

Wisdom For Life And Ministry

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7 ESV)

Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof leads others astray. (Proverbs 10:17 ESV)

'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.' (Job 28:28 ESV)

*The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.
(Matthew 12:42 ESV)*

Seven Things God Hates About the Rebel

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Proverbs 6:12-19

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Introduction:

Good morning church. I'd like to invite you to open your Bibles with me to Proverbs chapter six.

The first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs function almost as a cover letter to the collection. In this cover letter, Solomon presents his son with two paths: The path that leads to life and peace and the path that leads to death. Obviously, he desires for his son to stay on that first path, but he recognizes that there are going to be some forces – internal and external – that will try to pull his son towards the path of death.

In chapters five to seven, Solomon identifies some of these dangers. Interestingly, the list begins and ends with two long warnings about the adulterous woman. That is no accident. Solomon knows that the first thing AND the last thing that his son needs to hear is a clear and sombre warning against the danger of sexual sin.

But, it's not the only warning that he needs. The heading of chapter six in my Bible says: Practical Warnings. I think that's a perfect title for the chapter. This morning, we're going to look at one practical warning in particular. We find it in verses 12-19. Look there with me. Hear now God's holy, inspired, wise, living and active word to us today:

A worthless person, a wicked man,
goes about with crooked speech,
¹³ winks with his eyes, signals with his feet,
points with his finger,
¹⁴ with perverted heart devises evil,
continually sowing discord;
¹⁵ therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly;
in a moment he will be broken beyond healing.
¹⁶ There are six things that the Lord hates,
seven that are an abomination to him:
¹⁷ haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
and hands that shed innocent blood,
¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked plans,

feet that make haste to run to evil,
¹⁹ a false witness who breathes out lies,
and one who sows discord among brothers. (Proverbs 6:12-19 ESV)

This is the word of the Lord – thanks be to God!

Here, Solomon warns his son about the “worthless person”. Various translations describe him as an insurrectionist, a rabble rouser or a rebel. I think the term rebel is most familiar for us and captures well in one word the dangerous character of this man. He’s a troublemaker who stirs up disunity. Here’s how the story ends for a man like that:

¹⁵ therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly;
in a moment he will be broken beyond healing. (Proverbs 6:15 ESV)

Do you hear that? He is literally a lightning rod for the righteous wrath and judgement of God! He’s standing on the golf course in a thunderstorm with his nine-iron held up over his head. His end is RUIN and CALAMITY!

What is it that God hates so much about the rebel? His life is characterized by six things that the Lord hates, seven things that are an abomination to Him. Derek Kidner explains:

Six ... seven ... is a way of showing that the list, though specific, is not exhaustive.¹

There are other things that God hates, obviously. But what we have here is a list of all of the things that God specifically hates about the rebel. Matthew Henry notes:

God hates sin; he hates every sin; he can never be reconciled to it; he hates nothing but sin. But there are some sins which he does in a special manner hate; and all those here mentioned are such as are injurious to our neighbour.²

This is a list of community-harming, relationship-destroying, unity-sabotaging sins.

That’s why God hates the rebel. That’s why he is a lightning rod for wrath and judgement. He manipulates, hurts, and divides the people of God. Solomon is telling his son that, if he has any intention of staying on the path that leads to life then he needs to stay clear from men like this. More than that, he needs to make sure that he never becomes a man like this.

Here are seven things God hates about the rebel.

Seven Things God Hates About the Rebel

First:

¹Derek Kidner, *Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 17; IVP/Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1964), 69.

² Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible (Unabridged)*, Accordance electronic ed. 6 vols.; (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 2004), paragraph 17942.

1. He has haughty eyes

Haughty is another way of saying proud, vain, self-exalting or boastful. The one who has haughty eyes is the one who exalts himself over others. God HATES that. The famous proverb says:

Pride goes before destruction,
and a haughty spirit before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18 ESV)

The phrase “haughty eyes” is used two other times in the Old Testament, both referring to wicked kings who looked around at their kingdoms and gave themselves all the glory. For example, Isaiah writes:

¹²When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and **the boastful look in his eyes.** ¹³For he says:

“By the strength of my hand I have done it,
and by my wisdom, for I have understanding;
I remove the boundaries of peoples,
and plunder their treasures;
like a bull I bring down those who sit on thrones. (Isaiah 10:12-14 ESV)

The king of Assyria looked around at his vast kingdom and he proclaimed: “Look at ME! I have done it!” In fact, before he attacked Jerusalem, he sent his emissaries ahead and they boasted:

do not listen to Hezekiah when he misleads you by saying, “The Lord will deliver us.” ³³Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? (2 Kings 18:32b-33 ESV)

Do you hear that? The rebel says in his heart, “What can God do to me? Look at my treasure! Look at my strength! Fear God? He should fear ME!”

