

Proverbs

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*A VERSE BY VERSE
STUDY GUIDE
for the BOOK of*

Proverbs

*Prepared for the Equipping the Saints,
Ministry of the Word
by Pastor David Braden*

Proverbs

A VERSE BY VERSE STUDY GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This booklet is provided as a guide to assist the new Christian and those who have never studied the book of Proverbs on a verse-by-verse basis.

In general, I have tried to identify the clustering of proverbs (by topic) where appropriate.

For each chapter, I have provided some word study helps (often including the Strong's numbers with short definitions) and, when applicable, identified text problems within the Hebrew. In many cases, I've summarized what I believe is the principal teaching of a verse or cluster.

I have also prayed continually for guidance as to how to present this study and believe that God has given me help along the way. I have found that the use of charts and also quizzing those in my study group as to what they know before we begin a chapter study are useful study techniques.

We also discovered that studying one chapter each week was a good pace and allowed us enough time to examine each verse.

Just as God gave us the book of Psalms and its "prayers for all occasions," I believe God gave us the book of Proverbs with its representative wisdom for all occasions.

It should be noted that the outcomes we see in the book of Proverbs are not guarantees (or promises), but are general truths and observations from daily life.

May this booklet be of use to you as you learn to be wise, walking in the fear of the Lord.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

- Outline:**
- I. An Overview of Wisdom Literature
 - II. “A Quick Look” at the book of Proverbs
 - III. Proverbs: “Walking in the Fear of the Lord’
 - IV. Analyzing a Proverb with Examples

I. An Overview of Wisdom Literature:

Biblical wisdom literature provides principles for daily living for the community of God. These principles, given by a loving God, reveal God’s will for our lives and show us how to live successfully and harmoniously while here on earth.

In the wisdom books, God reveals patterns for living that:

- o help us gain an understanding of our own life,
- o help us as we relate to and work with others, and ultimately
- o learn about God Himself.

These books give instructions for the three primary activities of our daily lives: thought, speech and action. (think, say, do)

They teach us that the life we lead and the choices we make directly influence the quality of life that we will experience. We learn that we are where we are today because of choices that we have made in the past.

* We are a product of the choices we have made.

These books provide us a rich treasury of human experiences that reveal the wisdom and grace of God.

A Comparison of the Wisdom Books with other OT books:

Books	Central focus	Application
The Law	Revelation and Guidance	A historical record of God’s revelations to man and legislation for the community of Israel
Prophets	Authority to speak for God	God gives messages to mankind for the present and future.
Psalms	Worship	Simultaneously, a songbook and a prayer book
Proverbs	Wisdom; observation and reflections on personal experience	A guide for practical Godly living
Job	A test; questions and reasonings	Answers from God and man
Ecclesiastes	Vanity, the meaning of life	We are shown the futility of pursuing a

		life style without God. Without God, life is meaningless, fleeting.
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Three responses (inward motivations) regarding sin and righteousness:

Subject	Prophet	Priest	Wise Man
Sin	It is disobedience.	It is defilement.	It is folly.
Righteousness	It is just.	It is commanded.	It is wise/prudent.

There are three principle types of poetry in the OT: lyric, didactic and dramatic.

1. Lyric poetry is so-called because it was poetry originally accompanied by music played on the lyre. (e.g. Psalms)
2. Didactic (teaching) In this type of poetry (e.g. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes), observations and conclusions about life are shared. (An early teaching document of the NT church was called “the Didache.”)
3. Dramatic poetry employs the use of conversation or dialogue to convey the message being presented. The book of Job is Hebrew drama.

In the ancient culture of Israel, proverbs were used as a method of instruction for children.

The wisdom literature of Israel consisted of writings produced by Israel’s “wise men.” Wise men were one of 3 groupings of OT religious leaders, the other 2 being prophets and priests.

There were four main characteristics of the wise men of the ancient cultures:

1. They carefully observed the human condition.
2. They were most often teachers.
3. They each had a particular method of discourse. (e.g. Ezekiel – acted out a prophetic message)
4. They were authority figures who asserted their authority without apology or reservation.

The wise men have been compared to photographers that specialize in observing the human scenario. They have the ability to bring the diverse areas of human experience into sharp focus. They have the poetic skills to address a wide range of human experience. It is usually the poetic form that achieves the special effects desired. “Like a bird that strays from its nest is a man who strays from his home.” (27:8) (Note how this diverges from our normal form of speaking.)

II. Literary Purposes

Literature is produced when someone puts their thoughts, actions/experiences into writing.

The Bible, therefore, is literature...men wrote as they were inspired by God recording words and deeds which have occurred during the course of God's unfolding plan.

Those who write have literary goals and intentions. The book of Proverbs is designed to achieve the following literary intentions:

1. Of primary importance – record and pass on their thoughts and experiences.
2. Be skillful in the use of words and syntax in order to creatively convey their message.
3. Make the abstractions wisdom and folly concrete to our imaginations. Use of figures of speech and objects common to the day; e.g. farmer, seed, soldier, animals
4. Express wisdom in the forms of proverbs and poetry. Design these expressions to be memorable.
5. Demonstrate that all areas of life require us to make moral and spiritual choices.
6. Describe the consequences of the choices we make.
7. In describing the consequences of our choices, convince us of the importance of wisdom in the choices we make.
8. Make appeals to everyday life to show us that this is where our religious life is lived.

III. “A Quick Look” at the book of Proverbs

Proverbs contains 31 chapters, 915 verses.

It is what the title designates, a collection (anthology) of Proverbs (wisdom sayings).

In the first and last parts of the book, the Proverbs are arranged in clusters. The middle section contains a random collection of individual proverbs, many of which can be grouped by topic.

Author: Most of the Proverbs were written by David's son, Solomon. (see 3 main sections beginning at 1:1, 10:1 and 25:1.

Two chapters, 30 and 31 were written by Agur and Lemuel.

Jesus used Proverbs at times to teach His disciples. But the relationship of Proverbs to Christ is much deeper than it appears. A fundamental connection between Proverbs and Christ is that the wisdom recorded in Proverbs is found completely in Christ. (see I Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:3)

Topics addressed: The list of topics addressed in Proverbs seems to be endless.

Following are just a few:

Areas of life: domestic, urban, political, military, agricultural, religious

Social relationships: master to slave, rich and poor, husband and wife, parents and children

Social and ethical virtues: thrift, discretion, love, pleasure, purity, truthfulness, chastity, kindness, justice, humility

Evil persons: the fool, gossip/slanderer (talebearer), whisperer, backbiter, false boaster, the one who winks with his eye, the sluggard

Contrasting subjects: God and man, time and eternity, truth and falsehood, wealth and poverty, purity and impurity, pleasure and misery

Outline of Proverbs:

1:1-9:18 Who the truly wise man is

10:1-22:16 How the wise man should live

22:17-24:34 Application – determining in the heart to walk righteously
– A continuing decision throughout your life
– “30 sayings”

25:1-29:27 Continuation of book theme by contrast and description
(continues the theme of who the wise man is and how he should live)

Note: These 5 chapters were compiled by “men of Hezekiah” some 250 years after Solomon wrote them.

30:1-33 The words of Agur (note use of numerical proverbs)

31:1-31 The words of Lemuel

- A. Counsel to a king (2-9)
- B. In praise of a noble wife (10-31) – an acrostic

IV. Proverbs: “Walking in the Fear of the Lord”

Definition: A proverb is a short, memorable saying about conduct and character. The Hebrew word for proverb is “mashal” meaning “to be like” or “to represent.” This is very appropriate since many proverbs use comparison to teach simple life truths.

Proverbs are brief wisdom sayings that provide a generalized wisdom statement regarding a specific issue in life. They are designed to be concise and picturesque to facilitate memorization. This creative way of providing wisdom is another illustration of God’s interest in the details of our lives. He wants us to live successfully in the world.

Theme: The major themes of the Bible are 1) the salvation of mankind and the ensuing restoration of mankind’s fellowship with God and 2) the creation of God’s community of worshipers. These themes are especially prominent in certain books such as the gospels and the book of Romans.

The Bible was also written to show the restored person how to live now that they are saved and restored. This instruction is found throughout the Scriptures but is especially prominent in certain books. Proverbs is one of them.

Proverbs teaches the righteous works of a saved person. It does not teach salvation by works. It doesn’t dwell on doctrine. It does emphasize application and practice.

A book from the New Testament, James, is sometimes referred to as “the Proverbs of the New Testament.”

Literary Style: Proverbs is wisdom literature. (So that a person may become wise). No one is born wise. We learn to be wise. Think about it. What are the first things a new-born baby learns? What don’t they know, but must learn? (How to please God and be successful in life).

Wisdom literature uses a variety of styles and forms listed below:

Devices:

1. Comparison - things that are similar are compared using “as” or “like”
2. Antithesis – comparing things that are opposite usually divided with the word “but.”
3. Imagery – using picture language (e.g. gold ring in a pig’s snout)

4. Personification – ascribing personality to an inanimate object. (the woman folly, a tree falling in the forest)

Forms: poetry, parables, questions, short story (Pr. 7:6-27)
Note: Paul was an expert in using questions to introduce a new theme. – see Romans)

Teaching method: comparison and contrast

A. Literary Features

The book of Proverbs is an anthology (collection) of individual proverbs written primarily by Solomon.

Chapters 1-9 contain proverb clusters (poems) that exhort the reader to pursue wisdom and forsake folly/wickedness. Significant space is given to the topic of the forbidden/adulterous woman and the ensuing results of those who go in to her.

The proverbs of Ch-10 achieve their purpose by making a specific comparison and leaving it to the reader to determine its application for a specific situation.

Some clustering and paragraphs do occur in this section of one-sentence proverbs, and so the reader must take into account this potential.

B. Context of Proverbs

Theological – the covenant between God and Israel which provides grace and Israel's life in the land of promise.

Cultural – subsistence agriculture...living from one crop to the next.

Literary – chapters 1-9 provide the ideals and motivations for pursuing wisdom.

Political – reign of Solomon – heavy labor burden on the people
60,000 laborers, 70,000 stone cutters (when constructing the temple)

3rd king of the monarchy which resulted at the end of the period of the judges when Israel rejected God's rule over them (theocracy).

C. Concreteness

Proverbs are most often given with a specific situation or person in mind rather than in generalizations (e.g. plural)

- a father speaks to his son
- a vendor is exhorted to use honest weights

It becomes the task of the reader to expand the application and determine the appropriate situations or persons to include in a particular proverb. e.g. a proverb written specifically about a son may also be applicable to daughters.

D. Contradictions

In some cases, proverbs may appear to provide contradictions e.g. 26:4-5. These are only thought to be contradictory if one forgets that the proverbs are generalized maxims. The “contradictory” proverbs may apply in different settings.

Nor are proverbs designed to be technically accurate...but memorable

e.g. we might say, “a stitch in time”

Proverbs are not intended to address every conceivable situation. It is incumbent upon the reader to make a wise judgment as to the applicability of any proverb.

Interpretation Tips for Reading Proverbs:

1. The Proverbs are instructions from God, not merely (or simply) the collected wisdom of man. The proverbs we have, came from God.
2. Wisdom can be interpreted as righteousness or holiness since it describes the heart of the person who knows God.

Fool means a person who is wicked.
3. Recognize that Proverbs uses the literary device of personification. For example, the foolish woman is not primarily a person but is spiritual wickedness. Although, at times, it is used literally.
4. Proverbs are practical, not primarily theological or doctrine statements.

5. Proverbs are worded to be memorable but not technically precise.
 (“A stitch in time saves nine.” It most likely saves more or less but not exactly nine stitches...but nine rhymes with time and is therefore more memorable and the point is still made.)
6. Proverbs are not promises or guarantees.
7. Proverbs reflect an ancient culture and may need some translation to obtain an appropriate meaning. e.g. 25:24 “a corner of the roof” – will need to be culturally transferred or pictured to appreciate the meaning of this proverb.
8. Proverbs often use literary devices such as figures of speech (e.g. similes and metaphors.) Therefore, you will need to determine the literal meaning of the figure of speech in terms of our present day culture.
9. Reading Proverbs: With the exception of the first 9 chapters and chapter 31, the book is mostly a collection of individual proverbs. These need to be considered individually by themselves. Some Proverbs may be grouped topically for study.

The real context of individual proverbs is not its position within the book but our experiences in real life.

Once we understand the teaching of a proverb, we need to think of real-life applications or proofs which confirm its truth. In this way, each proverb becomes a snapshot of a true life situation.

10. Although the proverbs are not generally arranged by topics, it is possible to look for proverbs on a given subject and create your own topical cluster. e.g. “the fear of the Lord”
11. When meditating on a proverb, appropriate questions to ask are:
 - a. When in life do I encounter this experience or choice?
 - b. When have I seen or experienced this situation?
 - c. Whose life in my circle of acquaintances is an example of this type of wisdom or foolishness (folly)?

12. Proverbs tells a story.

Even though Proverbs has no narrative or “story-line,” it is possible to view the book of Proverbs as telling a story.

- o The plot: the quest for a righteous/good life (God-fearing)
 The quest occurs in an implied context of a moment-in-time conflict between good and evil, wisdom and folly.

- o Leading characters: The person who is on a quest is the pupil or “my son.”

This “son” is representative of us, the readers. So, ultimately, we are the ones on a quest and therefore are being instructed.

Other members of the cast:

- the speaker or narrator who is the authoritative voice
- 2 personified women – wisdom and folly
- the virtuous wife (Ch-31)
- a host of other players in our drama whose actions show them to be either wise or foolish, good or evil. (e.g. the sluggard, the drunkard)

So...while the book is an anthology of wise sayings, it is also a gallery of characters whose virtues or vices are displayed.

- The scene: the unique moment in time which is generated by the experience or choice

13. The speaking and writing skill of the wise man

In approaching the proverbs for understanding, we are interested in the “how” of a saying as well as the “what.” (how did he say what he said as opposed to what did he say.)

The composers of proverbs typically use the basic mode of poetry with an array of figures of speech such as metaphors and similes. They also tend toward the concrete rather than the abstract. The goal of a proverb is to convey wisdom in a striking and memorable way. So, a useful initial analysis would be to theorize about what makes a particular proverb different from our usual, ordinary, forgettable speaking. The fact that proverbs are encased in a format that sets them apart from every day language does not detract from the fact that they are consistently rooted in everyday experiences. Once we take this into account, we can explore our own experiences and observations of life that are illustrated in a given proverb.

Example: “When the righteous increase, the people rejoice.
When the wicked rule, the people groan.” 29:2

How has this been true in our own lives?

Also, take note when an element of humor enters into the picture. “Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.” 11:22

V. Analyzing a Proverb with Examples

The following steps are suggested:

1. Read through a chapter and identify individual proverbs and clusters.
2. Read the first proverb or cluster working your way through the chapter.
3. What type of proverb is it?
 - a. synonymous
 - b. antithetical (opposite, usually shown by the word “but”)
 - c. synthetic (use of similar words or descriptions)
 - d. other:
 - (1) climactic – builds on the same word e.g. Ps. 29:1-2 “ascribe”
Pro. 31:2 “my son”
 - (2) emblematic – use of simile or metaphor: Ps. 42:1 “as a deer”
Prov. 25:25 “like cold water to a thirsty soul...”
4. Identify figures of speech and imagery and translate them into their literal meaning for today.
5. Look up key words and determine appropriate definitions.
6. In contrasting proverbs, determine what is being contrasted. e.g. Prov. 12:1 What kind of discipline is being contrasted?
7. What action is being assessed? e.g. request to be surety,
the prostitute beckons (see Ch-7),
invitation to dine with a ruler
8. What is the theme and core teaching of the proverb?
9. What character quality is displayed? e.g. wise, fool, glutton, Lazy

What is the resulting effect of this character quality?
10. Determine real-life application
What virtue does this proverb promote? (e.g. self-control)
What vice does it denounce? (drunkenness)
What value does it affirm? (humility)

Also see meditation questions under number 11 above – “Interpretation Tips for Reading Proverbs.”

To remember: Proverbs are snapshots in time of individual opportunities to learn and display wisdom and moral character.

The author shows us the characters and the results of the choices they make.

Examples:

1. “It is better to live on a corner of a roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.” 21:9

o Single or cluster - single

o Figures of speech/imagery – imagery : corner of a roof

Use of a thesaurus might amplify the predicament.

