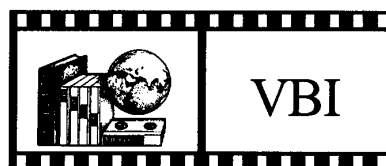
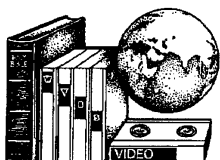


World Video Bible School®

Established 1986



P R O V E R B S

This set of notes is designed to be used by non-credit students of World Video Bible School® and correspondent students enrolled in the Video Bible Institute (VBI). VBI students should pay particular attention to the syllabus. Students not taking the course for credit may bypass the syllabus and use the notes as they see fit for their spiritual enrichment.



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PROVERBS
☞ Syllabus ☜

I. GENERAL INFORMATION.

- A. Instructor: Dr. Denny Petrillo.
- B. This course consists of 24 lessons on 8 DVDs or 8 videotapes.
- C. Each class is approximately 38 minutes long.

II. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE.

- A. This verse-by-verse study details the wisdom teachings of God for daily living.
- B. Special studies are given on major themes in Proverbs, such as wisdom, foolishness, righteousness, laziness, scoffing, friends, wickedness, the wife, the family (marriage) and child raising.
- C. Students will learn who God says is wise, and who is foolish.
- D. Students will be better able to recognize that which is wise when they see or hear it.
- E. Students will better understand Proverbs and be able to teach the book to others.

III. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.

- A. Required.
 - 1. Bible (ASV, KJV or NKJV).
 - 2. 24 video lessons.
 - 3. Spiral bound course notes.
- B. Optional: Any good (conservative) commentary on Proverbs.

IV. REQUIREMENTS.

- A. Read the entire book of Proverbs at least twice.
- B. View all 24 video lessons in their entirety.
- C. Read the class notes in their entirety.
- D. Complete all memory work (explained below).
- E. Submit a term paper (explained below).
- F. Take one written test.
- G. Have a combined grade average of at least 70.

V. MEMORY WORK.

- A. Memory verses must be written (or typed) from memory, then mailed to VBI for grading. Verses must come from the ASV, KJV or NKJV, according to what you indicated on your VBI enrollment application.
- B. All verses must be written out or typed at one sitting. You may study more and start over if you make a mistake, but you must still start again from the beginning and write all the verses at one sitting.
- C. For this course, the following verses must be memorized:

Any 15 verses of your choosing from Proverbs.
- D. Memory work is due when you mail VBI your written test.
- E. Hint: A good method of memorizing is to write the verses on flash cards that can be easily reviewed throughout the course.

VI. TESTS.

- A. There is one written test covering Proverbs.
- B. When you near the end of the course, contact us and request the test.
- C. When you receive the test, you have permission to look at it and study it.

- D. However, when you take the test, you must do so completely from memory, with no help from notes, Bible, etc.

VII. TERM PAPER.

- A. Write a paper on the seven Proverb patterns AND the nine rules on interpreting the Proverbs.
- B. The paper should be a minimum of six pages, typed and double spaced. If handwritten, the paper should be a minimum of eight pages, single spaced.
- C. The paper is due when you mail VBI your test and memory work.

VIII. GRADING.

- A. Memory work, term paper and test will be graded separately.
- B. Final grade is based on an average of all assigned work, with the test counting twice.
- C. You may request that a grade be explained or reconsidered, but VBI will have the final say.

IX. CREDIT.

- A. Credit will be issued, including a certificate, only after all work has been successfully completed, tapes have been returned (if rented), and all fees for materials for this particular course have been paid in full.
- B. We hope you enjoy and profit from your study of the God-breathed book of Proverbs, and that this course helps in your journey to heaven.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS INTRODUCTION

I. AUTHORS.

- A. SOLOMON (1:1; 10:1; 25:1).
- B. WISE MEN (22:17 - 24:22; 24:23-34).
- C. AGUR BEN JAKEH (30:1).
- D. KING LEMUEL (31:1).

Some say this is another name for Solomon. We find no king with the name "Lemuel" so we do not know who this is, but it is probable that it is Solomon.

II. PURPOSE (1:2-6).

A. INSTRUCTION.

- 1. Know wisdom and instruction.
- 2. Discern sayings of understanding.
- 3. Receive instruction in wise behavior; righteousness, justice and equity.

Looking at these three points, it is the focus of the wise man to try to help the student to be able to recognize that which is wise when he sees it. Then, in point #2, the student needs to be able to discern (sort out and comprehend the sayings of understanding) so that the student has derived some information of personal benefit. Point #3 has the ultimate goal – to change behavior so the person instructed will not only walk away with appreciation with what was said, but change his conduct accordingly. This last point also enumerates the areas that are most important for the student (son) to understand. He needs to know how to act wisely in the areas of righteousness, justice and equity.

B. SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED TO YOUNG MEN OF UPPER CLASS FAMILIES.

Our focus is on Solomon and how he, as the wealthy king, tries to pass on his acquired wisdom to his sons.

III. NAME.

The Hebrew title for the book is "MISHLI OF SOLOMON" ("THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON"). The term for "Proverb" is "MASHAL," which comes from a root word meaning "parallel" or "similar;" hence signifying a way of comparing.

A likeness or a comparison would be another definition of the word "proverb." Some say it is like a rule or a standard of behavior.

"The MASHAL denotes a simple self evident truth, expressed in a short, pointed sentence, designed to arrest attention, awaken responsive thought, and remain fixed in memory." (Miller, *Proverbs*, p. 275).

Think about this quote from Miller. It is a good definition, and covers the entire spectrum as to just what the Proverbs are trying to accomplish.

There are proverbs found outside the book of Proverbs such as Gen. 10:9 "like Nimrod..."; 2 Sam. 20:18 "Long ago they use to say, get your answer at Abel"; Ezek. 16:44 "Every one who quotes proverbs...like mother like daughter..." This would be written after the book of Proverbs. 1 Kings 20:11 is my favorite outside the book of Proverbs: "Let him who puts on the armor not boast like him who takes it off." Many 11 year olds do a lot of talking before they get into "battle" (i.e. sports contests, etc.). They need to learn to talk after they have done well. Judges 8:21 gives us yet another example of an ancient proverb.

In analyzing the Proverbs, there are 7 patterns in all.

IV. PROVERB PATTERNS.

A. IDENTITY, EQUIVALENCE OR INVARIABLE ASSOCIATION.

"This is really that."

English Examples:

Business is business.
A friend in need is a friend indeed.
A man's home is his castle.
The best things in life are free.
One man's junk is another man's treasure.
A penny saved is a penny earned.

Biblical examples:

Judges 8:21 As is the man, so is his strength.

Prov. 14:4 Where there is no oxen, the manger is empty.

Prov. 29:5 Whoever flatters his neighbor is spreading the net for his feet.

Gal. 6:7 Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap.

B. NONIDENTITY, CONTRAST OR PARADOX.

“This is not really that.”

English examples:

All that glitters is not gold.

Not all are hunters who blow horns.

You can lead a horse to water but you can not make him drink.

There is no such thing as a free lunch.

Good fences make good neighbors.

Biblical examples:

Eccl. 5:10 Whoever loves money never has enough.

Jn. 1:46 Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

In Proverbs:

Prov. 25:15 A gentle tongue can break a bone.

Prov. 27:7 To the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet.

C. SIMILARITY, ANALOGY OR TYPE.

“This is (or acts like) that.”

English examples:

A chip off the old block.

Time and tide wait for no man.

Like father like son.

Biblical examples:

Hosea 4:9 Like people like priest.

Ezek. 16:44 Like mother like daughter.

Prov. 25:13 Like the coolness of snow in the heart of harvest time is like a reliable messenger.

D. WHAT IS CONTRARY TO RIGHT ORDER, AND SO IS FUTILE OR ABSURD.

“This makes about as much sense as...”

English and Biblical examples:

1. Where it employs a mocking comparison:

A whistling woman and crowing hen are liked by neither God nor men. (Always come to a bitter end.)

Prov. 26:14 As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed.

2. When it takes the form of a rhetorical question.

What is the use of running when you are on the wrong road?

Jer. 13:23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopards its spots?

3. A maxim.

Do not count your chickens before they hatch.
You have the cart before the horse.
You are barking up the wrong tree.
Money does not grow on trees.

1 Kings 20:11 One who puts on his armor should not boast like the one who takes it off.

E. CLASSIFIED AND CHARACTERIZES PERSONS, ACTIONS OR SITUATIONS.

“You remind me of...”

English and Biblical Examples:

A fool and his money are soon parted.
A rolling stone gathers no moss.

Prov. 14:15 Simple man believes anything.

Prov. 13:1 A wise son heeds his fathers instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.

F. VALUE, RELATIVE VALUE OR PRIORITY, PROPORTION OR DEGREE.

“This is worth that” or “Better this than that.”

English examples:

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Better late than never.

Out of the frying pan into the fire.

It ain't over until it is over, or the fat lady sings.

Two heads are better than one.

Biblical Examples:

Prov. 19:22 Better to be poor than a liar.

Prov. 22:1 A good name is more to be desired than great riches.

G. TURNS ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF HUMAN CHARACTER AND BEHAVIOR.

“If you do this, then...”

English Examples:

Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Do not bite off more than you can chew.

No pain, no gain.

No guts, no glory.

Biblical Examples:

Hosea 8:7 Sow the wind, reap the whirlwind.

Prov. 1:5 A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel.

V. INTERPRETING THE PROVERBS.

I believe we need to begin by affirming that the Proverbs are inspired by God in their entirety. I believe that the teaching contained in these Proverbs are principles that God has given us for the purpose of helping His children choose the right course in life (Cf. 1:1-6). They are general commands and statements of truth and promises. When I consider the Proverbs to be “general”, I mean in the sense that they cover a vast number of topics which deal with daily living.

I also believe that the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament, and poetry in general, needs to be understood differently from other types of writing in the Scriptures. Let me offer some suggestions on what I mean by this:

- A. There are statements made that ought not to be taken literally. For example:
 - 1. 15:19 - There is no literal hedge of thorns for the sluggard, nor highway for the righteous.
 - 2. 21:22 - The wise man does not literally scale the city.
 - 3. 23:2 - are we to understand that we should literally put a knife to our throats?
- B. There are statements made that may not *always* be true. For example:
 - 1. 29:12 - will all his ministers become wicked? Not always (as in the case of Saul, where David and Jonathan were not wicked; or as in the case of Athaliah in 2 Kings 11). So in this case we see that there are some exceptions to the rule (but most of the time it will be true!)
 - 2. 15:25 - the widow (or poor) will not always have an established land inheritance (as in the case of Lazarus in Luke 16 who lived and died poor).
 - 3. 15:19 - mentioned in #1 above as well. We know from Romans 8: 31-38 that the “highway” of the righteous may be filled with famine, nakedness, peril, sword and even death. From 2 Tim. 3:12 we know that persecution is the way for those who are in Christ. See also Psalm 73.
 - 4. 22:6 - even the Proverbs show that a well-trained child may turn against his parents (2:1ff; 10:5; 13:1; 15:20; 17:21; 28:24; 29:3; 30:11,17, etc.) So the general rule is that a child trained properly

will not deviate from that good training.

5. 3:17 - the ways of wisdom will not *always* end in paths of peace.
6. 22:4 - certainly we know of truly humble people who never attained riches and honor, nor may have not had much of a life (perhaps Jesus himself would be evidence of this, as would Moses).

C. Some Proverbs are merely suggesting some forethought before one acts, not giving a hard and fast rule of action (even the Proverbs themselves encourage us to think before we act - cf. 15:28; 19:11; 21:23).

1. 26:4,5 - here we have one proverb that says “do not answer a fool, where as the next proverb says “answer a fool. Which one are we to follow? Certainly we ought to “know how to respond to each person” (Col. 4:6).
2. 22:26,27 - are we to understand from these proverbs that we should never borrow? Even the Law provided rules to be followed in lending and borrowing (Ex. 22:25-27; Lev. 25:35-37; Deut. 23:19, 20; Ps. 15:5)

I hope these points will, to some degree, clarify this question. I strongly resent some brethren who are trying to eliminate sound teaching using a “hermeneutic” that questions and undermines the validity and power of these Proverbs. These Proverbs are God’s teachings about life! We are exercising wisdom when we try to adhere to the tenets of these Proverbs.

One more comment about the statement that “proverbs are presented as probabilities, not promises.” To me this indicates that we are, to some degree, gambling with these teachings. It implies that one has a “50-50” chance of it working out in his favor when he obeys. We are not shooting dice. We are not playing the “odds.” We are confident that the omniscient God knows what is best, and that we will be better off (and ultimately rewarded) having followed His teachings concerning proper living.

However, if the people who said that Proverbs are presented as “probabilities” mean that when we do what God teaches, it will “probably” or most likely, work out, all things being equal, then I would have to agree with them. However, sometimes all things are not equal, therefore it may not work out. But most of the time it will. The above examples show there are some exceptions to the rules given in the Proverbs. But we are not to focus on the exceptions. We are to give diligent efforts to adhere, and afterwards anticipate, the stated result found in the proverb. Thus, I will try my best to “train up my child in the way he should go,” and I will antici-

pate that when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Another problem we often have with this issue is an erroneous view of inspiration. We often shirk at the thought that God would state a “general” truth, instead of an “absolute” truth. Is it possible that God could generalize like we often do (and nearly every other culture that has ever existed has done)? For example, Abraham was told in Genesis 15:13 that his descendants would be enslaved “400 years.” Steven quotes that number in Acts 7:6. However, in Exodus 12:40,41, Moses records it was “430 years to the very day.” Is it possible that in Genesis and Acts we have a rounding off or a general number, whereas in Exodus we have the exact number?

NINE RULES ON INTERPRETING THE PROVERBS.

1. Proverbs are often parabolic, i.e. figurative, pointing beyond themselves.

The student needs to understand that they do have the same basic format of a parable. We are not to look too closely at the particulars of a parable, but try to grasp what is the spiritual truth behind the words of the parable. Proverbs 6:27-29 talk about a harlot who is searching for precious life and they speak of the dangers of staying with a harlot. Is one literally taking “fire in their bosom” by spending time with a harlot? Of course not! There is a spiritual truth behind the words. Proverbs 9:13-18 discuss the woman of folly. They say she “knows nothing.” Is this to be taken literally? No, there is a lesson being made beyond the words stated.

2. Proverbs are intensely practical, not theoretically theological.

This point should not surprise us. We are not to derive our theology from the Proverbs. “The way of the sluggard is a hedge of thorns...” (15:19). This is not literally true, so if someone has a very difficult time in life he should not assume he does not have a relationship with God. He would be deriving his theology from a point made in the Proverbs, but this is not the point of the Proverb 15:19.

3. Proverbs are worded to be memorable, not technically precise.

So for the sake of memory they are worded certain ways. For example, in 21:22 a wise man “scales the city” of the mighty. Not literally or technically true, but we get the point. It is a figurative expression to show he gets the upper hand. They are worded so we can remember them. 24:14 - “Know that wisdom is for your soul; if you find it, then there will be a future and your hope will not cut off.” Has there never been a wise man who died in his youth? Have all wise people seen their dreams come true? Certainly, not all. Note 3:17 - are all the paths of wisdom paths of peace? Jesus had the ultimate wisdom, but His life was not free from conflict.

4. Proverbs are not designed to support selfish behavior - just the opposite!

The Proverbs talk about acquiring money and wealth, and that might encourage some to pursue the wealthy lifestyle (cf. 14:24; 10:15,22). Proverbs 6:6-11 tell us to go to the ant to observe how they do things in their making provisions for the long winter which is going to come. They exercise wisdom in the accumulating of goods. They do not over stock or under stock. They gather the possessions they need to survive. These Proverbs are teaching a proper perspective. We are not to be covetous, or lazy or work for the purpose of “acquiring.” The idea is to have balance.

5. Proverbs strongly reflecting ancient culture may need sensible “translation” so as not to lose their meaning.

For example: Proverbs 22:11 - “He who loves purity of heart and speech is gracious, the king is his friend.” Someone might think the president is going to be his personal friend if he is pure, but he misses the application. A relationship with the king in ancient times is not like today. In addition, one needs to explain the many references to “the city gate.” That place of importance in ancient times does not make much sense to modern readers. We must apply sensible translations.

6. Proverbs are not guarantees from God, but poetic guidelines for good behavior.

This is probably one of the most important of the list of nine. Far too often we look to the Proverbs as guarantees. But this does not take away the fact that these Proverbs are inspired. We have to let God teach us about inspiration. Is it not possible for God to give us principles which will work in most situations? Of course it is! In 22:26-27 it says, “Do not be among those who give pledges...why should he take your bed from under you?” If you ever co-sign for someone or are a surety for a loan, you may never lose your bed from under you. As mentioned earlier, all the ministers of an evil king are not necessarily wicked (Prov. 29:12). Proverbs 22:6 would fall under this: “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.” This is not a guarantee. But on basic principles, generally this is going to be true. It is not a hard and fast absolute that always works out this way. It is possible to have godly parents who do a good job of raising the child, but that child does not go along. There are exceptions, but the rule, the general principle, works most of the time. (See notes on 22:6 for more information on this). But there are no guarantees. Proverbs 15:25 is another example. “The Lord will tear down the house of the proud, but He will establish the boundary of the widow.” This is not a guarantee from God. Many widows have lost their houses.

7. Proverbs may use highly specific language, exaggeration, or any of a variety of literary techniques to make their point.

We have looked at 22:11. Proverbs 25:24 would also fit: “It is better to live in a corner of a roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.” That is an exaggeration. Proverbs 23:2 - “And put a knife to your throat, if you are a man of great appetite.” The point is made by exaggeration.

8. Proverbs give good advice for wise approaches to certain aspects of life, but are not exhaustive in their coverage.

Proverb 16:3 - “Commit your works to the Lord, and your plans will be estab-

lished.” This is good, wise advice, but it is not exhaustive. Not every plan you make will be established. Equally, the Proverbs do not attempt to deal with every possible situation a person may find himself in.

9. Wrongly used, Proverbs might justify a crass, materialistic lifestyle. Rightly used, Proverbs will provide practical advice for daily living.

For example: Proverb 14:24 - “The crown of the wise is their riches but the folly of fools is foolishness.” Proverb 21:20 - “There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish man swallows it up.” While there are Biblical examples of wise people who were poor, the Proverbs still encourage the benefits wisdom provides to one’s daily needs.

The main points given above come from: Gordon Fee and Douglass Stewart, *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth* (Zondervan, 1982), p. 203. It is important to note that this writer does not agree with many points made in this book. The student must read it with caution.

VI. THE THEME OF PROVERBS.

SEE the Theme Sheet of Proverbs.

The word “life” occurs thirty-two times, discussing life and the way one lives from day to day. We have two choices. One is predominated with the idea of the fool versus the wise man. The fool is described with five main ideas or words as is the wise man with five ideas or words. These are the predominate words. There are a few more that are not on the sheet.

- A. Fool - “the scoffer” (16 times we have the word for that which refers to the scoffer).
- B. Instruction or chastisement (24 times).

The Christian today should look to the Proverbs to provide practical guidance to make life more enjoyable, while at the same time, sin-free (as much as possible). If a person is successful in the Christian walk, it is because he exercised wisdom in the choices he made, the people he associated with, and the way he used his time. These points provide the central focus of the Proverbs.

Proverbs chapter one, like Psalm one, provides a basis for the rest of the Proverbs. Solomon, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, lays the foundation in this first chapter. The student of this great book would do well to grasp the concepts given here before proceeding into the rest of the Proverbs.

EXPOSITION OF PROVERBS

CHAPTER ONE

1:1 **The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:**

1:2 **To know wisdom and instruction, To discern the sayings of understanding.**

Solomon is credited with authorship. In 1 Kings 3:5-14 he asked for wisdom from the Lord and received that wisdom. The purpose is for one to know wisdom and instruction. There are many people who claim to be wise and assume the position of teacher (as in Psa. 1:1). The blessed man does not walk in the counsel of the wicked. He strives to learn from God as did Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:29).

To discern...understanding - being able to discern it all so that you grasp and understand that which has been said is **understanding**. 2 Tim. 3:6-7 provides a good example. There are people who are always learning, but are never able to learn those things which really matter: i.e. the truth.

Many parents throughout time have liked to use proverbs with their children to teach them great truths. In all probability your parents used them. Perhaps the meaning of the proverbs did not become instantly apparent to you. Yet, with time, the meaning unfolded and the lesson or lessons found within the proverb were seen. In addition, you most likely will remember the proverb the rest of your life, and even use it with your children. There certainly is great value in using the proverbs as a teaching technique.

1:3 **To receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity.**

This is the whole point. These are teachings from wise men instructing how to live one's life with wisdom. The book of 1 Peter emphasizes wise behavior. "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles" (1 Pet. 2:12). It is important that Christians conduct themselves in a right manner. Eph. 5:15-17 - "Be careful how you walk, not as unwise, but wise...do not be foolish..." Wise behavior is redeeming the time and thinking about how you use it.

There are three areas listed here that seem to be key areas of **wise behavior**: righteousness, justice and equity.

Righteousness - in the Proverbs is not only that which has to do with being like God (being a righteous person) but also has to do with what is right, what is the right thing to do in a given situation.

Justice - deals especially with the young men who will be involving themselves in

their fathers' businesses and the tendency to mistreat the poor to gain more wealth. They will be in positions of judges some day and must learn to be fair in their judgments.

Equity - has to do with the perspective concerning others. They are no better than others. They may have more than someone else, but that does not make them better. Equity is related to justice, Mt. 7:12 "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." (K.J.V.)

1:4 To give prudence to the naive, To the youth knowledge and discretion.

The word **naive** may be "simple" in your version. It occurs 14 times in the Proverbs. Cf. 1:4,22 (twice),32; 7:7; 8:5; 9:4,16; 14:15,18; 19:25; 21:11; 22:3; 27:12. The sons (or students) will someday be teachers themselves and will need to know how to handle the naive. The purpose of the sayings is to instruct the naive how to be prudent; to get the most out of their time, money, energies and words.

