

Mishlei 06-12**Unprincipled Thinking**

[Pesukim 6:12 thru 6:15]

Key Concepts

In the previous segment (06-06), Mishlei taught us the value of focused thinking as an antidote to lethargy. A person who practices focused thinking identifies the goals that are important to him and focuses his energies on achieving them. Now Mishlei reminds us that focused thinking is worthwhile only if one has worthwhile goals.

A person who organizes his life around gaining personal advantage instead of doing the will of His Creator will also have goals, but they will be unprincipled goals involving lying and deception. The unprincipled person cheats whenever he thinks he can get away with it. He operates without moral or ethical restraints, exerting self-control only as necessary to gain the goodwill and cooperation of others.

Exploring Mishlei

BODY LANGUAGE. To maintain his standing in the community the unprincipled individual pretends to accept moral teachings and thoughtful criticism. But all the while he reveals his disrespect in subtle ways. When he thinks nobody is looking, he expresses his true attitude in his body language, such as sly winks and facial expressions.

To get the best of others he is continually coming up with dishonest schemes. People fall victim to his lies because he puts up a good front, but he has no compunction about slandering others and provoking discord if he thinks it will be to his advantage.

(יב) אָדָם בְּלִיעַל אִישׁ אָוֶן הוֹלֵךְ עַקְשׁוֹת פֶּה :

(יג) קָרַץ בְּעֵינָיו מִלֵּל בְּרַגְלוֹ מֶרֶה בְּאַצְבָּעָתָיו :

(יד) תְּהַפְכוֹת בְּלִבּוֹ חֲרָשׁ רָע בְּכָל עֵת מִדִּינִים מִדִּינִים יִשְׁלַח :

(12) The unprincipled man is a man of iniquity. He moves forward by means of a crooked mouth.

(13) He winks with his eyes, stamps expressively with his feet, and points with his fingers.

(14) Capricious scheming is in his heart. He plots evil all the time. He provokes discord.

JUSTICE. Mishlei concludes by emphasizing that there is justice in the world. The victims of the unprincipled individual were not able to protect themselves because of his lies. Therefore, when it is his turn to be struck by misfortune, it will occur suddenly and there will be no forewarning.

The victims of the unprincipled person may never know what happened to them and so they will be unable to take corrective action. Similarly, when his misfortune strikes there will be no remedy available to him.

(טו) עַל כֵּן פְּתָאִים יָבוֹא אִידוֹ פֶּתַע יִשְׁבֵּר וְאִין מְרַפָּא:

(15) Therefore, His undoing will come suddenly; he will be broken unexpectedly, and there will be no remedy

Learning Mishlei

BODY LANGUAGE.

(יב) אָדָם בְּלִיעַל אִישׁ אָוֶן הוֹלֵךְ עֲקֻשׁוֹת פֶּה:

The unprincipled man — אָדָם בְּלִיעַל

is at heart a man of iniquity — אִישׁ אָוֶן

and so he has no compunction about deceiving everyone with whom he comes into contact. He feels no ethical or moral restraints and so he does whatever he can to surreptitiously gain advantage over others.

He moves forward by means of a crooked mouth — הוֹלֵךְ עֲקֻשׁוֹת פֶּה

that speaks slander and deception.

(יג) קִרְץ בְּעֵינָיו מִלֵּל בְּרִגְלוֹ מָרָה בְּאֶצְבָּעֵתָיו

He pretends to accept moral teachings and thoughtful criticism, but all the while he reveals his disrespect and falseness in subtle ways:

He winks with his eyes — קִרְץ בְּעֵינָיו,

stamps expressively with his feet — מִלֵּל בְּרִגְלוֹ,

and points with his fingers — מָרָה בְּאֶצְבָּעֵתָיו.

(יד) תִּהְפְּכֹת בְּלִבּוֹ חֵרֵשׁ רָע בְּכָל עֵת מְדִינִים יִשְׁלַח:

Capricious scheming is in his heart — תִּהְפְּכֹת בְּלִבּוֹ

for his mind swings rapidly from one intrigue to another.

He plots evil all the time — חֵרֵשׁ רָע בְּכָל עֵת

even while he pretends to be a friend.

He provokes discord — מְדִינִים יִשְׁלַח,

hoping to gain advantage from the trouble that he causes. Because his victims are unaware of the harm that he is doing, they are unable to protect themselves from him and they are unable to take the necessary steps to recover from the damage he has caused.

JUSTICE.

(טו) עַל כֵּן פְּתָאִים יָבֹא אִידּוֹ פְּתַע יִשְׁבֵּר וְאִין מְרַפָּא:

Therefore — עַל כֵּן,

when it is time for him to be punished,

he also will not receive a warning.

His undoing will come suddenly — פְּתָאִים יָבֹא אִידּוֹ;

he will be broken unexpectedly — פְּתַע יִשְׁבֵּר,

and there will be no remedy — וְאִין מְרַפָּא.