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# PROFILES OF CARNALITY

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## Introduction

Today I will speak from the book of Proverbs. Solomon identified various people in this book, each of whom are described according to their specific characteristics. In his writing, he provided us with very vivid descriptions of their behaviour.

As well, we are asked to come with him on the journey to consider their behaviours: how they act, and how they interact with others. We are also to consider what the *endpoint* of living in those ways becomes.

We will describe the different types of characters as 'profiles of carnality', and then examine the various expressions of our own carnality.

## Behaving like mere men

The apostle Paul explained that, when we 'set our mind on the flesh', and when we function according to our carnality, we behave like *mere men*. This means that our conduct is no different from the way in which every, fallen human being operates.

Our carnal responses, therefore, cause us to respond as mere men. In this same way, the profiles of carnality describe how mankind has continued to function since the Fall.

## The effect of the Fall

Solomon said, 'There is nothing new under the sun'; 'what has been, will always be'. Mankind will always respond in the same manner. This is an 'under the sun' reality.

He commenced the book of Ecclesiastes with the statement, 'Can anything be said, "This is new"?"

In the heart of man, there is nothing new. From the Fall, what has been will always be, *unless* we are connected to the offering and sufferings of Christ. Then there is something new in the heart of man. Otherwise, it would be exactly the same. Solomon described in detail the expressions of that carnality.

## The various profiles of the carnal nature

We will look at this today in order to understand these references from the book of Proverbs, and the characteristics of each of seven different

profiles. These include the fool; the lazy person; the wicked person; the naive; the scoffer; the proud; and the mocker.

As we read about these different characters, we can quickly identify them in terms of their actual *behaviour*. Solomon described something that we can look on and observe happening in another person.

However, in this exercise, Solomon was not primarily teaching us how to interface with other persons. He was actually teaching us how to *interface with ourselves*.

It is helpful, therefore, to realise that *we* are the person who is under scrutiny, as this word is ministered. As Solomon described each of these characters, he was describing you and me.

## Identifying the profiles within us

To varying degrees, we *all* have these profiles in ourselves, and we have to be delivered of all of them. We need to *overcome* in this area.

Our normal response in looking at this is to think, 'Oh, yes, *that person* over there is a bit foolish, and they are definitely naive'; or 'that other person is a bit lazy'. We tend to do this, don't we? When the word comes, we may think, 'If only that person over there is listening to this.'

Yet, the real issue remains: what about *me*? Am I listening to that word which is a mirror to who I am. When Solomon described the fool, he was actually saying, '*You* are the fool.' It really is a confronting reality to realise, 'Hold on, I am wicked.'

When we begin to describe this person, it sounds like a character who is unknown to us. We are then confronted by the wickedness and evil in the heart of man, and say, 'That couldn't be me!' However, that is what the Lord is reminding us of: that evil heart is *mine*. It is the same for each of us.

## Confronting the issue of carnality within us

The exercise for us is in becoming comfortable with considering our carnality. Christ exposes our carnality so that we are then able to *overcome* it by *the same word that is exposing it*.

Solomon was not teaching us how to interface with everyone else concerning this issue. Primarily, he was teaching us how to interface with ourselves, because we represent those seven profiles.

### **Help in recognising our carnality - fellowship**

The key point is that we need *fellowship and illumination* to understand how these profiles manifest in our lives.

The various aspects of our carnal nature are familiar to us, and that's why they are difficult to identify.

They are easy to see in the characters whom Solomon describes, and they might, according to our perception, be easy to recognise in others.

When it comes to us, however, we need fellowship and illumination to understand how this works.

All seven 'profiles of carnality' apply to every person, in varying degrees, and this is simply due to *the other law* that is within us. This other law is other than the Law of love. For this reason, we have need to overcome all seven expressions of carnality.

### **Reasons for polarising toward a particular expression of carnality**

What happens is that our temperament begins to polarise us toward various profiles more than others. The fact is that we are in possession of all seven.

According to our temperament, however, we begin to polarise in one direction. As a result, we become more of one, and less of another. This way of responding to life is because of our temperament, our character or our make-up.