To the youth knowledge and discretion - the young are not thought of as having the kind of tools they need to most appropriately conduct themselves. So the writer is assuming the role of teacher to give the young proper guidance.

1:5 A wise man will hear and increase in learning, And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel.

This is a statement of fact. A person who does not listen and does not grow in knowledge cannot be considered wise. So, if we take seriously James 1:19 and do that which the Word teaches, then we are wise. It is amazing in our society, as in most societies, we are sometimes closed to people who can teach us... especially the old. They have a lifetime of experience, and those who wish to be wise will benefit from that experience.

A man of understanding will acquire wise counsel - the idea of seeking to find wisdom is key here. It is a part of God's plan to have His people teach one another (i.e. Titus 2:2 - older women teach younger). However, there are many older women who are reluctant to teach because their advice was not welcome by the younger women. It is important to teach the younger women and the younger men to be good listeners to what the older members have to say. It is a part of God's plan for acquiring wisdom.

The man of understanding acquires wise counsel. Our youth today think this is found in the television or from their drug addict buddies at school. The prime person in life is the "star" of the football team. Young people are the focus of the teaching in these proverbs. It is they who need to decide who is wise and who is

not. One's peers, especially with youth, are not usually worthy of being teachers. Yet in nearly every society one learns the values of life from their peers who often lead them astray.

1:6 To understand a proverb and a figure, The words of the wise and their riddles.

Solomon wants them to reach the point where they have an understanding of what a proverb is, what it is saying and how it is applied. "Figure" refers to an expression of teaching which requires interpretation for a full understanding. "Riddle" is a saying not easily understood without explanation.

1:7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

This is seemingly the foundation of all the proverbs. It is the main point at which one must begin.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge - oftentimes the way parents get children to obey, in the early stages of a child's life, is with fear. The fear of discipline or example is for their own good and that is the beginning of learning. We spank the hand which is reaching for the hot pan not to be mean, but to avert a more serious and more potentially damaging event later on. The fear of getting the hand spanked is the reason for not touching the hot pan. The way to avoid some pitfalls in life is to fear God. We must have a proper understanding of God and the way He works. So if one does not fear the Lord, he is not wise. "Fear" is a word that means more than "respect." It includes the idea of trembling. We yield to God when we see His awesome power. We fear that power because we know we are much weaker. If Einstein does not fear the Lord, then he is not wise. He may have some intelligence, but he is not wise. Before one can know anything of true value, he must begin with God. Knowing about Him is the beginning (cf. Prov. 9:10). Science, with a knowledge of God, is a healthy and productive discipline. Yet science without God promotes the exaltation of man and atheism. It is a true adage in science that if one begins with a faulty premise then the conclusion will be faulty. Therefore, if the scientist begins without believing in God and His Word, then his conclusion is going to be flawed.

Despise - this is a strong Hebrew word meaning "despise, spurn, to be repulsed by." **Fools** consider wisdom and instruction to be that which has a wretched smell. They stay as far away from it as possible. There are places to go for wisdom and instruction (e.g. the church) and there are people to whom you can go. The fools stay away from those places and people. If one does not read his Bible he is a fool. There is something wrong with one's intellect if he does not read the Bible.

1:8 Hear, my son, your father's instruction, And do not forsake your mother's teaching;

This is the beginning of the proverbs. We see here that both parents are involved in the instruction. The Old Testament does place the major responsibility on the father. Deut. 6:4ff the father is teacher and instructor. In the New Testament Eph. 6:4 also names the father. But both parents had - and have - the responsibility of being the teacher. The encouragement here is to hear and not forsake what they are being taught. What about Rehoboam? He was instructed by Solomon but did not heed the wise instruction of his father. Therefore he made a mess out of his life.

Hear - in Hebrew meant more than listening to and remembering. If one does not follow the instruction, they did not hear it.

1:9 Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head, And ornaments about your neck.

This is a way of saying wisdom looks good on you and will always look good on you. Just like when you are dressed nice to out to go somewhere, do not forget to put on wisdom.

Parental teaching is not a heavy burden. It is of great value and can be worn proudly.

1:10 My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent.

Teaching begins here. Notice that the first instruction is a warning about evil companions.

The father knows the time is going to come when sinners, evil people (synonymous with those unwise and foolish, the lazy, the scoffer, the sluggard, etc.) will tempt him. When sinners entice, "Just say no!" (Cf. 1 Cor. 15:33).

He does not minimize the power of their evil influence and says that the young man must learn to resist.

1:11 If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood, Let us ambush the innocent without cause;

1:12 Let us swallow them alive like Sheol, Even whole, as those who go down to the pit;

1:13 We shall find all kinds of precious wealth, We shall fill our houses with spoil;

The ways of violence are offered as a way to wealth and having fun together.

1:14 Throw in your lot with us, we shall all have one purse.”

The sinners tell a good story. They have a “fool-proof” plan for success. If he will join in with them, they will share their stolen wealth with him. Note how the love of money will prompt these youths to ambush and kill. There is nothing people will not do for money. Money and peer pressure are powerful enticements.

1:15 My son, do not walk in the way with them, Keep your feet from their path,

How does the father discourage such participation? By pointing out the consequences.

This sounds like Psa. 1:1. Keep away from them, totally avoid them. Prov. 4:14 - “Do not proceed in the way of evil men.” 1 Cor. 15:33 - “Bad company corrupts good morals.” 2 Cor. 6:14 - “Do not be bound together with unbelievers.” Wise instruction says make sure you think seriously who you spend time with. Do not even associate with them because you are testing your own spiritual strength. You are better off to avoid temptation than to try to test yourself. In Mt. 6:13 Jesus says to pray to God to deliver us from the evil one. We want to stay away from evil, not place ourselves before it. 2 Thess. 3:3 says He will deliver us. But we have to try. What we want Satan to do is flee from us! We do not want him around! Cf. Jas. 4:7.

1:16 For their feet run to evil, And they hasten to shed blood.

Not only has the father told his son not to associate with such men as these, but now he tells him why. What they are doing is wrong, it is evil. We might describe the entire section here with one word. “GREED.” Greed is the basis of their motivation.

1:17 Indeed, it is useless to spread the net In the eyes of any bird;

The bird that sees the net will not fly into the trap. So it is foolish to spread the net. What they are doing will shed blood and hurt someone else, but they will wind up catching themselves in their own trap. They will hurt themselves.

1:18 But they lie in wait for their own blood; They ambush their own lives.

What they intended to do to others, they ended up doing to themselves. Conse-

quences of their actions will catch up with them. To practice sin is insanity. Many passages like this in the Bible support what he is saying. Like Gal. 6:7 - what you intend to do to others will come back on you.

- 1:19 So are the ways of everyone who gains by violence; It takes away the life of its possessors.**

Summary statement: Dishonest gain gathered by violence will result in death.

You see their wealth and obtain that wealth by violence, thinking it is going to increase the quality of your life. In fact, what it has done is to take away life. Here is one of our key words, "Life," in the Proverbs. The sinners are doing the enticing in verses 10ff but:

- 1:20 Wisdom shouts in the street, She lifts her voice in the square;**

In the Proverbs wisdom is personified as a woman. Wisdom is crying out. It is not hard to find. It is easy to find wisdom.

We are reminded of God's prophets who many times went into the streets and public places to deliver God's words.

EXCURSUS #1 - WISDOM (TWO PAGES)

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ABOUT WISDOM FROM THIS STUDY IN PROVERBS?

- I. God expects His people to be wise in:
 - A. Their dealings with others: The focus has been on the fact that we are a thinking people: thinking about the way to talk, act, respond. God expects us to know how to be "people persons."
 - B. Their handling of money: This is a point brought up on the second sheet on wisdom. The incorrect handling of money quickly and easily reveals one to be a fool.
- II. True wisdom comes only from God. The truly wise are humble and ever learning.
- III. True wisdom is seen not in the amount of information acquired, but in how one chooses to deal with the various circumstances in life.

Proverbs speak of those who know better, or how to act in a given situation, but

they still do that which is foolish. This is not true wisdom.

- 1:21 **At the head of the noisy streets she cries out; At the entrance of the gates in the city, she utters her sayings:**

In the midst of the mass of humanity is wisdom. She makes herself available to anyone who would seek her. There is no excuse for one not finding wisdom. In every age, in every place, God has made His wisdom available. Even the creation teaches about God (Cf. Rom. 1:19ff).

- 1:22 **“How long, O naive ones, while you love simplicity? And scoffers delight themselves in scoffing, and fools hate knowledge?”**

Ignorance is bliss. This is what wisdom is saying. How long are you going to be naive? When are you going to grow up? How long are you scoffers going to keep on delighting in this? (We will do a two part study on fools later on in this series.) But here the fools *hate* knowledge. It is the fool who does not want to sit in the classroom; does not want to “burn the midnight oil” to study and learn to acquire knowledge. Knowledge comes with effort, it does not magically appear. If you love knowledge you have to do the work required to acquire knowledge. Many children dream of being like their favorite sports star, yet they do not want to put in the hours of work practicing to be as good as that sports star. Equally, if you want to have wisdom and knowledge you have to work, but the fool does not want to work. As long as that is their attitude they remain fools. If one loves knowledge there is nothing that will hinder him from continuing to learn.

EXCURSUS #2 - THE SCOFFER

- 1:23 **“Turn to my reproof, Behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you.**

Wisdom is available in abundance! Sometimes the “school of hard knocks” is a part of the learning process. There may be some reproof in the education process. The idea of “pouring out my spirit” has nothing to do with the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, but the totality of wisdom filling you up.

- 1:24 **Because I called, and you refused; I stretched out my hand, and no one paid attention;**

Wisdom walks the street saying, “Come and I will teach you,” but she is ignored. The reason is that wisdom requires two things:

- I. Humbling of self - through reproof and discipline.

II. Work - which no one wants to do.

1:25 And you neglected all my counsel, and did not want my reproof;

This is the naive response. You neglect the counsel (advice) - you basically ignore it. Sometimes wisdom gives advice that is unsolicited in hopes of being heeded. It is true in every society that someone would say to the wise: "I did not ask for your opinion, I did not ask you what you thought." Wisdom here is giving unwanted counsel and reproof, but wisdom will be vindicated.

1:26 I will even laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes,

Wisdom is vindicated (e.g. "I told you so!"). Wisdom will always be vindicated. Wise behavior will always prevail in the end, although it may not seem like it at the time. It is one thing to go through life and not know better, but when one makes mistakes after ignoring wise advice, he deserves what he gets.

1:27 When your dread comes like a storm, and your calamity comes on like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come on you.

Failure has a way of coming quickly, moving like a fast moving storm, like a whirlwind with all its destructive force and ability. When it hits the foolish call for wisdom.

1:28 "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but they shall not find me,

The fool now desires wisdom, but she will not answer. This is like Amos 8:11-12 where there is a famine for hearing the words of the Lord. The people will go to and fro to seek the word of the Lord but will not find it.

1:29 Because they hated knowledge, And did not choose the fear of the Lord.

This repeats verse 22, fools hate knowledge. They did not choose the fear of the Lord. The one who hates knowledge equally chooses to not fear God (which would have been the beginning point to learning anything). Therefore Wisdom links her teaching with the fear of the Lord.

1:30 "They would not accept my counsel, They spurned all my reproof.

This is a repetition of verses 24,25. Wisdom has always been, and will always be, available until the person decides to ignore wisdom - as verse 28 says it will be too late. In the mean time, wisdom is available for us now. It is in God's word. If we ignore it:

1:31 **“So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way, And be satiated with their own devices.**

Eventually they are seeing the fulfillment of reaping what they have sown. The joy and satisfaction they thought they would have turns out to be like the man who overeats and becomes sick.

1:32 **“For the waywardness of the naive shall kill them, And the complacency of fools shall destroy them.**

Notice how ignorance is coupled with complacency (apathy, laziness). It is not simply a poor choice to ignore wisdom, it a choice between life and death.

1:33 **“But he who listens to me shall live securely, And shall be at ease from the dread of evil.”**

Here is the example of a “general principle” discussed in the introduction. Certainly there have been people who listened to good advice, but things did not work out anyway. But the general rule is that when people listen to wise advice they shall enjoy **security** and not have a dread of **evil** (unforeseen calamities in their lives).

CHAPTER TWO

2:1 **My son, if you will receive my sayings, And treasure my commandments within you,**

Notice the “If...then” format. One must begin by wanting wisdom.

Receive - the first of many strong verbs.

2:2 **Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding;**

These are parallel statements in this verse. The teacher appeals to the student to be receptive to and eager for God’s wisdom.

2:3 **For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding;**

Cry out! Let people know you want wisdom! Wisdom is not gained by passive effort.

2:4 **If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures;**

Verses 1 though 5 are a long “If...then” clause containing more than one “If.”

2:5 **Then you will discern the fear of the Lord, And discover the knowledge of God.**

The search for wisdom will not be a disappointment.

2:6 **For the Lord gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.**

The fountain of wisdom is God!

Wisdom is a gift which comes from God. This is why the search for wisdom will succeed. God knows you are seeking and He will give it. Cf. Jas. 1:5.

2:7 **He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity,**

God has “stored up” wisdom therefore He has plenty to give! Cf. Mt. 7:7-12.

2:8 **Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones.**

Justice is a key concept in the book of Proverbs, occurring 16 times (1:3; 2:8,9; 8:20; 17:23; 16:23; 17:23; 18:5; 19:28; 21:3,7,15; 24:23; 28:5; 29:4,26).

God has always promised to take care of His children (cf. Mt. 6:13; 2 Thess. 3:3).

2:9 **Then you will discern righteousness and justice And equity and every good course.**

2:10 **For wisdom will enter your heart, And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;**

2:11 **Discretion will guard you, Understanding will watch over you,**

Alertness and an effective protection.

2:12 **To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things;**

A person needs all the discretion he can obtain in order to protect himself from people like this.

2:13 From those who leave the paths of righteousness, To walk in the ways of darkness;

Jn. 3:19,20.

2:14 Who delight in doing evil, And rejoice in the perversity of evil;

2:15 Whose paths are crooked, And who are devious in their ways;

2:16 To deliver you from the strange woman, From the adulteress who flatters with her words;

Strange - in the sense that she is different from or outside the usual. The focus changes from evil men to the adulterous woman.

2:17 That leaves the companion of her youth, And forgets the covenant of her God;

The covenant of marriage made before God. Cf. Mal. 2:14,15.

2:18 For her house sinks down to death, And her tracks lead to the dead;

The house of such a woman is a dangerous place which leads to death.

2:19 None who go to her return again, Nor do they reach the paths of life.

This choice of lifestyle is fatal. Those who choose it do not return to real life. The irony is that they went here seeking the "good life."

2:20 So that you will walk in the way of good men, And keep to the paths of the righteous.

2:21 For the upright will live in the land, And the blameless will remain in it;

They are solid, strong, well established. The promised land is a basic part of God's gift. Cf. Deut. 4:10,26; 6:18.

2:22 But the wicked will be cut off from the land, And the treacherous will be uprooted from it.

Disobedience will force God to recall His gift of the land which was given conditionally. Cf. Deut. 28:63.

CHAPTER THREE

3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments;

Teaching - Torah in Hebrew, meaning "law." Good fathers teach, they do not give this duty to a school, a church, to TV, peers, magazines, etc.

Commandments - the father is not just advising.

3:2 For length of days and years of life, And peace they will add to you.

Three benefits of following this advice:

- I. Length of days: Quality.
- II. Years of life: Long life.
- III. Peace: Shalom - prosperity, well-being, health.

3:3 Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart.

Kindness - loyalty.

Kindness and truth - used together refers to a covenant. You can not go anywhere without them.

Make them a part of your life and thinking.

Truth - firmness, reliability or trustworthiness.

3:4 So you will find favor and good repute In the sight of God and man.

This provides the motivation for taking kindness and truth with us; God sees! This is the way Jesus grew and so should we (Lk. 2:52).

3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding.

We will fall if we try to do things without God's direction. Cf. Jer. 9:23.

3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

Think about what God directs for every action you are going to take. God will help work things out in you life. God's wisdom can remove obstacles and keep one from danger. Cf. Prov. 16:3.

3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.

Humility is essential, there is little hope for the arrogant. Cf. Isa. 5:21.

Fear of God will keep us from doing things that our own wisdom tells us we can do (Rom. 12:16).

3:8 It will be healing to your body, And refreshment to your bones.

Fear of the Lord provides health and vitality.

3:9 Honor the LORD from your wealth, And from the first of all your produce;

How we use what we have either honors or dishonors God. You cannot withhold from God without kindling His wrath! Cf. Mal. 3:10.

3:10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.

The best giving results in the best receiving. You cannot out-give God! Cf. Lev. 11:25; Lk. 6:38. Cf. v. 16.

3:11 My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD; Or loathe His reproof,

We do not have to take this discipline. But God could force us to learn from it if He chose to work that way. Lessons are learned in discipline. Cf. Heb. 12:5,6.

3:12 For whom the LORD loves He reproves, Even as a father, the son in whom he delights.

Discipline from God shows us His true love for us. The man who loves wisdom is praised in verses 13-18.

3:13 How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding.

3:14 For its profit is better than the profit of silver, And its gain than fine gold.

Wisdom's profit. Much wisdom is better than a lot of money.

3:15 She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her.

3:16 Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor.

Right hand - the best.

Left hand - good but not the best.

Older commentators - consider the meaning to be that wisdom will help one stay out of life-threatening trouble.

Newer commentators - view wisdom giving one inner health through peace and contentment.

Cf. 8:18; 22:4.

3:17 Her ways are pleasant ways, And all her paths are peace.

People want peace but do not know that God's wisdom gives it.

3:18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who hold her fast.

True, lasting happiness will be found in wisdom. Everything else is shallow and brief.

3:19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; By understanding He established the heavens.

God knew what He was doing when He created the universe. Scientists still marvel at how perfect it is. Cf. Job 28,38-41.

3:20 By His knowledge the deeps were broken up, And the skies drip with dew.

3:21 My son, let them not depart from your sight; Keep sound wisdom and discretion,

To keep these you must give them constant attention.

3:22 So they will be life to your soul, And adornment to your neck.

Benefits of wisdom.

3:23 Then you will walk in your way securely, And your foot will not stumble.

Stabilizing effect.

3:24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid; When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

Sweet and sound sleep.

3:25 Do not be afraid of sudden fear, Nor of the onslaught of the wicked when it comes;

Security. Cf. 1 Pet. 3:14.

3:26 For the LORD will be your confidence, And will keep your foot from being caught.

Stoutness.

3:21-26 Benefits of wisdom:

- I. Stabilizes (v. 23),
- II. Encourages sleep (v. 24),
- III. Security (v. 25) and
- IV. Confidence (v. 26).

3:27 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, When it is in your power to do it.

Power - opportunity. Your responsibility is to do good to others. Cf. Gal. 6:10; Eccl. 9:10; Col. 3:12.

EXCURSUS #3 - THE FRIEND

- 3:28 **Do not say to your neighbor, “Go, and come back, And tomorrow I will give it,” When you have it with you.**

If you have it now, give it because there is no promise there will be a tomorrow.
A good neighbor meets his obligations.

- 3:29 **Do not devise harm against your neighbor, While he lives in security beside you.**

He does not take advantage of an unsuspecting neighbor.

- 3:30 **Do not contend with a man without cause, If he has done you no harm.**

Some people look for a fight. Cf. Rom. 12:18.

- 3:31 **Do not envy a man of violence, And do not choose any of his ways.**

Because of his power and evil. Have we not done this by glorifying movie actors who, in their own lives or those they play on screen, do not have any godly right to wisdom because they have rejected God and His word? Cf. Psa. 73:16.

- 3:32 **For the crooked man is an abomination to the LORD; But He is intimate with the upright.**

Intimate - fellowship, status. This is man's greatest honor. The key to our attitude toward such people is found here. They are an abomination to the Lord, thus they are also an abomination to us!

- 3:33 **The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the dwelling of the righteous.**

God hates the wicked.

- 3:34 **Though He scoffs at the scoffers, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted.**

Cf. Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5.

- 3:35 **The wise will inherit honor, But fools display dishonor.**

CHAPTER FOUR

Basic points:

- I. A father should instruct;
- II. When he does instruct, it should be heard;
- III. When one hears - it should make him intelligent.

4:1 **Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, And give attention that you may gain understanding,**

4:2 **For I give you sound teaching; Do not abandon my instruction.**

4:3 **When I was a son to my father, Tender and the only son in the sight of my mother,**

Tender - pliable, teachable.

Sight - he received attention. He was not turned loose to raise himself.

Notice that this was a family tradition.

4:4 **Then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live;**

Good parents do pass on God's values to their children. These were his grandfather's, David's, words.

4:5 **Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.**

Do this regardless of the cost!

4:6 **"Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; Love her, and she will watch over you.**

4:7 **"The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding.**

4:8 **"Prize her, and she will exalt you; She will honor you if you embrace her.**

Man and religion mutually exalted.

4:9 **“She will place on your head a garland of grace; She will present you with a crown of beauty.”**

You will look great when you wear wisdom.

4:10 **Hear, my son, and accept my sayings, And the years of your life will be many.**

4:11 **I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths.**

4:12 **When you walk, your steps will not be impeded; And if you run, you will not stumble.**

4:13 **Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life.**

This shows how important wisdom is. Without wisdom you are spiritually dead.

4:14 **Do not enter the path of the wicked, And do not proceed in the way of evil men.**

4:15 **Avoid it, do not pass by it; Turn away from it and pass on.**

If you know where the evil ones gather together, stay away from those places.

4:16 **For they cannot sleep unless they do evil; And they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone stumble.**

The wicked are not happy unless they have some evil plan in mind. Cf. Mic. 2:1.

4:17 **For they eat the bread of wickedness, And drink the wine of violence.**

They consume every bit of evil information they can find.

4:18 **But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.**

Righteousness will be vindicated! Young people, you will be shown to be the intelligent ones when you do not participate in evil.

