(#125) The Proverbs of Solomon 17:13- Many Happy Returns

Since God Created humans, only God can provide specific understanding of human behavior. God gave Solomon Divine Wisdom **(1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10)** to explain what and why behavior is as it is, and **Proverbs 10:1 - 24:34** are randomly written, as if they were Judgments Solomon made about individual cases brought to him for Divine Wisdom (1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10), or simply God-given explanations about life. New Testament passages may help see the continuation of Wisdom offered through Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 17:13:
> Whoever rewards evil for good, evil will not depart from his house.

There are only four ways to payback deeds: **1) Good for Good; 2) Evil for Evil; 3) Evil for Good; or 4) Good for Evil.**

i. **Good for Good**: While a good gratitude level, it is doing what would be expected from anyone:
> But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. (Luke 6:32-34)

ii. **Evil for Evil**: This human response may "feel good" but is totally contrary to God's example in Jesus Christ:
> Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously. (1 Peter 2:23)

Other proverbs repeat this principle:
*   Do not say, 'I will recompense evil;' Wait for the LORD, and He will save you. (Proverbs 20:22)
*   Do not say, 'I will do to him just as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work.' (Proverbs 24:29)

iii. **Evil for Good**: This is the way to curse one's own future, household, job, friendships, or eternal destiny. Everything God Created "was very good" (Genesis 1:31), but Adam and Eve repaid Him by violating His rule in sin ("through one man sin entered the world," Romans 5:12). The southern kingdom, Judah, gave God evil for good:

> Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: 'I have nourished and brought up children, And they have rebelled against Me; The ox knows its owner And the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.' Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward. (Isaiah 1:2-4)

The history of the Jews' dealings with God's Prophets justified His destruction of their Nation in A.D. 70.

> For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost. (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16; also Matthew 21:33-46)

iv. **Good for Evil**: The superior method is:

> If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. Therefore 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:18-21)

This is not humanly possible without having the inner "Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus" (1 Peter 5:14), who will "be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

~~~~~~

All Scriptures and comments are based on the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.