Quarrelsome: contentious, brawling, quick-tempered, on a short fuse, looking for trouble, not desirable company

Look at a picture of a peasant home to amplify our assessment so as to appreciate the two choices of a place to reside.

o What is contrasted? a quiet, limited, but lonely place, vs. a home with a quarreling wife?

o Core teaching – A quarrelsome wife does not a happy home make. She is difficult to live with. It’s better to be alone than to dwell in the presence of a woman who is constantly quarreling.

o What Character quality is displayed: disunity, absence of peace, selfishness

What is the character quality of a quarrelsome wife? (self-centered)

o Real-life application - A man has a wife who fits this description.

This is a universal application since the demeanor of a woman is not limited to a culture or nationality but is personality based.

The final application is to evaluate the options such an unfortunate man may have.

2. “Whether a tree falls to the north or south, in the place where it falls, there will it lie.” Eccl. 11:3b

- o Single or cluster – This verse is actually a cluster of verses 1-8 which will help provide context for the proverb in question.

v.11:2 refers to an evil that will be upon the earth.

Leupold, in his exposition of Ecclesiastes, interprets this evil to be a judgment of God.

The picture is that of a storm that overthrows a mighty tree in the forest.

Referring to monarchs as trees is a common practice among prophets. (see Daniel)

The emphasis in the comparison is the thought that this tree, once overthrown, will remain overthrown. This nation can stage no comeback.

- o Figures of speech/imagery - a falling tree...What does it represent?

Referring to monarchs and nations as trees was a common practice among prophets.

The tree can also be a metaphor of the universal principle of finality that attends many events in life.

- o Core teaching - The principle of finality that attends many events in life...Once it's over, it's over.
- o Real-life application - Life does have a finality to it.
Recommendation: We should take action to be prepared for our moment of finality.

3. “Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.” 11:22

- o Single or cluster – single
- o Figures of speech/imagery – picture of a pig with a fine gold ring in its snout. Note the use of humor in the imagery

Discretion: synonyms – considerate, prudence, wisdom, enlightened
antonym – folly

- o Core teaching – Just as a gold ring cannot dress up a pig and is therefore wasted, so also, physical beauty on a woman who is not wise nor discreet (tactful, tending not to put one's foot in one's mouth, diplomatic), is wasted.

Worth/usefulness is not based upon physical appearance.

- o Real-life application – a universal phenomenon
Physical beauty alone is not sufficient to make a woman of value.

Many physically attractive women learn to use their physical attributes to get what they want.

A beautiful woman with godly character is rare.

PROVERBS 1

I. Definitions

In the previous chapter, An Introduction to the Book of Proverbs, we saw that it is possible to view Proverbs as telling a story. The story is a quest story, the quest for wisdom. And we are the ones who are on a quest.

If our quest is for wisdom, then:

Questions: How will we know what to look for?
How will we know if we've found it?

1. wisdom – Col. 1:9 practical application of knowledge
knowledge of how to live in one's relationship with God.
(*sophia* – 4678) (how to live for God)

Pr. 1:2 2451 *chokmah* wisdom, knowledge, experience,
intelligence, insight, judgment.
True wisdom leads to reverence for the Lord.

“The wise person is one who is sensitive to God and who willingly subjects himself to Him. The wise person is one who goes on to apply divine guidelines in everyday situations and, guided by God's will, makes daily choices. It is only in combining the Lord's words with experience that wisdom can be found or demonstrated.

Wisdom is expressed in godly living.

Combining knowledge and experience to successfully meet moral or other challenges in daily life is what demonstrates the possession of wisdom.

Wisdom to master life's challenges can be found only in one's relationship with God.” (from L.O. Richards “Expository Dictionary of Bible Words)

2. instruction – 4148 teaching by discipline (Proverbs, A Self Study Guide by Irving L. Jensen p. 25) Pr. 1:2
3. understanding – discernment given by the holy Spirit;
the critical faculty of how to evaluate people, things,
circumstances Col. 1:9 *sunesis* – 4907

Pr. 1:2 995 *bin* –knowing how to use information
wisely

4. prudence discretion, wisdom *yormah* 6195 Pr.1:4
shrewd in the management of practical affairs
careful with resources
synonyms – cautious, discreet, frugal

5. knowledge – facts about God’s will Col. 1:9 *epignosis* 1922

clear and exact knowledge that has a participation in the
object of knowledge

6. simple – 6612 “to leave oneself open,” one who flirts with sin and
yields quickly to enticement (Jensen p.25) Pr. 1:4

In Proverbs 7, we will see a simple young man who puts himself
in harm’s way by the choices that he makes.

7. fool – 191 *ev-ee/* to be perverse Pr. 1:7
sinner also ungodly (Jensen p. 26)
a person who lacks sense or good judgment

III. Outline of chapter 1

- A. 1:1-7 Prologue
- B. 1:8-19 Opening instruction to the son
- C. 1:20-33 A street oration by the woman wisdom

IV. Exposition

1:1-7 Prologue – 3 parts

Verse 1 The title, identifying the content and author

Verses 2-6 key words: to, wisdom/wise

Notice that vv. 2-4 are a continuation of his introductory statement
of verse 1 (note the colon at the end of the first line).

Question: Why is Solomon writing this book? _____

Note the listing of treasures that Solomon wants us to find.

An important implication in these verses is that we are to seek and
find/receive these treasures. “Inactivity and laziness never secured
the treasures of wisdom.”

In 5 words or less, summarize these 5 verses. _____

Verse 7: The Main theme

Question: What is the fear of the Lord? _____

Does it include terror? _____
(see the next chapter: The Fear of the Lord)

Note: An excellent and helpful study would be to collect all of the verses in Proverbs that mention the fear of the Lord and then summarize what these verses say about it.

B. 1:8-9 Opening Instruction to the son – 3 parts

Summarize what instruction is given to the son in each of these segments.

8-9 _____

Question: What is the first instruction Solomon gives his son?

Why would he give this one first? _____

What is the unspoken implication of this verse? _____

10-14 _____

15-19 _____

C. 1:20-33 A street oration by the woman wisdom

Summarize each of the segments below.

20-23 _____

Question: What are the 3 kinds of persons addressed in this segment?

Question: From this segment, does it appear that wisdom will be difficult to find? _____

Question: What is wisdom doing in v.23? _____

Rhetorical question: Why then, do we not have more “wise men” in our generation? _____

24-25 She (wisdom) called but they didn’t seek her.

26-33 “Fools” hated wisdom and did not choose her.
When they came to trouble and called upon her, she did not answer.

V. Application

What applications can we make from chapter 1?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

VI. Instructions to children

1. vv. 8-9 Listen to your parents
2. vv.10-19 Don’t consent or walk (hangout) with fools.
3. vv. 20-23 Turn away from the life of the simple, scoffer and fool.
4. vv.24-33 If you refuse to turn from evil, you will suffer the natural consequences of your choice (killed, destroyed).

THE FEAR OF THE LORD

(sometimes abbreviated as the “FotL”)

Introduction:

Phil. 2:12 “work out your salvation with “**fear and trembling**”

Acts 9:31 “...living in the “**fear of the Lord**” Heb. 12:28 “...have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with **reverence and godly fear.**”

Eccl. 12:13 “The conclusion of the matter: **Fear God** and keep His commands for this is the whole duty of man.”

Dan. 6:26 Darius: “I make a decree in every dominion of my kingdom...men must **tremble and fear** before the God of Daniel.” (after Daniel in the lion’s den)

Ps 5:7 “In **fear of you** I will worship...”

Prov. 1:7 “The **fear of the Lord** is the beginning of knowledge.”

These are powerful statements of the far-reaching influence of the Fear of the Lord.

Background:

- FotL ~ 160Xs in the Bible
- similar expressions (e.g. terrified, afraid, trembling) > 400Xs
- approximately 600 references to elements of the FotL.

It’s blessings are too numerous to count. e.g.

- Wisdom Job 28:28
- Contentment/freedom from evil Prov. 19:23 (rests content)
- Have the Lord’s love Ps 103:17 (“chesed” = lovingkindness)
- Good life, many days Ps 34:9-14; Prov. 10:27
- Fountain of life – guides one away from the traps of death Prov. 14:27
- Instruction/prosperity/inheritance Ps 25:12-14 (secret of the Lord)
- The Lord hears you. Mal. 3:16
- “...so that you will not sin Ex. 20:20
- wealth, honor and life Prov. 22:4 (by humility and the FotL)

An Understatement: The Fear of the Lord is highly desirable in one’s life.

Who had the fear of the Lord?

1. Abraham Gen. 22:12
2. Isaac Gen. 31:42
3. Jacob Gen. 28:17
4. Midwives Ex. 1:17
5. Joseph Gen. 42:18
6. Levi Mal. 2:4-5
7. David Ps 34:11
8. Isaiah Isa. 6:5
9. Cornelius Acts 10:2
10. Solomon Prov. 1:7
11. Paul II Cor. 5:11
12. Jesus Isa. 11:1-3

What the fear of the Lord is not:

1. Natural fear:
 - o thunder and lightning
 - o taking a final exam
 - o my experience as a young ice cream salesman (and a large dog)
 - o phobias – the dark, heights, spiders, snakes, etc.
 - o child – fear of punishment for wrongdoing
2. Fear taught by men Isa. 29:13 Jesus quotes Isaiah in Matt. 15:8-9
 - o religious laws – (If you don't do certain things you are not a true Jew)
 - o Pharisees – their rules were the commands of men self-righteous living
3. Fear of man –
 - o fear of what man thinks
 - o fearing the look of rejection (looking for man's acceptance) (You would disobey God to satisfy men.) e.g. Saul – had just lost the kingdom and he was still interested in "looking good" before the men. (I Sam 15:24-26)

What it is:

Many biblical words for fear
pah – terror
deagah – sorrow

charadah – trembling
chath – fright/terror
yirah – reverence
nagor – terror
megorah – fear
mora – fear/reverence
pachad – dread
rogez – rage/anger/trembling
phoboz – fear/terror

Other words – amazement, awe, wonder, astonishment

As can be seen from the variety of meanings – there are many out workings in our lives.

Underneath it all is a profound sense of awe, reverence and respect towards God coupled with a great appreciation and acknowledgement of who He is and what He does. (The heart knows, not merely mental assent.)

Awe: an emotion in which dread, veneration and wonder are mingled in various ways.

Awe: submissive and admiring fear inspired by authority

Awe: a fearful reverence inspired by deity.

Examples:

1. Gen. 28:16-17 Jacob at Bethel (“afraid”)
2. Matt. 28:8 the women were afraid yet filled with joy.
3. Luke 5:1-11 Peter and the catch of fish

Prov. 1:7 The chief part, the soul of Godliness

From the amplified Bible: “The reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord is the beginning and the principal and choice part of knowledge (its starting point and its essence.)

(Note: Ps 111:10 says the same thing about wisdom.)

Theological dictionary includes “necessary condition”

It is that substance or quality from which all things are constructed.
It is the beginning of wisdom (Pro. 1:7)

Illustration of the alphabet:

From earlier scriptures – our life, our worship, our service must be infused with godly fear.

Just as every word we form is constructed from letters of the alphabet, so every choice, every word and every action coming from us should be influenced, suffused, permeated, constructed with the fear of the Lord.

It is not by accident that the fear of the Lord is called the beginning of wisdom.

How do you get the Fear of the Lord?

1. A grace from God – Jer. 32:39-41 “I will put my fear in their hearts... **for the good of them...**” (restoration of the people to the land of promise)
2. When receiving God’s forgiveness – Ps 130:4 “There is forgiveness with you, therefore you are feared.”
3. By answered prayer/our response to God’s love and kindness (when we see His awe-inspiring deeds)
4. By true repentance II Cor. 7:11
5. By asking for it. Ask – seek – knock (present, continuous action)
6. By observing God’s judgments on the earth – e.g. Ananias and Saphira Acts 5:1ff v.11 “So great fear came upon the church...”

see also: sons of Eli and the “strange fire”
7. By meditating/studying God’s Word regarding His greatness and those who experienced Him. See Psalm 145
8. By having a pervading sense of His presence. Ps 139
9. By having a constraining awareness of our obligation to this great God.
10. By choosing the fear of the Lord. Pro 1:29

The awareness of who God is and what He has done constrains me to do what is right and pleasing in His eyes. (Heb. 12 after the faith “Hall of Fame”)

PROVERBS 2

As you read Proverbs, think of yourself as the father giving instructions for godly living to the son whom he loves. This father is very conscious of the importance of this instruction.

Note the specific topics he addresses early in his counsel to his son.

I. Review of Chapter 1: A Summary

1-7 Purpose of the book: to get wisdom...to become a wise son
Theme (v.7) - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

1st Instruction:

8-19 - Obey your parents
- Do not consent } with sinners (They set an ambush
Do not walk } for their own lives.)

20-23 Wisdom cries aloud in the streets. (It can easily be found, if desired.)

24-33 The consequences of refusing the counsel of wisdom

According to v.7, what are those refusing this counsel called? _____

What is another name for this type of person? (v.32) _____

II. Chapter 2:

2nd Instruction:

1-15 "If – then clause": "IF" > THEN
> THEN

1-4 If: you **search for wisdom** as you would for hidden treasure...

v.1 "son" בן ben = son, child, boy, grandson
specifies an intimate relationship

Question: What lesson is Solomon repeating from the 1st instruction? _____

Question: What is the primary instruction of this segment?

Question: How would you characterize the heart attitudes of the actions listed? _____

5-8 Then: You will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.

What does God do? _____

9-15 Then: You will understand righteousness, justice, equity, every good path

You will be delivered from the way of evil and men of perverted speech.

How are evil men described? _____

Question: What is the reward identified in this segment for the “if” actions if taken?

16-22 The rewards of searching for wisdom:

16-19 delivered from the forbidden woman

How is the evil woman described? _____

Note how quickly in Solomon’s instruction that he gets into the issue of the “forbidden woman.” (just his 2nd instruction)

20-22 walk in good and righteous paths

vv. 21-22 note contrast “but”

Note how well Solomon describes the characteristics of evil men and women. (I think he wants his son to know how to discern evil persons.)

Applications

What applications can we make from these chapters for our own lives?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

PROVERBS 3

I. Review of Chapters 1 & 2

Chapter 1 1-7 Purpose of the book: to get wisdom...to become a wise son
Theme (v.7) - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

1st Instruction

8-19 - Obey your parents
- Do not consent } with sinners (They set an ambush
Do not walk } for their own lives.)

20-23 Wisdom cries aloud in the streets. (It can easily be found, if desired.)

24-33 The consequences of refusing the counsel of wisdom
"Eat the fruit of their own ways."

Chapter 2

2nd Instruction

1-15 "If – then clause": "IF" > THEN
> THEN
1-4 **If:** you **search for wisdom** as you would for hidden treasure...
5-8 **Then:** You will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.
9-15 **Then:** You will understand righteousness, justice, equity, every good path.
You will be delivered from the way of evil and men of perverted speech.

16-22 The rewards of searching for wisdom:
16-19 delivered from the forbidden woman
20-22 walk in good and righteous paths

Proverbs 3 In chapter 3, three times Solomon begins with "my son." (1, 11, 21)

II. Exposition

1-12 In this segment, note the repeated use of the format:
- "do not"
- "do"
- the reward

Theme: _____

What are the rewards for keeping a father's teaching and commands?

v.2 _____

v.4 _____

v.6 _____

v.8 _____

v.10 _____

13-20

This segment is called "an encomium" which is a poem or prose writing in praise of a person or an abstract quality such as wisdom.

v.13 What does this verse tell us about our pursuit of wisdom?

What figures of speech are used to illustrate the value of wisdom?

_____ , _____ , _____

What are the rewards of wisdom?

v.16 _____

v.17 _____

v.18 _____

What do verses 19-20 tell us about wisdom? _____

Where was wisdom in the beginning? _____

21-35

A theme: Advice to a son

vv. 21-24 another "If (implied), then clause"

What are we to keep constantly in our sight?

How did the Jews keep the commandments "in sight?"

Should we do any of these things today? _____

What can we do to keep wisdom and discretion "in sight?"

25-32 What is the dominant teaching style in this segment? _____

Note the following events in life that require our choice:

v.25 Choose not to be afraid of:
sudden terror
the ruin of the wicked

v.27 choose to do **good** to those to whom it is due

good: "tov" big word in Hebrew...full of meaning

Ps. 23:6 "surely goodness..."

Strong's # 2896: good, pleasant, beautiful, excellent, lovely, delightful, convenient, joyful, fruitful, precious, sound, cheerful, kind, correct, righteous, the good, the right, virtue, happiness, pleasantness, practical, economic benefits, wisdom, aesthetic or sensual goodness, happiness, moral goodness (seems like this list is trying to cover every possible good)

v.28 a neighbor wants to borrow from you or is asking for something you owe him

v.29 doing evil to a trusting neighbor

v.30 contend with someone for no reason

v.31 be envious of a man of violence

Have you had the opportunity recently to make a choice regarding any one of these events in your life?