4:19 **The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know over what they stumble.**

This is a tragedy! The wicked truly do not know what they are doing.

4:20 My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings.

This section concentrates on the discipline of the heart, eyes, mouth and feet. Wise teachers were concerned with the whole person. Purpose in your heart to acquire and keep wisdom.

4:21 Do not let them depart from your sight; Keep them in the midst of your heart.

4:22 For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their whole body.

4:23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.

Heart - emotion, thought, mind; the will of the inner person. Cf. Lk. 6:45.

4:24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth, And put devious lips far from you.

This is more than lying. It has to do with any intent to deceive or manipulate.

4:25 Let your eyes look directly ahead, And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you.

Stay focused. Set worthy goals in your life and then proceed directly toward them.

4:26 Watch the path of your feet, And all your ways will be established.

The word of God is a lamp to your feet. Cf. Psa. 119:105.

4:27 Do not turn to the right nor to the left; Turn your foot from evil.

If you give serious thought to where you are going and are careful, you will reach your destination safely.

Heaven is our goal. Do not leave the path that leads there.

EXCURSUS #4 - LIFE

CHAPTER FIVE

Wisdom about marriage:

- I. The seductress (vv. 1-6).
- II. The price of infidelity (vv. 7-14).
- III. Blessings of a faithful marriage verses an unfaithful one (vv. 15-23).

5:1 **My son, give attention to my wisdom, Incline your ear to my understanding;**

We think morality is bad today, but it was also bad in these days. It was so bad the father had to caution his son about encountering these women in the streets.

5:2 **That you may observe discretion, And your lips may reserve knowledge.**

5:3 **For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, And smoother than oil is her speech;**

What she offers sounds good; all the sensual pleasures without the responsibilities and commitments of marriage.

5:4 **But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword.**

Even though what she offers seems promising, in the end things will not turn out as expected. The proverb encourages us to think things through and consider the full scope and consequences of our actions.

5:5 **Her feet go down to death, Her steps lay hold of Sheol.**

This passage is not dealing with hell (as the A.V. reads). It is saying she will, in the end, be taking your life.

5:6 **She does not ponder the path of life; Her ways are unstable, she does not know it.**

The proverb encourages us to surround ourselves with good, righteous people who think soberly about life.

5:7 Now then, my sons, listen to me, And do not depart from the words of my mouth.

He is going to instruct the son how to avoid the adulteress; "It is simple son, stay away from her."

5:8 Keep your way far from her, And do not go near the door of her house,

Do not even go into her neighborhood. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:22. This may seem to cowardly, but it is the action of the wise.

5:9-14 Solomon identifies three consequences of loose living:

- I. Will be exploited by those he does not like anyway (vv. 9,10),
- II. Will be condemned by own conscience (vv. 11-13) and
- III. Will be on the brink of public ruin (v. 14).

5:9 Lest you give your vigor to others, And your years to the cruel one;

5:10 Lest strangers be filled with your strength, And your hard-earned goods go to the house of an alien;

5:11 And you groan at your latter end, When your flesh and your body are consumed;

Some scholars think this refers to disease (VD, AIDS, etc.).

5:12 And you say, "How I have hated instruction! And my heart spurned reproof!

5:13 "And I have not listened to the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined my ear to my instructors!

5:14 "I was almost in utter ruin In the midst of the assembly and congregation."

What was the penalty for being with a harlot? Death! - Deut. 22:22-24; Jn. 8:5.

5:15-23 Fidelity is the best path.

5:15 Drink water from your own cistern, And fresh water from your own well.

Greek philosophy had reared its ugly head in many areas, including marriage.

But it is still true, "Do not covet your neighbor's wife."

5:16 Should your springs be dispersed abroad, Streams of water in the streets?

Fidelity is not the curse of isolation as society claims. There is a true reward and contentment in remaining faithful. Promiscuity is wasteful.

5:17 Let them be yours alone, And not for strangers with you.

5:18 Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice in the wife of your youth.

Verses 18 and 19 are commending the sexual qualities of a wife. They are identifying, in a straight forward way, the sacred satisfaction that ought to be part of a married life. Cf. 1 Cor. 7:4,5.

5:19 As a loving hind and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; Be exhilarated always with her love.

Exhilarated - literally "intoxicated." This is a relationship that is healthy and pleasurable. My passionate affection should not be given to a strange woman.

5:20 For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress, And embrace the bosom of a foreigner?

There are disastrous results of loving "strange women." There is an exhilaration that God approves, but why give that to one you do not love?

5:21 For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He watches all his paths.

Verses 21-23 are an appeal to common sense. One should know what God sees and act accordingly.

5:22 His own iniquities will capture the wicked, And he will be held with the cords of his sin.

Cf. Heb. 12:1.

5:23 He will die for lack of instruction, And in the greatness of his folly he will go astray.

CHAPTER SIX

6:1 My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor, Have given a pledge for a stranger,

You can be hurt by either the neighbor or the stranger if you are not cautious. There are many warnings about becoming a surety. Cf. 11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 22:26; 27:13.

6:2-5 The main idea of these verses is to treat business and financial dealings with great caution. They are to be fulfilled and resolved as soon as possible.

6:2 If you have been snared with the words of your mouth, Have been caught with the words of your mouth,

6:3 Do this then, my son, and deliver yourself; Since you have come into the hand of your neighbor, Go, humble yourself, and importune your neighbor.

Importune - continual pleading. Cf. Lk. 11:6.

6:4 Do not give sleep to your eyes, Nor slumber to your eyelids;

There were no bankruptcy laws to protect the debtor. All he could do was work long and hard to clear his debt.

6:5 Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hunter's hand, And like a bird from the hand of the fowler.

Gazelle - is a very vulnerable animal.

Deliver yourself - because if you do not you will be killed.

6:6-11 In these verses the ant is presented as a model of self-discipline and of an industrious life.

6:6 Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise,

The ant is the model for the wise man because:

I. She has the foresight to plan ahead.

Wise men are alert to the future. Fools are caught by surprise but the wise are prepared.

II. She has a positive work ethic.

She works because it is a part of her character. The wise do the right thing without having to be told.

EXCURSUS #5 - THE SLUGGARD

6:7 **Which, having no chief, Officer or ruler,**

6:8 **Prepares her food in the summer, And gathers her provision in the harvest.**

6:9 **How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?**

6:10 **“A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest”**

He loves sleep so much he allows poverty to overtake him.

Bad habits are like a comfortable bed: easy to get into but hard to get out of.

6:11 **And your poverty will come in like a vagabond, And your need like an armed man.**

6:12-15 The troublemaker.

6:12 **A worthless person, a wicked man, Is the one who walks with a false mouth,**

There are some people who are constantly causing confusion and trouble in society.

6:13 **Who winks with his eyes, who signals with his feet, Who points with his fingers;**

6:14 **Who with perversity in his heart devises evil continually, Who spreads strife.**

6:15 **Therefore his calamity will come suddenly; Instantly he will be broken, and there will be no healing.**

6:16-19 Seven things God hates.

6:16 **There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:**

Cf. Amos 5:21.

6:17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood,

Lying tongue - nothing destroys relationships faster than the loss of trust. Lying will be fatal to almost any relationship (marriage, family, business, church, God).

6:18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil,

Such as looting during riots, storms, etc.

6:19 A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.

This is different from verse 2 because this hurts someone else. Beware of brethren in the church who do this! A false witness could put someone into prison or even to death (stoned).

6:20-35 The folly of adultery.

6:20 My son, observe the commandment of your father, And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;

6:21 Bind them continually on your heart; Tie them around your neck.

This is similar to Deut. 6:6ff; 11:19. The teaching of wise men should be highly treasured.

6:22 When you walk about, they will guide you; When you sleep, they will watch over you; And when you awake, they will talk to you.

Wisdom will be like a loyal companion who is always there when needed; guarding and warning.

6:23 For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life,

6:24 To keep you from the evil woman, From the smooth tongue of the adulteress.

6:25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart, Nor let her catch you with her eyelids.

Desire - do not think about her.

Her eyelids - do not look at her.

Guard yourself against her seductive and sexually explicit appearance and mannerisms.

Cf. Mt. 5:28.

6:26 For on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread, And an adulteress hunts for the precious life.

A young man from the upper class would be a prime target. Some suggest this verse is making a distinction between the harlot and the adulteress. The harlot seems to be interested in your money only. But the adulteress can make more demands which can bring one to poverty and disgrace.

6:27 Can a man take fire in his bosom, And his clothes not be burned?

A man cannot expect to escape the consequences of infidelity any more than one who carries fire in his pocket or walks on hot coals can escape with no burns. Adultery is like playing with fire - you will get burned!

6:28 Or can a man walk on hot coals, And his feet not be scorched?

6:29 So is the one who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her will not go unpunished.

6:30 Men do not despise a thief if he steals To satisfy himself when he is hungry;

Adultery is more dangerous and costly than burglary. People have a way of classifying sin differently than God.

6:31 But when he is found, he must repay sevenfold; He must give all the substance of his house.

Regardless of the motivation, a heavy penalty will have to be paid, maybe even everything one has.

6:32 The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; He who would destroy himself does it.

The adulterer, though, has no sense because he destroys himself and has no hope of escaping the penalty by paying money.

6:33 Wounds and disgrace he will find, And his reproach will not be blotted out.

He will have to deal with an angry husband, and perhaps an angry community, who will not accept money in order to be mollified. Adultery involves irreparable loss.

6:34 For jealousy enrages a man, And he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

6:35 He will not accept any ransom, Nor will he be content though you give many gifts.

A man cannot purchase himself out of this kind of trouble.

We should look intensely at the hard, cold sexual ethic of Proverbs in the light of the Christian gospel, which requires self-control under the lordship of Christ and through the strength of Christ.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7:1 My son, keep my words, And treasure my commandments within you.

It is either instruction or seduction. You must obey, not just listen.

7:2 Keep my commandments and live, And my teaching as the apple of your eye.

Eye - something that is precious and likely to be injured or lost if not protected.

7:3 Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart.

Like a signet ring, this is a way of saying that the teachings should always be in sight. Wisdom teachings, like the Bible, do no good when they sit on the bookshelf. Their true value comes only when they become a part of the person.

7:4 Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," And call understanding your intimate friend;

This involves trust.

7:5 That they may keep you from an adulteress, From a foreigner who flatters with her words.

If you have the wisdom teachings in your heart you will know what to do when you meet the adulteress.

7:6-23 The method of the seductress (adulteress).

7:6 For at the window of my house I looked out through my lattice,

The wisdom teacher.

7:7 And I saw among the naive, I discerned among the youths, A young man lacking sense,

This is the immature young person who encounters a woman who uses all of her sexual wiles to seduce him.

7:8 Passing through the street near her corner; And he takes the way to her house,

Instead of fleeing the naive walk into trouble. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:22. He was instructed to stay away from her.

7:9 In the twilight, in the evening, In the middle of the night and in the darkness.

People prefer to sin under cover of darkness.

7:10 And behold, a woman comes to meet him, Dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart.

Cf. Tamar in Gen. 38:14,15.

7:11 She is boisterous and rebellious; Her feet do not remain at home;

Boisterous - loud and trying to attract attention.

Rebellious - is out of control. She does not recognize any authority - from God or man.

7:12 She is now in the streets, now in the squares, And lurks by every corner.

7:13 So she seizes him and kisses him, And with a brazen face she says to him:

Brazen - shameless. This would have been unheard of in the culture of the time.

7:14 "I was due to offer peace offerings; Today I have paid my vows." This is like saying, "I have been to church, so now let us have some fun!"

7:15 **“Therefore I have come out to meet you, To seek your presence earnestly, and I have found you.**

7:16 **“I have spread my couch with coverings, With colored linens of Egypt.**

She has prepared her bed for love-making knowing full well it will not be her husband who will enjoy what she offers.

7:17 **“I have sprinkled my bed With myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.**

7:18 **“Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with caresses.**

7:19 **“For the man is not at home, He has gone on a long journey;**

Marriage is built on trust. Her husband obviously trusted her, but she violated that trust.

7:20 **He has taken a bag of money with him, At full moon he will come home.”**

Her husband seems to be a wealthy business man. Therefore, she is not a common adulteress. She is not doing this for money.

7:21 **With her many persuasions she entices him; With her flattering lips she seduces him.**

She has with her many persuasions:

I. Appealed to his lust (15-18), and

II. Broken down his objections (19,20).

7:22 **Suddenly he follows her, As an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as one in fetters to the discipline of a fool,**

Suddenly - after all of his defenses are removed and he has visualized the pleasure, it does not take long for him to surrender.

Slaughter - he does know what is about to happen.

7:23 **Until an arrow pierces through his liver, As a bird hastens to the snare, So he does not know that it will cost him his life.**

Liver - the seat of passions. Cf. Lam. 2:11.

Cost him his life:

- I. Because the husband returns (?), or
- II. Because he has given over to forces of wickedness which corrupt and ruin.

He will pay a much higher price for this than he ever imagined.

7:24 **Now therefore, my sons, listen to me, And pay attention to the words of my mouth.**

7:25 **Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her paths.**

Heart - the mind or will. Avoid thinking about it.

Paths - paths because they have been well traveled by others.

He was told this earlier, now it is repeated.

7:26 **For many are the victims she has cast down, And numerous are all her slain.**

7:27 **Her house is the way to Sheol, Descending to the chambers of death.**

This admonition is a negative one, but the point is that a man can and must make responsible decisions.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8:1-5 The call of wisdom.

8:1 **Does not wisdom call, And understanding lift up her voice?**

Unlike the temptress in chapter seven, wisdom does not speak seductively under the cover of twilight.

8:2 **On top of the heights beside the way, Where the paths meet, she takes her stand;**

8:3 **Beside the gates, at the opening to the city, At the entrance of the doors, she cries out:**

She goes where the people are engaged in business.

Wisdom speaks clearly and forcibly in public places where she can be heard by all who will listen.

8:4 **“To you, O men, I call, And my voice is to the sons of men.**

The audience she appeals to is both broad and narrow:

Broad: She calls men in general, and

Narrow: Those who are young, not having the maturity and ability to make wise decisions.

8:5 **“O naive ones, discern prudence; And, O fools, discern wisdom.**

Each has the potential to be wise, but that will be lost if they do not listen.

8:6-11 The worth of wisdom.

8:6 **“Listen, for I shall speak noble things; And the opening of my lips will produce right things.**

The emphasis in verses 6-9 is on the straightness and rightness of wisdom's speaking. Her words are not crooked or deceptive.

8:7 **“For my mouth will utter truth; And wickedness is an abomination to my lips.**

8:8 **“All the utterances of my mouth are in righteousness; There is nothing crooked or perverted in them.**

The hearer need not fear, her words are true and honest.

8:9 **“They are all straightforward to him who understands, And right to those who find knowledge.**

The idea is that those who receive wisdom will be able to understand her.

8:10 **“Take my instruction, and not silver, And knowledge rather than choicest gold.**

Involvement is necessary. Wisdom does not come by accident, but is worth far more than earthly riches.

8:11 **“For wisdom is better than jewels; And all desirable things can not compare with her.**

8:12-16 The power of wisdom.

8:12 **“I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And I find knowledge and discretion.**

You know best the things you must live with.

Wisdom knows how to get things done in the affairs of men.

8:13 **“The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, And the perverted mouth, I hate.**

This is one of the two verses which join wisdom with the Lord (v. 35).

This shows that education and religion are united.

8:14 **Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, power is mine.**

She is a fully prepared counselor who is competent to guide men in the art of living.

8:15 **“By me kings reign, And rulers decree justice.**

Wisdom claims that it is by her power that kings and rulers govern.

8:16 **“By me princes rule, and nobles, All who judge rightly.**

8:17-21 The rewards of wisdom.

8:17 **“I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me.**

Wisdom guarantees she will respond to those who seek her. She will not hide herself. Cf. Jas. 1:5.

8:18 **“Riches and honor are with me, Enduring wealth and righteousness.**

This shows the proper balance. The idea is to seek wisdom first, then wealth will often follow. And you will also have the wisdom and intelligence to use it correctly. Cf. Mt. 6:33.

8:19 **“My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold, And my yield than choicest silver.**

Wisdom offers more than wealth. She offers a satisfying life. Money cannot buy happiness.

8:20 **“I walk in the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice,**

Thus those in the wicked path will not encounter wisdom.

8:21 **To endow those who love me with wealth, That I may fill their treasuries.**

God may want to bless us with wealth, but will not because He knows we do not know enough how to handle it properly. Cf. Mt. 25:15 (talents), each according to his ability.

8:22-31 Wisdom personified.

8:22 **“The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, Before His works of old.**

Wisdom has always been present.

8:23 **“From everlasting I was established, From the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth.**

The ancient age of wisdom is expressed. She has priority in time, before anything or anyone was created. She is not prior to the Lord.

God appointed wisdom as king.

8:24 **“When there were no depths I was brought forth, When there were no springs abounding with water.**

Wisdom is a child of the Lord.

8:25 **“Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills I was brought forth;**

8:26 **While He had not yet made the earth and the fields, Nor the first dust of the world.**

8:27 **“When He established the heavens, I was there, When He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep,**

The Bible testified to the earth being round long before science realized it!

8:28 **When He made firm the skies above, When the springs of the deep became fixed,**

Wisdom is a witness of creation, but she took no active part in the creation of the world. That was the work of Jehovah.

8:29 **When He set for the sea its boundary, So that the water should not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth;**

8:30 **Then I was beside Him, as a master workman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him,**

This seems to portray wisdom as a child staying beside Jehovah. Thus, wisdom has status unparalleled in the whole creation. Her message to men is grounded in a unique relationship to the Lord.

8:31 **Rejoicing in the world, His earth, And having my delight in the sons of men.**

8:32-36 The admonition of wisdom.

8:32 **“Now therefore, O sons, listen to me, For blessed are they who keep my ways.**

A concluding exhortation. Wisdom wants her pupils to heed her message and keep her ways. Cf. Lk. 11:28.

8:33 **“Heed instruction and be wise, And do not neglect it.**

Cf. Lk. 11:28.

8:34 **“Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at my doorposts.**

A continual vigil outside her doors is encouraged.

8:35 **“For he who finds me finds life, And obtains favor from the LORD.**

This is the only way to please God - obtain His wisdom. Cf. 1 Cor. 1:18-31.

8:36 **“But he who sins against me injures himself; All those who hate me love death.”**

Those who ignore wisdom inflict death upon themselves.

CHAPTER NINE

9:1-6 The invitation of wisdom.

9:1 **Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars;**

The idea seems to be that wisdom is well established, easy to find and well worth the cost of her house.

9:2 **She has prepared her food, she has mixed her wine; She has also set her table;**

9:3 **She has sent out her maidens, she calls From the tops of the heights of the city:**

9:4 **“Whoever is naive, let him turn in here!” To him who lacks understanding she says,**

Cf. verse 16.

9:5 **“Come, eat of my food, And drink of the wine I have mixed.**

This seems to be mocking the fertility temple where one would go to be with a temple prostitute. Wisdom is an extension of God and as such has so much more to offer.

9:6 **“Forsake your folly and live, And proceed in the way of understanding.”**

9:7-12 The uselessness of correcting a scoffer.

9:7 **He who corrects a scoffer gets dishonor for himself, And he who reproves a wicked man gets insults for himself.**

Here is the way of identifying the scoffer. If we attempt to correct him and he refuses to accept it then he is a scoffer. This seems to demonstrate that no matter how much wisdom tries, some men will not be taught.

9:8 **Do not reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you, Reprove a wise man, and he will love you.**

9:9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser, Teach a righteous man, and he will increase his learning.

If we consider ourselves to be wise and righteous, we must ask ourselves how teachable we are.

9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

A different word is used here than in 1:7. Here it means a necessary prerequisite or qualification. Cf. 8:13; 10:27.

9:11 For by me your days will be multiplied, And years of life will be added to you.

Wisdom is speaking.

9:12 If you are wise, you are wise for yourself, And if you scoff, you alone will bear it.

Each man experiences personally the consequences of his own conduct.

9:13-18 The invitation of folly.

9:13 The woman of folly is boisterous, She is naive, and knows nothing.

Yet she thinks she is a woman of understanding. Wisdom invites men as a teacher while the foolish woman invites them as lovers, and wants them to use their bodies for her pleasures. The result is death.

9:14 And she sits at the doorway of her house, On a seat by the high places of the city,

There are parallels between the “woman of wisdom” (9:1-6) and the “woman of folly.” They both have a house (a permanent place in every culture). They both offer invitations. Thus it is up to us to decide who to listen to.

9:15 Calling to those who pass by, Who are making their paths straight:

9:16 “Whoever is naive, let him turn in here,” And to him who lacks understanding she says,

9:17 **“Stolen water is sweet; And bread eaten in secret is pleasant.”**

“Getting away with sin.”

9:18 **But he does not know that the dead are there, That her guests are in the depths of Sheol.**

It is the realm of death itself.

CHAPTER TEN

PRESENTS CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE RIGHTEOUS MAN, THE WICKED MAN AND THE FOOLISH MAN.

EXCURSUS #6 - RIGHTEOUSNESS (TWO PAGES)

10:1 **The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish son is a grief to his mother.**

Fathers enjoy seeing sons willing to be taught and learn wisdom.

A son who will not learn causes his mother to endure much suffering.

Wisdom is necessary for the “good life” which parents desire for their children.

10:2 **Ill-gotten gains do not profit, But righteousness delivers from death.**

Do not profit - in the end. These “ill-gotten gains,” literally “treasures of wickedness,” seem profitable and sound profitable but are not. One should be able to match his treasures with his righteousness. There is no real security in wealth acquired wickedly. It does matter how a man acquires his money and property.

10:3 **The LORD will not allow the righteous to hunger, But He will thrust aside the craving of the wicked.**

Generally speaking, the Lord will not allow those who try to do right to suffer. Cf. Psa. 37:26; Mt. 6:33.

10:4 **Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, But the hand of the diligent makes rich.**

Poverty is the product of indifference.

10:5 He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, But he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.

