

Peace and Quiet: Worth More Than Money

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Date: 06 December 2009

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[0:00] Do you want to hear something funny or perhaps just sad? Probably right now, Tiger Woods is wishing that he was in my shoes.

! Probably the first athlete is going to be worth over a billion dollars. He's won more money on the PGA Tour than anyone else in history. Fourteen times he's won a major championship, second only to Jack Nicklaus.

So why is he wishing to be in my shoes? Me, whose house could probably fit into his garage, and who nearly came in last at the sectional high school golf meet.

Well, because Proverbs 17, verse 1, is true. If you'll turn there in your Bibles, Proverbs 17, verse 1. Proverbs 17, verse 1 says this, Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting with strife. This is the season where we talk a lot about peace and joy, and there are a lot of cards sent back and forth with beautiful pictures of a heavy snowfall falling on some calm farm scene, or maybe a picture of a beautifully decorated table with a happy family all around it.

[1:35] The problem is that most of those cards arrive in the mailboxes of families that know nothing of what those pictures convey. Their houses are full of strife, full of arguing, fighting, backtalk, jealousy, and rage.

So you have teenagers slamming doors and storming off, and you have adult brothers and sisters who can't talk to each other because of the bitterness that has grown up in their relationship. And the truth is that all those holiday greetings and cards and gay happy meetings are nothing but a veneer that covers over the strife that exists in most families and most homes.

And this proverb, in a few words, shows us the value of peace and quiet. How valuable is peace and quiet?

Proverbs says that if you put peace and quiet in pretty much the worst possible situation, it is still better than strife is in its very best situation.

[2:47] So do you remember in the Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens, when Scrooge gets to look inside the house of the Cratchits, and so he wipes the window off and he looks in, and what does he see?

They have hardly anything. They're poor as poor can be. They have nothing but pretty much a dry crust to eat that Christmas day, but they have something that Scrooge doesn't have.

They have peace and quiet, love and joy in their family. They don't have anything to eat, but they do have each other. They do have peace and quiet and blessing.

And the question is really put to the reader, who's really better off in that situation? Scrooge, alone, hating the world and the world hating him, but very rich.

He can buy anything he wants. Or the poor family that has nothing, but they can't enjoy one another. Well, you can put peace and quiet in the poorest situation, and it's still better than strife is in the best situation.

[4:00] Proverbs says that you can put strife into a house full of feasting. And so there you have all the meat and the drink that you could possibly want. You don't have a one-course meal.

You don't have a three-course meal. You have a seven-course meal, meal after meal, large meal after large meal. You have everything your eyes could want.

You have your huge 64-inch flat-screen TV. You have your PlayStation 3 in the other room. And you have your state-of-the-art laptop, your luxury cars in the garage.

You could have everything that you want. But if you don't have peace and quiet, then it doesn't mean a thing. You really are miserable as you sit in the cornucopia of all of your possessions.

So why is it better to have nothing but peace and quiet than everything with strife? Because strife ruins our ability to enjoy the things that we do have.

[5 : 04] So if you're driving in your car, and your car is a Ferrari, and you're driving down the road, and you're arguing with your wife, are you happy? No.

No. Now, you're driving in your car, and you're driving in a 1902 Pento, and you're singing with your wife and kids.

Are you happy? Yes, you are. So what is more valuable, peace and quiet, or money and feasting? So we're answering the question, how valuable is peace and quiet?

No amount of money can buy it. You can buy, if you could buy it, you know, the house with the feasting, their family, they would have bought it.

And you can buy lots of things in this world. You can buy Ferraris, and you can buy TVs. You can buy lots and lots of food. But you can't buy sitting with your family, with your kids playing nicely around your feet.

[6 : 08] You can't buy that feeling that everything is okay, that my family loves me, and I love them. You can't buy the rest that comes from living in a home that is peaceful, argument-free.

It's totally priceless. So it's worth more than all of the money in the world. It's more valuable than any retirement account. It's more valuable than all the Christmas presents in the world.

Because if you don't have peace and quiet, you can't enjoy the things that you have. Everything else turns to gravel in your mouth, even as you enjoy it, even as you chew on it.

Strife steals away our joy and our peace and quiet. But if we enjoy peace and quiet, it becomes a fertile soil where joy blossoms, where happiness blossoms.

