

OVERLOOKING THE ROOTS OF PROBLEMS

Proverbs 4:26 ... "Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established."

In our previous devotional we revealed that the word "problem" only appears in most of our Bibles once or twice. God does not see as problems, what most of us believe are problems. Still, just between you and me, we know that we face many struggles and problems, do we not? However, what I do believe is that we often call certain circumstances problems, which are only the symptoms of deeper issues that we might be ignoring.

For instance, if you quarrel with a friend and stop speaking to one another, you might consider the silence between you to be the problem. When in fact, the broken friendship might be a symptom of something deeper, such as one of you taking the other for granted, demonstrating jealousy, or finding offense through words or deeds. Instead of thinking that your poor school grades are because of an overly strict teacher or a badly written exam paper, it is most likely because of your own poor study habits. Is your kidney problem the result of chance, or the result of your drinking habit? Is your Diabetes only the result of an inherited tendency in your family, or also the product of your diet? Is your father upset with you because he is mean, or because you are disrespectful?

We have a tendency to look only at the symptoms of problems we face, rather than what caused them. You might pray for healing for your failing liver, that you caused through excessive alcohol consumption. You might blame your wife for a bad dinner, without considering that her day was much more demanding than yours'. Your children may be rebelling against you, but you have never shown them any respect as God's creation. Or, you blame the police for arresting your son for running over a child with his motorcycle, but you do not blame yourself for letting him drive underage and without a license.

Every problem you face has an underlying cause that you may be ignoring. If you care only about the symptoms, you may never correct the underlying cause of those problems. You will continue to face those same problems over and over again. Today's verse encourages us to be alert and sensitive to the decisions we make, the places we go, and the words we say because a mistake made today, may emerge as another problem for us tomorrow. Some problems may be unavoidable, but it is also true that we make decisions and choices that lead us into the valley of problems ourselves.

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