During harvest the whole family was needed in the field or vineyard. A son shows his true quality in such times.

10:6 Blessings are on the head of the righteous, But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

The righteous man receives blessings and leaves a good reputation behind him (v. 7).

10:7 The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot.

10:8-14 Schooling for success.

10:8 The wise of heart will receive commands, But a babbling fool will be thrown down.

10:9 He who walks in integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will be found out.

10:10-14 Contrasts the troublemaker in the community with the one who contributes to its welfare.

10:10 He who winks the eye causes trouble, And a babbling fool will be thrown down.

Winks - overlooking evil or perhaps a sign showing he is not telling the truth.

10:11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, But the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

The man whose speech cannot be taken at face value is a source of trouble.

10:12 Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all transgressions.

When love is behind one's actions it has a way of producing positive results. Cf. Jas. 5:20; Mt. 18:15,20.

10:13 On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found, But a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding.

The quality of speech is determined by its results. The speech of the fool gets him into trouble. Discipline is needed since reason and logic did not work. Cf. Prov. 26:3.

10:14 Wise men store up knowledge, But with the mouth of the foolish ruin is at hand.

Wise because they are silent, listening and storing up for good. It is quite difficult to learn when you are always talking. Cf. Jas. 1:19.

10:15 The rich man's wealth is his fortress, The ruin of the poor is their poverty.

The wise man does not underestimate the power of wealth. It provides protection. Yet he needs to be careful this wealth does not become his god. Cf. Lk. 12:15. The poor man must be careful or else he will use his poverty as an excuse and thus ruin himself.

10:16 The wages of the righteous is life, The income of the wicked, punishment.

Cf. Rom. 6:23.

10:17 He is on the path of life who heeds instruction, But he who forsakes reproof goes astray.

Here is one who has been instructed and disciplined but has forsaken it.

10:18 He who conceals hatred has lying lips, And he who spreads slander is a fool.

Conceals - he talks like a friend but is not. Even concealed hatred is wrong.

Fool - do you engage in gossip? You are a fool!

10:19 When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise.

You continue to talk so much you are bound to say something that will offend or damage another.

10:20 The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver, The heart of the wicked is worth little.

There is much power in speech and good speech is very valuable.

10:21 The lips of the righteous feed many, But the fools die for lack of understanding.

Feed many - through counsel and guidance. Cf. Hos. 4:6.

10:22 It is the blessing of the LORD that makes rich, And He adds no sorrow to it.

The idea seems to be that the way wealth is acquired is important. When one acquires wealth in a right way the Lord sends no sorrow with it.

10:23 Doing wickedness is like sport to a fool; And so is wisdom to a man of understanding.

To a fool wickedness is like fun and a playtime. So also is learning to one of understanding.

10:24 What the wicked fears will come upon him, And the desire of the righteous will be granted.

10:25 When the whirlwind passes, the wicked is no more, But the righteous has an everlasting foundation.

Cf. Mt. 7:24,25.

10:26 Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, So is the lazy one to those who send him.

Lazy - sluggard. The lazy performance of one sent on a mission brings unpleasantness and irritation.

10:27 The fear of the LORD prolongs life, But the years of the wicked will be shortened.

How did the fear of the Lord prolong life?

I. It kept one from trouble / sin / evil.

II. It encouraged one to keep specifics of Old Law (including sanitation laws).

III. It will bring special blessings from God.

Cf. 8:13; 14:27; 15:33.

10:28 The hope of the righteous is gladness, But the expectation of the wicked perishes.

10:29 The way of the LORD is a stronghold to the upright, But ruin to the workers of iniquity.

It provides a certain confidence and assurance.

10:30 The righteous will never be shaken, But the wicked will not dwell in the land.

If the people are righteous they will be allowed to stay in the land. If not, they will be removed. This also states the conditions of the land promise given to Abraham.

10:31 The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom, But the perverted tongue will be cut out.

10:32 The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable, But the mouth of the wicked, what is perverted.

Acceptable - to whom?

I. God first, then

II. Men.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

REASONABLE AND RIGHT RULES FOR LIVING

11:1-8 Right rule for purchasing.

11:1 A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, But a just weight is His delight.

There is a fundamental law in business - integrity. There are so many ways to cheat. It really pleases God when one is honest. Cf. Amos 2:6; 8:5.

11:2 When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom.

Dishonor - disgrace.

Humble - a reasonable, disciplined individual.

Pride is almost certainly going to lead to disaster. Humility, which is the opposite of pride, has the benefit of wisdom, thus success.

11:3 The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the falseness of the treacherous will destroy them.

The course of a man's life is determined by the nature of his inner self. What he is will determine what will happen to him.

11:4 Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, But righteousness delivers from death.

God really does not care about how much we have accumulated. He will judge based on how one lived his/her life.

Death - probably premature death.

The point in these verses is that righteousness can deliver one from anything.

Cf. Ezek. 7:19.

11:5 The righteousness of the blameless will smooth his way, But the wicked will fall by his own wickedness.

11:6 The righteousness of the upright will deliver them, But the treacherous will be caught by their own greed.

11:7 When a wicked man dies, his expectation will perish, And the hope of strong men perishes.

The wicked has no hope of anything beyond the grave.

11:8 The righteous is delivered from trouble, But the wicked takes his place.

The wicked receives the trouble instead.

11:9 With his mouth the godless man destroys his neighbor, But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.

Verbal assassination. If you do not watch your mouth and what you say, you are godless.

11:10,11 The effect of the righteous and the wicked on a city.

11:10 When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, And when the wicked perish, there is glad shouting.

Unfortunately this is not always true today. In fact, it seems to be rarely true today.

11:11 By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, But by the mouth of the wicked it is torn down.

The wisdom teachers were also concerned with the influence on the community.

11:12 He who despises his neighbor lacks sense, But a man of understanding keeps silent.

He controls himself by not saying what he thinks.

11:13 He who goes about as a tale bearer reveals secrets, But he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.

The trustworthy man is not a gossip. He does not speak about confidential matters. He is dependable.

11:14 Where there is no guidance, the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory.

When decisions are being made, those in a group are likely to be more successful.

11:15 He who is surety for a stranger will surely suffer for it, But he who hates going surety is safe.

A wise man refrains from business deals with strangers.

11:16 A gracious woman attains honor, And violent men attain riches.

Violent - this could mean energetic and strong. The contrast may be between

two ways of obtaining success. Perhaps this means that ruthlessness is not the only way to be successful.

11:17 The merciful man does himself good, But the cruel man does himself harm.

In addition to verse 16 this depicts the entire story of violence and cruelty. Cf. Mt. 5:7.

EXCURSUS #7 - THE WICKED (TWO PAGES)

11:18 The wicked earns deceptive wages, But he who sows righteousness gets a true reward.

If you “sow” righteousness, you will not have a crop failure. God guarantees success! Cf. Gal. 6:8,9.

11:19 He who is steadfast in righteousness will attain to life, And he who pursues evil will bring about his own death.

11:20 The perverse in heart are an abomination to the LORD, But the blameless in their walk are His delight.

Perverse - stubborn.

11:21 Assuredly, the evil man will not go unpunished, But the descendants of the righteous will be delivered.

Evil will be punished, either in this world or the next.

11:22 As a ring of gold in a swine's snout, So is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion.

Discretion - discrimination, good taste.

11:23 The desire of the righteous is only good, But the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

He has nothing else to hope for. Cf. Rom. 2:8,9.

11:24-31 Gives examples of unexpected results.

11:24 There is one who scatters, yet increases all the more, And there is one who withholds what is justly due, but it results only in want.

Economic facts of life - the one who hoards will find himself in poverty, but the one who invests will make money.

11:25 The generous man will be prosperous, And he who waters will himself be watered.

Cf. 2 Cor. 9:6,7.

11:26 He who withholds grain, the people will curse him, But blessing will be on the head of him who sells it.

11:27 He who diligently seeks good seeks favor, But he who searches after evil, it will come to him.

11:28 He who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like the green leaf.

Cf. 1 Tim. 6:17.

11:29 He who troubles his own house will inherit wind, And the foolish will be servant to the wisehearted.

Mismanagement of money will destroy a family. A man who manages money so badly, he ends up serving the wise man (who knows how to handle money). Cf. Jas. 5:20.

11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, And he who is wise wins souls.

This verse is not easily translated and is often debated as to its meaning. It seems to mean the wise save people from physical and spiritual disaster.

11:31 If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth, How much more the wicked and the sinner!

All will be "rewarded." Each will get what he deserves. Cf. 1 Pet. 4:18.

CHAPTER TWELVE

EXCURSUS #8 - WORDS

- 12:1 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, But he who hates reproof is stupid.**

The stupid man lacks rational ability and acts by instinct. People think more highly of those who want to improve themselves.

- 12:2 A good man will obtain favor from the LORD, But He will condemn a man who devises evil.**

- 12:3 A man will not be established by wickedness, But the root of the righteous will not be moved.**

Cf. Col. 2:7; Eph. 3:17f.

- 12:4 An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who shames him is as rottenness in his bones.**

Excellent - strong character. A good wife complements a man, enabling him to realize status and success. A poor wife saps his abilities and constantly keeps him from doing his best. She disgraces and damages his reputation through incompetence and immorality.

- 12:5 The thoughts of the righteous are just, But the counsels of the wicked are deceitful.**

- 12:6 The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, But the mouth of the upright will deliver them.**

- 12:7 The wicked are overthrown and are no more, But the house of the righteous will stand.**

- 12:8 A man will be praised according to his insight, But one of perverse mind will be despised.**

- 12:9 Better is he who is lightly esteemed and has a servant, Than he who honors himself and lacks bread.**

This is the “keeping up with the Joneses” passage. This commends the one who enjoys a modest but sure prosperity versus the one who pretends to be something he is not and then lacks necessities because of his vanity and over spend-

ing.

12:10 A righteous man has regard for the life of his beast, But the compassion of the wicked is cruel.

Animal rights. God does not sanction meaningless abuse of animals.

12:11 He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, But he who pursues vain things lacks sense.

Vain things - this is not defined, but it seems obvious that questionable, speculative financial dealings are in mind.

12:12 The wicked desires the booty of evil men, But the root of the righteous yields fruit.

Yields - because it nourishes and supports.

12:13 An evil man is ensnared by the transgression of his lips, But the righteous will escape from trouble.

12:14 A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his words, And the deeds of a man's hands will return to him.

Cf. Heb. 14:2.

12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

The fool has reliance on his own opinions, thus making him deaf to the advice of the wise man.

12:16 A fool's vexation is known at once, But a prudent man conceals dishonor.

Think, then speak!

12:17 He who speaks truth tells what is right, But a false witness, deceit.

12:18 There is one who speak rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing.

12:19 Truthful lips will be established forever, But a lying tongue is only for a moment.

12:20 Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, But counselors of peace have joy.

12:21 No harm befalls the righteous, But the wicked are filled with trouble.

12:22 Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, But those who deal faithfully are His delight.

12:23 A prudent man conceals knowledge, But the heart of fools proclaims folly.

The wise man does not live behind a facade of omniscience. That is the way of the fool.

The wise man:

I. Does not talk too much, and

II. Seeks to speak effectively.

12:24 The hand of the diligent will rule, But the slack hand will be put to forced labor.

Hard work will keep one from even harder work.

12:25 Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, But a good word makes it glad.

12:26 The righteous is a guide to his neighbor, But the way of the wicked leads them astray.

Care about helping others!

12:27 A slothful man does not roast his prey, But the precious possession of a man is diligence.

12:28 In the way of righteousness is life, And in its pathway there is no death.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

13:1 A wise son accepts his father's discipline, But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

The question is: "Are you a wise son?"

13:2 From the fruit of a man's mouth he enjoys good, But the desire of the treacherous is violence.

13:3 The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; The one who opens wide his lips comes to ruin.

Cf. Jas. 3:2.

13:4 The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, But the soul of the diligent is made fat.

The lazy man wants things but does not have them, while the diligent man has them because he is willing to work for the things he wants. Cf. 21:25.

13:5 A righteous man hates falsehood, But a wicked man acts disgustingly and shamefully.

13:6 Righteousness guards the one whose way is blameless, But wickedness subverts the sinner.

13:7 There is one who pretends to be rich, but has nothing; Another pretends to be poor, but has great wealth.

Both extremes are bad. The idea is that men should simply be honest and unpretentious.

13:8 The ransom of a man's life is his riches, But the poor hears no rebuke.

Riches - he is willing and able to pay the demanded ransom.

Rebuke - he does not receive "ransom notes" because there is no reason to blackmail him.

13:9 The light of the righteous rejoices, But the lamp of the wicked goes out.

13:10 Through presumption comes nothing but strife, But with those who receive counsel is wisdom.

A "know it all" loses the value of useful (and sometimes critical) dialogue with others.

13:11 Wealth obtained by fraud dwindles, But the one who gathers by labor increases it.

Obtaining money little by little is the best way. One who “gets rich quick” (i.e. stealing, lottery, etc.) is unstable and will probably lose it quickly.

13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

Expectations which repeatedly fail to be realized have a way of discouraging.

13:13 The one who despises the word will be in debt to it, But the one who fears the commandment will be rewarded.

Despises the word - of the teacher. The man who disregards the guidance of his wise teacher will ruin himself, while the man who respects his teachings will find success.

13:14 The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, To turn aside from the snares of death.

13:15 Good understanding produces favor, But the way of the treacherous is hard.

13:16 Every prudent man acts with knowledge, But a fool displays folly.

13:17 A wicked messenger falls into adversity, But a faithful envoy brings healing.

13:18 Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects discipline, But he who regards reproof will be honored.

13:19 Desire realized is sweet to the soul, But it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil.

13:20 He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.

This again states a cardinal principle of education. The one who wants to be wise will keep company with the wise. Wise people stimulate the development of their own kind. Unfortunately, the opposite is true. Fools beget fools, and sadly there are more fools than wise men!

13:21 Adversity pursues sinners, But the righteous will be rewarded with prosperity.

Proverbs are concerned with the general rule. There are exceptions (e.g. Job).

13:22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, And the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.

Cf. Eccl. 2:26.

13:23 Abundant food is in the fallow ground of the poor, But it is swept away by injustice.

The meaning of this verse is uncertain. The NASV views this as another illustration of the injustices done to the poor. Even when they are productive someone will always try to ruin their efforts.

13:24 He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

This verse supports corporal punishment as a proper form of parental discipline. Cf. Heb. 12:7.

13:25 The righteous has enough to satisfy his appetite, But the stomach of the wicked is in want.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

14:1 The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.

She works on being constructive. Men often receive enough criticism without getting it at home also.

14:2 He who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD, But he who is crooked in his ways despises Him.

The twisted, evil mind actually hates God.

14:3 In the mouth of the foolish is a rod for his back, But the lips of the wise will preserve them.

The fool's talk gets him into trouble.

14:4 Where no oxen are, the manger is clean, But much increase comes by the strength of the ox.

Do not mind the dirt because it is providing income.

14:5 A faithful witness will not lie, But a false witness speaks lies.

14:6 A scoffer seeks wisdom, and finds none, But knowledge is easy to him who has understanding.

Cf. Psa. 111:10.

14:7 Leave the presence of a fool, Or you will not discern words of knowledge.

It is a waste of time to stay in the presence of a fool because he will never say anything worthwhile.

14:8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, But the folly of fools is deceit.

14:9 Fools mock at sin, But among the upright there is good will.

God is pleased with those who are serious and sober when it comes to their sin - they deal with it!

14:10 The heart knows its own bitterness, And a stranger does not share its joy.

There is an inner self which understands its own bitterness as well as its own joy. Outsiders can not understand what you are experiencing. This is why we need to not say, "I know what you are going through." We should say this only if and when we have gone through the same thing. If we have not, we do not know!

14:11 The house of the wicked will be destroyed, But the tent of the upright will flourish.

14:12 There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

A way which, at the time seems like the very best way to go, may end up in death. Life has its inexplicable aspects. This is why we need God's directions. Cf. Jer. 10:23; Mt. 7:21,22.

14:13 Even in laughter the heart may be in pain, And the end of joy may be grief.

14:14 The backslider in heart will have his fill of his own ways, But a good man will be satisfied with his.

He is not dependable and consistent. His actions will return to haunt (bother) him.

14:15 The naive believes everything, But the prudent man considers his steps.

Naive - simple - he lacks the caution and analytical abilities of the prudent man.

14:16 A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, But a fool is arrogant and careless.

Arrogant and careless - about his own talents and abilities.

14:17 A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, And a man of evil devices is hated.

14:18 The naive inherit folly, But the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

14:19 The evil will bow down before the good, And the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

14:20 The poor is hated even by his neighbor, But those who love the rich are many.

This is an observation on the reality of life. It is not the way it ought to be, but is the way it often is. Cf. Lk. 15:11ff - the prodigal son.

14:21 He who despises his neighbor sins, But happy is he who is gracious to the poor.

14:22 Will they not go astray who devise evil? But kindness and truth will be to those who devise good.

Devise - plan.

14:23 In all labor there is profit, But more talk leads only to poverty.

This sets forth a basic maxim of life - work produces more than talk does. The wise man believes in work while a fool can talk himself into poverty. Cf. Mt. 21:28ff.

14:24 The crown of the wise is their riches, But the folly of fools is foolishness.

14:25 A truthful witness saves lives. But he who speaks lies is treacherous.

14:26 In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, And his children will have refuge.

14:27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, That one may avoid the snares of death.

The fear of the Lord will keep one from fatal pitfalls, disasters and premature death along the road of life.

14:28 In a multitude of people is a king's glory, But in the dearth of people is a prince's ruin.

Dearth - lack.

14:29 He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.

The wise man knows that anger cripples one's ability to make good decisions. Quick tempers only add more trouble. Cf. Jas. 1:19,20.

14:30 A tranquil heart is life to the body, But passion is rottenness to the bones.

There is a definite connection between inner peace and good health. A lack of satisfaction destroys good health.

14:31 He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, But he who is gracious to the needy honors Him.

Cf. Mt. 25:31-46.

14:32 The wicked is thrust down by his wrong-doing, But the righteous has a refuge when he dies.

14:33 Wisdom rests in the heart of one who has understanding, But in the bosom of fools it is made known.

14:34 Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a disgrace to any people.

Righteousness - doing the right thing in any given circumstance, including morals and ethics. Notice that national righteousness and sin are being discussed!

14:35 The king's favor is toward a servant who acts wisely, But his anger is toward him who acts shamefully.

Kings need skilled and competent men for intricate national affairs.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

An answer needs to be given, it just needs to be a gentle answer.

15:2 The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, But the mouth of fools spouts folly.

15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.

Those who think they will get away with something will not. God sees everything. Cf. Eccl. 12:14; Heb. 4:13.

15:4 A soothing tongue is a tree of life, But perversion in it crushes the spirit.

Tree of life - provides a balm and comfort. This is what a Christian's words should do. We may not be the kind who assaults one physically, but it is no better to assault one verbally.

15:5 A fool rejects his father's discipline, But he who regards reproof is prudent.

Regards reproof - learns to be wise.

15:6 Much wealth is in the house of the righteous, But trouble is in the income of the wicked.

Much wealth - because of the contentment of righteousness.

15:7 The lips of the wise spread knowledge, But the hearts of fools are not so.

15:8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight.

Abomination - abhorrent, repulsive, rejected.

Cf. Psalms 51:16,17 - God determines worship! Cf. Psalm 66:1-4; Genesis 4:4-10 (Cain). This is one of the few proverbs that deals with worship.

15:9 The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But He loves him who pursues righteousness.

15:10 Stern discipline is for him who forsakes the way; He who hates reproof will die.

15:11 Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD, How much more the hearts of men!

Any secrets known beyond the grave are known only by God. And if God knows those things He surely knows the heart of a man.

15:12 A scoffer does not love one who reproves him, He will not go to the wise.

15:13 A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, But when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.

This shows how happiness can arise from within while verse 30 shows the same thing from without.

15:14 The mind of the intelligent seeks knowledge, But the mouth of fools feeds on folly.

15:15 All the days of the afflicted are bad, But a cheerful heart has a continual feast.

A lot of this is our own doing. We need to learn to be happy and content. Compare with Job.

15:16 Better is a little with the fear of the LORD, Than great treasure and turmoil with it.

Cf. 1 Tim. 6:6.

15:17 Better is a dish of vegetables where love is, Than a fattened ox and hatred with it.

This has been proven true so many times, yet couples still do things that undermine the marriage while increasing the wealth (i.e. two jobs, etc.).

15:18 A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger pacifies contention.

The vocabulary of this verse suggests excessive litigation and legal action. The

man quick to say “I will sue you” is trouble in any community.

15:19 The way of the sluggard is as a hedge of thorns, But the path of the upright is a highway.

15:20 A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish man despises his mother.

15:21 Folly is joy to him who lacks sense, But a man of understanding walks straight.

15:22 Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they succeed.

It is a sign of wisdom to seek advice and it will usually prove to be a good choice.

15:23 A man has joy in an apt answer, And how delightful is a timely word!

Cf. Col. 4:6.

15:24 The path of life leads upward for the wise, That he may keep away from Sheol below.

15:25 The LORD will tear down the house of the proud, But He will establish the boundary of the widow.

The Lord is the protector of those who need His protection from the wicked and powerful land-grabbers. Cf. 16:18.

15:26 Evil plans are an abomination to the LORD, But pleasant words are pure.

15:27 He who profits illicitly troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live.

15:28 The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.

Cf. 1 Pet. 3:15.

15:29 The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.

15:30 Bright eyes gladden the heart; Good news puts fat on the bones.

Bright eyes - positive outlook. Someone with a friendly face (or good news) can make almost anyone feel good inside.

15:31 He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof Will dwell among the wise.

Example of synthetic parallelism (see introduction).

15:32 He who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding.

The one who neglects discipline harms himself most of all.

15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, And before honor comes humility.

Cf. 10:27; 19:23.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

“Man proposes, but God disposes.”

16:1 The plans of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.