Did you choose wisely? _____

vv.33-35

What is the contrast presented in this segment?

What applications can we make from chapter 3 for our own lives?

1. Don't forget the teachings of your parents.
2. Hold on to steadfast love and faithfulness.
3. Trust God wholeheartedly.
4. Don't think yourself wise.
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Definition: discretion

- o freedom to act or judge on one's own/make wise choices
- o cautious reserve
- o intelligent care
- o judicious

synonym: prudent

“insight” - the ability to “see into” a situation with wisdom and understanding

“precepts” – a command or principle intended as a general rule of action or conduct

“tender” – weak, delicate, immature, soft, faint-hearted
(description of the heart of a young child)...moldable

“keep” - *shamar* - keep, guard, preserve, watch, protect, attend, hedge about, exercise great care over, inspect, observe (in essence – what a shepherd does) – see Ps. 121

“word” *davar* 1697

Occurs more than 1400 times. It is translated with more than 85 different English words...e.g. word, saying, speech, news, command, promise, incident, occurrence, concern, cause, question, lawsuit.

Sometimes *davar* is what is done, and sometimes it is a report of what has been done. Sometimes *davar* is personified.

The “Word of the Lord” was a technical expression for prophetic revelation.

“stumble” *kashal* - 3782 cause to fall, stagger, or stumble to blunder morally to make a stupid or needless mistake to walk clumsily or unsteadily

II. Exposition

1st segment: vv. 1-9

Theme: _____

vv.1-2 What instruction is Solomon repeating? _____

What is the reward of obeying your parents? _____

What is the underlying implication of v.1? _____

What should/can you do if your father does not have wisdom?
Look for wisdom in God’s Word.

vv.3-9 What did Solomon’s father teach him? _____

v.3 describes the heart of a young child (tender). This, I believe, implies that it was tender, pliable, teachable...most likely not yet wounded by people or the issues of life.

From your knowledge of the Bible, did Solomon obey his father?

If no, how/where did he fail? _____

Did Solomon get the rewards of v.9? _____

A lesson from Solomon's life: Having wisdom does not assure success at keeping it or in applying it.

v.4 From v.4, what part of the anatomy should be involved in keeping God's commands? _____

v.7 Paraphrase Solomon's instruction that "The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom." (What does this mean?)

How do you keep God's Word in your heart? _____

2nd segment: vv. 10-19

Theme: _____

v.10 What instruction is Solomon repeating? _____

What is the reward of obedience to your parents? _____

v.11 A bold statement. Can we say this to our children? _____

v.12 What does the figure of speech of walking and running mean?

vv.14-15 Solomon repeats an instruction 6 times. What is this instruction? _____

This is an indication of how significant and important this instruction is.

vv.16-17 What is described in these 2 verses? (v.14) _____

Paraphrase the figure of speech used in v.17.

vv.18-19 What 2 ways are contrasted in this segment?

Rhetorical question: Can it be any clearer as to the end result of these 2 paths?

3rd segment: vv. 20-27

vv. 20-21 What instruction is Solomon repeating?

How can we do this? _____

v.22 What is a unique benefit of obeying you parents identified in v.22?

vv.23-27 In these verses, Solomon gets the human anatomy involved. Name the parts and the instruction for each part:

v.23 _____

v.24 _____

v.25 _____

v.26/27 _____

A Question: What is one way that we can get wisdom? (Ja 1:5-6)

Applications

What personal applications can we make from chapter 4?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

PROVERBS 5

I. **Review of Chapter 4: A Father's Wise Counsel** Stay away from the immoral woman!

Solomon teaches his son what his father has taught him.

vv. 1-9 Encouragement to get Wisdom

vv. 10-19 "The Contrasting Paths"

the path of the wicked vs. the path of the righteous

vv. 20-27 Exhortation to keep/guard the words he is teaching his son.

II. **Chapter 5: Definitions**

Discretion – the freedom to act or judge on one's own

exposé – to disclose, cause to be open to view

honor – splendor, glory, majesty, renown, ornament

in the NT, honor has the sense of weight (see I Tim.5:17-18) and is related to wages

ponder – consider carefully

great folly – the work of fools

discipline – *musar* – instruction, discipline, self-control, a checking, restraint, correction which results in education

"wormwood" – *la'anah* 3939 something bitter or grievous

any of several aromatic plants of the genus *Artemisia* which yields a bitter extract, sometimes used in flavoring certain wines

supposed to mean "a curse"

regarded as poisonous and therefore accursed
hemlock

III. **Chapter 5: Introduction**

Sometimes the proverbs use sexual imagery figuratively, usually referring to idolatry (e.g. Jer 5:7-8; Jud 8:27). But, at other times, figurative language is used in place of sexual language, but clearly refer to literal sexual meanings. Proverbs 5 is an example of the latter. (An important principle of biblical interpretation is to determine if imagery is figurative or literal.)

In this chapter, we will see powerful imagery warning against falling prey to the forbidden woman. (“the seductress”)

We will also see a strong affirmation of married, sexual love in the Bible with an emphasis on the privacy of the sexual relationship as God intended it.

IV. Exposition

vv.1-6 Theme: An _____ of the _____ woman.

v.1 What instruction does Solomon again repeat?

In chapter 4, he taught his son wisdom that his father had taught him. In chapter 5, Solomon is teaching his son his _____ and _____.

v.2 What is the ultimate end of those who do not keep discretion (the ability to make responsible personal decisions)? _____

v.3-4 How can you spot a forbidden woman? _____

vv.5-6 Ultimately, her path leads to death, to Sheol...the place of the dead, a real place. (This is not a figure of speech.)

What did Solomon do in this verse? Answer: He introduced his son to the reality of punishment in the next life.

Sheol contains 2 compartments or areas where those who have died go. One is called Abraham’s bosom (where Paradise was located), the other Hades (or Hell or Abbadon or the pit). It was a place of torment. These compartments were separated by an impassable gulf. (see Luke 16:19-31 – a real story about real people)

Which compartment do you suspect that the “forbidden woman” leads to?

What is the forbidden woman’s problem?

(another reason why she should be avoided)

In the light of the above, how important is it that young men avoid the sins of immorality as is pictured in the forbidden woman?

“Expanding Inclusion”

An important principle of biblical interpretation is that of “expanding inclusion.” This simply means that an author will illustrate a principle or teaching by providing a specific application, e.g. using a specific gender.

In this case, this principle expands the specific application to both genders.

Another illustration is the NT exhortation “Do not get drunk with wine.” Well then...can I get drunk on beer or whiskey? (The point is, don’t get drunk.)

With this principle in mind, what can we say about Solomon’s teachings to his son?

Note: Be sure to examine the context of a passage to determine if it is appropriate to expand the teaching beyond the specific situation in which it is encased.

v.6 “She does not ponder the path of life.”

Note: This is not the kind of woman a righteous man would/should desire for his wife.

vv.7-14 “The _____ of those who pursue the _____ woman”

v.7 He repeats his exhortation to keep his words.

v.8 His instruction is very simple and direct: “Stay away from her.”

vv.9-14 The end of those who pursue her:

v.9 _____

v.10 _____

v.11 _____

v.12 Why did the person speaking end up this way?

v.13 _____

v.14 Who could this person be?

What is the ultimate reward (or end) of those who pursue a forbidden woman?

vv.15-23 Encouragement to Marital faithfulness

Question: What do these verses tell us about Solomon's son? He had a wife.

This segment is overflowing with figures of speech.

What do the following mean?

V.15 "drink water" _____

V.15 "your own cistern" _____

V.15 "your own well" _____

V.16 "your springs (fountains)" _____

V.16 "streams of water in the streets" _____

V.18 "your fountain" _____

v.21 Why should we drink water from our own well?

v.23 "Great folly" is the work of fools, and they go astray.

A main thrust of the book of Proverbs is: "He dies for lack of discipline."

V. Application

A. What are verses 15-23 teaching us about marriage relationships?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

B. What other applications can we make from chapter 5?

1. We need to ponder (consider carefully) the path of life. v.6

2. Not taking heed to (not giving serious thought to) the path you are on leads to death.
3. Like a ship with the helmsmen asleep at the wheel, is a life in which one's ways are not considered.
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

PROVERBS 6

I. Review of Chapter 5

Solomon uses powerful imagery to warn against the seductions of the “forbidden” woman.

We also see a strong affirmation of sexual love as God intended it.

Solomon again appeals to his son and sons. This must surely include Rehoboam who would be the successor to Solomon on the throne of Israel at Solomon’s death.

Did Rehoboam apply the wisdom he had learned from his father?
(II Chron 11:18-21) _____

- vv. 1-6 An exposé of the forbidden woman
- vv. 7-14 The end of those who pursue the forbidden woman
- vv. 15-23 Encouragement to marital faithfulness (drink from your own well)

II. Overview of Chapter 6

Part I: 1-19 4 proverb clusters – warnings about surety, laziness and sowing discord + things God hates

- 1-5 becoming liable for someone else’s debt (surety)
- 6-11 the sluggard is encouraged to observe the ant
- 12-15 the worthless person who sows discord
- 16-19 7 things the Lord hates

Part II: 20-35 A 2nd warning against the seductions of the “evil” woman also referred to as an adulteress

Definitions:

- “surety” to be liable for another’s debt v.1
- “stranger” a nonacquaintance v.1
- “snared” caught, trapped v.2
- “fowler” one who sets a trap v.5

- “sluggard” indolent, lazy, slothful, not inclined to expend effort to achieve a goal v.6
- “worthless” also wicked v.12
- “crooked” perverse, disobedient v.12
- “abomination” to’evah 8441 morally disgusting e.g. homosexuality, idolatry, human sacrifice, eating unclean animals, engaging in occult activities, dishonest business practices, practicing cultic prostitution v.16 (from Zodhiates Word Study OT) v.16
“a strong expression for something morally disgusting”
- “evil” woman bad, of inferior quality v.24
- “adulteress” one who is not one’s own wife v.24

III. Exposition Part I: 4 proverb clusters

vv.1-5 Subject: _____

v.1 “my son”

“If - then” format

If you have made yourself liable for the debt of a neighbor or someone you don’t know... (a stranger)

Note: Prudence recognizes that, generally speaking, it is not wise nor good to put yourself in the position of being liable for another’s debt. In nearly all cases, it is not good for either party involved.

However, there may be exceptions. Can you think of one or two:

1. _____
2. _____

v.2 “If he has been caught/trapped by his own words”

Note imagery of a trapped animal, a picture that most of them will be familiar with.

What does an animal look like when trapped? _____
This will be their experience.

Some people who deal in finances will want to convince you of the safe nature of becoming surety in a business transaction.

What is one thing the merchandisers try to do when you're "in their store?" _____

What safeguards might you take when considering becoming surety for someone?

1. _____
2. _____

vv.3-5 An urgent appeal to take immediate and untiring action to free yourself from the condition of surety.

v.3 "You have come into the hand of your neighbor"

What does this mean? _____

vv. 6-11 Subject: _____

v.6 Solomon wants the sluggard to be taught by an _____.

v.7 The ant has no "boss" but still gets the job done.

What does the ant have that the sluggard does not? _____

What is the reward of slothfulness? _____ v.11

vv.12-15 Subject: _____

What other word is used to describe the worthless person?
_____ v.12

The worthless person has no desire to act in accordance with what God values.

How can he be recognized?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Will he see his calamity coming? (v.15) _____

The justification for the conclusion of v.15 is found in vv. 16 and 19.
What is it? _____

In these first three proverb clusters, what words are used to describe the person on which the clusters focus?

v.1-5 _____

v.6-11 _____

v.12-19 _____

vv.16-19 Subject: _____

This cluster uses a numeric literary device. It:

- embellishes the poetry,
- provides a memory aid, and
- builds to a climax, drawing attention to the 7th item.

Note that the 7th item is listed in the previous cluster (v.14).

See definition of abomination on page 41 and the illustrations from Scripture that are provided.

In your own words...what does abomination mean?

Is there a connection between this 4th proverb cluster and the 3 that precede it? If yes, what is it? _____

Note: This is a representative list and, therefore, is not all-inclusive.

IV. Exposition Part II: Warning against an adulterous woman

vv. 20-24 Subject: Opening summons to keep his parents' teachings

What does Solomon encourage his son to do?

How long must he do this? _____

What will be his reward if he does this? _____

v.24 The "evil" woman is a woman of bad or inferior quality.

What will help guard a "son" in his moment of temptation? _____

vv. 25-35 Subject: _____

v.25 What allurements does she use? _____ and

Why are a woman's eyelashes an allurements? _____

What does she do with them that might capture you? _____

"Do not desire her beauty in your heart."
What does Jesus say about this in Matt. 5:27-28? _____

v.26 How does Solomon contrast the prostitute and the adulteress?

Which is the more expensive? _____

vv. 27-28 Two rhetorical questions (asked merely for effect with no
answer expected.)

Why does Solomon use this literary device? _____

v.29 This verse displays the reason for the rhetorical questions: The
man who goes into his neighbor's wife is going to get burned.

He will not go unpunished.
The Hebrew term "naqah" usually implies that God does the
punishing. 11:21; 16:5; 17:5; 19:5, 9; 28:20

vv. 30-33 These verses show the different community responses to the
thief who steals bread and the man who goes into his
neighbor's wife.

What are the penalties for adultery?

- A. _____ v.32
- B. _____ and _____ v.33a
- C. _____ v.33b
- D. _____ v.34
- E. _____ v.35

vv. 34-35 What can the “sinning” man expect from the husband of the woman he slept with? _____

What reward does the adulterous woman get? _____
_____ 5:4-5

V. **Applications**

What personal applications can we make from chapter 6?

A. 4 proverb clusters:

1. Don't make yourself liable for another's debt. (surety)
2. Be resourceful and exercise initiative like the ant. (Don't be lazy)
3. _____
4. _____

B. Warning against the adulteress:

1. Keep God's (our Father) instructions always before us.
2. Do not let the adulteress capture you with her “bait.”
3. _____
4. _____

PROVERBS 7

I. Review of Chapter 6

Part I: 1-19	4 proverb clusters
1-5	becoming liable for someone else's debt (surety)
6-11	the sluggard is encouraged to observe the ant
12-15	the worthless person who sows discord
16-19	7 things the Lord hates

Part II: 20-35 A 2nd warning against the seductions of the "evil" woman also referred to as an adulteress.

II. Overview of Chapter 7: "The Fool and the Adulteress" A 3rd Warning against the Adulteress

This chapter begins with the usual exhortation to his son to keep and treasure Solomon's commands. How can he do this? (Through memory work). If he does, the commandments will keep him from the forbidden (adulterous) woman.

The instructions quickly narrow to the subject of sexual sin. The writer composes a vivid temptation story, perhaps one of the most impressive, ear-catching stories in the book of Proverbs.

In this narrative there are two main characters, a youth in his adolescent years and a promiscuous woman whose behavior betrays (reveals) her to be a prostitute.

The final warnings are encased in vivid metaphors depicting a young man's final destruction should he go down the path of the forbidden woman.

Definitions:

insight 998 insight, understanding, intelligence, v.4
prudence – shrewd in the management of business affairs

forbidden 2114 root – unacquainted, devious, adulterous, unrelated v.5

simple 6612 foolish, seducible, lacking education and/or experience v.7

youth 1121 boy, young one v.7

young man 5288 boy, infancy to adolescence (between childhood and manhood) v.7

lacking 2638 }
understanding 3820 } void of understanding v.7

wily of heart 5341 to hide, conceal v.10

bold (face) 5810 harden, impudent marked by contemptuous boldness
or disregard of others (Kissing this way in public was
not culturally acceptable.) v.13

love 1730 love, one beloved v.18

seductive 3948 persuasive v.21

smooth 2506 smoothness of the tongue, flattery v.21

“all at once” 6597 instantly, suddenly, “in a moment” v.22

III. Exposition

vv. 1-5 A summons to take his parents' wise instruction to heart

v.1 For the 7th time, keep your parent's commandments. (At least once
each chapter).

In this particular case (advise about the harlot which began in
chapter 6 (6:20)), he includes the mother's teaching.

Why might he do this? _____

v.2-3 Solomon wants his commandments to be _____ in his son's view.

