

Cause and Effect

The laws of cause and effect are easy to see. When a person ingests alcohol or drugs, his bodily functions succumb to the effects of those substances. If you consume 4000 calories per day, you are going to grow quickly obese. When you push the button, throw the switch or turn the knob, whatever function is aptly applied is going to occur. In today's Templates of Truth, Paul opens our minds to consider the spiritual laws of cause and effect as they relate to wrong-doing in our lives.

Paul declared a sobering truth in his letter to the Colossians – *For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong he has done, and that without partiality* (Colossians 3:25). Many in our world today obviously don't believe that truth, for they live fearlessly determined in spite of it. Others doubt the validity of that truth because they see no evidence it has been applied to the lives of those they think blatantly deserve it. Neither conclusion, however, acknowledges how this truth may already be at work in unseen ways, or the impending application that has been ultimately determined for it. The truth establishes an indisputable, universal principle: all wrong results in certain retribution for all wrong-doers! No exceptions – it is *without partiality*.

Scripture gives insight into the various ways this principle is made manifest. When it is applied in the lives of the unsaved, it is judgment. When it is applied in the lives of believers, it is discipline. Whether you perceive the application as a mere natural consequence or of a divine nature, God is the sovereign Administrator of it all. The Bible defines at least six manifestations of this universal principle.

Proverbs 39:11 – *With reproofs Thou dost chasten a man for iniquity; Thou dost consume as a moth what is precious to him.* What is precious to man? It is that which he is most attracted to, takes the most pleasure in and credits as most valuable in his life. When that is not God and His will & ways, it is the essence of idolatry – what we worship & adore in place of God. The word, *consume* means to melt or dissolve. Whether it is our bank account, financial portfolio, material possessions, social positions, or professional achievements, whatever we love more than God will be taken away from us during times of judgment and discipline.

Proverbs 10:24 – *What the wicked fears will come upon him.* In spite of man's outward arrogance, he harbors deep fears of things that cause him to tremble. In applications of divine judgment & discipline, these fears are often realized. That which he dreads most comes to the surface and makes true his worst nightmares!

Proverbs 26:27 – *He who digs a pit will fall into it, and he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him.* There is a term for this application – reciprocal justice. Some would simply say, "What goes around comes around." That which a person invokes against another eventually happens to him. It is remarkable how often it is an exact replication. The pages of Scripture are replete with

examples.

Proverbs 13:18 – *Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects discipline.* Financial & material loss, as well as personal & professional disgrace comes to those who live mindlessly in the face of clear Biblical warning.

Proverbs 13:21 – *Adversity pursues sinners.* The word, *adversity* is broad in its meaning. It includes misery, distress, calamity, disasters, pain, troubles and afflictions. All of these forces bring suffering and loss into the lives of those who live in disobedience and rebellion against God's will & ways.

Proverbs 17:11 – *A rebellious man seeks only evil, so a cruel messenger will be sent against him.* This truth is most staggering! The Hebrew phrase, *cruel messenger*, refers to a Satanic angel – demons! They can possess the unsaved and attach oppressive strongholds to God's people. This is the devil's strategy for taking an already rebellious person and pushing him deeper and deeper into darkness and destruction.

Don't be deceived by outward appearances. Just because a person enjoys wealth and great material possessions doesn't necessarily mean he is blessed of God. Satan and his demons will give you wealth, if they know it will keep you lost or keep you far away from an intimate relationship with God. Just because a person suffers negative circumstances in life does not necessarily mean that he is being judged or punished by God. God never promised His children that they would not endure persecution and suffering. Faithfulness to God in spite of circumstances and consequences is the mark of a true believer.

Judgment and discipline are not demonstrations of a mean-spirited God who simply wants to badger mankind with punishment. God's desire is that all men, especially His people, respect His will & ways, and regard His commands & expectations. As much as His Word reveals the consequences to wrong, it much more reveals the blessings and benefits to obedience & faithfulness. Consequences are not pro-active, they are reactive. We set things in motion with our attitudes, thoughts and behaviors. We invoke the response, whether it is cursing or blessing. It's a simple matter of cause and effect.

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide in Christ. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in the Lord Jesus.

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