The limitations of man to plan his life are disclosed in verses 1,2,9. What God wants should be the determining factor. Yet, man should think out his plans.

16:2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the LORD weighs the motives.

16:3 Commit your works to the LORD, And your plans will be established.

Cf. 1 Pet. 5:7; Jas. 4:13-17; Psa. 37:5.

16:4 The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil.

God prepared a place for the wicked even before there were any wicked men. The idea is that there are ultimately no “loose ends” in God’s scheme of things. Everything will be put to some use and matched with proper disposition. Cf. Isa. 45:7; 2 Pet. 2:12.

16:5 Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.

16:6 By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil.

16:7 When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

16:8 Better is a little with righteousness Than great income with injustice.

16:9 The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

Cf. Prov. 2:8; 3:23; 4:26; Jer. 10:23.

16:10 A divine decision is in the lips of the king; His mouth should not err in judgment.

16:11 A just balance and scales belong to the LORD; All the weights of the bag are His concern.

Cf. Amos 8:5 - wheat selling business with a small basket and a large dollar.

16:12 It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, For a throne is established on righteousness.

16:13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings, And he who speaks right is loved.

16:14 The wrath of a king is as messengers of death, But a wise man will appease it.

16:15 In the light of a king's face is life, And his favor is like a cloud with the spring rain.

16:16 How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver.

16:17 The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who watches his way preserves his life.

This is the simple yet powerful truth of the Proverbs. If you have not understood by now and still do not know what the "upright highway" is, it is to depart from evil.

16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling.

God brings about the destruction. Cf. 15:25. The foremost problem with pride is that it conflicts with the principle of wisdom - fear of the Lord.

16:19 It is better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, Than to divide the spoil with the proud.

One's attitude is crucial. If dividing the spoil will promote pride and arrogance you will be better off staying with the lowly.

16:20 He who gives attention to the word shall find good, And blessed is he who trusts in the LORD.

Those who give attention to God's word will find good and if they trust (obey) that word they will be blessed.

16:21 The wise in heart will be called discerning, And sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.

Verses 21 and 23 both say that wisdom will undoubtedly make a good impression.

16:22 Understanding is a fountain of life to him who has it, But the discipline of fools is folly.

16:23 The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, And adds persuasiveness to his lips.

He presents arguments that are hard to disregard. Cf. Mt. 12:34.

16:24 Pleasant words are a honeycomb, Sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

It is a sign of wisdom to say nice things when we can.

16:25 There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

To riches, to success, to salvation. Cf. v. 2; 14:12.

16:26 A worker's appetite works for him, For his hunger urges him on.

This teaches truth on incentives. One works because he likes to eat. Contrast this with 2 Thess. 3:10.

16:27 A worthless man digs up evil, While his words are as a scorching fire.

He has an incentive also, but this is to injure someone or destroy their reputation.

16:28 A perverse man spreads strife, And a slanderer separates intimate friends.

He has an incentive also, a desire to create strife and division. Cf. 17:4.

16:29 A man of violence entices his neighbor, And leads him in a way that is not good.

This man's incentive is to take advantage of his neighbor.

16:30 He who winks his eyes does so to devise perverse things; He who compresses his lips brings evil to pass.

There is a relationship between mannerisms and character.

16:31 A gray head is a crown of glory; It is found in the way righteousness.

Gray - translated "hoary" in some versions (e.g. RSV). The modern world idolizes "youth." But God's word places great value on old age and the wisdom and experience that comes with it.

16:32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.

Self-discipline is a very powerful attribute. Same thought as 15:17. It is better to have a quiet meal in an atmosphere of love.

16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.

In this time the Urim and the Thummim were probably used. Cf. Acts 1:26 (apostles); Josh. 19:51; 14:1,2 (land inheritance); 1 Chron. 25:8 (temple service).

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

17:1 Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it, Than a house full of feasting with strife.

17:2 A servant who acts wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully, And will share in the inheritance among brothers.

A man who operates with skill and success can overcome disadvantages such as being poor or being a slave.

17:3 The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, But the LORD tests hearts.

Men can find out the value of gold and silver, but only God can determine the true quality of our hearts.

17:4 An evildoer listens to wicked lips, A liar pays attention to a destructive tongue.

Gossip has always been a problem in every community. The reason for this? There are always those willing to listen.

17:5 He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker; He who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished.

There are always people who will turn themselves into this type of “monster.” They actually enjoy the weaknesses and problems of others.

17:6 Grandchildren are the crown of old men, And the glory of sons is their fathers.

The ideal family is one of harmony and mutual admiration. There is no “generation gap” here.

17:7 Excellent speech is not fitting for a fool; Much less are lying lips to a prince.

There are some things that do not belong together. But when they are together something is amiss!

17:8 A bribe is a charm in the sight of its owner; Wherever he turns, he prospers.

Unfortunately a bribe is a powerful and effective tool. The wise man must not close his eyes to the sad ability of its usage in government and business (in all areas of life).

Charm - literally “stone of favor.” In other words, this is the man’s “lucky charm,” his “ace in the hole,” that he will use to get his way.

17:9 He who covers a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.

Tolerance and sensitivity, as well as being forgiving, are the pillars of every true

friendship.

17:10 A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding Than a hundred blows into a fool.

Rebuke - just words.

Hundred blows - physical force.

17:11 A rebellious man seeks only evil, So a cruel messenger will be sent against him.

He will find evil! It will come to him!

17:12 Let a man meet a bear robbed of her cubs, Rather than a fool in his folly.

There is great danger in the presence of a fool.

17:13 He who returns evil for good, Evil will not depart from his house.

You do truly reap what you have sown. David especially experienced the second part of this verse. Cf. 13:21; 2 Sam. 12:10.

17:14 The beginning of strife is like letting out water, So abandon the quarrel before it breaks out.

Good advice concerning quarrels - stop them before they start! If not the "dam will break" and irreparable damage will be done.

17:15 He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.

The background here is of legal proceedings. God hates injustice of any kind.

17:16 Why is there a price in the hand of a fool to buy wisdom, When he has no sense?

A student has his tuition money in hand but it will do no good if he lacks the ability and discipline to learn.

17:17 A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.

Are friends and brothers a parallel here? If so, real friendship has a strong and enduring quality, even during crises.

17:18 A man lacking in sense pledges, And becomes surety in the presence of his neighbor.

17:19 He who loves transgression loves strife; He who raises his door seeks destruction.

Raises his door - being proud.

17:20 He who has a crooked mind finds no good, And he who is perverted in his language falls into evil.

There is nothing pure in him, he makes everything dirty.

17:21 He who begets a fool does so to his sorrow, And the father of a fool has no joy.

This verse along with verse 6 give the two sides of parenthood - joy and sorrow.

17:22 A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.

17:23 A wicked man receives a bribe from the bosom To pervert the ways of justice.

Bosom - literally "lap." A corruption of the casting of lots?

A man is wicked if he offers a bribe (v. 8) or if he accepts one.

17:24 Wisdom is in the presence of the one who has understanding, But the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.

Ends of the earth - gazing out the window. Wisdom comes to one who is able to concentrate and stay focused. He is able to give his attention to the task.

17:25 A foolish son is a grief to his father, And bitterness to her who bore him.

They wish they had never brought him into the world.

17:26 It is also not good to fine the righteous, Nor to strike the noble for their uprightness.

You had better never condemn an innocent man.

17:27 He who restrains his words has knowledge, And he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.

Think before you speak!

Cool spirit - composed, controlled, able to deal with emotional issues.

17:28 Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; When he closes his lips, he is counted prudent.

Intelligence is like a river; the deeper it flows the less noise it makes. This is ironic humor. Even fools can be thought wise if they will remain quiet. The lesson: do not talk so much.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

18:1 He who separates himself seeks his own desire, He quarrels against all sound wisdom.

One who is unsociable cares only about his own selfish concerns. He is against everything - even good, solid suggestions.

18:2 A fool does not delight in understanding, But only in revealing his own mind.

A fool is not interested in trying to understand things. What he really wants to do is tell you what he thinks. To understand takes more work than the fool is willing to invest.

18:3 When a wicked man comes, contempt also comes, And with dishonor comes reproach.

Reproach - disgrace. This shows the result of wickedness.

18:4 The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; The fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.

The wise man has a continual source of wisdom.

18:5 To show partiality to the wicked is not good, Nor to thrust aside the righteous in judgment.

People foolishly choose the most popular to be their friends, even though they may be wicked.

18:6 A fool's lips bring strife, And his mouth calls for blows.

His mouth constantly gets him into trouble. The fool attracts hostility and retaliation.

18:7 A fool's mouth is his ruin, And his lips are the snare of his soul.

18:8 The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the body.

These leave a scar. Watch your words! This indicates the desire for gossip. We may forget the good things we hear about people, but easily remember the bad things and "whisper" them to others who are eager to devour them.

18:9 He also who is slack in his work is brother to him who destroys.

Of the same class and sharing the same nature.

18:10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe.

Is like a strong tower - the righteous man who runs to the Lord will find security in Him which is provided by a fortified tower. This security is not accessible to the dangers below.

18:11 A rich man's wealth is his strong city, And like a high wall in his own imagination.

There is also something else that provides strength - cf. 10:15a.

18:12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, But humility goes before honor.

Haughty - because he thinks he can control everything.

Humility - perhaps meaning that once he learns that he can not control everything he is humble. Humility leads to greatness.

18:13 He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.

Do not answer until you hear the whole statement and know what is involved. It pays to listen before talking. We have probably learned this "a thousand times," yet we still have a tendency to judge before all the facts are known.

18:14 The spirit of a man can endure his sickness, But a broken spirit who can bear?

Broken spirit - if the spirit is crushed, a man's sickness is fatal because the inner source of resistance is gone. Physical weakness can be counterbalanced by determination of the spirit (i.e. mind and will).

18:15 The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

Acquires - do not merely listen, inquire!

18:16 A man's gift makes room for him, And brings him before great men.

People let him in *because* of the gift. However money, when properly used, can gain a man entrance into the circles of high society and great influence.

18:17 The first to plead his case seems just, Until another comes and examines him.

Just - righteous. This shows the value of close examination.

18:18 The lot puts an end to contentions, And decides between the mighty.

Reference to legal cases, particularly those whose investigations are drawn out and indecisive. In such situations, a settlement by the use of the casting of lots is commendable because it will settle what men cannot, or will not decide by normal legal procedures. Cf. 16:33.

18:19 A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, And contentions are like the bars of a castle.

Bars of a castle - difficult to break down.

18:20 With the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach will be satisfied; He will be satisfied with the product of his lips.

The idea seems to be that proper speech can put him in a position to earn a living.

18:21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit.

Because of the tongue's power it is imperative to use it properly.

18:22 He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the LORD.

The Proverbs believe in the benefits of marriage despite its obvious hazards (21:9).

18:23 The poor man utters supplications, But the rich man answers roughly.

The poor man has to worry about properly asking for help. The rich man does not.

18:24 A man of many friends comes to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

There is a friendship which endures more strongly and loyally than one's own relatives. These are genuine friends.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

19:1 Better a poor man who walks in his integrity Than he who is perverse in speech and is a fool.

The second part of this proverb seems to indicate that the fool is trying to swindle his way into wealth by speech which takes advantage of others.

19:2 Also it is not good for a person to be without knowledge, And he who makes haste with his feet errs.

The impulsive person who acts without thinking will fall into sin.

19:3 The foolishness of man subverts his way, And his heart rages against the LORD.

Take responsibility for your own actions. You cannot blame God for your faults.

19:4 Wealth adds many friends, But a poor man is separated from his friend.

Solomon was realistic about wealth. This is not the way it ought to be even though in reality it is the way it is.

19:5 A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who tells lies will not escape.

19:6 Many will entreat the favor of a generous man, And every man is a friend to him who gives gifts.

He is probably showing the difficulty a rich man has in distinguishing those who are his friends from those who want to use him and his wealth.

19:7 All the brothers of a poor man hate him; How much more do his friends go far from him! He pursues them with words, but they are gone.

19:8 He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; He who keeps understanding will find good.

The idea here is that the one who develops his mind is his own best friend.

19:9 A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who tells lies will perish.

An exact repeat of verse 5.

19:10 Luxury is not fitting for a fool; Much less for a slave to rule over princes.

The ancients believed there should be a correlation between the social order and the moral order.

19:11 A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, And it is his glory to overlook a transgression.

We live in a society that considers it a virtue to be quick to fight for your rights and refuse to allow a personal offense to go unanswered. Cf . Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13.

19:12 The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion, But his favor is like dew on the grass.

19:13 A foolish son is destruction to his father, And the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping.

19:14 House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the LORD.

Wise men recognized there was a considerable amount of uncertainty in the choice of a wife. Thus, a good wife is accredited to God.

19:15 Laziness casts into a deep sleep, And an idle man will suffer hunger.

Lethargic and apathetic.

19:16 He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, But he who is careless of his ways will die.

Commandment - of Moses? teacher? or father?

His ways - his teacher's ways.

19:17 He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, And He will repay him for his good deed.

The obligation to care for the poor is stressed. God takes care of the needy and repays the man who helps them. Cf. Heb. 6:10.

19:18 Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death.

Discipline while there is still time to influence the life of a child. There is a limit to the discipline.

19:19 A man of great anger shall bear the penalty, For if you rescue him, you will only have to do it again.

19:20 Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days.

19:21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, But the counsel of the LORD, it will stand.

God's purposes are worked out regardless of the plans and purposes of men.

19:22 What is desirable in a man is his kindness, And it is better to be a poor man than a liar.

The real measure of a person is his character, not what he owns.

19:23 The fear of the LORD leads to life, So that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil.

There is a measure of security for the one who fears God. Note the contrast in that "fear" can bring sweet, peaceful sleep. Cf. 15:33.

19:24 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish, And will not even bring it back to his mouth.

19:25 Strike a scoffer and the naive may become shrewd, But reprove one who has understanding and he will gain knowledge.

Naive - simple, immature, untutored.

One who has understanding - this one needs no such process of learning such as seeing the punishment of others. He can accept and utilize correction directly.

Punishment given to one person provides a learning opportunity to the other.

19:26 He who assaults his father and drives his mother away Is a shameful and disgraceful son.

People today feel that this is contemporary problem only.

19:27 Cease listening, my son, to discipline, And you will stray from the words of knowledge.

Ironical twist - used to show bad consequences of rejecting training.

19:28 A rascally witness makes a mockery of justice, And the mouth of the wicked spreads iniquity.

Spreads iniquity - his favorite food.

19:29 Judgments are prepared for scoffers, And blows for the back of fools.

Judgments - plural! All types of punishments are available (and will be used) for these types of people.

CHAPTER TWENTY

20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.

Is not wise - cannot act wisely. Drunkenness is a symptom of over indulgence and a loss of self-discipline.

The normal use of wine on festal occasions was accepted (cf. 3:10; 9:2,5; Eccl. 9:7; Psa. 104:15), but there were constant warnings concerning its use (Amos 6:6; Hos. 7:5; Isa. 5:11-12,22). Wisdom teachers know of its dangers (cf. 23:29,

30).

20:2 The terror of a king is like the growling of a lion; He who provokes him to anger forfeits his own life.

Growling of a lion - very frightening.

20:3 Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, But any fool will quarrel.

20:4 The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, So he begs during the harvest and has nothing.

It is a characteristic of the sluggard that he does not work when he is supposed to, but he looks for a harvest of crops anyway. He knows what he wants, but lacks the energy and planning in order to obtain it.

20:5 A plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, But a man of understanding draws it out.

Deep water - not easily seen or grasped.

Draws it out - he has the ability.

20:6 Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, But who can find a trustworthy man?

True friendship is rare. There are many superficial friends.

20:7 A righteous man who walks in his integrity - How blessed are his sons after him.

Because they receive the benefits of his character.

20:8 A king who sits on the throne of justice Disperses all evil with his eyes.

He sifts out the evidence of legal cases before him in order to make the right judgment.

20:9 Who can say, "I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin"?

"All have sinned." Cf. Rom. 3:9; 1 Jn. 1:8.

20:10 Differing weights and differing measures, Both of them are abominable to the LORD.

20:11 It is by his deeds that a lad distinguishes himself If his conduct is pure and right.

Verbal professions and external appearances are not decisive. Performance is essential. This is a very good verse for us today.

20:12 The hearing ear and the seeing eye, The LORD has made both of them.

Connected with verse 13. When one uses these properly he has the necessities of life.

20:13 Do not love sleep, lest you become poor; Open your eyes, and you will be satisfied with food.

Wisdom teachers were early risers and were concerned about sleeping too much.

20:14 “Bad, bad,” says the buyer; But when he goes his way, then he boasts.

20:15 There is gold, and an abundance of jewels; But the lips of knowledge are a more precious thing.

Wisdom is worth more than any wealth. Cf. 3:15,16; 16:16; 22:1.

20:16 Take his garment when he becomes surety for a stranger; And for foreigners, hold him in pledge.

Difficult - ideas:

- I. Lender is advised to be more strict with forgiveness than with Israelites. Cf. Ex. 22:26,27; Deut. 15:1-3.
- II. If you are dealing with a person who is a bad credit risk, particularly if he is liable for debts of forgiveness, get security for yourself (i.e. take his garments).

20:17 Bread obtained by falsehood is sweet to a man, But afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.

The satisfaction of dishonesty may be sweet for a while, but it does not last.

20:18 Prepare plans by consultation, And make war by wise guidance.

No man should try to conduct a military campaign by himself. He needs the counsel and guidance of others.

20:19 He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip.

The tale bearer will not keep confidences, so do not associate with him.

20:20 He who curses his father or his mother, His lamp will go out in time of darkness.

It is interesting that this says nothing about legal punishment and the one who curses his parents will bring an appropriate punishment upon himself. Cf. Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9.

20:21 An inheritance gained hurriedly at the beginning, Will not be blessed in the end.

Perhaps referring to wealth obtained violently or a “get rich” scheme.

20:22 Do not say, “I will repay evil”; Wait for the LORD, and He will save you.

Personal retaliation is not up to man. Cf. Rom. 12:17.

20:23 Differing weights are an abomination to the LORD, And a false scale is not good.

20:24 Man’s steps are ordained by the LORD, How then can man understand his way?

Man’s freedom to act is not in question. But there is a basic and ultimate limitation to that freedom.

20:25 It is a snare for a man to say rashly, “It is holy!” And after the vows to make inquiry.

One should count the cost before he commits himself or his property to God. Cf. Eccl. 5:4,5.

20:26 A wise king winnows the wicked, And drives the threshing wheel over them.

20:27 The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, Searching all the innermost parts of his being.

Ideas:

- I. Man is made in God's image and functions like Him;
- II. Nothing is hidden from divine scrutiny.

20:28 Loyalty and truth preserve the king, And he upholds his throne by righteousness.

The king needs the support of the people and he himself must manifest these same qualities.

20:29 The glory of young men is their strength, And the honor of old men is their gray hair.

The beauty of old age is, unfortunately, a lost element today.

20:30 Stripes that wound scour away evil, And strokes reach the innermost parts.

Corporal punishment is good for the character.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

21:1 The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.

The king needs to realize that he, too, is under the control of God. Cf. Dan. 4:17; 1 Tim. 2:1.

21:2 Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts.

21:3 To do righteousness and justice Is desired by the LORD rather than sacrifice.

Cf. 1 Sam. 15:22. Sacrifices are secondary to more essential qualities. Cf. Isa. 1:11ff.

21:4 Haughty eyes and a proud heart, The lamp of the wicked, is sin.

An attitude of this kind makes sacrifices unacceptable.

21:5 The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage, But everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty.

Hasty - we might think of these as “quick fixes.”

21:6 The getting of treasures by a lying tongue Is a fleeting vapor, the pursuit of death.

21:7 The violence of the wicked will drag them away, Because they refuse to act with justice.

21:8 The way of a guilty man is crooked, But as for the pure, his conduct is upright.

21:9 It is better to live in a corner of a roof, Than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

This is not a well-equipped and comfortable room. It is something far less than the comfort found below. Cf. 18:22; 21:19.

21:10 The soul of the wicked desires evil; His neighbor finds no favor in his eyes.

21:11 When the scoffer is punished, the naive becomes wise; But when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge.

21:12 The Righteous One considers the house of the wicked, Turning the wicked to ruin.

21:13 He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be answered.

Cf. 1 Jn. 3:17.

21:14 A gift in secret subdues anger, And a bribe in the bosom, strong wrath.

Subdues anger - the wisdom teachers are not promoting this, but they knew that occasionally this technique was necessary.

21:15 The execution of justice is joy for the righteous, But is terror to the workers of iniquity.

21:16 A man who wanders from the way of understanding Will rest in the assembly of the dead.

21:17 He who loves pleasure will become a poor man; He who loves wine and oil will not become rich.

21:18 The wicked is a ransom for the righteous, And the treacherous is in the place of the upright.

Perhaps the meaning is that the wicked person gets into the trouble he had actually planned for the righteous. Cf. 22:4.

21:19 It is better to live in a desert land, Than with a contentious and vexing woman.

21:20 There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise, But a foolish man swallows it up.

The wise man knows how to possess and preserve wealth.

21:21 He who pursues righteousness and loyalty Finds life, righteousness and honor.

Pursues - shows energetic and urgent action. Cf. Mt. 5:6.

21:22 A wise man scales the city of the mighty, And brings down the stronghold in which they trust.

Intelligent action is better than military fortification.

21:23 He who guards his mouth and his tongue, Guards his soul from troubles.

Disciplined speech is necessary!

21:24 "Proud, " "Haughty, " "Scoffer," are his names, Who acts with insolent pride.

21:25 The desire of the sluggard puts him to death, For his hands refuse to work;

It is the desire that kills him because he does not possess the discipline to work to fulfill his desires.

21:26 All day long he is craving, While the righteous gives and does not hold back.

The wicked is covetous constantly. Cf. Eph. 4:28.

21:27 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, How much more when he brings it with evil intent!

21:28 A false witness will perish, But the man who listens to the truth will speak forever.

Severe consequences for the false witness, but a good listener is a good witness.