How does Solomon propose that this be done? _____

vv. 4-5 What good effect will wisdom and insight have on his son?

vv. 6-9 What Solomon saw

What 3 things made this youth susceptible to the forbidden
woman?

1. _____ v.7
2. _____ v.8
3. _____ v.9

vv. 10-23 The Seduction

vv.10-12 How is the forbidden woman described?

v.10 _____

v.11 _____
v.12 _____

vv. 13-21 How does she persuade him?

v.13 _____
v.14 _____

What is the significance of her telling him she has today offered sacrifices and paid her vows?

A. _____
B. _____

v.15 _____
v.16 _____
v.17 _____
v.18 _____
v.19 _____
v.20 _____

With what does she win him over? (v.21) _____

She appears to anticipate and answer his every unspoken concern.

What might some of his concerns be? _____

She seems to be throwing everything but “the kitchen sink” at him.

She promises _____ delights and _____
from her husband. She tells him that he is _____.

vv.21-22 He takes the bait and is caught.

v.21 He has taken the bait. In a single moment of _____,
he falls.

v.22 How is his action described? _____

Have you ever seen an animal caught in a snare?
Ever seen the look and action of panic as it realizes it is caught?
How does a fish react when it is snared by the bait?

This is now his lot. (Yet, for the moment, he doesn't know it.)

This is a key moment in the story, the point of decision.

v.23 What ultimate price must he pay? _____

vv. 24-27 The Final Warning

What two pieces of advice does Solomon give in v. 25?

1. _____
2. _____

The final encouragement to stay away from her:

v.27 "Her house is the way to _____, going down to the chambers of _____."

Which chamber will be his? _____

In mentioning Sheol, Solomon is showing his son that the consequences of his choices in this life go beyond the grave.

The point of the story: Wisdom includes staying away from the paths that one knows will lead to temptation, paths that many have gone down to their own destruction.

The reason for the simple youth's demise: He was in the _____ place at the _____ time.

IV. Applications

What applications can we make from this powerful, thought-provoking story?

1. Don't let your heart go after a forbidden woman.
2. Don't let your feet go near her dwelling.
3. Beware the woman who is wily of heart and smooth of speech.
4. Make "understanding" your close friend. v.4
5. _____
6. _____

PROVERBS 8

Top-Level Outline of Proverbs

A. Ch. 1-9 Theme: “The Pursuit of Wisdom”
“The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom”

Therefore: “Walking in the Fear of the Lord”

Personifications are prominent, e.g. wisdom, folly

B. Ch. 10-31 Miscellaneous Applications – dominant use of one-verse maxims esp. contrasting parallelisms

**I. Review of Chapter 7: “The Fool and the Path” or
“The Fool and the Adulteress”
A 3rd Warning against the Adulteress**

1-5 A summons to take his parents’ wise instruction to heart

6-9 What Solomon saw from his window

10-23 The Seduction (“the “fine lady” and her smooth words)

24-27 The Final Warning

fool - sinner, also ungodly
a person who lacks sense or good judgment
a person who is easily persuaded

simple - easily seduced
to leave oneself open
one who flirts with sin and yields quickly to enticement

**II. Background to Ch-8: A Second call to Wisdom” (1st call was in 1:20ff)
“Why a son should choose wisdom over folly”**

Chapters 8-9 will now complete this 1st major segment of Proverbs which consists of Proverbs clusters.

The next major section 10-29, will display Proverbs in parallel constructions, esp. antithesis parallelisms, e.g.:

*“A wise son makes a glad father,
but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.” 10:1*

In chapter 8, the woman of sin (Ch-7) is now contrasted with the woman of righteousness.

Ch-8 is a self-contained unit in which wisdom is personified as a woman who calls out in the streets. (She is not hidden or uneasily found.)

This great woman illustrates a central message of Proverbs:

the existence, character and purpose of true wisdom which is framed in a covenant relationship with the Maker of heaven and earth. As such, wisdom includes every aspect of life in all places on the earth and is available to all who will seek her.

After the introduction in vv. 1-5, the paragraphs following describe:

- 6-9 the character/heart of wisdom
- 10-11 the value of wisdom
- 12-21 the character and reward of wisdom
- 22-31 the origin of wisdom
- 32-35 a final call to wisdom

III. Exposition

1-5 the call to wisdom

v.1 a rhetorical question (designed to stir the thoughts of the reader but not soliciting an answer)

vv.2-4 Wisdom can be found _____. (location)

The sluggard or fool who has no desire for wisdom has no excuse because she has made herself _____.

She is not _____ but is _____.
(characteristic of sound)

v.5 The simple and the fool are exhorted to learn _____ and _____.

“prudence” – shrewd in the management of practical affairs

“sense” – bin: to discern, to perceive
to make intelligent decisions
deal wisely
understanding
implies the ability to distinguish between good and evil

In essence: “learn to have an understanding heart”

6-9 the heart of wisdom

Very interesting: The character of wisdom is described by her words.

Also see:

“My mouth will speak words of wisdom; the utterance from my heart will give understanding.” Ps. 49:3

“For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.” Mt. 12:34 (Jesus speaking)

The words of our mouth reveal what is in our _____.

What is in the heart of wisdom?

v.6 _____ things, what is _____.

v.7 _____

v.8 _____ (not twisted or crooked)

v.9 * _____ and _____.

*5228 “nakhoach” – plain, correct, honest, right
what is just and proper

What do the words of your mouth reveal about what is in your heart? _____

Note the contrast of the words from wisdom as opposed to the words and actions of the forbidden woman: (Pr. 7:10-21)

What is the character of her heart?

7:10 _____

:11 _____

:12 _____

:13 _____

:15 _____

:18 _____

:21 _____, _____

10-11 the value of wisdom

Wisdom is more valuable than (better than):

_____ and _____ v.10

_____ and all that you may _____ v.11

12-21 the character and reward of wisdom

Character: 12-17

Question: "Who does she hang out with?"

v.12 _____
(not bad company to keep)

v.13 She hates: _____
_____ and _____
perverted _____

Note: If you hate evil, it is a good indicator that you have a measure of the fear of the Lord.

One of the main purposes of the fear of the Lord is to align our heart with what God loves.

Question: What can she give you from her store of treasure?

v.14 has _____ and sound _____
_____ and _____

vv.15-16 By wisdom, kings and rulers _____ and
_____ what is _____.

Note: Wisdom offers to fools and the simple the same things that are available and needed by kings and rulers (persons in positions of authority).

v.17 What, in v.17, provides one of the requirements for finding wisdom? _____

Rewards: 18-21

Wisdom gives:

v.18 _____ and _____
enduring _____ and _____

v.19 better than _____

v.20 her paths is _____

v.21 an _____
fills their _____

22-31 the origin of wisdom

From Proverbs, A Self Study Guide by Irving L. Jensen pp. 10-11:

“The relation of Proverbs to Christ is deeper than appears on the surface. Some see Christ foreshadowed in such explicit passages as 8:22-31, 23:11 and 30:4. A foundational connection is that the wisdom spoken of in Proverbs is found completely in Christ. (I Cor. 1:30) The aspiration in Proverbs is for wisdom to become incarnate as indeed it did when “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge became flesh in Christ. (Col. 2:3.) The wise man of Proverbs is the righteous man and no man is righteous except as he is clothed with the righteousness of Christ. So, the truly wise man today is the born-again Christian.”

See also John 1:1-3; Gen. 1:1-2

The goal, therefore, is that the wisdom of God becomes incarnate in us just as it was in Christ.

v.22 Wisdom was _____ by God at the beginning of His work.

7069 qanah – create, possess, procure, attain, get

“An accurate paraphrase of v. 22 would be:

“I, Wisdom, was the Lord’s in the beginning; yea, I was with Him in all eternity.”

Those who see Christ pictured throughout chapter 8 must be careful in their interpretation of the text so that the eternal being of Christ is not contradicted.

He is not a created entity. (my comment)

vv.24-25 What do these verses tell us about wisdom?

2342 chul – to turn in a circle, whirl, twist, revolve, to be in labor (child birth)

There are two main ideas in this word:

1. spinning
2. twisting in labor pangs

What does the phrase “was bought forth” mean?

v.30 How does this verse depict the activity of wisdom in the creation process? _____

32-35 a final call to wisdom

v.32 “And now...” it sounds to me like Solomon is beginning to wrap up his exhortation to get wisdom.

v.33 Hear and do not disdain

v.34 What does this verse indicate is our responsibility towards wisdom? _____

Question: Watching daily is a spiritual discipline. What discipline is it? _____

vv.35-36 Rewards/punishments

What is the reward of those who find wisdom? _____

What is the result of those who fail to find wisdom? _____
_____.

A very thought-provoking conclusion:

“Those who _____ wisdom love _____.”

IV. Applications from this chapter

1. We need to seek wisdom daily. v.34
2. The rewards of wisdom are great; the effect on those who don't find her are disastrous.
3. Wisdom can be found if we seek her. (She is not hidden.)
4. _____
5. _____

We would be wise to ask ourselves 2 questions:

1. Am I on the path to wisdom?
2. What do my current actions reveal about my attitude towards wisdom?

A good motivator to love the truth: Those who hate wisdom love death.

PROVERBS 9

I. Top-Level Outline of Proverbs

- A. Ch. 1-9 Theme: “The Pursuit of Wisdom”
“The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom”

personifications are prominent, e.g. wisdom, folly

- B. Ch.10-31 Miscellaneous Applications – dominant use of one-verse maxims esp. contrasting parallelisms

II. Background to Chapter 9

Chapters 8-9 complete the 1st major segment of Proverbs which consists of proverb clusters with a central focus on wisdom.

Ch-8 is a self-contained unit in which wisdom is personified as a “woman” who calls out in the streets. This woman of righteousness is contrasted with the woman of sin from Ch-7. “A second call to wisdom” is an appropriate theme for Ch-8.

The great woman of chapter 8 illustrates a central message of Proverbs:

the existence, character and purpose of true wisdom which is framed in a covenant relationship with the Maker of heaven and earth.

Her character, value, origin and reward are described in ch-8.

The poem of ch-9 presents contrasting personifications of wisdom and folly in which Solomon uses the following format:

- a description of the each “woman”
- an invitation to the simple
- an invitation to eat (and the menu)
- the end result of dining with wisdom or folly

One obvious purpose in this writing style is to give the simple person a clear picture of the value of wisdom over folly. (e.g. Wisdom leads to life, folly leads to death.)

III. Exposition: "Invitation to a banquet"

vv. 1-6 Wisdom's invitation

vv. 1-2 wisdom's preparations

What has wisdom prepared to serve? (see also v. 5)

_____, _____, _____

What is the significance of the seven pillars?

v.4 Who may come to this banquet? _____

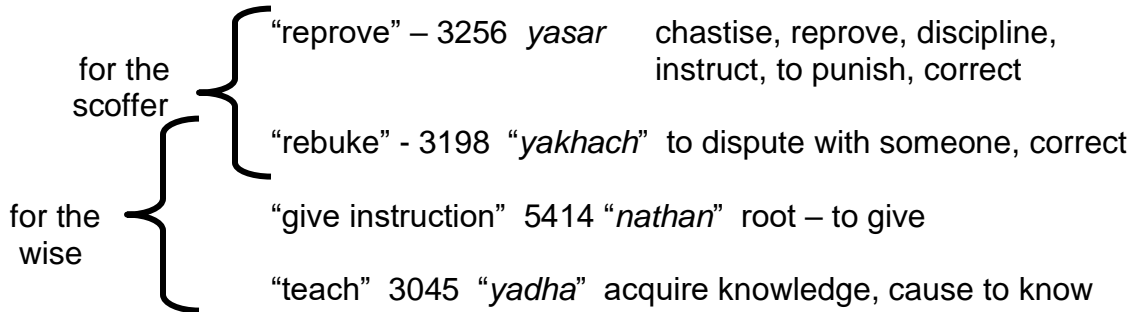
v.6 What is the end of those who dine at her table?

What is the end of those who dine with folly? (v.18) _____

vv.7-12 The scoffer and the wise

Definitions:

"scoffer" – 3887 *luts* to mock, to scorn, to deride
The word *luts* is believed to have come from a root meaning "to make mouths at"



vv.7-9 Correcting a scoffer gets you:
_____, _____ and _____

Reproving a wise man yields:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Note the actions with the scoffer versus the actions with a wise man.
Who is the recipient of the actions of the scoffer? _____

Who is the recipient of the actions of the wise man? _____

v.10 The theme of Proverbs, and specifically this major segment of the book, is repeated:

“that the fear of the Lord is the first foundation stone to be laid in the pursuit of wisdom.”

vv.11 What are the rewards of wisdom? _____

vv.12 Each person will experience their own outcome of their choice: wisdom or folly.

vv. 13-18 The woman folly

vv.13-15 How is the woman folly described?

v.13 _____, _____, _____

v.14 _____

v.15 _____

Who does she invite to her banquet? (vv.15-16) _____

v.17 What has she prepared for her banquet?
_____ and _____.

What is the meaning of “bread eaten in secret?”

v.18 What is the end of those who dine with her? _____

What is the difference between the “banquet of wisdom” and the “banquet of folly?” _____

Now that you’ve read the entire chapter, can you determine why Solomon included the intermediary cluster, vv.7-12 between the call of wisdom and the call of folly? _____

From this chapter, what are some characteristics of the wise man?

1. He is open to _____.
2. Doesn't think that he "knows it all" but continues to _____.
3. He has a _____ spirit.
4. He chooses the _____ of _____.
5. _____

Do your life choices show you to be a wise man/person?

IV. Applications

How can we apply the instructions of chapter 9 to our own lives?

1. Choose the house of wisdom and not folly.
2. Pursue wisdom and understanding.
3. Receive correction and rebuke.
4. Don't waste your time correcting a scoffer.
5. _____
6. _____

The “WOMEN” of PROVERBS: WISDOM and FOLLY

From Proverbs 9

	Wisdom	Folly
A. Qualities	Industrious, diligent Generous, receives a rebuke	Loud, v.13 Simple, a thief, immoral
B. Preparations for her banquet	a. She slaughtered her beasts b. Built her house c. Mixed her wine d. Sent out invitations	She stole her provisions
C. Who gives out the invitations?	v.3 She does	v.15-17 she calls to those passing by
D. Who are the invitations given to?	a. Whoever is simple b. Those lacking understanding	a. Anyone who will come
E. What is the menu?	a. Meat b. Wine c. Bread	v.17 a. stolen water b. bread
G. Where did she get what is to be served?	v.10 She made it herself	v.17 She stole it
H. What is the quality of the food?	Good; put in order; Given the description I think we can say that her guests were well fed	Poor, since by eating her food her guests end up in sheol/hell
I. What is the end result of dining with her?	The guests were treated to a well-prepared feast	Her guests are in the depth of hell. V.18

Questions:

1. Who is speaking in verses 7-12? _____
2. How does the segment 7-12 fit into this picture which compares wisdom and folly? _____
3. What does the phrase “bread eaten in secret” mean? _____

(Clue: Why would the bread be eaten in secret?)

PROVERBS 10

Advance Assignment: Read through chapter 10 and identify any reoccurring themes or words. _____, _____, _____

I. Review of Chapter 9

Chapter 9 completes the first major segment of Proverbs which consists of proverb clusters with a central focus on the pursuit of wisdom.

The poem of ch-9 presents contrasting personifications of wisdom and folly in which Solomon uses the following format:

- a description of the each “woman”
- an invitation to the simple
- an invitation to eat (and the menu)
- the end result of dining with wisdom or folly

One obvious purpose in this writing style is to give the simple person a clear picture of the value of wisdom over folly. (e.g. Wisdom leads to life, folly leads to death.)

II. 10:1-22:16 – “The Proverbs of Solomon”

The 2nd Major Section of Proverbs

Background

After the wisdom poems (proverbs clusters) of chapters 1-9, we now begin a section which is often called “the Proverbs proper” which consists mainly of individual (2-line) proverbs.

This major section can be sub-divided as follows:

1. Chapters 10–15 consists mainly of antithetic proverbs using the key word “but.”
2. Chapters 16-22 consists mainly of synonymous proverbs using the key word “and.”

Some expositors take the position that all of the Proverbs in this section are individual proverbs, a long miscellaneous list of detached proverbs.

Others believe that the original author did more than just throw the individual proverbs together at random. But it is up to us to determine if and how individual proverbs might be clustered.

For example: A read-through of Chapter 10 reveals a significant use of the words wise/wisdom, fool/wicked and statements which reference the mouth and lips.

In this chapter, I see a dominant theme of a comparison of the actions of a righteous person contrasted with the wicked actions of the fool.

