As if these verses didn’t contain enough good advice, I’d like to bring just one more verse into the conversation. Romans 12:18 says, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” It’s great advice for a Christian to live in peace with everybody, but I’ve often wondered under what circumstances this is really possible. And it seems disingenuous and even unjust to peacefully accept some situations. Clearly there’s more to it! Fortunately, here in Proverbs 21, we get some solid examples. In dealing with a “brawling” or contentious person, letting things go makes sense. Fighting is what they want, so a peaceful retreat is probably the way to go. But only the “wicked” is entirely indifferent to his neighbors. Verse 11 repeats advice that we’ve seen previously in Proverbs, that taking direct action to discipline the “scorner” is actually of benefit to the whole community. But this definitely means getting involved, evaluating right and wrong… not always a peaceable course of action. Verse 12 depicts the “righteous man” contemplating the wicked, being very much aware of things that are wrong, denouncing them, perhaps, while recognizing that God will be the one to deal with them. Verse 13 also advocates direct involvement! The upshot appears to be that we are obligated to get involved in a situation if that will be of benefit to our community, while living as peaceably as possible otherwise. But peaceful is not the same as indifferent or uninvolved! Jesus called us “the light of the world,” which “cannot be hid” (Matthew 5:14). And that means positive action!

**Proverbs 21:9-13**

**It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.**

**The soul of the wicked desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.**

**When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise: and when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.**

**The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked: but God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.**

**Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.**

**Lowland Gorillas**

Gorillas are large and intelligent. They possess no tails and have jet black skin along with coarse black hair that covers their entire body except for the face, ears, hands and feet. The hair on the back and rump of males takes on a grey coloration as they get older. This coloration is the reason why older males are known as “silverbacks.” A male, standing erect, can be up to 5 ft 11 in tall and weigh up to 600 lbs. Gorillas frequently stand upright, but walk in a hunched, quadrupedal fashion, with hands curled and knuckles touching the ground. This is comfortable for them, because the arm span of gorillas is greater than their standing height. Gorilla families are led by one or more adult (silverback) males. In cases where there is more than one silverback in a group, they are most likely father and son. Young gorillas are very much like young children. They spend a lot of time playing, climbing trees, chasing one another and swinging from branches, safe under their fathers’ eye. The silverback organizes group activities, like eating, nesting and travelling. Any gorilla who challenges this alpha male is likely to be cowed by impressive shows of physical power. He may stand upright, throw things, make aggressive charges, and pound his huge chest with open or cupped hands while “barking” or unleashing a frightening roar. It is absolutely necessary for the silverback to repell challengers to his dominance. A new (unrelated) male taking over a group may kill the babies in order to mate with their mothers. The silverback is responsible to protect his family, so he responds with a loud, powerful display to any potential challengers. But gorillas choose their fights with intelligence and care. Young gorillas frequently annoy their fathers, but his discipline is neither loud nor violent. Even a group of elephants wandering by draws no response at all, as he knows that elephants aren’t dangerous to his family. One might say gorillas live “peaceably” with other jungle inhabitants—right up until there is a threat to their family. Then the silverback doesn’t hesitate to act expeditiously for the good of his community!

Netflix

Our Planet

Season 1

Episode 3: “Jungles”

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