21:29 A wicked man shows a bold face, But as for the upright, he makes his way sure.

He sets his course in wickedness.

21:30 There is no wisdom and no understanding And no counsel against the LORD.

These verses seem to be addressed to the political and military confidence of men in positions of leadership who relied on their own scheming.

21:31 The horse is prepared for the day of battle, But victory belongs to the LORD.

Cf. 2 Tim. 2:19.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

22:1 A good name is to be more desired than great riches, Favor is better than silver and gold.

Good - the word is not in the original, but it is implied.

In the ancient culture it was a terrible thing to bring shame upon the family name. Many today could not care less about their reputation as long as they have money.

Favor - because of a good name.

22:2 The rich and the poor have a common bond, The LORD is the maker of them all.

Rich...poor - God made both.

22:3 The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, But the naive go on, and are

punished for it.

22:4 The reward of humility and the fear of the LORD Are riches, honor and life.

Humility...fear - these two go together. God does not force people to bow down to Him, but it comes naturally to the humble.

22:5 Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; He who guards himself will be far from them.

22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.

By considering the child's tendencies and temperament, each child needs individual attention. See special sheet on this verse. Cf. v. 15.

22:7 The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower becomes the lender's slave.

This is a fact of life, therefore the idea is to do the best one can.

22:8 He who sows iniquity will reap vanity, And the rod of his fury will perish.

22:9 He who is generous will be blessed, For he gives some of his food to the poor.

In contrast to verse 8, the generous man will be blessed.

22:10 Drive out the scoffer, and contention will go out, Even strife and dishonor will cease.

This is a good Old Testament commentary on Rom. 16:17; get rid of the trouble-maker and you have rid yourself of the trouble! Cf. 26:20.

22:11 He who loves purity of heart And whose speech is gracious, the king is his friend.

The king will approve of those with reliable speech and reliable character and will promote those in his kingdom.

22:12 The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, But He overthrows the words of the treacherous man.

Preserve - keep, retain. God will not allow the words of evil men to succeed.

22:13 The sluggard says, “There is a lion outside; I shall be slain in the streets!”

This reason for not going to work is absurd, but so are most of the excuses of lazy people.

22:14 The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit: He who is cursed of the LORD will fall into it.

Mouth - seductive words. Only those going in the wrong direction will fall into this pit.

22:15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.

Some children love to get into trouble. They have foolishness so deeply ingrained in them it will not be removed easily.

22:16 He who oppresses the poor to make much for himself Or who gives to the rich, will only come to poverty.

22:17-24:34 If the wisdom teacher's words are not enough to convict, perhaps what other wisdom teachers said will.

22:17 Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise, And apply your mind to my knowledge;

22:18 For it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, That they may be ready on your lips.

22:19 So that your trust may be in the LORD, I have taught you today, even you.

22:20 Have I not written to you excellent things Of counsels and knowledge,

22:21 To make you know the certainty of the words of truth That you may correctly answer to him who sent you?

22:22ff These are now the wisdom sayings.

22:22 Do not rob the poor because he is poor, Or crush the afflicted at the gate;

Because he is unable to defend himself.

22:23 For the LORD will plead their case, And take the life of those who rob them.

You do not want to take a case where God Himself is defending the one you oppressed.

22:24 Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man,

22:25 Lest you learn his ways, And find a snare for yourself.

He will get you into trouble and, as a result, you may not live long. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:33.

EXCURSUS #9 - PARENTS & CHILDREN

22:26 Do not be among those who give pledges, Among those who become sureties for debts.

These seem to be hasty pledges without seriously considering the consequences.

22:27 If you have nothing with which to pay, Why should he take your bed from under you?

Do not pledge what you can not pay. This could be rephrased, "Do not get in over your head."

22:28 Do not move the ancient boundary Which your fathers have set.

22:29 Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before obscure men.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

23:1 When you sit down to dine with a ruler, Consider carefully what is before you;

Wisdom teachers wanted their students to know that manners are logically linked to character, discipline, self-respect and upbringing. It appears that manners are not considered so important in our society today. How sad!

23:2 And put a knife to your throat, If you are a man of great appetite.

Do not "make a pig of yourself," it will make a bad impression.

23:3 Do not desire his delicacies, For it is deceptive food.

You may be under examination, or there may be an ulterior motive.

23:4 Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, Cease from your consideration of it.

Some are obsessed by wealth. Cf. Heb. 13:5.

23:5 When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings, Like an eagle that flies toward the heavens.

There is a saying, "Easy come, easy go."

23:6 Do not eat the bread of a selfish man, Or desire his delicacies;

It is grudgingly given. You would be better off not being there.

23:7 For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, "Eat and drink!" But his heart is not with you.

Eat and drink - he is counting the cost with of bite you take.

Heart...not with you - he really does not want to give you anything.

23:8 You will vomit up the morsel you have eaten, And waste your compliments.

It is as if you would say, "This is very good," then vomit up the food.

Two possible meanings:

I. It is sickening to be in the company of such people, or

II. Everything will be lost when you vomit his expensive food.

23:9 Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, For he will despise the wisdom of your words.

23:10 Do not move the ancient boundary, Or go into the fields of the fatherless;

Into the fields - to steal crops. This was the sin of coveting more land and crops.

23:11 For their Redeemer is strong; He will plead their case against you.

23:12 Apply your heart to discipline, And your ears to words of knowledge.

Listen to this teaching!

23:13 Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you beat him with the rod, he will not die.

A wayward child is sometimes “straightened out” by being “bent over” even though all of his yelling and screaming may sound as if he is dying. Cf. 22:15.

23:14 You shall beat him with the rod, And deliver his soul from Sheol.

The implication is that he will not only survive but that he will survive because of the discipline. These verses show that people were afraid to discipline for fear of hurting the child. Caution and control have to be exercised with the discipline.

23:15 My son, if your heart is wise, My own heart also will be glad;

Because it will show that the teacher succeeded in his job.

23:16 And my inmost being will rejoice, When your lips speak what is right.

23:17 Do not let your heart envy sinners, But live in the fear of the LORD always.

Envy sinners - because they have so much.

Live...fear - therefore you are not living to please others or yourself.

23:18 Surely there is a future, And your hope will not be cut off.

23:19 Listen, my son, and be wise, And direct your heart in the way.

In the way - there is only one way!

23:20 Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;

Why is this the wrong crowd? The answer is in the next verse. Cf. Eph. 5:18.

EXCURSUS #10 - THE FAMILY

23:21 For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.

23:22 Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.

23:23 Buy truth, and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding.

23:24 The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, And he who begets a wise son will be glad in him.

23:25 Let your father and your mother be glad, And let her rejoice who gave birth to you.

We should always try to please our parents.

23:26 Give me your heart, my son, And let your eyes delight in my ways.

The teacher (parent) again calls for the student's undivided attention. He is also offering himself as an example.

23:27 For a harlot is a deep pit, And an adulterous woman is a narrow well.

A place where you might become stuck firmly in its mud.

23:28 Surely she lurks as a robber, And increases the faithless among men.

23:29-35 Consequences of drinking and drunkenness.

23:29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?

23:30 Those who linger long over wine, Those who go to taste mixed wine.

Over wine - wine bowl.

Mixed wine - with water and honey.

They did not intend to become drunk.

23:31 Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it goes down smoothly;

Red - attractive to the eye.

Smoothly - attractive to the taste.

23:32 At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper.

23:33 Your eyes will see strange things, And your mind will utter perverse things.

Because you will probably say some things you would not otherwise say.

23:34 And you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, Or like one who lies down on the top of a mast.

23:35 “They struck me, but I did not become ill; They beat me, but I did not know it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink.”

Ill - he “feels no pain.” Even in those days drink easily became an addiction.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

24:1 Do not be envious of evil men, Nor desire to be with them;

Cf. 1 Cor. 15:33.

24:2 For their minds devise violence, And their lips talk of trouble.

24:3 By wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established;

Wisdom...understanding - the blue-print for your house.

24:4 And by knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches.

24:5 A wise man is strong, And a man of knowledge increases power.

Wisdom is simply more powerful than any human power.

24:6 For by wise guidance you will wage war, And in abundance of counselors there is victory.

24:7 Wisdom is too high for a fool, He does not open his mouth in the gate.

You must go to the high places (lofty) in order to grasp it.

24:8 He who plans to do evil, Men will call him a schemer.

24:9 The devising of folly is sin, And the scoffer is an abomination to men.

We normally understand the folly as the sin, but here merely thinking about it is the sin.

24:10 If you are slack in the day of distress, Your strength is limited.

24:11 Deliver those who are being taken away to death, And those who are staggering to slaughter, O hold them back.

Cf. Jas. 5:19,20; Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 4:5.

24:12 If you say, “See, we did not know this,” Does He not consider it who weighs the hearts? And does He not know it who keeps your soul? And will He not render to man according to his work?

If you say... - perhaps this is an excuse to not be involved. With opportunity comes responsibility. If we can help someone we had better do so.

24:13 My son, eat honey, for it is good, Yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste;

Cf. Psa. 19:10.

24:14 Know that wisdom is thus for your soul; If you find it, then there will be a future, And your hope will not be cut off.

This is the application for wisdom.

24:15 Do not lie in wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; Do not destroy his resting place;

24:16 For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, But the wicked stumble in time of calamity.

Rises again - keep fighting the good fight! “Seven times” is normally enough to defeat a man, but...a righteous man will continue to get up. Cf. Mt. 18:21f.

24:17 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles;

Remember, vengeance is the Lord's! Cf. Obad. 12.

24:18 Lest the LORD see it and be displeased, And He turn away His anger from him.

When He sees your joy will He turn His anger toward you instead?

24:19 Do not fret yourself because of evil doers. Or be envious of the wicked;

24:20 For there will be no future for the evil man; The lamp of the wicked will be put out.

24:21 My son, fear the LORD and the king; Do not associate with those who are given to change;

Change without proper regard for God or the king (do they want to overthrow him?).

24:22 For their calamity will rise suddenly, And who knows the ruin that comes from both of them?

Both of them - the Lord and the king. Cf. Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:17.

24:23 These also are sayings of the wise. To show partiality in judgment is not good.

Cf. Lev. 19:9-37; Jas. 2:1ff.

24:24 He who says to the wicked, "You are righteous," Peoples will curse him, nations will abhor him;

24:25 But to those who rebuke the wicked will be delight, And a good blessing will come upon them.

24:26 He kisses the lips Who gives a right answer.

This is a pleasing answer! Therefore, it receives a favorable response.

24:27 Prepare your work outside, And make it ready for yourself in the field; Afterwards, then, build your house.

Lay the foundation first, then build your house. But only after you are sure the land can support you.

24:28 Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, And do not deceive with your lips.

Cf. Eph. 4:25.

24:29 Do not say, “Thus I shall do to him as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work.”

Again, this is the problem of vengeance. Cf. Rom. 12:17; Eph. 4:25,29.

24:30-34 Procrastination.

24:30 I passed by the field of the sluggard, And by the vineyard of the man lacking sense;

Cf. Rom. 12:17.

24:31 And behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles, Its surface was covered with nettles, And its stone wall was broken down.

This does not surprise the wise man. It is what he had expected to find from the sluggard.

24:32 When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, and received instruction.

24:33 “A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest,”

24:34 Then your poverty will come as a robber, And your want like an armed man.

You “walk fast” to escape but he walks faster.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

25:1 These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah transcribed.

This verse has given scholars much to think about. Did Hezekiah:

- I. Transcribe from one book to another,
- II. Translate or
- III. Collate?

What affect does this have on our understanding of inspiration?

25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.

Prophecy is a perfect example. It is partially concealed until its fulfillment. Then the glory of God's wisdom and providence can be seen. Cf. Deut. 29:29. There are so many things man does not know. Cf. Job 38-41.

25:3 As the heavens for height and the earth for depth, So the heart of kings is unsearchable.

25:4 Take away the dross from the silver, And there comes out a vessel for the smith;

25:5 Take away the wicked from before the king, And his throne will be established in righteousness.

How many time have our leaders listened to bad advice? Compare Rehoboam. Only when the king's (president's) ministers are wise and good will the government be established in righteousness.

25:6 Do not claim honor in the presence of the king, And do not stand in the place of great men;

25:7 For it is better that it be said to you, "Come up here," Than that you should be put lower in the presence of the prince, Whom your eyes have seen.

Cf. Lk. 14:7-11.

25:8 Do not go out hastily to argue your case; Otherwise, what will you do in the end, When your neighbor puts you to shame?

Obtain all of your information first. Understand all of the facts accurately.

25:9 Argue your case with your neighbor, And do not reveal the secret of another,

Cf. Mt. 18:15.

25:10 Lest he who hears it reproach you, And the evil report about you not pass away.

25:11 Like apples of gold in settings of silver Is a word spoken in right circumstances.

One pleases the eye, the second pleases the heart.

25:12 Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise reprov-er to a listening ear.

Earring - or nose ring.

25:13 Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest Is a faithful messenger to those who send him, For he refreshes the soul of his masters.

Normally, harvest time is a hot and sweaty time. The cool snow is a welcome change. It is refreshing to find an honest and faithful messenger.

25:14 Like clouds and wind without rain Is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely.

These clouds are not worth much. Neither is this man. This person boasts how good he is, but when it is time to produce the results are nothing. Cf. 2 Pet. 2:17.

25:15 By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded, And a soft tongue breaks the bone.

The tremendous power of the tongue. Cf. Lk. 18:1ff.

25:16 Have you found honey? Eat only what you need, Lest you have it in excess and vomit it.

Be moderate with all of your enjoyments.

25:17 Let your foot rarely be in your neighbor's house, Lest he become weary of you and hate you.

Do not impose on your neighbor. Everyone needs some privacy.

25:18 Like a club and a sword and a sharp arrow Is a man who bears false witness against his neighbor.

25:19 Like a bad tooth and an unsteady foot Is confidence in a faithless man in time of trouble.

25:20 Like one who takes off a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar on soda, Is he who sings songs to a troubled heart.

When someone is sad he does not appreciate frivolity. Such actions do not make sense given the circumstances (e.g. cold day, vinegar). Cf. Rom. 12:15.

25:21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink;

Quoted in Rom. 12:20. Cf. 2 Kgs. 6:22.

25:22 For you will heap burning coals on his head, And the LORD will reward you.

25:23 The north wind brings forth rain, And a backbiting tongue, an angry countenance.

When you find out that someone has been talking about you “behind your back,” it certainly does not bring smiles!

25:24 It is better to live in a corner of the roof Than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

He has to go to the corner of the attic to get away from her. Solomon should know with his many wives! Cf. 21:9.

25:25 Like cold water to a weary soul, So is good news from a distant land.

25:26 Like a trampled spring and a polluted well Is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked.

25:27 It is not good to eat much honey, Nor is it glory to search out one’s own glory.

25:28 Like a city that is broken into and without walls Is a man who has no control over his spirit.

He cannot depend upon him to stay within his limits: he “flies off the handle,” etc.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

THE FOOL CHAPTER

EXCURSUS #11 - THE FOOL (TWO PAGES)

- 26:1 **Like snow in summer and like rain in harvest, So honor is not fitting for a fool.**

Why do we lift up fools in the eyes of the people? Those such as movie stars, athletes, rock stars, etc.?

- 26:2 **Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying, So a curse without cause does not alight.**

It flits around without setting goals. A causeless curse will not reach its intended target because an innocent person is being attacked.

- 26:3 **A whip is for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, And a rod for the back of fools.**

Requires compulsive discipline.

- 26:4 **Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him.**

Cf. 23:9.

- 26:5 **Answer a fool as his folly deserves, Lest he be wise in his own eyes.**

There are times a fool should be answered and times he should not be answered.

These proverbs would be applied differently depending on the circumstances.

- 26:6 **He cuts off his own feet, and drinks violence Who sends a message by the hand of a fool.**

The messenger took the place of the one sending him.

- 26:7 **Like the legs which hang down from the lame, So is a proverb in the mouth of fools.**

It is useless.

26:8 Like one who binds a stone in a sling, So is he who gives honor to a fool.

Binds - so that it cannot be slung, which is dangerous.

26:9 Like a thorn which falls into the hand of a drunkard, So is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

He is injured by it in ways he would not be if he were sober.

26:10 Like an archer who wounds everyone, So is he who hires a fool or who hires those who pass by.

It is not only irresponsible, it is crazy.

26:11 Like a dog that returns to its vomit Is a fool who repeats his folly.

The fool never learns and, like this dog, he continues to do the things that will not work. He has difficulty learning from experience. Quoted in 2 Pet. 2:22.

26:12 Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

The “know it all” (egotist) is the worst type of person.

26:13 The sluggard says, “There is a lion in the road! A lion is in the open square!”

Another “lame” excuse to not work. Cf. 22:13.

26:14 Like the door turns on its hinges, So does the sluggard on his bed.

Both a door and a sluggard move, but neither goes anywhere.

26:15 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; He is weary of bringing it to his mouth again.

26:16 The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes Than seven men who can give a discreet answer.

Despite his laziness, the sluggard considers himself wise, even wiser than a team of seven competent men who are trained to give answers to difficult questions.

26:17 Like one who takes a dog by the ears Is he who passes by and meddles with strife not belonging to him.

Mind your own business.

Most dogs were not domestic pets. Therefore, to grasp one by the ears was a sure way to get bitten.

26:18 Like a madman who throws Firebrands, arrows and death,

Without concern for the deadly consequences.

26:19 So is the man who deceives his neighbor, And says, “Was I not joking?”

Do not be a “practical joker.”

26:20 For lack of wood the fire goes out, And where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down.

Do not “add fuel to the fire” by continuing to gossip.

26:21 Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife.

26:22 The words of a whisperer are like dainty morsels, And they go down into the innermost parts of the body.

He takes a situation that might otherwise die out and turns it into a major conflict.

26:23 Like an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross Are burning lips and a wicked heart.

Smooth lips may cover an evil heart like glaze covers the rough earthenware of a piece of pottery.

26:24-26 These verses deal with the secret, malicious attitudes cloaked with charming speech and mannerisms.

26:24 He who hates disguises it with his lips, But he lays up deceit in his heart.

26:25 When he speaks graciously, do not believe him, For there are seven abominations in his heart.

Seven - this illustrates a full, perfect degree of hate and malice.

26:26 Though his hatred covers itself with guile, His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly.

A group will be able to see through his disguise and reveal his real nature.

26:27 He who digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone, it will come back on him.

As a boomerang returns to the hand which throws it.

26:28 A lying tongue hates those it crushes, And a flattering mouth works ruin.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

27:1 Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.

This verse reminds us of the limitations of human planning. One should plan, but do so with the realization of his lack of ultimate control. Cf. Jas. 4:14.

27:2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips.

The wise man does not try to build his reputation by praising himself.

27:3 A stone is heavy and the sand weighty, But the provocation of a fool is heavier than both of them.

Verses 3 and 4 - nothing is harder to bear than the uncontrolled and misguided anger of a fool.

27:4 Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, But who can stand before jealousy?

This question assumes there is no answer. You cannot adequately protect yourself from these things.

27:5 Better is open rebuke Than love that is concealed.

Verses 5 and 6 go together.

27:6 Faithful are the wounds of friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

It is better to have a friend whose honest confrontations leave their wounds than kisses of those who hate you. Real friendship cannot exist when one must be

constantly restrained and timed. This was how Judas betrayed Christ - Mt. 26:49, also cf. Rom. 12:9,10.

27:7 A sated man loathes honey But to a famished man any bitter thing is sweet.

The application here is far reaching. Need creates desire, while an abundance may lead to the rejection of that which is wholesome and good.

27:8 Like a bird that wanders from her nest, So is a man who wanders from his home.

An observation on the stress and strain of moving. Leaving the familiar can be traumatic.

27:9 Oil and perfume make the heart glad, So a man's counsel is sweet to his friend.

Friendship is better than the joy sweet perfumes brings.

27:10 Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend, And do not go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity; Better is a neighbor who is near than a brother far away.

Near - near enough to help in the day of calamity. Sometimes your friend or your father's friend can do more for you than a relative.

27:11 Be wise, my son, and make my heart glad, That I may reply to him who reproaches me.

Sometimes a teacher can answer critics by pointing to the accomplishments of his students.

27:12 A prudent man sees evil and hides himself, The naive proceed and pay the penalty.

Cf. 22:3; 1 Thess. 5:22.

27:13 Take his garment when he becomes surety for a stranger; And for an adulterous woman hold him in pledge.

If you are this type of person (v.12) you need to take what security you can, while you can, because even that will soon be gone.

27:14 He who blesses his friend with a loud voice early in the morning, It will be reckoned a curse to him.

Appealing to common sense; i.e. do not call at 6 A.M.

27:15 A constant dripping on a day of steady rain And a contentious woman are alike;

27:16 He who would restrain her restrains the wind, And grasps oil with his right hand.

Cf. 19:13.

27:17 Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another.

We become dull without the sharpening of mind and character in study with and association with others.

Another - literally "his friend."

27:18 He who tends the fig tree will eat its fruit; And he who cares for his master will be honored.

Cf. 2 Tim. 2:6.

27:19 As in water face reflects face, So the heart of man reflects man.

We begin to know ourselves through our relationships with others.

27:20 Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, Nor are the eyes of man ever satisfied.

What an observation on the nature of man's desire! He never has enough of anything he really wants.

27:21 The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold, And a man is tested by the praise accorded him.

A man's character is cultivated by the praise he accepts from others. Also, he is judged by what he praises.

27:22 Though you pound a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, Yet his folly will not depart from him.

Even though the imagery is unclear, the message is not. It is almost impossible to remove folly from a fool.

27:23-27 The benefits of taking care of one's "equipment."

27:23 Know well the condition of your flocks, And pay attention to your herds;

27:24 For riches are not forever, Nor does a crown endure to all generations.

27:25 When the grass disappears, the new growth is seen, And the herbs of the mountains are gathered in,

27:26 The lambs will be for your clothing, And the goats will bring the price of a field,

27:27 And there will be goats' milk enough for your food, For the food of your household, And sustenance for your maidens.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

28:1 The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, But the righteous are bold as a lion.