My position is:

1. Let's read through the chapter and let it open its message to us.
2. Be sensitive and aware of reoccurring themes.
3. Recognize that some proverbs will be "individual" and not attached to the proverbs that surround it.

Other proverbs , perhaps in clusters of 2 or 3 or more (which we will have to identify) may focus on a specific theme.

III. Exposition

- 1-5** The theme of this cluster is to encourage his son to perform his _____ in righteousness.
Note topics of treasure, hunger, a diligent hand, harvest.

- v.1 Note the subtle change of his usual initial exhortation to hear and obey the commands of his father and mother.

Here his appeal is to the effect that his son's behavior will have on his parents rather than the rewards the son will receive. (Makes a glad father)

Question: In training a child, is it OK to encourage a child to obey the parents because of the good effects the child's righteous behavior will have on the parents? _____

Question: What good effect might this "learned behavior" have on the child later in life? _____

- v.2 Why does Solomon say that deceitful actions that bring treasures (probably monetary gain) do not profit. _____

(I think he has the final result and the effect on the soul in mind.)

- v.3 God fulfills the _____ of the righteous.
The _____ of the wicked are not satisfied.

- v.4 diligent: 2742 incisive – impressively direct and decisive
 diligent – characterized by steady, earnest and energetic effort,
 painstaking

An observation: The diligence that God instills in the heart of the righteous is his means to provide for his physical needs.

A personal observation: As I was growing up, I was a diligent student. I did my homework, had jobs growing up, worked my way through college, etc. As an engineer, I always worked diligently and wanted to do well on my projects. None of these actions were ever enforced upon me by my parents. (e.g. My parents never told me to do my homework.) I just did them being motivated by something from within my heart. (which I didn't know what it was at the time)

I have wondered at times...why me...why am I this way. Many of my friends were not diligent and did not do well after leaving home to go to college. Some of their lives did not turn out well because of the lack of diligence. (Some of the smartest students in my class dropped out of college.)

I think I now have my answer. (Diligence was a gift from God to enable me to provide for my physical needs and the needs of others.)

- v.5 Note the focus on the farm. This was the cultural context of Proverbs – subsistence agriculture...living from one crop to the Next.

6-11 In this cluster, Solomon contrasts the righteous and the babbling Fool.

v.10 “winking with the eye” often depicts a person who is giving a secret signal that he is not telling the truth.

The wise are _____ v.6, are remembered well v.7, receive _____ v.8, walks _____ v.9 and is a _____ of _____ v.11.

By the way, what is a fountain (well) of life? A source of blessing.

The babbling fool conceals _____ v.6, his name will _____ v.7, he will come to _____ v.8, his crooked ways will _____ v.9, he is a _____ v.10a, he will come to _____ v.10b, and his mouth conceals _____ v.11

12-18 More contrasts of the wise with the wicked fool.

v.12 see NT counterpart: "Love covers a multitude of sins."
(1 Pet. 4:8)

Significant focus on the mouth/lips, tongue
The wicked fool _____ v.12, lacks _____ v.13,
brings _____ near by his mouth v.14, lets his gain lead to
_____ v.16, rejects _____ and leads others
_____ v.17, has lying lips that conceal _____
and speaks _____ words v.18.

Note that v.18 is synonymous and not antithetical.

19-21 Contrasts prudent speech with wicked speech

The righteous:

- He restrains his _____ v.19
- His tongue is of high _____ v.20.
- His lips _____ many v.21.

What is the righteous man of v.21 feeding "the many?" _____

22 What is the source of the wealth of the righteous? _____

Why does Solomon include the phrase "and he adds no sorrow to it" in this proverb? _____

23-25

v.23 The hearts of the wicked and righteous are contrasted.

The heart of the righteous takes pleasure in understanding and has a firm hope of being established forever.

The wicked think doing wrong is a trivial matter and have no secure hope.

26 Vinegar and smoke are major irritations to the teeth and eyes.
So also, is a sluggard to those who employ him.

Question: Why then would anyone hire a sluggard? _____

27-30 In these verses, we see the hope of the righteous contrasted with the expectation of the wicked.

We can also see that it is the Lord who secures the end of each person according to their ways.

31-32 The dominant subject of this cluster is the mouth.

The speech of the righteous is contrasted with the speech of the wicked.

“perverse” 8419 corrupt, turned away from what is right or good
obstinate in opposing what is reasonable or
accepted

froward: disobedient, willful

fraud: deceit, trickery, imposter, cheat

Again, we can see that the mouth reveals what is in the heart:

- The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom and knows what is acceptable.
- The mouth of the wicked brings forth that which is perverse and will be cut off which is to say that it will be no more.

IV. Applications

In this chapter, we see examples of what the hearts of both the righteous and the wicked will bring forth.

We also see the end of the righteous and the wicked.

1. We can ask ourselves: What does my mouth reveal about what is in my heart?

Is what comes out of my mouth consistent with righteousness or wickedness/folly?

2. We can also take hope in that, as we pursue righteousness, we can have a confident hope for the future.
3. A third way this chapter can help us is that it provides us with specific illustrations of the speech of the righteous and the wicked. Words spoken are clues as to what is in the heart.

This should enable us to be discerning in our choice of friends and who we should or should not hang out with. (especially important for youth)

4. _____

5. _____

V. Problems we have with the wicked?

1. We don't approve of/like their behaviors.
2. They irritate us.
3. We don't see them as a fallen creature that still carries something of the image of God within them.
4. We don't know why they are the way they are.
5. We don't see God's heart for them. (He doesn't desire that any should perish.)
6. We forget: "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

PROVERBS 11

I. Review

The 1st major segment of Proverbs, Chapters 1-9, consisted primarily of proverb clusters which exhorted the sons to seek wisdom. A significant part of this section was devoted to comparisons of the women Wisdom and Folly.

One of the primary instructions regarding folly is “to stay away from her.”

Last week we began our study of the 2nd major section in Proverbs, chapters 10-16, often referred to as “Proverbs proper.”

In Chapter 10, we saw an assortment of individual proverbs and clusters. Much was said about the wise, the wicked and the mouth (referring to our speech.)

II. Introduction to Chapter 11

Chapter 11 provides more antithetical proverbs contrasting the righteous and the wicked. These proverbs provide wisdom for a righteous life in a diverse assortment of life situations.

One help in studying this chapter is to note the words or phrases that characterize our two main types of persons:

- A. Righteous – humble, integrity, upright, understanding, blameless, trustworthy, gracious, one who waters, one who sells in the time of need (generous), etc.
- B. Wicked/fool – pride, crookedness, treacherous, godless, crooked heart, withholds what is needed in desperate times (selfish), sinner.

A second help in evaluating the instructions in this chapter is to note the categories of human experience included in the chapter:

- economic life,
- society,
- future rewards and punishments,
- relationships with others,
- domestic life.

I believe that Solomon, in chapter 11, is illustrating for us the diversity of wisdom as it impacts all phases of our lives on earth. There is no situation in life that the wisdom of God is not available to us. Often, we will need to search for it.)

We also see the effect of wisdom's absence in the lives of those who don't seek God.

In chapter 11, as with chapter 10, we will discover some single verse proverbs and some clusters.

III. Exposition

1-8 Matters of financial and personal security (contrasting the righteous and the wicked)

See if you can fill in the blanks as I have restated the central thought of each proverb in this section.

v.1 honesty in _____ transactions is encouraged.

Significant word: abomination – something that God absolutely abhors

v.2 Pride yields _____.
Wisdom can be found with _____.

v.3 Integrity guides the righteous.
The treacherous walk the path to _____.

v.4 This proverb contrasts the effect of riches and righteousness on the day of wrath, a day of judgment which will come.

“day of wrath” – can be a reference to a soon-coming judgment or a reference to judgments at the end of time.

v.5 Righteousness keeps a man on a straight path.

What does “a straight path” mean? _____

Wickedness leads to a fall.

v.6 Righteousness delivers the upright.
Lust takes the _____ captive.

v.7 The hope of the wicked ends at his death.
His hope of wealth also _____.

v.8 The righteous are delivered from trouble.
The wicked find _____.

Note the theme related to righteousness that pervades this cluster:

Righteousness as a guide (3a, 5a) and deliverer (4b, 6a, 8a)

Summary: The effect of righteousness (or the lack of it) in matters of financial and personal security.

Can we also surmise that the unrighteous don't know what they are missing?

How might an unrighteous person respond if you showed them the benefits of a righteous life as shown above?

Where, in the world, can you find instructions for living a righteous, and therefore fruitful, life? _____

9-13 Righteous vs Ungodly Speech

This cluster exposes the effect of the godless person's speech on others. It also reveals the very positive effect of a righteous man's life.

The godless with his mouth:

- A. destroys his _____ (9a)
- B. overthrows a _____ (11b)
- C. belittles his _____ (12a)
- D. reveals _____ (13a)

The positive aspects of a righteous man:

- A. The righteous man, by his _____ is delivered from the godless. (9b)
- B. The _____ rejoices when a righteous man does well. (10a)
- C. A city is exalted by the _____ of the righteous. (11a)
- D. A righteous man does not _____ secrets. (13b)

An application: Guard your words such that what comes out of your mouth is a blessing to all and is pleasing to God.

For an additional study on the problem of the mouth, see James 3:1-12.

14 Guidance

This individual proverb expresses the need for guidance which can be found in consulting with others.

Bottom line...we don't need to be limited by just what we ourselves know or understand. It is wise to avail yourself of the wisdom and understanding of others.

Note: problem of "lone rangers" – God has no lone rangers.

15 Surety

This individual proverb advises against becoming surety for someone. (something we discussed previously in Prov. 6:1-5, putting up security for your neighbor such that, if he defaults on his loan, you pay.)

16-21 Contrast of the gracious woman and kind man with the violent and cruel man

A. The gracious and kind:

get honor v.16, benefits himself v.17, has a sure reward v.18, will live v.19, are a delight to the Lord v.20, will be delivered v.21

B. The violent, cruel, wicked, crooked heart, evil person gets:

riches (which don't help him on the day of judgment) v.16, hurts himself v.17, earns deceptive wages v.18, will die v.19, are an abomination to the Lord v.20, will not go unpunished v.21

22 "the worthless beauty" - a very informative, amusing picture

"Beauty is only skin deep."

23-31 Destinies of the wicked and of the righteous

Note references to agricultural images when describing the blessings of the righteous. (especially significant in the Hebrew “crop to crop” culture.)

- waters, green leaf, fruit, tree of life

The blessing to the righteous extends beyond themselves.

v.30 “captures souls” or: “He who wins souls is wise.” (KJV)

Note the positive effects of the righteous life:

- v.23 desires lead to good
- v.24 generosity
- v.25 generosity
- v.26 generosity
- v.27 seeks good
- v.28 wealth comes from the Lord
- v.29 served by the fool
- v.30 produces good fruit
- v.31 rewarded for righteousness

IV. Application

In this chapter we are given a very definitive picture of the righteous life and its effects.

We are also shown a picture of the wicked, their way of life and its results.

A primary lesson of this chapter is to “choose a righteous life.”

Another lesson: Be wise in the use of your mouth.

We could also say: “beware an unrighteous person” because we can clearly see the fruit of their lives which do not promote righteousness, faith or obedience.

Note also that other Proverbs exhort us “not to hang out with sinners.” Also, Ps. 1:6 indicates the end of the ungodly is “to perish.”

PROVERBS 12

Themes:

How to please God
How to live successfully
How to live a righteous life
How to be wise

I. Review Chapter 11

Chapter 11 (which we studied last week) and Chapter 12 provide antithetical proverbs contrasting the righteous and the wicked. These proverbs provide wisdom for a righteous life in a diverse assortment of life situations.

One help in studying these chapters is to note the words or phrases that characterize our two main types of persons:

- A. Righteous – humble, integrity, upright, understanding, blameless, trustworthy, gracious, one who waters, one who sows in the time of need (generous), etc.
- B. Wicked/fool – pride, crookedness, treacherous, godless, crooked heart, withholds what is needed in desperate times (selfish), sinner.

A second help in evaluating the instructions in these chapters is to note the categories of human experience included in the chapter:

- economic life/business,
- society,
- future rewards and punishments,
- relationships with others,
- domestic life.

In these chapters, Solomon illustrates the diversity of wisdom as it impacts all phases of our lives on earth. There is no situation in life in which the wisdom of God is not available to us.

We also see the effect of wisdom's absence in the lives of those who don't seek God.

II. Exposition of Chapter 12

In this chapter, we will again see the dominant theme of contrasting the righteous and the wicked.

We will see the heart, words and deeds of each person and the effects resulting to themselves and their surroundings (neighbors, city and nation)

In this chapter, there are some clusters and some proverbs that stand alone.

Note in this chapter, the number of maxims that employ the use of the word “but.”

An important principle for Biblical Interpretation:

We sometimes hear the phrase “comparing apples and oranges” when making comparisons. The point of the saying is to make sure, when discussing a comparison, that you’re comparing objects that are similar. (Obviously, apples and oranges are dissimilar.)

This is especially important in Proverbs where we are literally making hundreds of comparisons.

So, a necessary step in the interpretation process is to assure that you are comparing objects or qualities that are basically alike or similar in nature.

The 1st proverb in chapter 12 provides us an example to illustrate this point. The word to be examined is the word “discipline.”

This word can have several meanings...punishment (oral and corporal – the body), instruction, self-control and chastisement, to name a few.

So, the question becomes: Which definition would be an appropriate comparison with “reproof?” _____.

vv. 1-3 Qualities of a good man

key word: discipline 4148 *musar* - chastisement, punishment, instruction, self-control
It is a checking restraint, a correction which results in education. It is often oral as opposed to corporal (relating to bodily punishment.)

reproof: 8433 chastisement, the act of arguing, punishment, correction, reproof, rebuke

The key to this proverb is the assignment of the appropriate definition to the key words. (From first glance, we don’t know what kind of discipline is being provided.)

v.1 In this verse, we see the same activity (discipline) being brought to two very different individuals. But we will need to determine what kind of discipline is being brought in order to have an appropriate comparison. Our clue is in the 2nd half of the verse in the word reproof. Our comparison therefore, must be with a discipline of reproof/correction (see definition above) and not, for example the discipline of repeated action.

One loves knowledge (must be a righteous person) the other, by his reaction to the discipline reveals that he is a fool.

v.2 “evil devices” – 4209 a scheming man is portrayed (wicked intentions)

v.3 “root of the righteous” - 8328 root, bottom, deep

What is the “root of the righteous?” _____

What is the significance of this benefit? _____

See Ps 1:2-3 What is the root of this man? _____

The man who is well rooted will prosper in _____. (see Ps.1:3)

To summarize: (Prov. 12:1-3)

A. The good man loves discipline and knowledge. He will receive the favor of God and his “root” will never be removed.

B. The fool hates being _____ v.1, is condemned by _____ and will not be _____.

Note: The contrast of verse 3 is not “being established” and a “lasting root.”

In the context of this verse, “root” and “established” mean the same thing.

v.4 An excellent wife

excellent: 2428 *chayil* might, strength, power, able, valiant, virtuous, riches, substance, wealth. The main meanings are strength and wealth.

crown 5850 = crown

What does the use of the word crown mean in this proverb?

How is she his “crown?” _____

Greatly blessed is the man whose wife is a crown and not rottenness in his bones.

We can say that a virtuous woman invigorates her husband while the one who brings shame eats away at his strength.

vv.5-7 righteous vs. the wicked with results of their moral choices

The words and thoughts of the wicked bring about their _____ while the words and thoughts of the righteous work justice and their house will stand. (not be brought down or overthrown.)

Therefore, the words and thoughts of the righteous will bring stability into their lives.

v.8 the value of a sound mind

This proverb extols the virtue of having a sound mind.

Question: If my mind is not sound, what can I do to gain a sound mind? See Ps 1:2 _____

v.9 contrast of the lowly vs. the self-important

A person who is lightly esteemed yet has help is better off than a person who thinks highly of himself yet has no food – and is too prideful to even ask for help.

vv.10-14 sensible labors, worthless pursuits

I’ve connected these proverbs because of the thread of the “work of a man’s hands” (the everyday worker in his labor at his business) that pervades this cluster.

The righteous person cares for his _____ v.10, works his _____ v.11, has plenty of _____ v.11, is fruitful v.12 and will _____ trouble v.13.

Contrast the wicked person whose _____ is cruel v.10, he follows _____ pursuits v.11, and lacks _____ v.11, he covets the spoil of _____ v.12, and will be trapped by the _____ of his _____ v.13.

