

Themes in Proverbs: Attitude and Mood Management

Notes by Steve Gregg

I. The all-important “heart” (Matt.15:17-18; Luke 8:15; Ps.125:4)

*Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it spring the issues of life. (4:23)*

Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. ³⁶ But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. (Matt.12:34-36)

“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. (Matthew 15:8)

A. Not Freud’s “unconscious mind”

*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.
“Eat and drink!” he says to you,
But his heart is not with you. (23:7)*

*The heart knows its own bitterness,
And a stranger does not share its joy. (14:10)*

B. The real “you”

*Fervent lips with a wicked heart
Are like earthenware covered with silver dross.
²⁴ He who hates, disguises it with his lips,
And lays up deceit within himself;
²⁵ When he speaks kindly, do not believe him,
For there are seven abominations in his heart;
(26:23-25)*

*As in water face reflects face,
So a man’s heart reveals the man. (27:19)*

C. The need to correct and maintain

*Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;
The rod of correction will drive it far from him. (22:15)*

*The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways,
But a good man will be satisfied from above. (14:14)*

*Hear, my son, and be wise;
And guide your heart in the way. (23:19)*

II. Moods and ‘tudes

A. Disillusionment

*Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life. (13:12)*

B. Depression

*A merry heart does good, like medicine,
But a broken spirit dries the bones. (17:22)*

*The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness,
But who can bear a broken spirit? (18:14)*

*A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance,
But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.
¹⁵ All the days of the afflicted are evil, but he who is of a merry heart has a continual feast. (15:13, 15)*

*The heart knows its own bitterness,
And a stranger does not share its joy. (14:10)*

*Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression,
But a good word makes it glad. (12:25)*

C. Envy

*Do not envy the oppressor,
And choose none of his ways (3:31)*

*A sound heart is life to the body,
But envy is rottenness to the bones. (14:30)*

*Do not let your heart envy sinners,
But be zealous for the fear of the Lord all the day
(23:17)*

D. Jealousy

*For jealousy is a husband’s fury;
Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. (6:34)*

...you shall not bow down to [idols] nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me. (Exodus 20:5)

...for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, a jealous God. (Exodus 34:14)