

Overlooking an Insult

Scripture Reading — Proverbs 12:13-23

Fools show their annoyance at once, but the prudent overlook an insult. — Proverbs 12:16

There's a French proverb that beautifully expresses what we need to learn today: "Write injuries in sand, kindnesses in marble." This is similar to the advice in our verse today from Proverbs: "Fools show their annoyance at once, but the prudent overlook an insult."

Many of Jesus' teachings show that he knew the wisdom of the Old Testament. For example, Psalm 37:11 says, "The meek will inherit the land," and in his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus elaborates by saying, "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). What's more, Jesus' famous instructions about turning the other cheek (Matthew 5:39) certainly have in mind the kind of offense mentioned in Proverbs 12:16, where the wise person overlooks an insult rather than becoming annoyed.

Life is full of irritations, and a fool shows his annoyance at once. He easily flies off the handle. A prudent person rides above the surge of irritation and overlooks the provocation. Having a calm spirit is so important in raising children, in working with others, in race relations, in marriage, in international relationships—in fact, in all of life.

Patience and prudence—wisdom—are important in all our dealings with others.

Have you asked God to guide you with his wisdom today? (See James 1:5.)

Prayer

Lord, preserve us from knee-jerk reactions. Give us a calm spirit that trusts in you. Help us not to become easily annoyed. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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