- v.14 Note that here Solomon has inserted a synonymous proverb. (use of the word “and”)

“The work of his hands comes back to him.”

What does this mean? _____

vv.15-23 the fool and the prudent

- v.15 The fool thinks himself to be right so he sees no need to consult others for instruction or counsel.

Prov. 3:5-7 warns against this attitude and even exhorts the son not to be wise in his own eyes.

- v.16 For this to be an appropriate comparison, we need to assume that the fool is being insulted just as is the prudent. (see Pro.12:1 discussion on appropriate comparison).

In the fool’s case, he can’t _____ the insult and it immediately shows in his mannerisms.

For the prudent, an insult to him is like “water off a duck’s back.”

- v.17 A truthful person can be relied upon to give honest evidence. The words of a false witness are not dependable.

v.18-19

There are some whose normal speech pattern is to accuse, belittle, mock, insult or condemn others. Their words are like a cutting sword bringing injury and damage.

The words of the wise bring healing.

v.19 shows the durability of truthful and of lying lips.

v.20-21

What are the rewards to:

- the righteous: _____ and _____.
- the wicked: _____ and _____.

v.22-23 more on the mouth/lips

Note: numerous references to the mouth/speech in this cluster

vv. 24-28 Diligence vs. Sloth

The contrast of the foolish and the prudent in the previous cluster now moves to a contrast between the diligent and the slothful.

v.24 The diligent will have positions of authority while the slothful will be in servitude.

v.27 The slothful are too lazy to roast their game.

v.27 What is the precious treasure that the diligent will get? See Prov. 10:4 (also, discussion in the lesson on Proverbs 10:4).

III. Applications

What applications for our own lives can we make from this chapter?

1. In this chapter we see the heart, words and deeds of both the wise and the foolish.

These maxims can be a guide for our own behavior.

2. We can strive to be:
 - well-rooted
 - diligent, not slothful
 - prudent, not foolish
 - one who loves and receives discipline
 - one who controls his thoughts
 - one whose speech blesses and heals, and is not accusing, mocking, insulting or condemning towards others
3. We can express our gratitude towards God for His Word which shows us these things.
4. _____
5. _____

PROVERBS 13

I. Review of Chapter 12

In chapter 12, we saw the dominant theme of contrasting the righteous and the wicked (by juxtaposition). These are people living in their world making day-to-day decisions just as we do today.

These contrasts included:

- the qualities of the righteous and the wicked
- their thoughts and words with the results of their life choices
- the business practices of these men at work
- sensible labors vs. worthless pursuits
- the fool and the prudent, and
- diligence vs. sloth

In essence, we saw the heart, words and deeds of each person and the effects resulting to themselves and their surroundings (neighbors, city and nation).

II. Chapter 13

Antithetic proverbs continues to be the dominant literary mode with a seemingly random organization for chapters 13 and 14.

This randomness typifies the mixed nature of our lives that are often void of well-organized patterns. (but not without purpose in God's grand plan for each of us)

In general, the proverbs of this chapter appear to be individual in nature with an occasional cluster of two.

Embedded within the Proverbs we see a sense of values that demonstrate to us the things God values. A righteous life consists of coming to value the things God values.

In these proverbs, we see a cataloging of virtues to be embraced and vices to be avoided.

III. A Listing of some Virtues

Virtue: conformity to a standard of right
 morality
 a particular moral excellence
 a commendable quality

active power/ability to accomplish a given effect
personal character qualities that a righteous person would
want to embrace.

Character Qualities in Proverbs Worthy of Our Attention

- A. Trust in God: Prov. 3:5 “Trust in the lord with all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding.”
- B. The fear of the Lord: The beginning of wisdom Prov 9:10
- C. Attention to the wisdom of your parents: a reoccurring teaching in the book of Proverbs.
- D. Fidelity: faithfulness
- E. Discipline: “Discipline yourselves for the purpose of godliness.” I Tim 4:7
- F. Friendship: “A true friend sticks closer than a brother.” Prov. 18:24
- G. Temperance/Moderation/self-control
- H. Diligence: “Go to the ant, you sluggard and consider its ways.” Prov. 6:6
- I. Simplicity: “Better to be poor and walk in integrity than to be crooked in one’s ways even though rich.” Prov. 28:6
- J. Honesty/Truthfulness
- K. Submission/Obedience
- L. Dependability/Reliability
- M. integrity (whole hearted/united heart)
- N. Acceptance/tolerance
- O. Perseverance/endurance

See chart on next page for a tabulation/assessment of Proverbs 13.

PROVERBS 13: Character and Fruit Summary

Verse	Righteous person described	Fruit of a righteous life	Ungodly person described	Results/Fruit of an evil person's life	Theme
1	A wise son	Hears his father's instruction	A scoffer	Does not listen to a rebuke	Hearing
2/3	A man	Eats what is good, guards his mouth	2. desire of the treacherous, 3. opens his lips wide	2. is for violence 3. comes to ruin	"The mouth/speech"
4	Diligent	Is richly supplied	Sluggard	Craves but gets nothing	Desires
5	Righteous	Hates falsehood	Wicked	Bring shame and disgrace	Honesty/truthfulness
6	Blameless	Guarded by righteousness	Wicked	Overthrown by sin	"The way"
7/8	Humility	Has great wealth	Pretender	Has nothing	Wealth
9	Righteous	His light rejoices	Wicked	His lamp extinguished	Light
10	Takes advice	Wisdom comes to him	Insolent / Pride	Visited by strife	Taking advice
11	Gathers little by little	Increases in wealth	Gains wealth hastily	It diminishes	Wealth
12	Fruitful				Hope/desire
13	Reveres God's Word	Will be rewarded	Despises God's Word	Brings destruction upon himself	Reverence for God's Word
14	Wise	Teaching = a fountain of life			Instruction
15	Good sense	Wins favor	Way is treacherous	Comes to ruin	Good sense
16	Prudent	Acts with knowledge	A fool	Flaunts his folly	Wise/fool

17	Faithful	Brings healing	Wicked	Messenger falls into trouble	Faithful messenger
18	Heeds reproof	Is honored	Ignores instruction	Poverty and disgrace	Receiving instruction
19	Soul	Desire fulfilled	A fool detests turning from evil		
20	Walks with the wise	Becomes wise	A companion of fools	Suffers harm	Friends/companionship
21	Righteous	Rewarded with good	Sinners	Pursued by disaster	Rewards
22	A good man	Leaves an inheritance for his grand children	Sinners	His wealth goes to the righteous	Wealth
23					Missed opportunity
24	Loves his children	Disciplines his children	Hates his son	Spare the rod	Discipline
25	Righteous	His appetite is satisfied	Wicked	His belly suffers want	Appetite

1. Read through the themes identified in column 6. Note the themes that are repeated...hearing, speaking, the heart, wealth, God's Word and instruction, wisdom.

Aren't these some of the main principles of life? If we attend to these areas, we will be walking the "path of righteousness" on which there is great reward.

2. Application:
 - A. Use this list to assess your own walk and determine if corrections are needed.
 - B. Keeping these things in mind, such as the rewards for a righteous life, can be a help and a hope that our lives will be well-spent.
 - C. _____

IV. Exposition

v.1 Teachability

Solomon continues his appeal for obedience to parental instruction

A scorner/mocker is the highest level of “a fool.”

- He is not teachable.
- He has no respect for authority.
- He is a “know-it-all.”
- He reviles “matters of faith.”

vv. 2/3 Wisdom for our mouth

v.2 “fruit of his mouth” – What fruit is your mouth producing?

“desire of the treacherous” – Solomon takes the contrast to the heart of the wicked

v.3 the mouth...a lifesaver//guards his lips//“Put a lid on it.”

“Take heed that your mouth doesn’t cut your throat.”

v.4 diligent – one who is careful to do his work in a timely manner

“diligent” – characterized by steady, earnest and energetic effort (Merriam-Webster dict.)

“The fulfillment of goals doesn’t happen by chance, but by diligence.”
(over time)

v.5 applying the contrast – therefore, the wicked:

- do not hate falsehood,
- make use of it (falsehood),
- and suffer the result of its fruit

“It doesn’t bother a wicked man to lie”

“shame and disgrace” - could translate “spread the smell of scandal”

v.6 Sin is a powerful enemy.

Security in life dwells with the righteous.

vv. 7/8 Honesty and wealth

v.7 Things are not always as they seem. People may not be what they seem pretends to be rich / pretends to be poor

For the unrighteous, it doesn't matter what you have or don't have, there is always a concern about it.

(When God gives wealth, there is no sorrow/worry with it. Prov. 10:22)

This verse seems to encourage honesty and unpretentiousness.

v.8 ransom – taken captive and a payment is needed

How is it that a man of wealth is taken captive?

v.9 Light and lamp are images of a person's joy, energy and visible success.

The "lamp" of the wicked is not life-giving.

The expenditure of his energies does not bring life but death and destruction.

The righteous can anticipate a fruitful, light-giving life.

v.10 An insolent/prideful person cannot receive advice and ultimately comes to strife.

"insolence" – contemptuous, rude, disrespectful (Merriam-Webster dict.)

v.11 wealth "hastily gained" – perhaps a lotto winner

But this person hasn't learned how to live wisely with wealth.

"Little by little" is a training period for prosperity.

This is a warning against speculation.

v.12 A desire fulfilled brings energy, life, sustenance to the hopeful heart (a tree of life).

Hope deferred is applicable to both believers and non-believers.

v.13 Reverence for God's Word brings a reward.

v.14 The teaching of wisdom is life-giving

What is the fruit of the teachers in your life? (Also, who are the ones that are your instructors in life?)

v.15 Those who are treacherous are actually working towards their own ruin.
Good understanding describes the capacity for:

1. good sense
2. sound judgment
3. wise opinions

v.16 Why would a fool “show off” his folly?

Our actions display our wisdom or folly.

v.17 A wicked messenger is not trustworthy.
This verse reinforces the importance of careful scrutiny of those you hire.

v.18 “Refusing instruction is walking the road to destruction.”
Responding correctly to discipline can bring honor and success.

v.19 A fool loves to do evil. It is his “plaything.”

The focus of this verse is “a desire fulfilled.”

In the case of the wicked, they are reluctant to divert from an evil course of action at times because it is conceived to satisfy a need and ultimately to fulfill a desire. They want the feeling of a “desire fulfilled.”

v.20 Be careful in your choice of friends.

“Choose wisely, choose the wise.”

v.21 “Sin is a master leading to disaster.”

v.22 A good man thinks beyond his own existence.
What inheritance are you leaving for those who will follow you?

Divine justice determines the disposition of a man’s goods.

v.23 Injustice may lead to missed opportunities.
How does this happen?

e.g. Promoting on the basis of friendship or relative rather than on the basis of qualifications.

Injustice can take away what hard labor could have produced.

v.24 God sanctions the “rod of discipline.”

However, one must be wise and careful as to how it is administered.
This requires much wisdom and discernment.

v.25 The appetites of the wicked are never satisfied.
Even when fed, the appetite (of the wicked) longs for more.

Might this be because of the foods with which the appetite is sated?

What the righteous acquire will be satisfying to them

PROVERBS 14

I. Review of Chapter 13

In chapter 13, the “but” word is dominant indicating antithetic (contrasting) proverbs. This is the dominant literary mode with a seemingly random organization for both chapters 13 and 14.

This randomness typifies the mixed nature of our lives that are often void (to us) of well-organized patterns. (but not without purpose in God’s grand plan for each of us)

The proverbs of chapter 13 are all individual proverbs. In this chapter, we charted the fruit of both the virtuous and the wicked lifestyle.

II. Chapter 14 Background

Chapter 14 is similar to chapter 13, seemingly random proverbs, contrasting themes and identification of the results of the choices one might make. There are 2 two-verse clusters in this chapter, the rest are individual maxims.

In this chapter, we will identify the actions of the righteous and the wicked and the virtue or vice that is to be embraced or avoided.

In the table below, the headings generally apply. (For some proverbs they don’t apply.)

Proverbs 14: Virtues and Vices

Verse	Righteous Action	Virtue	Wicked/fool - action	Vice
1	Builds her house	Diligence	Tears it down	Destructive
2	Walks uprightly	Fear of the Lord	Devious	Deceitful
3	Wise lips	Wisdom	Foolish mouth	Folly of Pride
4	Ox in the stall	Diligence/Initiative	No oxen	Lazy
5-7	Faithful speech	Honesty/truthfulness	Lies/scoffing	Unfaithful witness
8	Discerns his way	Discernment	Folly	Deceitfulness
9		Upright	Mock at sin	Sinfulness not acknowledged
10	Personal emotions	Only the heart knows its joy and bitterness		
11		Upright		Wickedness

12				
13				
14		Good man	Backsliding	
15-16	Gives thought to his steps	Plans ahead	Believes everything	Reckless Careless
17			Quick temper, evil devices	Acts foolishly
18	Receive knowledge	Prudent	Folly	Simple (fool)
19				Evil/wicked
20				
21	Generous to the poor	generosity	Despises his neighbor	Sinner
22	Devise good	Steadfast love and faithfulness	Go astray	Devise evil
23	Toil	Diligent to labor	Tends to poverty	Talk without action
24	Wise about \$\$	Wisdom	Foolishness	Folly
25	Truthful witness	Truth	Deceitful	A liar
26-27	Refuge for their children	Fear of the Lord		
28	Multitude of people	Glory	No people	Ruin
29	Slow to anger	Understanding	Quick temper	A fool
30	Life to the body	Peace	Bones rot	envy
31	Generous to the needy	Honors God	Oppresses the poor	Dishonors God
32	Refuge in death	Righteous	Overthrown	Wickedness
33	Wisdom in the heart	Understanding		
34	Exalts a nation	Righteousness	A reproach	Sin
35	Deals wisely	Servant's heart	Wrath of the king	Shameful acts

III. Exposition

- v.1 A woman who is a fool (lacks wisdom) even in the midst of strenuous labor, can destroy what she intends to build.

- v.2 The devious, because they lack the fear of the Lord, will despise Him.

Another reason for seeking the Fear of the Lord: We don't want to be found despising God.

Note: The wicked/unrighteous/fool always despises God because righteousness brings conviction for sin.

- v.3 A fool's prideful tongue brings about his own demise, while a wise person benefits from his wise words.
- v.4 The unpleasant work of cleaning a stall is necessary if there will be crops to harvest. Take the hard work/labor with the good.
- v.5 A false witness breathes out lies because that is his native language. It flows naturally from his lips. (He needs a change to his origin, that of being born again.)
- v.6 A man of understanding has devoted himself to finding wisdom and finds it easily. The scoffer doesn't know the path to knowledge.

Question: What is the path to knowledge? _____

- v.7 You will not find wisdom and knowledge on the lips of a fool. Since he has no heart for virtue, he has no desire for knowledge. Without these, he will not pursue wisdom and understanding.
- v.8 The prudent is concerned to examine and be prudent about his steps because he has a true perspective on life and its rewards.
- v.9 The contrast here regards the guilt offering which indicates the concern or lack of concern for forgiveness of sins.
- v10. No one knows the inner experiences of the heart of a person except those experiencing it.
- v.11 Flourishing for the upright means prosperity of spirit and not necessarily financial gain.
- v .12 This proverb encourages a person to carefully consider his ways. It may be concerned with the deceptiveness of evil; it promises happiness, power and a good life but cannot deliver "the goods."
- v.13 Life may hold a mixture of joy and grief, laughter and heart ache.
- v.14 Each man will receive the appropriate fruit for the ways he chooses.
- v.15/16 The simple (fool) is naïve. He is too lazy to discern his ways. He doesn't give thought to his ways/steps. His recklessness and carelessness will be his downfall.
- v.17 This is a reoccurring theme in proverbs, the quick temper.
- v.18 This proverb contrasts the rewards of the fool and the prudent.

v.19 Ultimately, the wicked will be forced to acknowledge that the righteous chose the wise path.

v.20 A poor man has few friends, a rich man many.

Question: What happens if the rich man loses his riches? _____

Then, his true friends will be revealed.

v.21 To observe the “law of contrasts,” we need to observe that poverty is at issue here.

v.22 devise: to plan, to prepare for, to originate

Our moral behavior is often the result of planning.

Question: What are you preparing for? _____

v.23 Talk is cheap and easy, and leads to poverty.
To profit requires energy, labor, thought.

v.24 Folly is its own reward.

v.25 The vast chasm between the true and false witness
Also see v.5: truth does not deceive

v.26/27 More of the rewards for the Fear of the Lord:

1. strong confidence
2. refuge for your children
3. a fountain of life
4. aids in turning from the snares of death

v.28 For a king: if he has no people, he has no rule, and no glory.

v.29 The quick temper again...see v.17
Repeats that a quick-tempered man puts his foolishness on display.

v.30 Peace in the heart has healthy by-products related to the physical well-being of its possessor.