Even more than this, the *culture* within our families begins to galvanise certain responses, reactions or profiles. Initially, our temperament may polarise a certain way. However, the family culture begins to galvanise us a certain way also.

It is the mode of: 'I always respond that way. I will always respond that way because I have the other law. My temperament polarises me to that, and my family culture then enshrines that as the way to respond. I don't even know that I'm doing it, because I think this is the journey, or the path, to life.'

In this regard, we read, 'The evil, or wicked, man, consider his path'; or, 'look at the path of the fool'; or 'look at the way of the lazy man'.

### **The call to consider our way; our family culture**

However, the Lord is saying, 'Consider *your* way!'

This is because we think that our actions will result in life; however, they are based on carnal motivation and operation.

Even more than this, the *culture* within our *family* galvanises certain carnal responses or reactions.

The redeeming feature for us is that, as the Spirit feeds to us the tree of life, we begin to respond differently. This is an amazing point.

Previously, I would have responded in a fallen way to a situation. The Spirit, however, fed me the fruit from the tree of life, and I made a different response. The Lord is delivering us from our carnality.

### **Cleansing from familiar spirits**

It is this familiar uncleanness that needs cleansing, so that we are delivered from the *oppression of unclean and familiar spirits*.

This is particularly the key.

So, yes, we may understand how mankind operates. Yes, we may understand our temperament, and enjoy poking fun at our personality types and how we respond or react.

In truth, the Lord is asking us to be *cleansed from our uncleanness*, because this is the thing that becomes galvanised, enforced or enshrined within a family. The outcome is that children, as they grow, readily begin to manifest that particular expression of the familiar, to their own detriment.

### **The example of Jabez**

As an example, a man named Jabez prayed to the Lord for deliverance from the familiar, galvanising of his carnal approach. His family viewed themselves as victims of their suffering. And Jabez called upon the Lord, desiring to be healed from the family impact upon his carnality. There are just two verses recording the story of Jabez.

Now Jabez was more honourable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory,

that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!” So God granted him what he requested. 1Ch 4:9-10.

### **We actually choose to follow in the fallen ways of our families**

The dynamic shown here is that our familiar culture *names* us.

Before we blame our mum and dad for all of our familial tendencies, however, we can actually accept the guilt here, because *we chose* that too.

The reason that we are of the familiar culture is not because of our forefathers. Rather, it is because we have chosen such.

We actually need fellowship with our forefathers to be delivered of that.

### **The Lord can deliver us from our familiar ways**

‘His mother called him Jabez saying, “Because I bore him in pain.” And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain”.’

He sought to be delivered from that familiar, carnal response! ‘So God granted him what he requested.’

The nature of Jabez’s prayer was amazing, and the nature of Jacob’s prayer was quite similar. This is why the dynamic of the Lord’s response was so powerful in their respective situations.

### **The healing qualities of wisdom**

We will now pick up the thought in Proverbs Chapter 9. The wonderful thing is that, for all of these profiles, ‘the wisdom from above’ is crying out to each and every person, enabling us to obtain such wisdom, in order to be delivered from our carnal responses.

‘Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars; she has slaughtered her meat, she has mixed her wine, she has also furnished her table.

‘She has sent out her maidens, she cries out from the highest places of the city, “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!”

‘As for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine

I have mixed. Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding”.’ Pro 9:1-6.

### **Our evil conscience healed by Christ’s blood**

‘Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out her seven pillars’.

When we think of *seven pillars*, we can readily connect it to the fellowship of Christ’s *seven wounding events*.

This is the pillar, or the foundation, upon which we are being built. We are built on Christ, whose blood was sprinkled seven times, and which is dealing with the seven aspects of our evil conscience.

### **Wisdom says ‘forsake foolishness and live’**

‘Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars; she has slaughtered her meat, she has mixed her wine, she has also furnished her table. She has sent out her maidens, she cries out from the highest places of the city.’

This sounds like the *agape* meal, doesn’t it? It sounds like the Spirit saying, ‘Come’, and the bride saying ‘Come’. She has set her table and she is saying, ‘Come.’