Wicked flee - what causes this? guilt? fear of God's wrath?

Bold - even when external danger really threatens he is bold and courageous like a young lion, because his strength is in God. Think of Paul and his boldness when he stood firm in front of those who wanted to kill him.

28:2 By the transgression of a land many are its princes, But by a man of understanding and knowledge, so it endures.

When the land is in trouble, its rulers will not last long. We need godly people to preserve the kingdom. Compare Jer. 5:1-6 where Jeremiah sought for a righteous man and because he could not find one the kingdom was destroyed (i.e. how many would have saved Sodom and Gomorrah?). Cf. 2 Kgs. 15:8-15.

28:3 A poor man who oppresses the lowly Is like a driving rain which leaves no food.

Cf. Mt. 18:28 where illustrated by the two debtors.

Floods were frequent in the east. Sometimes flocks, crops and houses were carried away with them.

28:4 Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, But those who keep the law strive with them.

This is a form of existentialism. If it feels good do it. If it is right for me, it is good. Usually those who accept this philosophy are lawbreakers.

28:5 Evil men do not understand justice, But those who seek the LORD understand all things.

Also true in spiritual matters - "spiritual discernment." Cf. 1 Jn. 2:20,27.

28:6 Better is the poor who walks in his integrity, Than he who is crooked though he be rich.

Wholeness of character is better than money.

28:7 He who keeps the law is a discerning son, But he who is a companion of gluttons humiliates his father.

28:8 He who increases his wealth by interest and usury, Gathers it for him who is gracious to the poor.

28:9 He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.

Would it make any difference if he were a member of the church? Of course not. Cf. Num. 12:13. Not even Moses' prayer could be answered when it was against God's law. Cf. Jer. 7:16; 11:14; 14:11.

28:10 He who leads the upright astray in an evil way Will himself fall into his own pit, But the blameless will inherit good.

28:11 The rich man is wise in his own eyes, But the poor who has understanding sees through him.

28:12 When the righteous triumph, there is great glory, But when the wicked rise, men hide themselves.

Under Communism wicked men forced Christians to worship in secret.

28:13 He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

Merely admitting you are sinful is not worth anything! See *Paths To Peace*, p. 111.

Cf. 1 Jn. 1:9.

28:14 How blessed is the man who fears always, But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.

28:15 Like a roaring lion and a rushing bear Is a wicked ruler over a poor people.

28:16 A leader who is a great oppressor lacks understanding, But he who hates unjust gain will prolong his days.

Unjust gain - covetousness. See *Paths To Peace*, p. 41.

28:17 A man who is laden with the guilt of human blood Will be a fugitive until death; let no one support him.

Nero killed so many close friends and relatives he did not have anyone left to trust.

Let the law set the penalty and then enforce it (i.e. death penalty).

28:18 He who walks blamelessly will be delivered, But he who is crooked will fall all at once.

28:19 He who tills his land will have plenty of food, But he who follows empty pursuits will have poverty in plenty.

Plenty of nothing.

28:20 A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who makes haste to be rich will not go unpunished.

Blessings - both physical (Mk. 10:30) and spiritual (Rev. 2:10).

Haste to be rich is not only foolish, it is sinful.

28:21 To show partiality is not good, Because for a piece of bread a man will transgress.

28:22 A man with an evil eye hastens after wealth, And does not know that want will come upon him.

28:23 He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor Than he who flatters with the tongue.

28:24 He who robs his father or his mother, And says, "It is not a transgression," Is the companion of a man who destroys.

So often we do not feel the responsibility for the money borrowed from a relative - but a debt is a debt!

28:25 An arrogant man stirs up strife, But he who trusts in the LORD will prosper.

See *Paths To Peace*, p. 19.

28:26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely, will be delivered.

The Bible does not endorse the saying, "Let your conscience be your guide." If a conscience were biblically trained then it would properly guide you. Cf. Jer. 17:9; 10:28.

28:27 He who gives to the poor will never want, But he who shuts his eyes will have many curses.

28:28 When the wicked rise, men hide themselves; But when they perish, the righteous increase.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

29:1 A man who hardens his neck after much reproof Will suddenly be broken beyond remedy.

Harden his neck - is stubborn. Christians should not take lightly the Lord's discipline. If we harden ourselves to it we will be broken on judgment day.

29:2 When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, But when a wicked man rules, people groan.

29:3 A man who loves wisdom makes his father glad, But he who keeps company with harlots wastes his wealth.

Women are harlots for the money. A Memphis, TN girl admitted to earning

\$40,000 in one year while being busy only part-time (1980).

29:4 **The king gives stability to the land by justice, But a man who takes bribes overthrows it.**

29:5 **A man who flatters his neighbor Is spreading a net for his steps.**

Beware of the flatterer! He is not trying to please you but deceive you so that he can get what he wants from you later.

29:6 **By transgression an evil man is ensnared, But the righteous sings and rejoices.**

The righteous man he knows to whom he belongs!

29:7 **The righteous is concerned for the rights of the poor, The wicked does not understand such concern.**

Every human being has rights. Wicked people look only at their poverty and despise the righteous.

29:8 **Scorners set a city aflame, But wise men turn away anger.**

29:9 **When a wise man has a controversy with a foolish man, The foolish man either rages or laughs, and there is no rest.**

The fool cannot appreciate the wise man's argument. A wise man becomes exhausted trying to convince him.

29:10 **Men of bloodshed hate the blameless, But the upright are concerned for his life.**

Concerned for his life - because men of bloodshed come after him.

29:11 **A fool always loses his temper, But a wise man holds it back.**

Loses his temper - uttereth all his mind (K.J.V.).

29:12 **If a ruler pays attention to falsehood, All his ministers become wicked.**

They will know what the king likes to listen to and tell him falsehoods.

29:13 The poor man and the oppressor have this in common: The LORD gives light to the eyes of both.

They both receive life from Him.

29:14 If a king judges the poor with truth, His throne will be established forever.

29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.

Two types of discipline:

- I. The rod (physical) and,
- II. Reproof (verbal).

29:16 When the wicked increase, transgression increases; But the righteous will see their fall.

E.g. Sodom and Gomorrah.

29:17 Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; He will also delight your soul.

Not all correction is with a rod. It must be determined when it is needed, but do correct!

29:18 Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, But happy is he who keeps the law.

Vision - or divine revelation.

If one tries to live without God's truth restraint is cast away.

29:19 A slave will not be instructed by words alone; For though he understands, there will be no response.

29:20 Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

Be slow to speak! Cf. Jas. 1:19.

29:21 **He who pampers his slave from childhood Will in the end find him to be a son.**

Willingly obedient.

29:22 **An angry man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression.**

29:23 **A man's pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will obtain honor.**

Although pride is meant to lift one up, it really brings him down. See *Paths To Peace*, p. 39. Cf. Jas. 4:6,10.

29:24 **He who is a partner with a thief hates his own life; He hears the oath but tells nothing.**

If you hear that a person broke the law, do not remain silent. Cf. Lev. 5:1.

29:25 **The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.**

Cf. 1 Sam. 15:24; Lk. 12:4; Jn. 12:42,43.

29:26 **Many seek the ruler's favor, But justice for man comes from the LORD.**

A person may not be punished by the law of the land, but God will not let him go unpunished. What about bankruptcy? Cf. 1 Cor. 4:4.

29:27 **An unjust man is abominable to the righteous, And he who is upright in the way is abominable to the wicked.**

CHAPTER THIRTY

THE WORDS OF AGUR

30:1 **The words of AGUR the son of Jakeh, the oracle. The man declares to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal:**

We have no other reference to any of these names. Agur is presumed to be a wise man of some reputation, but of unknown date.

30:2 Surely I am more stupid than any man, And I do not have the understanding of a man.

God and His ways are always a mystery to men. Agur shows his wisdom by confessing his ignorance.

30:3 And I have not learned wisdom, But I have the knowledge of the Holy One.

30:4 Who has ascended into heaven and descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has wrapped the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His son's name? Surely you know!

Sarcasm is seen, for he knows that no one knows.

30:5 Every word of God is tested He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.

30:6 Do not add to His words Lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar.

Cf. Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19.

30:7 Two things I asked of Thee Do not refuse me before I die:

Cf. 1 Chron. 4:10.

30:8 Keep deception and lies far from me, Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion,

Why? See verse 9.

30:9 Lest I be full and deny Thee and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or lest I be in want and steal, And profane the name of my God.

30:10 Do not slander a slave to his master, Lest he curse you and you be found guilty.

30:11 There is a kind of man who curses his father, And does not bless his mother.

30:12 There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes, Yet is not washed from his filthiness.

30:13 There is a kind — oh how lofty are his eyes! And his eyelids are raised in arrogance.

30:14 There is a kind of man whose teeth are like swords, And his jaw teeth like knives, To devour the afflicted from the earth, And the needy from among men.

30:15 “Give,” “Give.” The leech has two daughters, There are three things that will not be satisfied, Four that will not say, “Enough”:

The blood-sucking horseleech was common in Palestine.

Give, give - there are those who are always asking for favors. However, this also reveals a common human problem - greed.

30:16 Sheol, and the barren womb, Earth that is never satisfied with water, And fire that never says, “Enough.”

30:17 The eye that mocks a father, And scorns a mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.

Eye that mocks...scorns - a sneering, scornful, defiant look of rebellion. Such a son will be denied burial and his body left for the carrion birds.

30:18 There are three things which are too wonderful for me, Four which I do not understand:

30:19 The way of an eagle in the sky, The way of a serpent on a rock, The way of a ship in the middle of the sea, And the way of a man with a maid.

Eagle - graceful flight.

Serpent - without legs, yet still moves.

Way of a ship - to stay afloat.

Way of a man - the process of courtship.

Each reach their objectives in wonderful and sometimes mysterious ways. Each one has to navigate difficult situations including the presence of a young girl.

30:20 This is the way of an adulterous woman: She eats and wipes her mouth, And says, “I have done no wrong.”

Nonchalant and claiming innocence, she regards sexual intercourse as casually as eating a meal; she is totally unconcerned about her conduct.

30:21-23 Dealing with the imbalances which occur in society with intolerable consequences.

30:21 Under three things the earth quakes, And under four, it cannot bear up:

Some believe these are satirical and not to be taken seriously.

30:22 Under a slave when he becomes king, And a fool when he is satisfied with food,

30:23 Under an unloved woman when she gets a husband, And a maidservant when she supplants her mistress.

Unloved woman - perhaps because she was unattractive and unpopular.

When she gets a husband - because she becomes arrogant?

30:24-28 The focus is not scientific, but to observe lessons relevant to human life.

30:24 Four things are small on the earth, But they are exceedingly wise:

Small - yet great. These tiny creatures demonstrate great wisdom!

30:25 The ants are not a strong folk, But they prepare their food in the summer;

Each line begins with a limitation which each, in turn, overcomes.

Foresight and planning to meet future needs.

30:26 The badgers are not mighty folk, Yet they make their houses in the rocks;

Badgers - Conies (A.V. & R.V.).

Skill and resourcefulness to gain security.

30:27 The locusts have no king, Yet all of them go out in ranks;

Organization and discipline - not dependent on external forces to make them work.

30:28 The lizard you may grasp with the hands, Yet it is in kings' palaces.

Resources of the mind used to overcome severe physical limitations.

Each of these (vv. 29-31), in their own way, set forth a positive example of

leadership.

30:29 There are three things which are stately in their march, Even four which are stately when they walk:

30:30 The lion which is mighty among beasts And does not retreat before any,

30:31 The strutting cock, the male goat also, And a king when his army is with him.

30:32 If you have been foolish in exalting yourself Or if you have plotted evil, put your hand on your mouth.

This chapter closes with another warning to one who has allowed himself, or will soon allow himself, to become proud and over-confident.

30:33 For the churning of milk produces butter, And pressing the nose brings forth blood; So the churning of anger produces strife.

Pressing the nose - "Shut up or I will give you a bloody nose."

The point - do not provoke others because it will result in serious trouble and conflict.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

THE WORDS OF KING LEMUEL

EXCURSUS #12 - THE WIFE

31:1 The words of King Lemuel, the oracle which his mother taught.

Some say "Lemuel" is another name for Solomon, but we do not know for sure.

We have benefitted from studying "father to son" proverbs, but here we have some "mother to son" proverbs.

Lemuel means "belonging to God" or "dedicated to God."

31:2 What, O my son? And what, O son of my womb? And what, O son of my vows?

What? - this seems to be a continual call - "Are you listening?"

She lets him know:

I. He matters to her, and

II. She vowed him to God.

31:3 Do not give your strength to women, Or your ways to that which destroys kings.

Strength to women - physical and financial.

That which - or them (wives?).

History shows adultery ruins kings (Napoleon, etc.). Perhaps this refers to the commonly large harem such as the one that destroyed Solomon. Cf. 1 Kgs. 11:1.

31:4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine, Or for rulers to desire strong drink.

An intemperate man is ill-fitted to hold the reins of government.

31:5 Lest they drink and forget what is decreed, And pervert the rights of all the afflicted.

Only God could know the tremendous and widespread damage alcohol has caused when influencing a man of power.

31:6 Give strong drink to him who is perishing, And wine to him whose life is bitter.

Alcohol is considered to have its use, not as an intoxicating beverage but for medicinal purposes.

31:7 Let him drink and forget his poverty, And remember his trouble no more.

To give him a diversion and then restore him. This was offered to Jesus, but He refused it.

31:8 Open your mouth for the dumb, For the rights of all the unfortunate.

31:9 Open your mouth, judge righteously, And defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.

A king must have justice and equity in his kingdom.

31:10-31 It is a mistake to think that all of these attributes could be found in one woman, but this is an ideal.

In Hebrew each verse begins with the appropriate letter of the alphabet.

31:10 An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.

Excellent - carries the idea of capable, strong and therefore valuable.

Her worth - this implies that such a woman is rare.

See 5:18 for Proverb scriptures concerning women (wives).

31:11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain.

Trust - because she earned it!

31:12 She does him good and not evil All the days of her life.

She has her husband's good in view constantly, recommending his kindness by her good deeds.

31:13 She looks for wool and flax, And works with her hands in delight.

She likes to work and enjoys what she does. Women today are taught to hate the "drudgery" and enslaving atmosphere of the housewife.

31:14 She is like merchant ships; She brings her food from afar.

This may also refer to an aptitude for business in which she not afraid to go to obtain those things she requires.

31:15 She rises also while it is still night, And gives food to her household, And portions to her maidens.

She is self-motivated and stays busy. Cf. v. 18.

31:16 She considers a field and buys it; From her earnings she plants a vineyard.

Her eye is always open to business opportunities, especially in real estate.

31:17 She girds herself with strength, And makes her arms strong.

She takes care of her own strength and health by useful labor and exercise, avoiding that which might ensnare or weaken.

31:18 She senses that her gain is good; Her lamp does not go out at night.

When her goods are selling she works into the night to maintain production.

31:19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hands grasp the spindle.

31:20 She extends her hand to the poor; And she stretches out her hands to the needy.

She is interested in those outside her own household.

31:21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household, For all her household are clothed with scarlet.

Scarlet - a symbol of quality.

Her most repeated quality is her care for her household (Titus 2:4,5). Her other activities do not prevent her from caring for the needs at home.

31:22 She makes coverings for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple.

31:23 Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land.

Often a man's public image depends upon his wife. Some scholars think this is because she dresses her husband well.

One of the best reputations a man can have is to be known as the husband of a good wife.

31:24 She makes linen garments and sells them, And supplies belts to the tradesmen.

31:25 Strength and dignity are her clothing, And she smiles at the future.

As long as one has an industrious wife there is no need to worry about the future.

31:26 She opens her mouth in wisdom, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

When she talks, people listen!

31:27 She looks well to the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness.

She is alert to the needs of her family. She knows that idleness leads to vice. Therefore she is energetic in meeting her family's needs.

31:28 Her children rise up and bless her; Her husband also, and he praises her, saying:

31:29 “Many daughters have done nobly, But you excel them all.”

This is the reward for being a virtuous woman.

31:30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.

Deceitful...vain - youth and beauty fade.

Charm and beauty are deceitful (in the sense that they do not reveal the true person) and fleeting. The real worth of a woman is her devotion to God. Such a woman endowed with the virtues set forth in this poem deserves the praise (v. 31). She is no slave to a master husband, but a person in her own right who takes and fulfills an honored place in the life of the home (community).

While all of this is good, the key is her fearing the Lord! The Proverbs start and finish with this crucial concept.

31:31 Give her the product of her hands, And let her works praise her in the gates.

See *Paths To Peace*, p. 65.

She deserves recognition so others will follow her example.

EXCURSES
SPECIAL STUDIES IN PROVERBS

THE THEME OF PROVERBS

A COMPILATION OF SAYINGS INTENDED TO DIRECT
LIFE (חיים - 32 Times)

THE CHOICE

THE FOOL (צ'ל - 26 Times)

1. Is Wicked
(רשע - 86 Times)
2. Is Self-Confident
(כסיל - 50 Times)
3. Is A Sluggard, Lazy
(צעל - 15 Times)
4. Is Evil, Bad, Immoral
(רצ - 47 Times)
5. Is Simple, Naive
(ת' - 14 Times)

THE WISE MAN (חכם - 97 Times)

1. Has Knowledge
(חדצ - 73 Times)
2. Has Understanding
(ב'ן - 30 Times)
(תננח - 19 Times)
3. Is Considerate Of His
Friends / Neighbors
(רצ - 32 Times)
4. Is Righteous
(עך'ק - 87 Times)
5. Guards Words
(צמר - 18 Times)
(דבר - 23 Times)
Guards Tongue
(לשון - 19 Times)
Guards Lips
(שפט - 43 Times)

**MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE IS VITAL BECAUSE
"JUDGMENT (משפט - 16 TIMES) FOR MAN
COMES FROM THE LORD." (29:26)**

<p style="text-align: center;">WISDOM * * * * A STUDY IN PROVERBS</p>

- I. The source of Wisdom.
 - A. Ultimately in God - 2:6; 3:19; 21:30; 30:3.
 - B. Parents - 4:5,11; 5:1; 23:19.
 - C. Wise men - 1:5; 22:17.
 - D. Creation - 6:6-11; 30:24-28.

- II. Actions of the Wise.
 - A. Hears others - 1:5; 2:2; 8:33; 12:15; 13:10.
 - B. Fears the Lord - 1:7; 9:10.
 - C. Seeks, asks, searches - 4:7; 18:15; 23:23.
 - D. Makes Wisdom his best companion - 7:4; 10:23; 14:33; 17:24.
 - E. Accepts reproofs/commands - 9:8,9; 10:8; 13:1; 21:11; 29:15.
 - F. Thinks before acting - 10:14.
 - G. Is humble - 11:2.
 - H. Wins souls - 11:30.
 - I. Walks with other wise men - 13:20.
 - J. Looks for purpose in his life - 14:8.
 - K. Turns from evil - 14:16.
 - L. Teachers others - 15:7.
 - M. Avoids alcohol - 20:1.
 - N. Rejects fools - 20:26.
 - O. Deals wisely with money (saves) - 21:20.

- III. Benefits of Wisdom.
 - A. Unlocks mysteries of life - 1:6.
 - B. Feeling of accomplishment - 2:10.
 - C. Blessings - 3:13.
 - D. Honor - 3:35.
 - E. Better than wealth - 8:11; 16:16.
 - F. Is constructive - 9:1; 15:2; 18:4; 24:3,23.
 - G. Pleases parents - 10:1; 15:20; 23:15,24; 27:11; 28:3.

- H. Is good for others - 12:18; 13:14; 16:14,21; 25:12; 29:8,9.
- I. Brings material satisfaction - 14:24.
- J. Provides guide for the tongue - 16:23; 17:28; 29:11; 31:26.
- K. Better than strength - 21:22; 24:5,6.
- L. Provides a future - 24:14.

IV. Problems.

- A. One might be wise in their own eyes only - 3:7; 9:12; 26:5,12,16; 28:11.
- B. The wrong type of people seek it - 14:6; 17:16.
- C. Those who need wisdom turn away from the wise - 15:12.

**For wisdom is better than jewels;
and all desirable things can not compare with her.
Proverbs 8:11**

THE SCOFFER

* * * *

A STUDY IN PROVERBS

Hebrew שֹׁכֵחַ (16 times), meaning “self-made interpreter, to act as a scorner, show oneself a mocker.”

I. CHARACTERISTICS.

- A. Enjoys scoffing - 1:22.
- B. Hates those who try to correct - 9:8; 15:12.
- C. Seeks wisdom - Finds none - 14:6.
- D. Mocks justice - 19:28.
- E. Causes strife, contention and dishonor - 22:10.
- F. Pulls others down - 24:9.
- G. Can learn by discipline - 19:25; 21:11.

II. END:

- A. Must alone bear results of action - 9:12.
- B. Judgment/Discipline - 19:29.

**“The devising of folly is sin,
and the scoffer is an abomination to men.”
Proverbs 24:9**

THE FRIEND

* * * *

A STUDY IN PROVERBS

Friends and Neighbors (same Hebrew word רֵעַ.)

- I. THE GOOD NEIGHBOR.
 - A. Reluctant to start strife - 3:29.
 - B. Reluctant to spread strife - 25:8-10.
 - C. Kind and generous in judgments - 24:17f; 25:21f.
 - D. Knows silence is often wiser than criticism - 11:12.
 - E. Helps (rather than hold in contempt) one who has failed - 14:21; 21:10.
 - F. Not overbalanced into sentimentality - 22:25.
 - G. Able to say "no" - 6:1-5.
- II. THE GOOD FRIEND.
 - A. Dependable, consistent.
 - 1. Not a "fair-weather" friend - 14:20; 19:4-7; 18:24; 17:17.
 - 2. Thus the reader should be the same way and not forsake his friends - 27:10.
 - B. Candid, honest criticism, frankness.
 - 1. Faithful, true words - 27:6.
 - 2. Compliments - 29:5.
 - 3. Rebukes are appreciated - 28:23.
 - C. Gives (and receives) counsel.
 - 1. Gives life a pleasantness - 27:9.
 - 2. Makes other a better person - 27:17.
 - D. Uses tact, respects another's feelings.
 - 1. Do not often bother one another - 25:16, 17.
 - 2. Has good timing with praise - 27:14.
 - 3. Encourages when depressed - 25:20.
 - 4. Does not deceive, even in jest - 26:18, 19.
- III. THE VULNERABILITY OF FRIENDSHIP.
 - A. Betrayal (2:17) or estrangement (16:28; 17:9).
 - B. Separated by:
 - 1. Gossip - 16:28.
 - 2. Not forgiving - 17:9.

