

Proverbs of Solomon – Proverbs 24:27-34

We have already touched on each of the themes in this last third of chapter 24, with one exception. *“Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.”* There is some really sound advice in **verse 27**, which would save our grandchildren a great deal of grief if they would put it into practice. It is primarily practical, but I can see a spiritual application as well. Even though you may already understand it fully, let’s remind ourselves of what it says.

Scattered all over North Idaho are companies which build log homes. I suppose they are all over the country – in places where there are sufficient trees for log construction. Most of these companies don’t contract to cut down trees on a man’s property, and then shape whatever they find into beams, joists and walls for some on-going design of a house. No, they cut specific trees, bringing them to their own location where they build the house. When their cabin fits the pre-designed plan, they mark and number the logs they have used. Then they disassemble that house and carry all those pieces to the homeowner’s property. There they prepare the foundation and then reassemble the building just as it was before. Some of us remember doing the same sort of thing as children with our sets of Lincoln Logs.

In essence this is what the Holy Spirit is telling us to do. Out in your field, away from the beautiful site where you want your family home, prepare all the parts necessary for its construction. When you have what you need for walls, roof, flooring and other necessities, then built your house.

This instruction is so simple – so obvious – it shouldn’t need to be expounded. But the truth is, particularly in our modern society, this is not the way we do things. Rather than driving a beat-up pick-up for three years, saving our pennies and dimes, kids today go to the dealership and sign papers for a car far more expensive than they need, and then they borrow money on a five year term, essentially doubling the price of the vehicle. Rather than buying a flip phone, they agree to the latest smart phone, adding \$50 a month to their perpetual, unending contract. When it comes to a house, 98% of the time it is impossible to buy it outright. It is nearly impossible to pay a contractor up-front to build it. So once again we are at the bank seeking a mortgage, which may last 20 years or 30 years, and which will probably be extended even longer when interest rates drop and we sign more papers. But the Lord says, *“Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.”* Making this a policy in our lives will likely save us from a number of sins, some of which I’ll get to as we move along.

Following these instructions will keep us from building until we can afford to build.

The United States sometimes calls itself – *“The land of the free and the home of the brave.”* Actually, there are very few people for whom either of those descriptions apply. How many young people are brave enough these days to reject the pressure to buy the things which the world or their friends tell them they must have? They must not drive that old hand-me-down clunker of a car. They must have the latest smart phone or tablet. They must dress like the rest of the crowd. I only point to kids, because they are easy targets – the truth is adults are just as bad. Rarely do we stockpile the resources or supplies we need for a project and when we have enough then we build the house. Not only are we not brave enough to swim up stream against the pressure of friends and advertising, neither are we free. As long as we are in debt we are slaves to our creditors. There are multitudes of professing Christians who cannot tithe because their next pay check is already spoken for by some loan shark – some *“bank”* or credit card company. There are churches and missionaries which cannot do the work they would like to do for the Lord, because they don’t have funds, because Christians are in debt up to their eye-balls to the world. They have enslaved themselves to devilish bankers to the point they can’t serve the Lord properly. Most of us have been forced by circumstances to borrow money from time to time for legitimate reasons, like medical expenses, or some other God-ordained disaster. But we must we must do our best to get out from under that debt as quickly as possible. I have noticed that some commentators suggest that the word *“house”* should be interpreted as *“family.”* That is a Biblical use of the word from time to time. Those who make that application, go on to advise young people not to consider marriage, or perhaps children, until they can afford them. I’m not sure that is what Solomon meant, and I’m not sure this is always practical, but I can see the point. I’m not sure we can ever really afford children, but at least we aren’t usually borrowing money in order to buy them.

Following Solomon’s instructions could protect us from wasting our resources on unnecessary things.

But this is not a guarantee, depending on the heart of the man involved. Our property owner has envisioned a brick house for his wife and children. He has drawn up meticulous plans and printed them off on blue paper. In addition to the number of baths, he knows the number of electrical outlets, the number of light fixtures and even the bricks

necessary to get the job done.

I have a brother in law who is building a mountain log home, and his plans are meticulous – down to the number of shingles on the roof. With plans like those comes determination to bring them into fruition. Cutting the number of logs and buying the precise number of shingles before beginning construction is one way of making sure of compliance to the plans. And perhaps the plans have been made in such a way that a small building can be completed now, but it can be expanded later when there is more need and when there are additional funds. *“Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.”* Having saved money for a good reliable car, now that we are at the dealership, our cash should keep us from borrowing money to buy a high-priced luxury car we don’t need.

Following Solomon’s instructions guarantees that we’ll have the means of getting things done.

The Lord Jesus also spoke of this sort of planning. In **Luke 14:28** He said, *“Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.”*

A few years ago, my brother-in-law began to collect the best logs he could with which to build his home. Over time he brought log after log from various places in Colorado to his mountain property. He built a saw mill and began milling those logs, knowing precisely where each of them would be when they were put together, and knowing the right shape and length. Then he dug a hole for the basement; he prepared the foundation; he framed the walls of the basement. On and on each step went as he had the money to get it done. He didn’t start any segment of the work before he knew that he could finish it. He will tell you he is building it for the glory of God, and he is trying to do it God’s way, because **HOW** we do God’s work is as much a part as simply **DOING** God’s work.

When Solomon’s homeowner has readied all the pieces necessary for his new house, it is almost guaranteed that it will get done. He has reduced the obstacles against him. What was the price of a bundle or square of shingles ten years ago? I have no idea, but I guarantee that they cost less ten years ago than they do today. Having those materials already bought and paid for means that the work can proceed when the roof is finally ready for shingles. Now, I know that we can’t talk about Solomon as if he was one of our equals. That man was wealthier than King Midas. He didn’t have to use his credit card to buy more nails or a nail gun for the shingles. In fact, he had friends who were ready to loan him their nail guns and to give him their nails. Nevertheless, Solomon practiced what he preached, or at least he saw the principle put into practice.

First, it was the desire of Solomon’s father to build a temple for the Lord, but God wouldn’t permit it, telling him that his son should do it. So, as we read in **I Chronicles 22**, David began collecting the materials necessary for the temple. *“David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the LORD must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death.”* Then Solomon picked up where David left off, using his friend Hiram to continue the preparations. **I Kings 5:18** – *“Solomon’s builders and Hiram’s builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they **PREPARED** timber and stones to build the house.”* The preparations were so thorough and perfect that when the construction actually began it was unlike any construction site in history. *“And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.”*

I don’t know if I have fully expounded what the Spirit was saying here.

But I would like to conclude with a spiritual application. *“Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.”* There are millions of people who go through their lives expecting invitations to eventually take up eternal residence in heavenly mansions overlooking streets paved with gold. They are not building those cabins over in glory land, and of course they couldn’t do it if they tried. But neither are they making any preparations for their future house *“not made with hands eternal in the Heavens.”* They are floating through life, buying, selling and borrowing for all kinds of temporary, earthly things, without the least thought of seeking God’s will and His blue-prints for eternity. Somehow winging it, they think there will be a home for them in the Holy City when the time comes for their retirement.

But they are dead wrong – they are spiritually dead wrong. *“Except they are born again, they shall not even see the Kingdom of God – let alone have residence there.”*