That's something about how valuable peace and quiet is. You can't buy it. You can't replace it. You can't even enjoy anything in the world if you don't have it. Now let me ask you, how do you get peace and quiet then?

[7 : 25] Well, we know where it doesn't come from. It doesn't come from money. It doesn't come from having everything that you want. How many people try to do that?

They look around at their family fighting, their kids fighting. And they say, I'm tired of these kids. They're fighting over the PlayStation all the time.

They can't get along. So what will we do? We will buy another PlayStation and we'll buy another TV and we'll build onto the house so they have separate bedrooms. And if they can each have their own thing, then there won't be fighting.

I'll have some peace and quiet. And so they go out and they buy their PlayStation and they buy their TV and they build onto their house. And they try to buy peace and quiet. Does it work?

No. They stop fighting about the PlayStation, maybe. But as sure as the sun comes up, they find something else to fight about. Because more stuff, less sharing is not the way to have peace and quiet.

[8 : 31] It doesn't. More stuff doesn't cure our selfish desires. Remember what James says. Why is there? What causes fights and quarrels among you?

Why isn't there peace and quiet? James asked. Isn't it because of your desires that battle within you? So money can't fix our heart problems.

Money can't give us peace and quiet. So where does it come from? Two places. First, the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord.

Remember the theme of the book of Proverbs. What is that theme? The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Everything else in the whole book of Proverbs follows that theme.

The fear of the Lord is the engine that is driving the train of wisdom and joy and a godly life. And so it is in this case in Proverbs 17. When the fear of the Lord characterizes our life, then what inevitably will follow is peace and quiet, even when all you have is a dry crust of bread.

[9 : 42] So when I say the fear of the Lord, I'm not talking about a terror, where we're absolutely in terror of Him. But we're talking about deep respect for the Lord, joined with love.

And so when we see ourselves as His creatures, the ones that are under His rule, under His control, under His government, and He is the one who's deciding what we will have and what we will not have, then we are put in our proper place.

We finally are able to submit to the one who is greater than we are. And so we begin to see that what I want is not what is the most important thing.

My desires, the desires that are battling within me, those are not the important thing. Rather, He rules my life. He is the King in my life.

His desires for me, what He wants to give me, that is what is important. And I know, because He loves me, that He will give me nothing but what is the best.

[10:50] So, where does that take us? Why can we trust Him? Why can we trust Him to give what we need and we can know that what He gives us is the best and so we can have peace and quiet?

It's because He is the Lord. He is who He is. And because He is who He is, He has the right to give me everything that He gives me.

and it really is the best. Because He not only has complete control over all of His creation, and He does not only have complete authority, but He is really good.

He is really good. He is a good King. And so, I can think about Him and I can think about my situation and what He is putting me in and I can have peace. Because He is good and He is strong. And so, I can put my desires to rest. I can let go of them and enjoy peace and quiet. So, I can stop worrying about what He said or what she said and about what He has and what she has.

[12:03] I can say, this is what God has given me. This is exactly what He wants from me. And I don't understand why this is the best sometimes. But I know that He has reasons and those reasons might be beyond me.

But I don't have any need to worry or fret. There's no reason to be fighting or arguing or trying to climb over other people because God is in control.

And God is good. And so, I can relax and have peace. The fear of the Lord also gives us wisdom to shut our mouths when we are tempted to say things that ruin peace, that bring about strife.

So, you're working in the kitchen, ladies, on Christmas Eve and your sister comes in and she says something mean and spiteful to you for whatever reason.

It doesn't matter. And what is the natural human response? The natural human response where God is absent, He does not enter into their thoughts. Well, what do you do? You really let her have it.

[13:14] You say something to get back at her. And what is the result? It's strife. It's an ever-escalating argument until it ends in screaming and yelling and shouting.

And there is no peace and quiet. But as you're standing there over your hot stove and your sister says that, those words still hurt.

They're still offensive. But when you're living in the presence of God, you can realize that He is watching you, that He knows what situation you're in, and that He has told you how to respond in that situation.

And so instead of letting her have it, you cover over the offense. You ignore it. Or instead of saying something mean, you answer gently.

For a gentle answer turns away wrath. And what is the result? You're fearing the Lord. You're thinking about what He wants you to do. The result is peace instead of strife.

