever counting his sheep to be sure they were all with the flock. If any was sick, he immediately cared for it.

V. 24. Just as riches or the crown could not be taken for granted, neither could one's flock and herd. Today's ten wealthiest men in the world may not all be wealthy in a few years. Those who rule today may be overthrown tomorrow. So

care and diligence must be watchwords even of a shepherd.

V. 25. One can see the diligence of the shepherd in providing food for his flock at the different seasons.

V. 26. This diligence pays off, for there is wool for the clothing, and from the sale of goats could the land be purchased for oneself.

V. 27. Additional reward for diligence: plenty of milk. They milked the goat whereas we milk the cow. On goats' milk "Geikie" says, "In most parts of Palestine goats' milk in every form makes, with eggs and bread, the main food of the people.

### NOTICEABLE GROUPINGS IN CHAPTER 27

#### *Comparisons using "as"--*

"As a bird that wandereth from her nest, So is a man that wandereth from his place" (v. 8).

"As in water face answereth to face, So the heart of man to man" (v. 19).

#### *"Friend"--*

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend" (v. 6).

"Oil and perfume rejoice the heart; So doth the sweetness of a man's friend that cometh of hearty counsel" (v. 9).

"Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not" (v. 10).

"He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, It shall be counted a curse to him" (v. 14).

"Iron sharpeneth iron; So a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (v. 17).

#### *"Praise"--*

"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; A stranger, and not thine own lips" (v. 2).

"The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; And a man is tried by his praise" (v. 21).

#### *"Fool"--*

"A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; But a fool's vexation is heavier than they both" (v. 3).

"The simple pass on, and suffer for it" (v. 12).

"Though they shouldest bray a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with bruised grain, Yet will not his foolishness depart from him" (v. 22).

#### *"Speech"--*

"Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth" (v. 2).

## CHAPTER 27

"Better is open rebuke Than love that is hidden" (v. 5).

"He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, It shall be counted a curse to him" (v. 14).

"The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; And a man is tried by his praise" (v. 21).

### HELP THE NEEDY

I like 19:17: "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he (God) pay him again." In other words, when one GIVES to the poor, he is actually LOANING to God, and God always pays up! We can surely trust the Lord. We do not help the needy just to be helped of the Lord, but in our own limitations when it seems that we cannot do very much, it is comforting to know that if we help another, God Himself will bless us that we too might be able to make it through.

22:9 says, "He that hath a beautiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor."

11:24,25 says, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." It is like sowing. A farmer can take a bushel of oats, and scatter it over a portion of ground. It may look like he is throwing it away, but up comes the plants, and in a few weeks he has many bushels of oats. If the generous person shall abound, then he has not lost by being thoughtful of others. He who has watered others will himself be watered.

## PONDERING THE PROVERBS

### WISDOM

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her” (3:13-18).

What a great passage that is! Man thinks of material gain. Proverbs is not blind to the place of material things, but it says the merchandise and the gain of wisdom are better than that of silver, gold, rubies, and all other earthly things that one can desire. That passage pictures Wisdom’s two hands full of great blessings: length of life in her right hand and riches and honor in her left. It also points out that wisdom leads the way to pleasantness and peace and is a tree of life. No wonder, then, that the passage says, “Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.”

“A good man obtaineth favour of the Lord: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.” If you want the favor of God, you must live right, and nobody’s favor should you desire to have more than the favor of God.

To the obedient child, the father in Proverbs assures, “So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man” (3:4).