Envy eats away at the primary physical structure of the body.

v.31 Ministering to the poor is a way of ministering to God.

The person who oppresses the poor displays his true heart towards true God, i.e. contempt.

v.32 A righteous person finds help, a refuge during the time of death.

The wicked are brought down without an anchor for the soul.

v.33 Wisdom dwells in the heart of the wise.
What is in the heart of fools will be revealed.

v.34 Note the importance of righteousness to the health and well-being of a nation. What is the difficulty of a divided (50/50) nation?

Note also the effect of sin upon a people.

v.35 For this proverb, consider the king as one who has authority over you in your life.

Question: Will you/do you have the king's favor? _____
i.e. Is he pleased with your work? _____
Or is your work shameful to behold? _____

IV. Applications

We again see the contrasts between the wise and the foolish.

The way is made plain as are the fruits of righteous and unrighteous choices.

A discerning person who seeks wisdom and understanding, the true path, should have no difficulty finding it. God wants us to find it.

Knowing now the results of the choices that are to be made before you make them, what will your choices be?

PROVERBS 15

I. Review of Chapter 14

Chapter 13 and 14 are similar with seemingly random proverbs, contrasting themes and identification of the results of the choices one might make.

In these chapters, we see the actions of the righteous and the wicked and the virtue or vice that is to be embraced or avoided.

II. Chapter 15: Introduction

Chapter 15 completes another segment in our outline of Proverbs: One-verse maxims, often using the word “but” to indicate contrasting lessons.

When we have completed chapter 15, we will essentially be at the half-way point of our study of the book of Proverbs.

A. General Proverbs 1-9 Theme
 Proverbs 10-31 Miscellaneous Applications

B. First Level of Detail

1:1-6	Prologue
1:7-9:18	Theme/Commendation
<u>10:1-15:33</u>	<u>One-verse maxims – “but” (contrasting)</u>
16:1-22:16	One-verse maxims – “and” (synonymous)
22:17-24:34	Words of the Wise “30 sayings”
25:1-29:27	Collected by Hezekiah’s men
30:1-31:31	Words of Agur and Lemuel

Chapter 15 continues the pattern of randomness with most of the proverbs being based on the principle of contrast.

Repetitive words/themes are not unfamiliar to us:

the wise – the fool
the good – the evil
the righteous – the wicked

Also, we will see significant focus on our words and our heart.

The chapter consists of a mixture of 1-verse maxims and clusters of 2 to 4 verses.

An interesting observation:

The first section from 15:1-17 begins with a note on harsh, provocative language and ends on a reference to the fear of the Lord.

The second half of the chapter, 18-33 also begins with a similar exhortation on provocative language and ends with an appeal to the fear of the Lord.

III. Exposition

vv.1-4 The Use of Words – Helpful or Harmful?

This focus of this cluster is the tongue:

- a soft answer/a harsh word
- the tongue of the wise/the mouth of fools pouring out folly
- a gentle tongue/perverseness in the tongue

“harsh” - 6089 to afflict, to pain, to offend

Although verse 3 doesn't speak specifically about the tongue, what reason might Solomon have had for including it in this cluster?

What are the benefits of a “wise” tongue?

v.1 ...turns away _____.

v.2 ...commends _____.

Alternate translation: “uses knowledge aright”

v.4 ...is a tree of _____.

Application: Be _____ in the use of your _____.

v.5 Heeding discipline

The attitude of a son towards his father's instructions reveals if he is wise or a fool.

The contrast in this proverb is reproof which is correction.

Question: Can this proverb also be applied to other authority figures in our lives? _____

v.6 A Reward for righteousness

Walking in the paths of the wise/righteous is the road to prosperity.

Hebrew: The income of the wicked is “a thing troubled.”

The word trouble (‘akar’ 5916) is usually the trouble that one man brings on another. See also Achan, Josh 7:1, also translated Akar in I Chron 2:7.

v.7 Use of our Speech

This verse is similar to verse 2 except the instrument of focus for the fool is the heart instead of the mouth.

vv.8-9 Acceptable Worship and Conduct

Note the contrasting results of the wicked and righteous behavior:

wicked – abomination

righteous – loved and accepted

The “Master of the Obvious” would have to admit that the choice between wicked and righteous behavior is a “no brainer.” And yet, many choose wickedness.

vv.10-12 More on Receiving Reproof

v.10 Restated: Whoever hates reproof and forsakes the way will find the path to severe discipline and death.

Sheol v.11: (same as Hades) – place of the dead, 2 places/compartments:

- Abraham’s bosom (for the righteous)
- Place of torment

Abaddon v.11: the pit, hell, the torment side of Sheol

These verses show the importance of teaching children early in their life to receive reproof/correction; e.g. the decisions we make in this life have eternal consequences. We might also add that the results we see in our lives gives evidence of the decisions we make.

Can we say that the first step in gaining a heart that receives correction is to teach them the fear of the Lord? _____

Why? The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. (Prov. 1:7)
Knowledge leads to a right understanding of correction.

This may be an even race between the “fear of the Lord” and “love.”
Do you agree? _____

Also see v.33 “The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom...”

This teaching on receiving discipline/reproof is a reoccurring theme in Proverbs.

Question: How do you teach someone to receive discipline?

1. school of hard knocks.
2. v.1:7 _____
3. show/explain the results of receiving discipline

vv. 13-15 Focus on the Heart

v.13 A healthy heart effects the face.

Question: What does your face say about your heart?

v.14 The importance of where a heart feeds

v.15 To enjoy life, have a cheerful heart

cheerful: 2896: *toṽ* good, goodness (big word in Hebrew – many meanings...all beneficial)

vv.16-17 What is really important (“better is...”)

These verses form an appropriate value system for forming the heart described in the previous cluster.

v.16 Life is better with the fear of the Lord, even if we have only a little.

v.17 It’s better to have a humble meal in a home of love, than to have fine dining in a home of strife.

v.18 The affect of Patience on Strife

It takes patience and a calm spirit in the midst of rising temperatures to maintain peaceful relationships.
(personal conflicts and disputes)

v.19 The condition of “the path” as perceived by the sluggard and the upright.

“a level highway” ESV (5549) to mound up, especially a turnpike

The contrast of the sluggard with the upright is rightly focused on the issue of diligence.

Question: Where did thorns come from? (see Gen. 3:18)

What does the “hedge of thorns” signify to the sluggard?

v.20 The Effect of the wise and foolish on their parents

Once again, the mother gets the “bad end of the stick.”

Can you think of a Proverb that would reinforce this statement?

v.21 The Conduct of the Wise and the Fool

Why does the fool enjoy folly? _____

What is the “contrast of this proverb?
the ability to make _____ decisions?

Since this is a contrast, and the man of understanding “walks straight ahead,” what does the path of the fool look like?

v.22 The Value of Advice/Counsel

Why is it important to have many advisers?

v.23 Wise Speech = Pleasing Speech

“reply of his mouth”

This proverb is synonymous. (repetition of the same thought)

To say the right thing at the right time requires knowledge and wisdom. No wonder it is pleasing to a wise man.

v.24 The Path of Life

This is a synthetic proverb, it amplifies and builds on the information of the first line.

The prudent walk the “path of life” with wisdom and this helps them to avoid the path to death.

The choices we make in this life determine our final destination after death.

vv.25-33 Pride vs. Humility

This concluding cluster is framed by the contrast between the prideful and the humble. vs. 25 and 33

The proverbs in between these “book ends” show the prideful as follows:

1. wicked thoughts (abomination to the Lord) v.26
2. greedy for unjust gain v.27
3. mouth pours out evil things v.28
4. The Lord is far from them. v.29
5. ignores instruction v.32

The humble are illustrated as follows:

1. pure and gracious words v.26
2. hates bribes v.27
3. thinks through his thoughts before answering v.28
4. The Lord hears his prayers. v.29
5. listens to life-giving reproof v.31/32

This summary cluster is a fitting climax to chapter 15 (and this section of the book of proverbs) which contrasts the:

- wise and foolish
- upright and wicked
- good and evil
- righteous and unrighteous
- the path of life, the road to Sheol

IV. Application

1. We would be wise to study the contrasts of this chapter to discern the path of a righteous life versus the path of the wicked.

And then to ask ourselves these questions:

Have I gotten the fear of the Lord, wisdom and understanding?

From the evidence of my own life, what path am I on?

Do my choices lead me to life or to death and destruction?

Are there behavior corrections that I should make?

2. The way and results of the wise and the foolish are clearly delineated in this chapter.

PROVERBS 16

I. Review of Chapter 15

Chapter 15 completed the 3rd segment in our outline of Proverbs. We are now essentially at the half-way point of our study of the book of Proverbs.

First Level of Detail

1:1-6	Prologue
1:7-9:18	Theme/Commendation
<u>10:1-15:33</u>	<u>One-verse maxims – “but” (contrasting)</u>
16:1-22:16	One-verse maxims – “and” (synonymous)
22:17-24:34	Words of the Wise
25:1-29:27	Collected by Hezekiah’s men
30:1-31:31	Words of Agur and Lemuel

Chapter 15 continued the pattern of randomness with most of the proverbs being based on the principle of contrast (antithetical).

Note the repetitive words and themes which are not unfamiliar to us:

the wise – the fool; the good – the evil; the righteous – the wicked

Also, we saw significant focus on our words and our heart.

II. Chapter 16

The proverbs of the previous chapters were mainly antithetic using the key word “but.” The primary purpose of these proverbs was contrast.

In chapter 16, the proverbs use the key word “and” which indicates the intent of the proverb to emphasize by repetition and addition.

This chapter is more thematic than previous chapters as can be seen from the following outline:

vv.1-9	The ways of man contrasted with the purposes of the Lord
vv.10-15	The righteous king
vv.16-19	The “better” way
vv.20-24	Wise speech
vv.25	A way that seems right
v.26	Motivation to work
vv. 27-30	Evidences of the workers of iniquity
v.31	Aging
v.32	Patience and self-control
v.33	Casting lots – the Sovereignty of God

III. Exposition

vv.1-9 **The Ways of Man Contrasted with the Purposes of the Lord**

Note that “the Lord” is included in all but one of these verses. This cluster compares the plans of a man’s heart with the purposes of God. Its central thrust is “pleasing the Lord.” v.7

v.1 Speech – Divine Enablement

A man can plan and arrange his thoughts, but if he wants to give a right reply, he must seek it from the Lord.

Questions: Who does this verse apply to? _____

What is the central issue involved in this statement?

v.2 Divine Omniscience

It is God alone who can accurately evaluate our motives.

v.3 Trusting God

“commit” – 1556 – *galal* - to roll oneself upon

“Thy will be done.” = a dangerous prayer for the carnal man

v.4 Divine Sovereignty

God ensures/assures that the consequences for each person’s actions will correspond to the life lived.

v.5 The abomination of pride

God gives a guarantee: the prideful will be punished.

v.6 Sin: atonement and avoidance

Having an appropriate reverence, respect and awe for the Lord is an antidote to embracing evil.

v.7 Pleasing the Lord

A man who pleases the Lord, disarms social conflict.
To recall: Proverbs are generalizations and cannot be made an absolute for every occasion. Our Lord lived an impeccable (faultless, irreproachable) holy life, and yet his enemies still turned on Him.

v.8 Righteousness of greater value than wealth

Unethical conduct tarnishes great gain.

The Scriptures do not praise a man for ill-gotten gain.

How well does a man live with himself knowing that he has used unjust means to accumulate his wealth?

Or...does he even care?

v.9 The Sovereignty of God

This verse “book-ends” the first cluster of Ch-16. (see v.1)

People often think they are “getting their own way” when, in actuality, God is leading them through strange paths to work out His purposes in their lives.

Question: Can you think of some “strange paths” that you’ve walked wondering “what was going on?”

In the end, will we not say to the Lord: “Thank you that you did not allow “such-and-such” a thing (which I desired) to come to pass?”

vv.10-15 The Righteous King

These verses portray the ideal king.

Note the desirable quality of this king in the title for each verse.

v.10 Wise speech

When he speaks an oracle (an authoritative or wise utterance), it is with wisdom and justice.
Interesting that, in describing an ideal king, the first quality addressed is that of speech.

v.11 Honesty in business

This proverb tells us that God is the source of honesty and justice in our business practices.

Justice, which is symbolized by the scales which represent business transactions, is maintained by God who is over the king.

v.12 Righteousness brings stability in government.

Note: Egyptian kings had a pedestal under their throne that resembled the hieroglyph for justice.

A wise king detests wrong-doing knowing that it will corrupt his kingdom.

v.13 The king approves honesty.

A righteous king will appreciate those who speak honestly with him.

We have already seen much in Proverbs about the ill effects of deceitful speech.

v.14 Wisdom appeases wrath

When a king's wrath appears imminent, a wise person has the wisdom to appease it.

v.15 Encouragement

This proverb is the antithesis of v.14 which speaks of the king's wrath.

Here, the king is shown to have the skill to 'brighten the faces' (bring a smile to) of those around him.

vv.16-19 The "Better" Way

v.16 Wisdom is better than wealth

A reoccurring theme in Proverbs.

Wisdom and wealth are not incompatible; but the purpose of this proverb is to encourage people to pursue wisdom and understanding.

These are the true values in life, not silver and gold.

v.17 Righteousness prevents evil.

A righteous life (the better way) is a safeguard against the calamities of evil.

v.18 The consequences of pride

Pride is contrasted with the “better life.”

v.19 Humility is better than “stuff.”

It is better to be humble and poor than to share plunder with the proud.

vv.20-24 Wise Speech

v.20 The blessing of trusting in the Lord

The person who trusts in the Lord and listens to instruction will be blessed.

v.21 Skillful Speech

Being wise in your speech builds your reputation and enhances your influence.

v.22 Prospects for life, good or bad

This is an antithetical maxim.

It tells us that a person’s prospects for life are influenced by his wisdom or folly. We are to choose the path we will walk. We can be wise!

v.23 Wise speech

The wise man’s heart guides his speech and increases his persuasiveness.

v.24 The benefits of wise speech

Gracious words taste good to the soul and result in health benefits to the body.

These 5 verses (20-24) stress the importance of the condition of the heart. If the heart is right, then the speech will also be right.

v.25 A Way That Seems Right

The “seemingly” right way.
(a deceptive appearance)

This shows the importance of discernment.

This proverb is a repeat of 14:12.

It is possibly repeated to emphasize the danger of pursuing a self-chosen way as opposed to the way of wisdom.

v.26 Motivation to Work

Labor is often boring drudgery. A man will embrace it and the diligence required because of his need.

Personal need is often the primary incentive to labor.
(We work because we need the money.)

vv. 27-30 Evidences of the Workers of Iniquity

These next verses (27-30) describe types of evil that seem clever to those who practice them but which are, in reality, evil and destructive.

Note the parade of ill characters in this cluster:

deceived about his way, worthless, speech is a scorching fire, dishonest, whisperer, violent, winks with his eye, purses his lips

v.27 Malicious conduct

1100 *beliyya'al* an ungodly man, worthlessness, wicked, a destroyer, also “scoundrel”

This is not a man you want to hang out with.
Nor do you want to learn his ways.
He, most likely, will be burned by his own tongue.

v.28 Divisive speech

perverse 8419 a fraud

This man is a liar, a whisperer, a “man of falsehoods.”
He will destroy close friends.
He spreads strife (4066 contentious, quarrelsome)

v.29 Evil Associations

Another admonition to carefully choose your associates.

v.30 Evidence of Evil Intentions

The wicked often betray their intentions by physical evidences. The two identified here are the winking of the eye (indicating a lie is about to be told) and pursing (pucker – to contract into folds or wrinkles) the lips.

v.31 Aging

Righteousness is rewarded with longevity.

The generalized maxim is that the righteous will endure but the wicked will come to an early end.

There is commendation for those who through a long righteous life can anticipate unbroken fellowship with God in glory.

A thought: How often does a discussion of the glory of God enter our conversations?

v.32 Patience and Self-control

Slow to anger is good.

The one who can control his anger is better than one who is strong enough to take a city.

v.33 Casting Lots – the Sovereignty of God

The apparently random act of casting lots falls within God's provision of governance.

PROVERBS 17

I. Review of Chapter 16

In chapter 16, the proverbs use the key word “and” which indicates the intent of the proverb to emphasize by repetition and addition.

