

Frederick Douglass, Part II: Chapters 8-9:
Political Struggles, Difficult Friendships, and Another Escape

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." – Proverbs 17: 17

1. After meeting John Brown and his family for the first time, Douglass thought:

They were people of stern truth, solid purpose, and rigid economy

They were people who were destitute, uneducated, and indolent

They were people of unwelcoming manners, haughty disposition, and angry ambitions

2. Give the definitions of the following words or terms Douglass uses in his narrative (use a dictionary and pay attention to the context in which the word is used):

1) Cravat (noun):

2) Testimonial (noun), p 202:

3) Degradation (noun):

3. Read Proverbs 17:2. How did the 1848 Free Soil Convention in Buffalo illustrate what is described in this verse? Answer in 3-5 sentences and use specific people to show what you mean.

4. Douglass has much to say about the Fugitive Slave Act passed by Congress in 1850. Do a little research about the Act, and then decide if the following statements about the Fugitive Slave Act are true or false:

“The Fugitive Slave Act empowered agents of the federal government to arrest escaped slaves.” True or False

“The Fugitive Slave Act prohibited slaveowners or their agents from pursuing escaped slaves into free states.” True or False

“The Fugitive Slave Act permitted the prosecution, fining, and imprisoning of American citizens who assisted escaped slaves.” True or False

5. Read Proverbs 17:4. How was this verse illustrated in what happened following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act? What surprising group of people does Douglass describe as not being “much behind the press and the politicians” in their promotion of the Act? Answer in 3-5 sentences.

6. Read Proverbs 18:14. Based on Douglass’ narrative, what result of the Fugitive Slave Act caused his spirit to feel broken, “like a besieged city at news that its defenders had fallen at its gates”?

7. Read Proverbs 17:8 and 18:16. What would you say was Harriet Beecher Stowe's "precious stone" or "gift" that "made room" for her? What was Frederick Douglass'?

8. Read Proverbs 17:14 and Proverbs 18:19. Do you think that in 1859, the United States was at place where the strife between the North and the South could not be stopped? Or do you think that the offended brethren could still be reconciled? Why or why not? Using the information in Douglass' narrative, answer in 3-5 sentences.

9. Which of the following people *best* illustrated Proverbs 17:17 and 18:24? Note why.

Frederick Douglass, because:

Harriet Beecher Stowe, because:

Franklin Turner, because:

10. Read Proverbs 18:17. The purpose of this question is to cross-examine Douglass' perspective that John Brown "needs no defender." Read the attached articles, "John Brown: Radical Abolitionist" and "Col. Robert E. Lee's Report Concerning the Attack at Harpers Ferry." Then read Proverbs 17:11-12 and 18:12. After reading these alternative accounts and verses, write a short essay (a minimum of two paragraphs) answering the question below, using both Proverbs and the historical information discussed to support your answer. (This question is worth 5 points).

Would you have joined John Brown in the attack on Harpers Ferry?