

Hokmah
"Wisdom"
21st July 2017

How does one avoid a confrontation with authority? One way would be to not advance beyond the boundaries or laws that they have set in place for those under their jurisdiction to abide by. If you don't break the law, you have no fear of the authority (*Romans 13:3*). The other situation people get in trouble with higher ups is when they get caught saying nasty things about leaders. Usually we are smart enough to not say those things to their face. What we do is tell it to some close friend who tells it to another close friend of theirs, and on and on it goes until the information makes its way to the person we were gossiping about. Bad news travels faster than good. However, to be fair, good news also travels, but it has a good result, not a negative one.

Ecclesiastes 10:20 says, "Furthermore, in your bedchamber do not curse a king, and in your sleeping rooms do not curse a rich man, for a bird of the heavens will carry the sound and the winged creature will make the matter known." Here the figure of speech represents an exchange of one noun for another, a metonymy. The bird is used in place of a person which it represents. The idea is that by some small means the thing you think you say in private will make its way to the person spoken about in a swift manner. The bird seems harmless, but since it is present, it carries the message where the one who spoke it didn't want it heard.

In our day of electronic communication this happens much more quickly than a carrier pigeon could possibly deliver it. Have you ever spoken ill of someone you just got off the phone with only to realize that the phone failed to disconnect? Have you ever texted disparaging comments to someone then mistakenly text it to the person you were commenting about? Have you ever been caught talking about someone you thought had left the premises only to discover they heard everything you said? Once that has happened it is difficult to convince the person you offend to forgive you. There may be some consequences for letting your feelings out. This is especially true if the person you bad-mouthed has authority over you.

I am reminded of the spiritual element in all this, that is, the part where God is in control of things. Note that *Numbers 32:23* teaches that sin will be exposed, "...and be sure your sin will find you out." *Isaiah 59:12* promises that our sins will testify against us. We may then know, that God is able to reveal even the most carefully hidden or disguised sins that we commit. They may be exposed by means we had not even considered a possibility. When the news is leaked out we may say, "How on earth did that get back to her?" The point is that when the information comes to the one in authority over us, we may pay a heavy price for what we said.

The advice of Solomon in the passage above is straightforward. Even if we are in a place that seems secure and secluded, in the presence of our spouse, we can be found out. His advice is, even in the most secure of places, do not say things by way of cursing those in authority. It is better to say nothing than to say something and pay for it.

If the curse never comes out of our mouth, the person we are upset with will never hear of something bad that we thought. It is only when the thought is shared that we are in danger of exposure. Further, we are not to let unwholesome things come out of our mouths. This can be achieved by forgiving someone immediately upon being hurt. Do not harbor anger, it leads to revenge. That way we will not have to give an account of the bad things that we may have entertained expressing.

In The Wise God,
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