

## PROVERBS 20 Selected Verses

<sup>3</sup> It is honourable to refrain from strife,  
but every fool is quick to quarrel.

<sup>9</sup> Who can say, 'I have made my heart clean;  
I am pure from my sin'?

<sup>27</sup> The human spirit is the lamp of the Lord,  
searching every inmost part.

<sup>10</sup> Diverse weights and diverse measures  
are both alike an abomination to the Lord.

<sup>17</sup> Bread gained by deceit is sweet,  
but afterwards the mouth will be full of gravel.

<sup>23</sup> Differing weights are an abomination to the Lord,  
and false scales are not good.

<sup>12</sup> The hearing ear and the seeing eye—  
the Lord has made them both.

<sup>15</sup> There is gold, and abundance of costly stones;  
but the lips informed by knowledge are a precious jewel.

<sup>19</sup> A gossip reveals secrets;  
therefore do not associate with a babbler.

<sup>29</sup> The glory of youths is their strength,  
but the beauty of the aged is their grey hair.

3 – If only such advice was followed on the world stage! We live in fearful times and we need a lot of honourable people helping restrain and redirect the quarrelling energy of fools.

9,27 – These proverbs encourage humility and introspection. Too many of us are only too ready to point fingers and see external flaws. But rarely are we prepared to look into ourselves and examine our own heart and motives. Where is our responsibility and accountability? How have we done wrong leading to difficulties in our relationships or poor consequences in what has come to be? Healthy introspection is essential for personal growth. Doing it before God seeking truth, grace and forgiveness are also essential.

10,17,23 – Dishonesty for personal gain is so rampant in our world. Dishonesty is about lies, deceit, misinformation along with greed, and the things we choose to focus on because they serve our agenda. If God is of central importance as a foundation in our lives, then we must

challenge ourselves when it comes to our honesty as well as encourage a regular introspection of our hearts and actions. Having people in our lives whom we trust to speak truthfully and whom we are ready to hear... this is essential too.

12 – This proverb follows much that we have already pondered. What does it mean to see? What does it mean to hear? We see and we don't see, and the more we take the time and are committed, the more we are enabled to see. The more we open our hearts, the more we are ready to hear. Seeing what we don't want to see and hearing what we don't want to hear is healthy. It means we are open to correction and change and are not just bent on shutting out anything contrary to what we have already persuaded ourselves to see and hear.

15 – This proverb is similar to others we have encountered before. Material value is far less precious than spiritual and moral value. Integrity is priceless and must be pursued as a treasure above all. Building character is far more worthy of our humanity than building our material investments and bank accounts.

19 – It's one thing to consult with another and vent when we are frustrated, upset, hurt or disappointed with someone. But this must be a prelude to dealing with the person in question directly at some point. Just talking bad about other people and creating a two-faced way of relating with others is harmful to ourselves as much as to others. Creating intimacy and friendship with some over against others is cowardly. We must take responsibility for all our relationships – the good ones and the challenging ones. People need to trust that we can be truthful with them in as kind a way as possible and with courage to face their displeasure.

29 – This is a beautiful proverb because it recognizes the beauty in all people whatever their age. External beauty is just skin deep and fades quickly. Inner beauty of character and heart is what lasts and hopefully grows with age. What do you think?

PRAYER: Thank you, O God. For revealing to us where true beauty is to be found, we thank you. For granting us the courage to be truthful with others because we care, we thank you. For reminding us that true value and worth are to be found in integrity rather than material security, we thank you. For granting us ever deeper insight and listening to your truth and will for us, we thank you. For the courage to be honest with ourselves, we thank you. For the capacity to examine ourselves with grace and faith in what we can yet grow to become, we thank you. For your empowerment in our ability to make peace with others and in ourselves, we thank you. In Jesus' name we pray this way, Amen.