

Reverence and Love

Ponder: Realizing what is better

Scripture: “Better is a little with the fear of the lord, than great treasure with trouble. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a fatted calf with hatred” (Proverbs 15:16-17, NKJV).

I’m a meat-eater. My spouse is mostly vegetarian. She would have gotten along better in ancient times than I. Seldom does a day go by that I don’t consume at least one helping of beef, pork, chicken, or fish. Such would not likely have been the case had I lived in Biblical times. Meat was for special occasions like religious feast days.

Desirable as meat is to me, Solomon tells us that there are far more important considerations. Notice the parallelism in the two verses quoted above: A dinner of herbs (vegetables, v. 17) is parallel with “a little” (v. 16). Hatred (v. 17) is parallel with trouble (v. 16). Love (v. 17) is parallel with the fear of the Lord (v. 16). And a fatted calf (v. 17) is parallel with great treasure. You see, the same grain that you might use to fatten a calf could be eaten by people. If you were wealthy enough to have a calf, and to use precious grain to fatten it, you would be quite rich compared to nearly everyone else.

Most of us would say, “Well, I’d like to be rich like that!” And there’s nothing inherently wrong with being rich, but we shouldn’t make material wealth our primary concern. If we have only a handful of worldly goods and can afford to eat only vegetables, but we revere God and are loved, we’re blessed! Would we really want to trade places with the person who is “rolling in dough” and can afford USDA prime every day, but lives with constant turmoil and hatred? Even the most tender, juicy steak would taste like cardboard under such conditions!

Our culture minimizes the importance of reverence for God, misunderstands what love is, and focuses on finances and fun. Let us heed Solomon’s wisdom with a proper fear of God, appreciation of love, and contentment with the blessings of today.

Song: “Seek Ye First The Kingdom of God”

Prayer: God our Father, You are worthy of our deepest reverence. Please help us to worship You with all our hearts. Whether we have little or much of this worlds goods, may we be thankful for them, and for Your love and the love of friends and family. In Jesus’ name, Amen.