[14:20] So the fear of the Lord, respect for who He is, it's a constant awareness that He is with you. And that transforms your life. That transforms your tongue and your mind.

And so what begins to come out of your life is not strife and arguing and words that hurt, but peace and quiet. Well, the question then becomes, how do I grow in the fear of the Lord?

I want this peace and quiet. How do I grow in the fear of the Lord? Well, you meditate on the Scriptures. And I know that's nothing new, but in the Scriptures, our thoughts about God are transformed.

Because the Scriptures tell us what we should think about God. and the Scriptures have a very high view of God. We, by nature, have very low views of God.

A lot of you here are thinking, the thought of God is nothing to you. We have very low views of God. But in the Scripture, God tells us what He thinks about Himself.

[15:30] And God has the highest view of Himself. He knows who He is. He knows how powerful He is and how good He is. And so, in the Scriptures, we get to read what God thinks of Himself and about what we should be thinking of Him.

And so, as we meditate on Scripture, as we read and we ponder and we filter that through our minds, our thoughts start going in a different direction. We begin to think God's thoughts after Him. He thinks it and we begin to think it. And then we realize, as we are thinking that and as we are meditating, that there is no way that I can think highly enough about God.

That my best thoughts are way too small. And then respect begins to grow in my heart and love begins to grow in my heart and fear begins to grow in my heart.

And then, that is when it begins to transform us and change us. And so, instead of strife, our life produces peace and quiet. And then we begin to taste what Proverbs is telling us is so good. [16:47] So, when the Scripture rules our hearts and it rules our home, then you're going to find a peaceful home. I've never seen a peaceful home where mom and dad aren't real, true-hearted, thorough, biblical Christians.

Where the Scripture is being meditated on and thought on day and night, there you find peace. Now, in this world, we're not going to have perfect peace. There's always going to be situations that come in and ruin that.

But the peace and quiet that we, that Proverbs is telling us, that we could have, it comes through reading the Word of God and growing in our fear of the Lord.

the second way. Where does peace and quiet come from? The fear of the Lord is the first way. The gospel is the second. And, of course, I'm not saying that this is an alternative way to peace and quiet.

It's not an alternative to the fear of the Lord. Because if you fear the Lord, you're going to believe the gospel. And the gospel presents to us Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

[17:57] And it presents to us Jesus Christ, the only Savior for humanity. And as we consider the gospel and as we play its scenes before us, something begins to happen in us if we are Christians.

What happens is that strife dies. There's simply no room for bickering and arguing and complaining and feuding and fighting when we are captivated by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Well, how does the gospel produce peace and quiet? Because the gospel kills pride. It kills pride and pride is the source of strife.

And so, it not only kills pride, it actually, on the other hand, it grows humility. It humbles us when we really believe and when we lay hold of what the gospel is saying to us.

and what we, what the gospel says about us. And the gospel is the message that God has to save sinners because sinners like you, like you and like me, we're too bent, we're too wicked, that we can't save ourselves.

[19:14] There's nothing that we can do. We are completely helpless. So, what did Jesus say? You must receive the kingdom as a child. You don't.

You can't work for it. And that is a humbling truth to find out that, you know what, I can't do anything to save myself. I'm completely helpless and God must help me.

God must do it all for me. And that is the message of the gospel about us. And that kills pride. I can't argue and fight when I realize that in order to save me, God had to do everything.

And pride really dies when we hear the gospel's message about our humble Savior. Pride can't live when we are feasting on Jesus Christ and we are thinking about what he did to save us.

Everything that he did was full of humility. So, turn in your mind to that passage, that familiar passage in Philippians 2. And it says, let the same mind be in you as was in Christ Jesus.

[20:28] And then begins this ancient gospel hymn. And it's really almost a Christmas hymn. Who being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God to be something to be grasped, to be clutched.

But instead, he made himself into nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. So, let me ask you, can you really go on fighting and quarreling and arguing and claiming your rights when Jesus laid down his rights for you?

When he didn't consider equality with God something to be grasped, but he let go of it. and he let go of all the perks of divinity and he let go of all the praise of angels and the glories of heaven.

He veiled his glory, the full manifestation he hid and he put it all aside and he laid down his rights. So, can you really claim your rights when he laid down his?