Do you remember how that story ended for the king of Assyria? His entire army was slaughtered by an angel of the Lord in the middle of the night. He fled like a coward back to Assyria where his two sons assassinated him, and the kingdom of Assyria was subsequently overwhelmed by invaders and wiped clean from the slate of history.

therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly;
in a moment he will be broken beyond healing. (Proverbs 6:15 ESV)

The rebel is a proud man. He is a “self-made” man. He loves comparing himself to others and he is eager to boast and exalt himself. He is an unteachable man because he believes that he knows it all. He is a lightning rod for the judgement of God. Stay as far away from him as you can.

And before we move on, we need to humble ourselves and acknowledge that we are all capable of subtly slipping into this sin. We look around at all of the blessings that God has abundantly provided, and we’re tempted to take all of the credit.

Wisdom recognizes that everything that we have is from the Lord. Are you wealthy? Praise God! Your wealth is from Him! Are you healthy? Praise God! That was Him too! The one who is wise refuses to take credit for all of those blessings and instead recognizes those blessings as a gift that he or she must steward for the

glory of God and the good of others.

But the rebel seeks glory for himself. He believes he deserves it. Stay away from him.

The second thing God hates about the rebel is that:

2. He has a lying tongue

The rebel is all too happy to distort the truth and to manipulate those around him in order to advance his agenda. This is an abomination to God.

Lying destroys trust, sabotages community and separates us from God.

Jesus describes himself as “The way, the TRUTH and the life.” Meaning, honesty is not simply something that God likes – it is who He is! He is TRUTH! Therefore, lying not only destroys our trust and community with one another, but it ultimately separates us from the Living God! It is a big deal!

Deceit is self-absorbed at its very nature. The rebel convinces himself that the truth will not serve his best interests. Isn't that why employees lie to their bosses? Isn't that why citizens lie to their governments about how much income they should be taxed on? The liar is able to justify his lies because he is fundamentally a self-worshipper. Stemming from his pride, he is more than happy to lie to your face if it will serve his selfish ambitions.

God HATES the lying tongue! It is the characteristic of a rebel and it must not be found in you. The Apostle Paul teaches us that deceit is something that we must not carry over from our former, sinful way of living. He writes:

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. (Colossians 3:9-10 ESV)

Do you see that? You used to lie when you were living for yourself, but now you are a new creation in Christ, and you are living in a new community in Christ. You have been taken off of that path and placed on the path of life and there will be no lying here. The God who is TRUTH owns this path.

So, steer clear of the rebel who has a lying tongue. Don't BE the rebel who has the lying tongue.

The third thing that God hates about the rebel is that:

3. He has hands that shed innocent blood

The rebel is willing to sacrifice the lives of others in his prideful pursuits. He doesn't care about the well-being of those around him because he is self-absorbed. He can easily justify the pain that he inflicts on others because in his wickedness he only thinks about himself.

Now, it might be helpful to remember here that this book was written to prepare a ROYAL son to live and lead. You and I may not find ourselves in positions to shed innocent blood – though an argument could be made that we are all culpable for the daily shedding of innocent blood that is taking place in our nation – but Solomon's son would be tasked with the leadership of a nation. Do you remember the story of David and

Bathsheba? Do you remember how David had her innocent husband killed on the frontlines of battle so that he could proceed to marry Bathsheba and conceal his sin? Kings can do that kind of thing, and Solomon wanted his son to know that the people who do those things stand directly in the line of fire for God's holy wrath and judgement.

While we do not hold that kind of political power, rebels today can still be guilty of this offence. Jesus, for instance, taught:

You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' ²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. (Matthew 5:21-22 ESV)

Are you tracking with me here? Solomon tells us that God HATES murderers. Jesus tells us that many of us are guilty of murder in our hearts and that the consequence for that hatred is the hell of fire! Are you hearing that?

