

**Wise Up**  
***Responsibility Towards Others***  
**Part 6**

**Intro:** Question: Are we becoming more self-centered as a society? Are we becoming more and more self-oriented and less oriented in thinking about others? There is a lot of research out there on this topic, some are blaming technology, social media, affluence and prosperity, lack of face-to-face interaction and even our politics. The truth is it's probably all the above.

- People are reluctant to get involved, help out when they see a person in need. I often hear, "It's none of my business." Whether or not they say this they act like it.
- A few years ago we were going to go to lunch at Claim Jumper in Clackamas. As we were turning into the Town Center a young girl's car had died right in the middle of that busy road. EXPLAIN
- As we conclude our series in Proverbs today, we see that wise people embrace a level of responsibility towards others. They are not self-oriented, but rather others oriented. BUT, what does this look like? What is our responsibility towards others? Am I really my brother's keeper?

**1. We are responsible for being helpful and generous**

*Prov. 3:27 "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it." (ESV)*

- We all have a tremendous amount of power to do good. We are not to withhold doing good when we have the ability to make a difference in someone's life. When you see a need and can make a difference you should choose to do something.
- This can be in big and small ways.
  - Helping a stranded motorist / a neighbor with a project / fixing the single mom's car.
  - It's recognizing your spouse needs help – (men, you help with dinner / dishes / laundry / take the kids out so mom has a break.
  - Our church meeting food scarcity needs in our community – explain – 399 kids per month.
  - Our commitment to the children in Guatemala – explain
  - The Adult Center – it was in our power to do so...so we did. Over 3000 people per month.

*Prov. 14:31 "Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him." (ESV)*

*Prov. 19:17 "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed." (ESV)*

- Sometimes helping others is giving our time, or our experience, but it will also be our financial resources. Notice that helping the poor “lends to the Lord”. It reminds me what Jesus said in Matt 25, “When you do it to the least of these, you do it to me.”
- Your generosity to this church – to these programs we run allows us to have the power to make a difference.
- God put Foothills here so that the goodness of God would not be withheld from this community. From the beginning God put on our hearts a sense of responsibility for Moalla and the surrounding area.
- Prov. 11:11 “By the blessings of the upright a city is exalted.” We take this very literally. We are here to elevate this city. God has entrusted this city to us. We are intentional with being helpful and generous.

## **2. We are responsible for having integrity and honesty**

*Prov. 11:1 “The LORD detests the use of dishonest scales, but he delights in accurate weights.” (NLT)*

- God expects us to embrace our responsibility to be honest in business and have integrity with money. What are dishonest scales? Explain – Dishonest scales take advantage of people. It ignores the responsibility to be fair to others.
- Dishonest scales had their motivation in greed. It’s a lack of integrity with money that impacts other people. How is your financial integrity? Whether or not it’s in business, we all can have dishonest scales. How so?
  - Just a couple of weeks ago I was doing some plumbing and was at ACE getting all my parts. I had them all connected to make sure everything fit. The gal ringing me up missed a piece. I could have walked out and saved money – Explain
  - The same thing happened at BI-Mart when I was buying some storage tubs. Explain
  - What would you do? I know people who say, “None of my business. They made the mistake.” That attitude is very self-centered and lacks integrity.
- The financial integrity is a high priority here at Foothills. So much so we have an outside firm do a yearly audit of all our finances to make sure everything is always above reproach.
- Honesty is a basic responsibility we all have to each other. We owe each other the truth. WHY? Because dishonesty damages people and as followers of Jesus, we are in the business of loving people.

*Prov. 16:28 “A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friend.” (ESV)*

- We can be dishonest in a variety of ways. We can be dishonest in our finances – dishonest emotionally – dishonest hiding our true opinions and thoughts – dishonest with our motives –
- But Proverbs tells us we owe one another truth.

## **3. We are responsible for giving mutual love and support**

*Prov. 17:17 “A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need.” (NLT)*

Prov. 12:18 “There is one whose rash **words** are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” (ESV)

Prov. 12:25 “Anxiety in **a** man's heart weighs him down, but **a** good **word** makes him glad.” (ESV)

Prov. 10:12 “Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.” (ESV)

- Notice what these verses teach us about our responsibility to one another. We are to love and support people in their need. We are to use our words to heal and encourage. We are to love people through their brokenness not be offended by it.
- This can literally happen anywhere and with anyone. Of course we know we should be these things to those in our inner circles of relationships, But God gives us opportunities to love and encourage anywhere.
  - A few weeks ago I was finishing up at the gym one morning and one of the guys I know was just showing up. I asked him how he was doing, He said, “You don’t want to know.” I replied, “Yes I do.” He proceeded to share some very tough personal / family pain going on. We talked for a moment and then he said, “Why do you even listen to me?” See how rare this is?
- Loving people – caring about their lives, their pain, their discouragement is so rare. Sometimes I fear we are forgetting how to be human. God created us with the need for human interaction and this means mutual love and support...not a text.
- We owe one another these things...inner circle or the stranger we encounter. WHY? Because we are all longing for connection.
- ‘Remember the four corners of connection? Let me illustrate it one more time for us. SMARTBOARD – Four corners explained.
- We owe it to one another to be corner four type people. Are you?