LIFE

* * * *

A STUDY PROVERBS

HEBREW דִּינָה (32 TIMES IN PROVERBS) - MEANS "WELFARE & HAPPINESS, EARTHLY FELICITY (HAPPINESS) COMBINED OFTEN WITH SPIRITUAL BLESSEDNESS" (BDB, p. 313).

- I. HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF IT.
 - A. Listen to wise counsel - 3:2; 4:10,22.
 - B. Find wisdom and embrace it - 3:18,22.
 - C. Realize it is worth guarding - 4:13.
 - D. Watch over heart (desires/interests) - 5:23.
 - E. By using discipline as a stepping stone - 6:23; 10:17; 15:31.
 - F. By fearing the Lord - 19:23.
 - G. Pursue righteousness - 21:21.
- II. HOW TO RUIN IT.
 - A. Spend time with harlots - 2:19; 5:6.
 - B. By not being satisfied - 14:30 Cf. 1 Tim. 6:16-18.
 - C. By not controlling tongue - 18:21 Cf. 2 Jas. 3:8.
- III. LIFE AT ITS BEST.
 - A. When lived with wisdom - 8:35.
 - B. Long when coupled with wisdom - 9:11.
 - C. Is a wage for the righteous - 10:11; 11:19,30; 12:28.
 - D. Is a reward for humility and fearing the Lord - 22:4
- IV. THE TREE OF LIFE.
 - A. Is available to the righteous - 11:30.
 - B. Is desire fulfilled - 13:12.
 - C. Is wisdom - 3:18.
 - D. Is a soothing tongue - 15:4.
- V. THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE.
 - A. Is the teaching of the wise - 13:14.
 - B. Is the mouth of the righteous - 10:11.
 - C. Is the fear of the Lord - 14:27.
 - D. Is understanding - 16:22.

**"THE PATH OF LIFE LEADS UPWARD FOR THE WISE,
THAT HE MAY KEEP AWAY FROM SHEOL BELOW."
PROVERBS 15:24**

THE SLUGGARD
* * * *
A STUDY IN PROVERBS

HEBREW עָשֵׂי (15 TIMES) MEANING “SLUGGISH, LAZY, STUPID.”

I. THE SLUGGARD'S CHARACTER.

- A. He will not begin things - 6:9,10.
- B. He will not finish things - 12:27; 19:24; 26:15.
- C. He will not face things:
 - 1. Lion outside, murder in the streets - 22:13.
 - 2. Rationalizes his own laziness - 26:16.
 - 3. Does not plow - 20:4 - Soft choice.
- D. Restless, unsatisfied desire:
 - 1. Craves but gets nothing - 13:4; 21:25,26.
 - 2. Helpless, thorns in his path - 15:19.
 - 3. Useless, causes destruction - 18:9.
 - 4. Exasperating - as smoke to the eyes - 10:26.

II. THE SLUGGARD'S LESSON.

- A. Example of the ant - 6:6-8:
 - 1. Needs no overseer.
 - 2. Knows the time.
- B. Experience:
 - 1. It comes too late - poverty comes like the bandit - 6:11; 24:33,34.
 - 2. Ends in slave labor - 12:24.
 - 3. Procrastination - vineyard becomes wasteland - 24:30,31.

NOTE: Wise man - Learn from sluggard - 24:32.

RIGHTEOUSNESS

* * * *

A STUDY IN PROVERBS

PART 1

HEBREW צְדִיקָה (OCCURS 87 TIMES IN PROVERBS) MEANS “DOING WHAT IS RIGHT, FAIR, JUST AND NORMAL” (BDB, p. 841).

- I. HOW DOES ONE BECOME RIGHTEOUS?
 - A. By learning wisdom from the Lord - 2:9.
 - B. By running to the Lord for guidance - 18:10.
 - C. By pursuing after it - 21:21 Cf. Mt. 6:33.
- II. HOW IS RIGHTEOUSNESS MANIFESTED?
 - A. By not being a “know it all,” but a learner - 9:9.
 - B. By having a hope for the future - 10:28; 14:32.
 - C. By not being overcome by worry - 10:30 Cf. Phil. 4:6f.
 - D. By having a smooth path - 11:5.
 - E. By not being “wishy-washy” - 11:19.
 - F. By having godly desires - 11:23.
 - G. By being a good example - 12:26.
 - H. By having pure thoughts - 12:5.
 - I. By being sensitive - 12:10; 29:7.
 - J. By guarding words - 12:13; 13:5.
 - K. By being a fighter - 13:6; 28:1.
 - L. By being a hard worker - 20:26.
 - M. By not giving up - 24:16.
 - N. By hating evil - 29:27.
- III. WHAT IS THE VALUE OF BEING RIGHTEOUS?
 - A. It gives one the true riches of life - 8:18,19; 11:18; 13:21; 15:6.
 - B. It delivers from death - 10:2; 11:4.
 - C. Your memory will live on - 10:7.
 - D. It will keep you out of trouble - 11:6,8; 12:21.
 - E. It will be a blessing to others after your death - 11:21; 20:7.
 - F. It will be a blessing to others during your life - 12:12; 14:34.
 - G. God will establish you - 12:7.

RIGHTEOUSNESS

* * * *

A STUDY IN PROVERBS

PART 2

- IV. GOD AND THE RIGHTEOUS.
 - A. He loves them - 15:9.
 - B. He hears their prayers - 15:29; 10:24.
 - C. He cares for physical needs - 10:3; 11:28; 13:25.
 - D. He blesses them instead of cursing - 3:33; 10:6; 11:31.
- V. THE "PATH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS".
 - A. Is the path taken by good men - 2:20.
 - B. Is fair, peaceable (non-violent) - 4:18.
 - C. Is just - 8:20; 16:8.
 - D. Is true living - 12:28.
- VI. THE MOUTH OF THE RIGHTEOUS.
 - A. Speaks truth - 8:7.
 - B. Makes life more enjoyable - 10:11; 16:13.
 - C. Is like precious silver - 10:20.
 - D. Provides substance to others - 10:21.
 - E. Flows with wisdom - 10:31
 - F. Is not perverse - 10:32.

**"THE WAY OF THE WICKED IS AN ABOMINATION TO THE LORD
BUT HE LOVES HIM WHO PURSUES RIGHTEOUSNESS."**

PROVERBS 15:9

THE WICKED

* * * *

A STUDY IN PROVERBS

PART 1

HEBREW רָשָׁע (86 TIMES IN PROVERBS) MEANING "TO BE LOOSE, ILL REGULATED, ABNORMAL, WICKED; GUILTY OF: a) CRIME b) HOSTILITY - TO GOD & MAN, OR c) SIN" (BDB, p. 957).

I. CHARACTERISTICS.

- A. Do not understand consequences of life - 4:19.
- B. Trap themselves - 5:22; and others - 12:26; 25:26.
- C. Their mouths:
 - 1. Speak lies - 8:7.
 - 2. Conceal violence - 10:6,11.
 - 3. Speak perversions - 10:32.
 - 4. Destroy whole cities - 11:11; 12:6.
 - 5. Are deceitful - 12:5.
 - 6. "Pour out" - talks evil constantly - 16:28.
 - 7. Spreads iniquity - 19:28.
- D. Always seem to get into trouble - 11:8; 12:21; 13:17; 18:5.
- E. Do not care for anyone but self - 12:10; 21:10; 29:7.
- F. Do not care about example - 13:5,6; 28:28.
- G. Always has to "look over his shoulder" - 28:1.

II. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

- A. Not to be afraid of them - God will protect - 3:25.
- B. Avoid them - 4:14.
- C. Not to waste time with them - 9:7.
- D. Not to make excuses for them - 17:15.
- E. Make yourself their enemy - 21:12.
- F. Do not be envious - 24:19,20.

THE WICKED

* * * *

A STUDY IN PROVERBS

PART 2

III. FATE OF THE WICKED.

- A. Will be cut off/removed from what is important - 3:22; 10:25,27, 30; 12:3; 13:9.
- B. House will be cursed - 3:33; 14:11.
- C. Will not be taken care of by the Lord - 10:3.
- D. Their name will be worthless -10:7,20; 12:7.
- E. Will be paid for "work" - 10:16,24; 11:5,18; 14:32; 15:6; 21:7.
- F. Is without hope - 10:28; 11:23,31.
- G. People will rejoice when gone - 11:10.
- H. Will eventually yield to righteous - 14:19.
- I. Worship will be rejected - 15:8,9,29; 21:27.
- J. Will become a tool for God - 16:4.

**"A MAN WILL NOT BE ESTABLISHED BY WICKEDNESS
BUT THE ROOT OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WILL NOT BE MOVED."
PROVERBS 12:3**

**"THE LORD IS FAR FROM THE WICKED,
BUT HE HEARS THE PRAYERS OF THE RIGHTEOUS."
PROVERBS 15:29**

**"THE RIGHTEOUS ONE CONSIDERS THE HOUSE OF THE WICKED,
TURNING THE WICKED TO RUIN."
PROVERBS 21:12**

WORDS

* * * *

A STUDY IN PROVERBS

NOTICE: 3 OUT OF 7 ABOMINATIONS TO THE LORD INVOLVE THE MISUSE OF WORDS - 6:16-19.

I. THE POWER OF WORDS - 18:21.

A. PENETRATES:

1. Feelings - 12:18,25; 16:24.
2. Attitude - 18:8.
3. Self-Esteem - 29:5.
4. Beliefs and convictions - 10:21; 11:9.

B. THE SPREADING OF WORDS:

1. Bad sense - 10:10; 16:27,30.
2. Good sense - 10:11; 12:14; 15:4.

II. THE WEAKNESS OF WORDS.

A. They are no substitute for deeds - 14:23.

B. They cannot alter facts:

1. Cannot change the way a man really is - 26:23-28.
2. Denials and excuses will not help - 24:12; 28:24.

C. They cannot compel response - 2:3,4; 17:10; 29:19.

D. Are affected by attitude of hearer - 17:4.

III. WORDS AT THEIR BEST.

A. Marks of words at their best:

1. Honest - 16:13; 24:26.
2. Few - 10:14,19; 11:12,13; 13:3; 17:28.
3. Calm - 17:27:
 - a. Allow time for a fair hearing - 18:13,17.
 - b. Allow tempers to cool - 15:1.
 - c. Has potent influence - 25:15.
4. Apt - 10:3; 15:23; 25:11.

B. How does one make the best use of words?

1. Study - 2:6; 15:2,28; 16:1.
2. Purify inside - 4:23.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

* * * *

A STUDY IN PROVERBS

- I. THE "ROD" IS OFTEN PRAISED AS AN APPROPRIATE TOOL OF DISCIPLINE (HEBREW **טַבַּעַל**, MEANS "ROD, STAFF, CLUB." IT IS A COMMON ARTICLE FOR SMITING, BEATING OR USE AS A WEAPON).
 - A. A father using it loves his son - 13:24.
 - B. It will do more good than harm - 23:13,14.
 - C. It takes more than words to get rid of foolishness - 22:15.
 - D. Character will be stronger if there is some "cutting back" - 15:32.
 - E. Training needs to start early - 22:6.
 - F. Child left to himself will bring shame and disgrace - 29:15.
- II. DISCIPLINE DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY BRING WISDOM & CHARACTER.
 - A. Reasonable approach must be used (i.e. not military discipline).
 1. Children must develop pride in parents - 17:6.
 2. Law (= direction, guidance) is the best resource for the parents. This includes:
 - a. Commands - 3:1; 7:2.
 - b. Habits, lifestyle, example - 3:21-24; 4:12 Cf. 2 Tim. 3:14-17).
 - B. Best training cannot instil wisdom - it can only encourage the choice to seek it (e.g. 2:1ff).
 1. May be too "wrapped up in self" to learn - 10:1; 13:1; 17:21 cf. Deut. 21:18-21.
 2. A good home may still produce a bad son:
 - a. An idler - 10:5.
 - b. A whoremonger - 29:3.
 - c. May despise parents - 15:20; 30:11,17; Cf 20:20.
 - d. May steal from parents - 19:26; 28:24.
 3. Sometimes parents are to blame:
 - a. Neglects child - 29:15.
 - b. Are not taught early enough - 22:6.

PROVERBS 1:10

THE FAMILY

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A STUDY IN PROVERBS

I. HUSBAND AND WIFE.

- A. Monogamy is God's plan:
 - 1. No reference to polygamy.
 - 2. Wants a united voice to speak to the children - 1:8; 6:20.
- B. Man to be more than loyal - he is to be truly in love - 5:19.
- C. Broken vow is sin against marriage partner - 2:17 Cf. Mal. 2:14-16.
- D. She is far from being his property (as in other ancient Eastern lands) - she can "make or break" her husband - 18:22; 19:14; 12:4.

II. SEXUAL SIN IS PRESENTED AS A MOST TERRIBLE SIN:

- A. It is illogical - 5:19,20.
- B. Is dishonorable - 6:33.
 - Even in today's society, unfaithfulness causes people to not trust.
 - Is self-destructive - 6:33.
 - A few moments of pleasure can ruin a life - is it worth it?
 - Cf. Heb. 11:24-26.
- C. Is restrictive, ensnaring - 23:27,28.
- D. Throws away one's best years - 5:9,11.
 - Many have bemoaned their carousing later in life - it robbed them of a truly fulfilling relationship with mate.
- E. Possibly lose possessions - 6:26; 29:3.
 - Prostitution is a billion dollar business - where do the billions come from?
- F. Risk physical danger and social disgrace - 2:18,19; 6:26-29, 32-35.

THE FOOL
* * * *
A STUDY IN PROVERBS

PART 1

- I. SIMPLE. THE KIND OF PERSON WHO IS EASILY LED, GULLIBLE, SILLY.
- II. HE IS MENTALLY NAIVE (14:15) AND MORALLY BANKRUPT. HE COULD BE HELPED IF HE WOULD ACCEPT DISCIPLINE, BUT HE WILL NOT - 1:22-32.
- III. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE נָסִיחַ (50 TIMES), MEANS "STUPID, OVER-CONFIDENT."
 - A. Loud, boisterous - 9:13; 18:2.
 - B. Causes grief to parents - 10:1; 15:20; 17:25; 19:13.
 - C. Does not guard tongue:
 - 1. Slanders - 10:18.
 - 2. Talks constantly about nothing - 12:23; 15:2,7.
 - 3. Causes strife - 18:6,7.
 - 4. Curses - 19:1.
 - D. Wickedness is like a sport - 10:23; 13:19.
 - E. Shows no common sense - 13:16; 17:24; 26:7-11.
 - F. Harms those who befriend him - 13:20; 14:7.
 - G. Is arrogant and careless - 14:16.
 - H. Cannot handle wealth - 19:10; 21:20.
- IV. ATTITUDES.
 - A. Hates knowledge - 1:22; 15:14.
 - B. Will not listen or be instructed - 8:5; 23:9.
 - C. Does not care what he does - 14:24.
 - D. Trusts in his own heart - 28:26.
- V. ACTIONS.
 - A. Complacent - 1:32.
 - B. Deceiving - 14:8.
 - C. Loses temper - 29:20.
- VI. HIS END.
 - A. Judgment - 19:29; 26:3.
 - B. No honor - 26:1,8.

THE FOOL
* * * *
A STUDY IN PROVERBS

PART 2

HEBREW נָלֵץ (26 TIMES), MEANING “VOID OF KNOWLEDGE, COMMON SENSE, SELF-DISCIPLINE OR MORAL CHARACTER.”

I. CHARACTERISTICS.

- A. Despises wisdom and instruction - 1:7; 10:21; 29:9.
- B. Talks foolishly and endlessly - 10:8,10,14; 12:16; 14:3; 17:28.
- C. Thinks his way is always right - 12:15.
- D. Mocks at sin - 14:9.
- E. Rejects discipline - 15:5; 16:22.
- F. Has no common sense (wisdom) - 17:16.
- G. Quarrels - 20:3.
- H. Cannot rid him of his folly - 27:22.

II. HIS END.

Will serve the wise - 11:29.

**“THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS
THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE;
FOOLS DESPISE WISDOM AND INSTRUCTION.”
PROVERBS 1:7**

THE WIFE
* * * *
A STUDY IN PROVERBS

THE IDEAL

FROM PROVERBS 31:

- I. HER VALUE IS INDESCRIBABLE - 10.
- II. SHE IS TRUSTWORTHY - 11,12:
 - A. Hardworking - 13-19.
 - B. Generous - 20.
 - C. Concerned for family - 21-24.
 - D. Optimistic - 25.
 - E. Kind - 26.
 - F. Not lazy - 27.
 - G. Worthy of praise from her family - 28,29.
 - H. One who fears the Lord - 30.

THE POSITIVES OF A GOOD WIFE

- I. A BLESSING, BRINGS REJOICING - 5:18.
- II. HUSBAND FOUND A GOOD THING, HAS FAVOR FROM THE LORD - 18:22.
- III. A PRUDENT WIFE IS FROM THE LORD - 19:14.
- IV. SHE IS THE CROWN OF HER HUSBAND - 12:4.
- V. IS CONSTRUCTIVE IN THE HOME - 14:1.

THE NEGATIVES OF A BAD WIFE

- I. HER CONTENTIONS ARE LIKE A CONSTANT DRIPPING - 19:13; 27:15.
- II. SHE IS BOISTEROUS, NAIVE, KNOWS NOTHING - 9:13.
- III. IF SHE LACKS DISCRETION, LIKE A GOLD RING IN A PIG'S NOSE - 11:22.
- IV. IF SHE SHAMES HIM, LIKE ROTTENNESS TO BONES - 12:4.
- V. BETTER TO LIVE IN A CORNER OF ROOF - 21:9; 25:24.
- VI. BETTER TO LIVE IN A DESERT THAN WITH HER - 21:19.

THE KING

* * * *

A STUDY IN PROVERBS

- I. WRITTEN BY A KING - 1:1; 31:1.
- II. HAS AUTHORITY FROM GOD.
 - A. To reign - 8:15; 21:1.
 - B. To decree - 16:10 Cf. Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13,14.
 - C. Abomination to God if commits wickedness - 16:12.
- III. THE KING AND HIS PEOPLE.
 - A. His power is in the people - 14:28; 30:31.
 - B. Has power of death, but still flexible - 16:14.
 - C. Sets mood of the nation - 16:15; 29:4.
 - D. To be feared by people if angry, but a blessing to them if he is favorable toward them - 19:12; 20:2.
- IV. THE PEOPLE AND THEIR KING.
 - A. They love him if he is honest and upright - 16:13.
 - B. They are his friends if they are pure and honest - 22:11.
 - C. Those who are skilled will stand before him - 22:29.
 - D. He is to be feared like God is feared - 24:21.
 - E. Will organize themselves without him if necessary - 30:27.
 - F. If he is wicked:
 - 1. They hide themselves - 28:12,28.
 - 2. They will be devoured - 28:15.
 - 3. They groan - 29:2.
 - 4. His ministers become the same - 29:12.
- V. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE KING.
 - A. Must consider actions of servants - 14:35; 25:2-5.
 - B. Must be just / fair, sees through evil plans - 20:8.
 - C. To punish wicked - 20:26 Cf. Rom. 13:4.
 - D. Must be righteous to maintain throne - 20:28.
 - 1. Wise counselors can help establish - 25:5.
 - 2. Fair treatment of poor necessary - 29:14.
 - 3. Must be morally pure - 31:3.
 - 4. Must keep from wine / strong drink - 31:4.

PROVERBS 22:6

“TRAIN UP A CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO,
EVEN WHEN HE IS OLD
HE WILL NOT DEPART FROM IT.”

- | | | |
|----|-------|--|
| 1. | חנך | Train, dedicate, to make experienced; to accustom (as one does to a horse by a bit in his mouth or rope). Get him used to something (BDB, p. 335). |
| 2. | נצר | Boy, lad, youth. General word which describes all from babes to teenagers (Cf. Gen. 21:12f; 37:2; 2 Sam. 18:5,12) (BDB, p. 654f). |
| 3. | צלפי | According to, or in accordance. |
| 4. | דרכי | His way, his road, his path (BDB, p. 202f). |
| 5. | גם | Adv. - moreover, also, yea. |
| 6. | כי | When, at the time. |
| 7. | יגדיו | Grow old, he shall grow old (BDB, p. 278). |
| 8. | יסור | He will not turn aside, depart, apostatize (BDB, p. 693). |

THE VERSE SAYS WE ARE TO GET A CHILD ACCUSTOMED TO WALKING THE RIGHT PATH OR LIVING THE RIGHT LIFESTYLE. THE WORD חנך MEANS TO GET SOMEONE USED TO SOMETHING LIKE GETTING A HORSE USED TO THE BRIDLE OR BIT. THUS, WE ARE TO SEE THAT OUR CHILDREN GET USED TO LIVING THE GODLY LIFESTYLE SO THEY BECOME COMFORTABLE WITH IT AND RESIGNED TO IT. IF THIS IS DONE, THEY WILL KEEP WALKING IN THE PATH WITH WHICH THEY ARE ACCUSTOMED WHEN THEY GROW OLD. THERE IS MORE IMPLIED THAN TEACHING. WE MUST GET THE CHILD ACCUSTOMED TO DOING THE LORD'S WILL. THIS WE DO BY SHOWING HIM HOW AND BY DOING RIGHTEOUS THINGS WITH HIM.