Do you know how to spot a rebel? Look for the hot-tempered man who holds grudges for years. He's a murderer in his heart, and he is liable to the hell of fire. STAY AWAY FROM HIM!

And what about us? How many of us have allowed hatred and malice to take root in our souls? The Apostle Paul tell us that, as new creations in Christ, we must leave all of that hatred behind us. In Colossians three he writes:

But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. (Colossians 3:7-8 ESV)

Put them away, Christian. Let it go.

Very practically, this is one of the many reasons why I am so thankful that we celebrate the Lord's Supper each month. Communion forces us to unearth any of the hatred and the unforgiveness that has crept into our hearts and to leave it all behind at the cross where Christ's blood was shed in place of our own.

But we have to keep moving. The fourth thing that God hates about the rebel is that:

4. He has a heart that devises wicked plans

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus made it clear that we are culpable not only for what we do physically but also for what we feel and treasure inwardly. In the same way that he equated hatred with murder, he also equated lust with adultery. In Matthew 5:27-28 Jesus said:

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28 ESV)

God makes radical demands on your heart, because God designed you and He knows that everything that takes root in your heart will ultimately bear fruit in your life. Jesus taught:

The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks. (Luke 6:45 ESV)

Very practically, Solomon tells us here that the rebel entertains wicked fantasies in his heart. I imagine this could manifest itself in a number of ways. Perhaps he has been wrongly treated in his workplace for a long time and he entertains fantasies of lording his success over those who lorded their success over him. Perhaps he has been wronged somehow and he fantasizes about how awesome it would feel to hurt that person who wronged him.

But sin planned in the heart is sin committed in the sight of God.

For he knows the secrets of the heart. (Psalm 44:21b ESV)

Guard your heart! Take every thought captive. Have you been allowing yourself to entertain sinful thoughts? Our text this morning is a serious warning. Thoughts like that are an abomination to God. He hates them.

Sinful plans in the heart inevitably lead to the next thing that God hates about the rebel:

5. He has feet that make haste to run to evil

Sometimes our sin comes as a result of our unholy response to an unforeseen circumstance. Someone cuts us off on the highway and we shout in anger, before coming to our senses and repenting. We walk past a billboard with a seductive image and we catch ourselves looking twice before coming to our senses and turning away. There's no excuse for these sins, but they are not what Solomon is describing here. The sin of verse 15 is premeditated and deliberately sought out.

This is the one who puts a sinful plan in motion and who is then so excited that he can't wait to act on it! It reminds me of Haman who we read about as we walked through the book of Esther a little over a month ago. He constructed the gallows in his backyard on which he planned to hang his nemesis Mordecai and he was so excited to execute his plan that he was giddy as he walked to his meeting with the king. The rebel is so intoxicated by his sinful pursuits that he is RUNNING headlong towards sin.

This is a serious warning, and we find it all over Scripture. The Apostle John wrote:

And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:3-4 ESV)

Do you hear that? If you are walking with someone who is running headlong towards sin, then you are walking with a rebel! The truth is not in him! He is positioning himself for serious judgement so don't position yourself next to him. Warn him. Urgently, lovingly warn him. But then stay clear of him until he takes that lightning rod off of his head.

By the way, THAT is church discipline right there. Gather some witnesses and warn a brother. If he doesn't repent, gather the church and warn him again. If he still doesn't listen, then identify him as a rebel and distance yourself from him until he returns to the path of life and peace.

The next thing that God hates about the rebel is that:

6. He is a false witness who breathes out lies

Perhaps your wondering how this is any different than Solomon's first warning against telling lies.

While the two are related, what Solomon is warning against here stands in a category on its own. Here he is not referring to lying in general but to lying under oath with malicious intent. We see this same principal laid out in the Mosaic law. God takes false accusations very seriously. In Deuteronomy 19, for example, we read:

The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, ¹⁹ then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. (Deuteronomy 19:18-19 ESV)

That sounds extreme to us, but it makes a lot of sense. If two guys plot together and accuse their neighbor of a crime that he didn't commit, and the judge discovers that their accusation is false, then those false accusers ought to pay the penalty that they tried to have inflicted on their neighbor. That seems like the best way to curb false accusations.