#### 4. We are responsible for avoiding behaviors that harm

- Proverbs is filled with encouragement to avoid specific behaviors because of the damaging nature of these behaviors. Let me give you 5 specific behaviors we need to take responsibility for and seek to avoid.
- If we do not avoid these behaviors, we literally push people into corners 1-3.
  - Dishonesty
  - Gossip and slander
  - Divineness
  - Destructive speech
  - Unresolved Anger

Prov. 30:33 “As the beating of cream yields butter and striking the nose causes bleeding, so stirring up **anger** causes quarrels.” (NLT)

- This is not some list of rules. It’s not some legalistic way to live our lives. It’s not a list to create guilt and shame. We simply take these behaviors seriously in our attempts to avoid them because we know the damage they do relationally.

- Wise people know what things to avoid so their lives and relationships can be blessed. Foolish people simply ignore their responsibility to avoid these behaviors. Then they blame other people for the turmoil they experience in life.
- Wise people generally care about not creating harm in others. Therefore, they take responsibility for their actions. Because of our self-centered culture, I'm seeing a tremendous decline in people's overall care for one another. It seems many simply do not care how they make others feel.
- It reminds me of this warning Paul gave to his disciple Timothy.

*2 Tim. 3:1-5 "You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. <sup>2</sup> For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. <sup>3</sup> They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. <sup>4</sup> They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. <sup>5</sup> They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!" (NLT)*

- I think we're living in these times. All the more reason to be different. All the more reason to stand out in a dark world by being the salt and light Jesus told us to be.

## **5. We are responsible for rescuing those who can't rescue themselves**

*Prov. 24:11-12 "Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter." (ESV)*

*"Don't excuse yourself by saying, "Look, we didn't know." For God understands all hearts, and he sees you. He who guards your soul knows you knew. He will repay all people as their actions deserve." (NLT)*

- This verse strikes at the heart of the phrase; "It's none of my business." Apparently, there are times it's not only our business, it is our moral obligation to get involved and do something.
- It also removes our excuse of turning a blind eye. God knows we knew and still chose to do nothing.
  - These verses were used at the end of WW2 when the cities and towns around the Nazi concentration camps did nothing while the slaughter of millions of Jews took place. Extreme example but it still applies to us.
- Now I know it's easy to be thinking: "I don't know anyone being taken away to death or being led to slaughter. I'm off the hook here. BUT, before you completely excuse yourself, let me bring some context. Do we not have people in these situations?
  - What about the drug addict?
  - What about people with food scarcity?
  - What about abortion?
  - What about sex trafficking?
  - What about our kids being indoctrinated with lies about life – gender – values – anti-God philosophies.

- What about generational poverty / no education / malnutrition
- What about people who have no relationship with God through Jesus?
- Are not all these people stumbling to the slaughter?
- People complain about all the evil in our world today while they sit back in the safety of their own little world and do nothing. God calls His people to action. God calls His people to make a difference in this world. We cannot keep turning a blind eye to the carnage around us. God knows we know!
- Evil triumphs only when good people do nothing. We have a responsibility to rescue – get involved – stand in the gap for those who can't. It is our business. This is why we have verses like this.

*Rom 12:21 "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (ESV)*

- Wise people do not ignore the evil, they overcome it with good. We are a church that is trying to do just that. If you wonder why we are so active in meeting needs and getting involved in our community, this is why. We see the needs, now we are compelled to act.
- Maybe it's time for you to get involved in some way. Maybe it's time to care. Allow God to break your heart. Allow the Holy Spirit to create compassion in you for someone – something – some need.
- Maybe it's as simple as; "God, what do you want me to care about?" Let Him give you His heart for something...because He will.

As you can see from Proverbs, we have a tremendous responsibility towards others. We cannot just exist in our own little bubble and ignore the people and the world around us. We must reject this self-oriented way of living and defining life. It's not biblical and it's not following Jesus. Life is not just about you. Embracing our responsibility towards others is embracing wisdom.

Now, what will you do? Opportunities abound and you have a church that is committed to a search and rescue mission. Fall is a great time to join a team and start caring about others.