

SERMON(S) ON THE MOUNT

America is no longer a nation of the Book. The Bible has disappeared from most arenas of discourse. Nonetheless, the Sermon on the Mount is still widely recognized, or at least aspects of it... the golden rule for instance (Matt. 7:12). Nowhere else in scripture does Jesus so beautifully prepare his followers for their life on earth and their trek to heaven. And the more we, as a nation, lose touch with the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew the more we lose touch with Jesus, and the more we lose our civility.

But another famous passage is shrinking from the American psyche also. It has been said that we are a nation without proverbs. We lack "grandma's proverbs" such as "a stitch in time saves nine," and we lack God's book of Proverbs as a personal and national guide. During the Watergate investigations, the judge would often quote a very applicable proverb at the beginning of the day's proceedings. But today, though we hear an abundance of political rhetoric we hear little Proverbial recitation.

I have come to believe that the book of Proverbs is the "Sermon on the Mount" of the Old Testament. To this day, no one book, biblical or otherwise, gives us such a solid and successful world view as the book of Proverbs. It is in this book that God teaches the widest array of practical ways to relate to the world around us. With Proverbs' truths, God builds into us a world view that says integrity wins over manipulation, honesty prevails over deception, and suffering for right is victorious over ease and pleasure.

Proverbs has 31 chapters and most months have 31 days. I am convinced that the best way to start your daily Bible reading is with a chapter of Proverbs that corresponds to the day of the month. For example, on February 5th read Proverbs 5, etc. The whole Bible is vital to our living victoriously on earth and our living forever with Jesus. The Book of Proverbs is the key to understanding how the world works and how to work in the world.

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