This was important in Solomon's day, but I would argue that it is especially important now. It has never been easier to destroy another human being's life. Any one of you could pull out your phone, write a false accusation against me on Facebook, and destroy my career and credibility within a matter of three minutes. Solomon was writing specifically about the testimony given in court, but we live in a world where you don't need to go to court to be destroyed. The court of public opinion requires very little evidence and they've never issued a verdict of innocent.

Now, to be fair, they've never entirely issued a verdict of guilty either. Everybody loses when accusations are brought forward. Some discredit the accuser while some discredit the accused. The question is never "who will win?", but "who will lose the least?"

Which is why God HATES that rebels tell lies about other people. Rebels are willing to slander and to distort the truth so as to further their agenda.

Very practically, I think a warning like this should cause us to pause in our social media world. We're passing along information all the time. Sometimes, we're passing on information about other people. I have done that. I have shared articles without doing the homework to make sure that the article I shared was true. I need to hear this warning. Because Solomon tells us here that God HATES when we spread lies that negatively impact other people. That's something that rebels do, and we are to have no part in it.

Finally, the last thing that God hates about the rebel is that:

7. He is one who sows discord among brothers

A few weeks ago, I mentioned that God made us to live in community. He loves the unity of his people. Therefore, everything that we do to threaten that unity is an abomination to God. Abomination is a strong word, isn't it? But that's the language that Solomon uses here. God hates the one who sows discord among brothers. Matthew Henry writes:

Those that by tale-bearing and slandering, by carrying ill-natured stories, aggravating every thing that is said and done, and suggesting jealousies and evil surmises, blow the coals of contention, are but preparing for themselves a fire of the same nature.³

That's a vivid image, isn't it? The rebel is busy planting seeds of anger and distrust in the community. He's whispering behind the scenes, trying to amass as much influence as he can to bring about the division he desires. But as he's fanning the flames here on earth, God is preparing the flames for him in eternity. God HATES the one who sows discord among brothers.

Listen: If you want to walk on the path that leads to life, then you need to learn how to walk in harmony with God's people. If you start spreading rumors and pushing people into ditches, then you will quickly discover that the adulterer and the fool were the least of your concerns. The God of the universe is going to remove you Himself. In a sense, this last sin is a culmination or a result of all of the sins that we have been walking through. One commentator notes:

The types of behavior under consideration have this in common, that they are all disruptive in their tendency, that they are characterized by self-assertiveness or malice or violence, and that they break the bond of confidence between man and man.⁴

The rebel wants to pull us apart. Stay away from him. The Apostle Paul warned Titus of such men. He wrote:

As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, ¹¹ knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. (Titus 3:10-11 ESV)

Warn him. Then warn him again. Then have nothing to do with him until he repents. His end is destruction. Binding yourself to him is like strapping yourself into a car that is careening off of a cliff. Get out before it is too late.

Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." (1 Corinthians 15:33 ESV)

Conclusion

Now, as we conclude, I recognize that in a room this size it is likely that we have some rebels in our midst. Maybe you're here and, as we have walked through this list you have seen yourself multiple times. If that's you, I just have one last thing to say before we conclude. The good news of the Gospel – the hope for all mankind – is that:

Jesus Died on the Cross to Rescue Rebels

In fact, the New Testament tells us over and over again that, before we put our trust in Jesus Christ, we were ALL rebels. That's what the Apostle Paul says in Ephesians chapter two. He says that we were literally children of wrath! But he goes on to say:

³ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible (Unabridged)*, Accordance electronic ed. 6 vols.; (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 2004), paragraph 17942.

⁴ McKane as cited in Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 1-15*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 346.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved (Ephesians 2:4-5 ESV)

There is no rebel that is beyond the reach of the grace of God. Yes, you have sinned. Yes, your sin is like a suit of tinfoil that is inviting the lightning of the wrath and judgement of God. Yes, you are a danger to yourself and a danger to those around you. Yes. See that!

BUT, see THIS too! Jesus Christ came into the world to remove our suit of tinfoil and to place it upon himself. If you turn away from your rebellion – that's what we call repentance – and if you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, then he will take your sin upon himself and absorb the judgement and the wrath that you deserve.

God is in the business of turning rebels into saints. He turns worthless men and women into royal heirs of the heavenly kingdom. He turns insurrectionists into instruments of mercy. That is my story. That is the story of every Christian in this room. That is THE story. This is the word of the Lord. Let's pray together.