

Lessons From A Pencil

Proverbs 3: 11-12; John 16: 13-15

Everything created has some kind of likeness and many lessons are taught by comparing something with something else; Jesus did this in His parables. Jesus would say “the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed” and other comparisons, so it’s not out of place to say a man is like a pencil.

So how is a man like a pencil? Or how should he be like a pencil?

- (A) the pencil was made by a creator, so is man and the pencil is made to the maker’s liking, man is made in the image of God.**
- (B) The pencil will bear the name of its maker, man wears the name of Christian.**
- (C) The pencil will either raise or lower man’s evaluation of the maker by its quality; man either raises or lowers people’s evaluation of God by their actions.**
- (D) The pencil is used up in service to its owner; man must allow God to use him up in God’s service.**
- (E) Work done by the pencil’s owner, through the agency of the pencil, reflects glory upon the owner; the work done by**

God through the instrumentality of Christians reflects glory upon God.

Let me tell you what a pencil maker might tell the pencil before he put it in the pencil box, these are five important lessons:

The First thing he told the pencil was: “ everything you do will always leave a mark.” In 2 Corinthians 5: 10, we are told that we will all, as believers, appear before the judgment seat of Christ(the bema seat), for an evaluation of all our actions, whether good or bad. This isn't referring to sins since they have been forgiven, but to all our activities as believers that we have done during our earthly lifetime—whether they were eternally valuable activities or useless ones. In 1 Peter 2, we are told to keep our conduct honorable when we are in, and among, the unbelievers so then our good works, that they see, glorify God. Our actions lead to consequences, we always leave a mark. Just as in the natural world, where events are governed by the laws of cause and effect, in the spiritual world events are governed by the laws of action and consequence. God told Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but they disobeyed and their action has caused horrendous consequence; Moses told the Israelites of the blessings which the people would receive if they obeyed the Lord God, and he also told them of the curses associated with the disobedience of God. Galatians 6 tells us that whatever a man sows, so shall he reap, to think that our actions have no consequences is to mock God.

The **Second** thing the pencilmaker told the pencil was: “ you can always correct the mistakes you make.” At the end of a pencil is an eraser, now why would anyone want to invent an eraser? One reason is that we all make mistakes and the eraser helps us correct those mistakes. Our faith in Jesus gives us an eraser, which is the forgiveness of God. Why do we need correction? Well it keeps us out of ignorance, Proverbs 15: 5 says: “ a fool despises his fathers instruction, but he who receives correction is prudent.” Also correction keeps us prosperous, Proverb 13 talks of poverty and shame coming to those who ignore correction, but whoever accepts rebuke will be honored. Also again, correction keeps us in God’s will because those who accept it are on the pathway to life.

The **Third** thing told to the pencil was: “ what is important is what is inside of you.” In 1 Samuel 16 is the story of how David is chosen by God and anointed to be the future king of Israel. The story also tells us that God doesn’t look at the outward appearance, but rather the inside or the heart. From that whole story we learn something about God’s choices. His choices are sovereign and when you look back at the ancestry of David, you will see the hand of God moving and shaping events; Rahab the prostitute, who married Salmon and their son was Boaz, who married Ruth, and their great grandson was David. God’s choices are surprising, just remember how He passed up all the older son’s of Jesse to have the youngest anointed as king. God chose the most unlikely person in the most unlikely of places. God’s choices are specific because He

chooses those who are ready. Samuel had to sanctify Jesse and all of David's brothers, but when David comes, he isn't put thru the process of sanctification because his heart is in a state of readiness. God chooses those who are reliable, when He calls David, he has been doing what he was told to do--- tend the sheep. God chooses those who are redeemed and David had seen the glory of God in the heavens, he has been walking with God for sometime. When we say about what is inside a person, we are talking of their character; D.L. Moody said: "character is what a man is in the dark."

The Fourth thing told to the pencil was: "in life you will undergo painful sharpenings, which will only make you better." The sharpening of the pencil is to let the lead or the inner part show through; man must relegate his outward self to the background in order for his spiritual part to show through. This is a reference to what we as believers go thru as trials, tribulations, chastening and correction. Proverbs 3 reminds us not to despise God's chastening us or detesting His correction because those whom the Lord loves, He will chasten. When He does chasten us, He is dealing with us as His children, all true children of God are chastened at one time or another. Trials and tribulations are testings and examinations to reveal, and possibly expose, the true condition of our heart; it is in the time of testing that our strength is revealed and our hidden impurities are exposed. These painful sharpenings are God's way of driving us back to righteous behavior. Scriptures tell us that the heart is deceitful above all things and God will search our heart to give us our reward or punishment

according to our works. These sharpening times also reveal whether we are submitted to God's will, *just* remember we are the clay and He is the potter. God rewards and blesses those who endure trials and come out victoriously; blessed is the person who preserves under trial because he will receive the crown of life.

The Fifth and final thing told to the pencil was: "to be the best pencil, you must allow yourself to be held and guided by the hand that holds you." The pencil is guided into work by the owner; man must allow God to guide him. OT Scriptures tell us that God is wonderful in counsel and excellent in guidance, and in Romans 8, we hear that those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Here is a quote I read about freedom: "there are two freedoms, the first is the false one where we believe man is free to do whatever he likes; the second one is true freedom because the man is free to do what he ought to do." Scriptures tell us that God is our guide and Jesus is our Shepherd; we should follow the Lord because He knows the way we are going. The 23rd Psalm says: "He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake;" sheep if left to themselves will graze an area until they turn it into a dust bowl and we are like sheep and need a Shepherd to lead us. I said **lead us, not drive us by standing behind us and beating us so we move on, God goes before us and leads the way for us. God provides a guide to lead us thru life and Jesus mentioned this guide in John 16, when He said the Spirit of Truth will come to guide us into all truth; He is the Comforter, the Helper, He is the Holy Spirit.**

In conclusion, we just like the pencil, need constant sharpening, remember we are special persons with unique, God given, talents and abilities and only we can fulfill the purpose which we were born to accomplish. We should never allow ourselves to get discouraged and think our lives are insignificant or can't be changed. Like the pencil, always remember that the most important part of who we are, is what's inside of us.

A final thought: Life without God is like an unsharpened pencil—it has no point.

AMEN.