‘She cries out from the highest places of the city, “Whoever is simple [or naive], let him turn in here!” As for him who lacks understanding.’

We understand that that is the *fool*. So, addressing the fool, ‘who lacks understanding, she says, “Come and eat my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding”.’

### **Our conversation articulates the wisdom from above**

You and I, as part of the bride, are articulating that call of *the wisdom from above*.

When we receive the word, and then speak that word, that same call is resident in our conversation. We are part of the wisdom which is crying out, ‘Turn in here’, to one another.

The *fellowship* of the *agape* meal is healing our naivety and foolishness.

It is operative in our conversation over morning tea and throughout the week as we speak in that word, which is the wisdom from above.

### **The deliverance of the naive**

The same is true for all of these profiles. The Lord is delivering us of *all* of them.

The wisdom which we speak cries out to the naive, or simple, person, saying, 'Turn in here.'

I love that, because the naive person is simply the person who takes up every good idea. In their thinking and actions, they are 'here'; then they are 'there'; then they are somewhere else. Every good idea, every good initiative, every good word, every good possibility influences them and spurs them into unnecessary action.

Hence, the word is saying, 'Do not turn there or there or there or there; turn in here.'

'Here is the *one conversation* you need to have, as a naive person. It is the conversation of that word, in the fellowship of the *agape* meal.'

### **All given the opportunity to obtain the wisdom from above**

The fact remains, all seven profiles of carnality are given the opportunity to obtain the wisdom from above. This is the great mercy of the Lord.

We remember in Lamentations Chapter 3 that it notes, 'By His great mercies [which are new to us today], we are not consumed' by our carnality.

Our carnality does not, in the end, consume others; rather, it can consume ourselves. But, 'by His great mercies', we do not have to be consumed by our carnality.

### **We can dwell safely and be secure; our choices and accountability**

Wisdom herself calls out, 'Turn at my rebuke; surely I will pour out my Spirit on you; I will make my words known to you ... but whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil'.

This sounds like being established as a pillar in the house of our God, doesn't it? We 'will dwell safely and will be secure'. Our own offence will not cause us to depart from the temple.

If, however, we continually choose to live by these carnal propensities, we eventually 'eat the fruit' of our ways. If we choose to be a fool, and continually choose to respond like a fool, we will inherit foolishness. It is, therefore, a fairly simple proposition, and there is no way of getting around it.

We cannot squirm around it, by saying, 'Someone else needs to be accountable for my folly.'

No; in the end, if you are foolish, you will *inherit the foolishness* of your own choices.

For example, the person who continually scorns others will *inherit scorn* for themselves. 'Surely the Lord scorns the scornful.' Saying it another way: if you live according to carnality, it becomes the way you will die.

The lesson for us remains that it is not how we start the journey; it's how we finish the journey that is most important. The good news is that we are going to finish the journey because, today, we are being *delivered from those responses*.

### **A foundation based on the wisdom from above**

These 'seven pillars' are the foundation upon which we build our lives. They belong to the wisdom from above. They refer to our participation in the seven wounding events of Christ's offering.

On His offering journey, Christ's blood was sprinkled seven times as the full provision to deal with our carnality. We could describe these profiles as being seven aspects of an evil conscience. And our evil conscience is cleansed by the sevenfold sprinkling of Christ's blood.

For example, the proud person is cleansed of his pride through all seven wounds but, in particular, by the fifth, because the Lord is dealing with our *pride* through His suffering of the crown of thorns. In this action, our evil conscience is cleansed by the blood of Christ. For this to be a reality in our life, we need to be joined to the seven wounds of Christ's offering.

### **The Spirit joins us to the fellowship of Christ's offering**

And as we have heard already today, we do not even have that *capacity* to join ourselves to that fellowship.

It is the Spirit who is joining us to the fellowship of Christ's offering. That is an amazing weakness that we are realising, 'I don't even have the capacity to join myself to Christ's offering. The Spirit is joining me.'

'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience

from dead works to serve the living God?  
Heb 9:14.

Therefore, 'Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water'. Heb 10:22.