Can you keep fighting for yours when he let go of his? Can you go fighting, keep on fighting and arguing with your mom and dad or your brother and sister when it really lands home that Jesus left angels praise to come to men like us with all of our unkind ways.

[22:01] We are a mean and despicable race. And so, he left seraphs and angels who were constantly and forever praising him to be kicked and shoved and abused by men.

And he left his throne above to be born in a stall and so, can you be fighting, I want my place, I want this, I deserve this, when he gave up his place?

Well, the gospel isn't just incarnation. That hymn goes on, and being found in the appearance of a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.

What humility Jesus showed on the cross. He became obedient to death. Have you ever thought, where did death come from?

Well, Jesus, God, he invented death. Death was his punishment on humanity for their sin.

[23:06] And so, Jesus, he created death as the punishment. He ordained it. But, here he is dying. Here he is becoming obedient to death, even death on the cross.

And so, on the cross, they taunted him to come down. If you are really the Messiah, come down. Could he have come down? Yes. He could have called a legion of angels and annihilated his enemies in a second.

Could he have come down? Could he have pulled himself off the cross? Yes. But, he must submit. He must obey, because he is dying for sinners.

And they scorned him, but he did not revile in return. And they mocked him, and he asked for their forgiveness. That is humility.

That is love. So, let me ask you, can you go on fighting and arguing when Jesus did not fight, but he surrendered himself for you?

[24:12] So, the humble Savior makes humble servants. Well, then, how can you know this peace and quiet that Proverbs 17, 1 is talking about? Grow in the fear of the Lord.

Meditate on the gospel. Memorize the gospel. Parents, teach the gospel to your children, and parents, show the gospel, then the way that you live, model it before your children.

And as those two things begin to mark your life, your life will become more peaceful, more quiet, and like I said, it's not going to be perfect, of course, but it will be to a greater extent.

Finally, two words of application from this proverb, and then we'll be done. First, a word to those who are not very wealthy, comparatively speaking.

Do you see that you are at no disadvantage whatsoever to the wealthy? If you are full of the fear of the Lord, and you are meditating on the cross of Jesus Christ, you can have peace and quiet, something that the wealthy cannot buy.

[25:24] And so, no matter your financial position, no matter how rich or poor you are, if you have Jesus Christ, and you are fearing the Lord, then you can enjoy what Proverbs 17.1 is talking about.

You can enjoy peace and quiet. You can enjoy what God has given you. It might be little, but you can enjoy it and take, you can be happy in it.

You can be happy in what God has given you in Jesus Christ. You can enjoy how he's just provided for your needs. Because if you have Jesus, you can have peace and quiet, and that is worth more than all the money in the world.

So, secondly, to those who are fairly well to do, do you see that you're not necessarily better off than your brother or sister in a poorer condition?

They could be enjoying more of the peace and quiet that you don't have. Wealth is not necessarily a sign of blessing. So, don't let your wealth distract you from the things that actually can make you happy.

[26:32] That is Jesus Christ. Don't think that your money can give you what it can't give you. It can't give you peace and quiet, but he can. And so, instead of thinking that you can buy it, throw it aside and revel in Jesus Christ.

Revel in fearing and worshiping God, and if you do that, you will be blessed, whether you're rich or whether you're poor. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we pray that you would give us grace to enjoy Jesus Christ, to find in him the pearl of greatest price, to gladly give up everything that we have in order to enjoy him.

Father, I pray that you would unveil that pearl of greatest price to some sinner even now. Let them see that he is more valuable than everything that they have, and let them with joy and gladness go and give it all away.

Sell everything that they have in order to gain him. Father, will you please keep us from loving money? Will you give us the grace of contentment to take what you have given to us and just be happy with it?

Be happy because it comes from your hand, and whether you take it or give it, that you are still good. Father, I pray that our homes would be marked by peace and quiet.

[28:07] Will you give us such a fear of you that it would teach our tongues and our hearts and our minds wisdom to look over an offense, to answer gently, to do what it takes to have peace with godliness.

Father, I pray that you would bless us as we go on our way. Will you help us as we seek to encourage those at the nursing home? Will you do us all good the rest of this week, whether you send us trial or blessing, will you help us to see it that it comes from your hand and that it is good? We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. may may