

It is, of course, interesting how these irritating circumstances arise. I may speculate on it a bit...I am afraid to write them down! And Proverbs does not give us specific origination although it may give a clue here and there. But what in life tends to irritate you...apply the rule of love to it and see if the irritation is not overcome that way.

- A. Neglect of duty 10:16, 12:11; 28:19, et al. The positive scripture is seen in 4:6-11 among other places.

The answer is to be diligent, industrious, and faithful in performing what is yours to perform. If faithfulness is the watchword it will ward off both slothfulness and greed.

- B. Contentiousness 21:9, 19.

It must be understood that although the feminine figure is cited it is not just a feminine failure. The rule of love will instruct us to not fight fire with fire but to allow the soft answer to have an opportunity to work. The relationship of Christ and the disciples models for us correct behaviour in this setting.

- C. Proddings 27:15, 19:13

The same note applies here as in B above. But note that if we take the Golden Rule (Matthew 7) and apply it to these cases we will be careful not to be the provoker in such affairs. And we will also be forgiving if we think we are prodded too hard. Nagging is the less polite word.

- D. Personal Failures 19:26-29

These exist in two areas. The first is where we fail one another in some expected aspect of life. The second is where we feel we have failed in some life-performance as a unit or as individuals involved in a unit. The rule of love is needed here for there is nothing to be gained by recrimination, introspection, and guilt building.

In short, God has given us lives to be lived together. It is natural that some irritations will come. These are domestic hurts because we do not expect or welcome them in the area where we want to feel most secure. But the proper response is to meet them with the rule of love. The hurt is healed that way and while some pain may remain we do not feed on it. We forgive and correct our own paths so that we are not the instigators of what is wrong. Cf. 18:22, 19:13-14; 31:10 ff.

V. Dealing with the Provocations of Life

Proverbs 6:16, etc.

Well, there are many provocations of life and we can only treat a few of them in this "hurts of home" series. Note the text cited above and you will see the ground root causes for many of the provocations and these basic areas show up in many of the domestic hurts. Our discussion for this area will be after the pattern of Paragraph III. Some basic things will be laid on the table and outlined and we will divide for discussion by groups. Your participation is expected and maybe you will feel like providing a case history!