This chapter is more thematic than previous chapters as can be seen from the focus of proverbs clusters from 5-10 verses on specific themes such as:

- The ways of man contrasted with the purposes of the Lord
- The righteous king
- The “better” way
- Wise speech
- A way that seems right

II. Chapter 17: Peacemakers and Troublemakers

The primarily “thought couplets” of chapter 17 depart from the antithetic parallelisms of the preceding chapters and focus more on the synonymous and synthetic forms in which the maxims either restate a theme or build on the theme.

As we continue to build on the themes of Proverbs, we begin to see that a good and righteous life, a moral life that honors God, requires some “swimming against the current.” It requires active choice and strenuous effort. This moral life is not something that “happens by chance.” It calls for our dedication and diligence, for our perseverance

Chapter 17 includes a number of figures of speech that will need our attention to transpose the figurative meaning to a literal meaning. e.g.

- a “precious stone” or a “charm” v.8
- “letting out water” v.14
- “makes his door high” v.19
- “the ends of the earth” v.24

<u>Outline:</u>	v.1	Theme
	vv.2-9	Contrasts with reference to speech
	vv.10-20	Contrasts with reference to deeds
	vv.21-28	The Contrast of wisdom and folly

- Exercise:**
1. Read through the chapter.
 2. What is the contrast of v.1? _____

3. Identify each verse in 2-9 that makes a reference to speech and what the reference is.

vv. 2-9

4. Identify each verse in 10-20 that references strife and how strife is characterized.

vv. 10-20

III. Exposition

Verse 1: Theme

v.1 The Value of Peace

Poverty with peace is better than prosperity with strife.
The contrast is between peace and strife.

“dry crust” nothing like oil or butter to put on it - the bare essentials

“feasting” 2077 literally “sacrifices” specifically peace offerings

This would provide meat for the meal which was a luxury in ancient times.

Verses 2-10: Contrasts with reference to speech

v.2 Ability is better than Privilege

The application of wisdom can overcome the advantage of inheritance.

A diligent servant has a better end than a disgraceful son.

“disgraceful” 954 root meaning “to become pale or blush”

v.3 Divine Refining

The refining process requires heat and stress and the skill of the refiner to know when the process has achieved its goals.

A key word: test 974 to try, to prove, purify, to watch

The focal point of this proverb is the refining process.

Question: How does the Lord “test” our hearts? _____

v.4/5 Evil Speech – Malicious, Mocking

v.4 a synonymous proverb

“malicious” 1942 calamity, perverse things, naughty things,
wickedness

A wicked man, who is a liar, has an ear for malice (desire to cause injury or stress to another).

v.5 “contempt” - 2778 defame, blaspheme, reproach

Question: Why would someone mock (make faces at) the poor?

In this scenario, it would appear that the mocker has a better station in life than the poor person being mocked.

Might this have something to do with a grateful heart, or the lack thereof?

v.6 Honor within the Family
Happy is the home where God’s Word prevails.

Does this proverb hold true for those families not living a godly life?

v.7 Evil Speech – Prideful and Lying

Fools should not speak of lofty things any more than a ruler should speak lies.

“arrogant” 3499 also translated “excellent” which could be “lofty speech”

Lofty speech whether it is great claims or arrogant opinions is not suited to a fool.

In this proverb, we find that a dishonest ruler is worse than an arrogant fool. The ruler 5081 (a noble, a prince) is a man with position and expected to embrace a worthy code of honor which practices truth.

What a detriment to society he becomes when he resorts to lies to achieve his purposes. He is regarded as worse than an arrogant fool.

v.8 The Success of a Gift

7810 gift, present, reward, bribe

A gift is 2580 precious 68 a stone = “a precious stone”

: “a gift that open doors” – a custom for most occasions

e.g. Saul going to seek Samuel’s advice about the donkeys (I Sam 9:7-8)

v.9 Responding to an Offense

an antithetic proverb

The compassionate person believes that love is better served by charitable silence than by divisive gossip.

Here is a clear case where a person’s speech, whether withheld or released, exposes what is in the heart.

v.10 Responding to Discipline

an antithetic proverb

The wise are humbled and instructed by reproof.

The fool is so enamored by his own opinion (which is really poor judgment) that he cannot conceive of someone more capable than himself.

This proverb also indicates that physical punishment is less effective than a wise reproof.

Note: Scourging, not to exceed forty lashes, was a form of public justice (Deut. 25:1-3).

Question: What does the 100 lashes to a fool tell you about the heart condition of the fool? _____

Verses 11-20: Contrasts with reference to deeds

v.11 Judgment for an Evil Man

a synthetic (building) proverb – the 2nd line adds more information to the theme of the evil man

merciless 394 terrible, cruel
official 4397 messenger, an ambassador representing the one
who sent him
= a cruel messenger or official
“sent” 7971 seeks after

An evil man, set upon rebellion, will reap the just recompense for his actions.

v.12 The Danger of a Fool

As dangerous as a bear separated from her cubs is (she acts with good reason), it is more dangerous to encounter a fool in the midst of his folly. His mind is set on his evil intentions and is not to be denied.

Question: What is the explanation of the fool’s behavior? (Prov. 15:5)

v.13 Just Retribution

You reap what you sow.
The punishment will be appropriate for the crime committed.
As evil does, evil receives.

Questions: Why would a person give back evil when he has received good?

Can you think of a situation in which this might or has occurred?

v.14 Containing Strife

“letting out water” 6362 let out, slip through
4325 water
= breaching a dam

Conflicts should be stopped before they get out of control.

A simile: The beginning of strife **is like** releasing water.

v.15 What God Hates: the miscarriage of justice

Since He is just, He hates injustice. (It is an abomination to Him.)

v.16 The fool and Wisdom – never the twain shall meet

The picture here is of a fool who has money in his hand with which to hire a wise man to instruct him in the ways of wisdom.

desire – 3820 *lev* = heart

But the fool has no heart for wisdom.

v.17 The Loyalty of Friends

A true friend is constant in the relationship.

Even in adverse times, when the friendship might be tested, he will still be a loyal friend.

v.18 Surety

a synthetic proverb

It is not wise to put up security for someone else's loan.

Whoever does it, lacks good judgment.

Note: This is generally true although there may be an occasion where becoming surety for someone is appropriate and/or needed. (e.g. a father for a son)

v.19 Evil (arrogant and contentious) Speech

“high gate” - 1361 to be lofty, to be haughty, exalt, lift up
6607 opening, door, gate, entrance

Taken literally, it might mean to be a pretentious house.
(But this would be an unusual expression for the OT.)

IF it is figurative, gate could be the mouth

So: it would be to say lofty things (brag) about one's self.

Question: So, then, what is this proverb saying? _____

Question: What effect does “speaking lofty words” about one's self have on the listeners? _____

v.20 The Trouble of a Perverse Heart

perverse 6141 distorted, crooked, false, froward (disobedient, Willful)

deceitful 2015 to turn, to turn over, overturn, pervert, destroy

trouble 7451 *ra'ah* bad, evil, of inferior quality

refers to a calamity

Also: opposite of *tov* (which is all that is good) See Ps. 23:6

A perverse heart and a deceitful tongue are a recipe for trouble

Verses 21-28: The Contrast of wisdom and folly

v.21 No Joy for the Father of a Fool

This verse uses 2 words for the fool:

3684 stupid or silly, portrays a slow-witted person (related to religious, intellectual or moral matters)

5036 nabal – wicked - focuses on religious folly, one who is morally and religiously indifferent

see story of David and Abigail (her husband was Nabal) (1 Sam 25)

Either son (a fool) brings not joy but grief to his father.

see 17:6 for the children who are a crown for the aged

v.22 The Effect of Emotions on Physical Health

heart 3820 *lev* Most commonly used as “the totality of man’s inner or immaterial nature.

spirit 7307 *ruach* breath, air for breathing

Our emotional disposition has an effect on our physical health.
see also 14:30

crushed 5218 broken, afflicted, stricken

Dry bones signify unhealthiness, lifelessness see Ezk. 37:1-14

v.23 The Wicked utilize bribes to pervert Justice

7810 same Hebrew word (*shachad*) as in v.8 but here, the context warrants a different translation (bribe instead of gift)

4480/2436 from or out of/ bosom, meaning “from the bosom”

- “in secret:

The fact that the wicked man, a person who is a corrupt judge or person with similar power, accepts the “gift” in secret shows that it is not appropriate.

v.24 The Discerning man versus the Fool

discerning – 995 perceive, pay attention to, observe, understand

The wise (discerning) understand the important issues of life and keep their focus on the path of wisdom.

The fool does not understand nor appreciate the issues of life and is unable to keep his attention on anything. His thoughts float aimlessly on the sea of uncertainty.

His wandering eye and vacant mind are expressed by hyperbole, which is to say that his “thoughts wander all over the place.”

v.25 The Effect of folly on the Parents

see also Pro. 10:1, 17:21

grief 3708 sorrow, vexation, anger, provocation, fretfulness,
wrath, spite, grief

bitterness 4470 grieve, sorrow, bitterness

The fool rewards his parents with bitter grief.

v.26 Unjust Punishment

officials 5081 “princes”

Punishing those who are righteous is inappropriate and contrary to what is right and just.

This appears to be a synonymous proverb.
But the relationship between the innocent and the officials with integrity is not quite the same thing. (An innocent man hasn’t done wrong while an official has acted displaying his integrity.)

This proverb may be saying that it makes about as much sense to punish the innocent as it does to flog a just official.

v.27/28 Controlled Speech

v.27 knowledge - 1847 knowledge, insight, intelligence

understanding - 8394 prudence, understanding

The wise person is careful with his words and has a clear, honorable, excellent spirit.”

3368 clear, excellent, honorable

7307 spirit

v.28 The Wisdom of Silence

Silence is an evidence of wisdom.

A fool may conceal his lack of wisdom by staying quiet.

He doesn't become wise but merely appears to be so.

No one knows that he knows nothing, unless he opens his mouth.

PROVERBS 18

I. Review of Chapter 17

The “thought couplets” of chapter 17 focused on the synonymous and synthetic forms in which the maxims either restate a theme or build on the theme.

We saw that a good and righteous life, a moral life that honors God, requires some “swimming against the current.” It requires active choice and strenuous effort. This moral life is not something that “happens by chance.” It calls for our dedication, diligence and application.

A theme of chapter 17 could be “Peacemakers and Troublemakers.”

In this chapter we principally saw contrasts with reference to speech and to deeds.

II. Chapter 18: The Power of the Tongue

This chapter contains a mixture of maxims that are individual and those that can be grouped in clusters.

Topics include the tongue/speech, security, antisocial traits, sin and its effects, laziness and disputes, to name a few.

A dominant underlying thread pervading this chapter is the power of the tongue.

Exercise

Read through the entire chapter and identify each verse with a reference to speech and how the use of the tongue is characterized, e.g. v.13 – premature speech.

III. Exposition

v.1 Isolating Oneself

The ESV states: “Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire;”

This person isolates himself either by living reclusive or by divisive speech. (rages against wise judgment)

This is not merely the unsociable or unfriendly person but one who is actively divisive and is an enemy of society.

What would sound judgment say to this person? _____

What does scripture say about this in Romans 12:4-5? _____

Is there an appropriate "aloneness" in our lives? _____

What is the corresponding "spiritual discipline?" _____

What is the example of Jesus to us? (Luke 5:16)

vv.2-8 Speech

What are the characteristics of speech in the following verses?

v.2 _____

v.3 contempt

v.4 _____ What does this mean? _____

v.5 partiality

v.6 _____ and _____

v.7 a _____ and a snare to his _____.

v.8 a _____ What does this person do? _____

v.2 Antisocial Behavior

This person is in love with his own opinions. He is also clever enough to ask questions or guide conversations to lure people into talking about himself and how clever he is rather than apply himself to gaining understanding.

v.3 The Effect of Sin

Wickedness, contempt, dishonor and disgrace are intimate traveling companions. When you see one, you can expect that the others are nearby.

v.4 The Words of the Wise

This is a synthetic proverb as the 2nd line adds information to the first line.

“deep waters” can be an inexhaustible supply or profound speech

“a bubbling brook” is a continuous source of refreshment and beneficial ideas.

v.5 Injustice is unacceptable

In this setting, the court system is defective.

v.6 Speech that invites Discipline

We’ve seen in previous chapters that a fool’s lips will cut his own throat. Here, his lips extend his misery to other parts of his body.

v.7 The “Mouth of Ruin”

This proverb continues the theme of the previous proverb regarding the effects of a fool’s mouth.

His opens his lips and sows the seeds of destruction.

“If ever there was a proverb to encourage wise speech, this is it.

v.8 Gossip

3859 (*Laham*) wound, swallow greedily, dainty morsels

2315 (*cheder*) innermost

990 (*beten*) belly, the inmost part, the bottom of the heart

It is sometimes used to express the deepest recesses of an individual.

Gossip is more than skin-deep.

It goes much deeper within than just shallow talk.

This figurative language stresses how deeply gossip affects the inner part (core) of our being.

Why gossip is so destructive: people love to _____ it and then to _____ it.

Question: How can we guard against gossip?

1. _____
2. _____

vv.9-12 Two Types of Security

vv. 9 and 12 describe two things that bring about destruction.
What are they?

v.9 _____
v.12 _____

vv.10 and 11 describe two kinds of security.
What are they?

v.10 _____
v.11 _____

Taken together, these proverbs tell us that riches can give us a false sense of security.

On the other hand, humility and the name of the Lord lead to a dependable security.

v.13 Premature Speech

It is unwise to speak to a point unless the point is first made.
“Don’t answer before hearing.”

v.14 A Healthy Spirit

We again see the benefits of a right spirit to the physical body.

One whose spirit has been broken and crushed is difficult to be around.

vv.15-19 A Court Case

The following cluster reflects Hebrew court customs.

v.15 Listen carefully to what is being said to get an understanding of the case before you.

v.16 Beware the gift of bribery that brings a man before the great. Don’t let the gift capture your judgment.

v.17 Don’t be swayed by the first to state his case.

v.18 Sometimes the lot is needed to put an end between powerful adversaries.

v.19 The resolution of an offense between brothers meets strong resistance such as the bars of a gate.

vv.20-21 More on the mouth/the ability of the tongue

v.20 “fruit of his mouth” and “the harvest of his lips” are synonymous.

Fruit and harvest have good connotations.

v.21 We will reap the fruits of our speech.

Question: What harvest will you see from the fruit of your speech?

v.22 A Good Wife

A good wife is a gift from the Lord (the Lord’s favor).

* NOTE: This is not just any wife, but one who is in God’s favor.

Can we say the same thing about a good husband? _____
In fact, the fruit from a wife is dependent upon the quality of her husband.

v.23 Quality of Speech

A person’s station in life will influence the manner of his speech.

The poor person pleads while the rich man demands.

This is very typical of cultures throughout the world.

v.24 The Loyal Friend

It is better to have one faithful friend than to have numerous unreliable friends.

The unreliable friends may actually become the undoing of the one who counts them “his friends.”

Proverbs 18 Class Test

- v.1 A man who isolates himself – what does the scripture say about him?
He seeks his own _____.
- v.2 If a man takes no pleasure in understanding – wise or fool
- v.4 His words are deep waters – wise or fool
- v.5 He deprives the righteous of justice – Is it good or bad? _____
- v.6 His lips walk into a fight – wise or fool
- v.7 His lips are a snare to his soul – wise or fool
- v.8 Words of a whisperer – Who is he? _____
Where do his words go? _____
- v.9 One who is slack in his work is a brother to him who _____
- v.10 A strong tower – Whose name is it? _____
- v.12 A haughty heart leads to _____.
- v.13 Gives an answer before hearing – wise or fool – why? _____
- v.15 An intelligent heart acquires _____.
- v.16 What does giving a gift do? _____ Example _____
- v.17 Why is it best to listen to more than one testimony? _____

- v.18 The _____ puts an end to quarrels.
How can this be? _____
- v.19 An offended brother is _____
- v.21 The power of the tongue contains _____ and _____.
- v.22 Finding a wife – good or bad
- v.24 A true friend sticks _____ than a _____.

PROVERBS 19

I. Review of Chapter 18: The Power of the Tongue

Our study of chapter 18 showed that it contains a mixture of maxims that are individual and those that can be grouped in clusters.

Topics included the tongue/speech, security, antisocial traits, sin and its effects, laziness and disputes, to name a few.

A dominant underlying thread pervading this chapter was the power of the tongue.

II. Chapter 19 Introduction

Chapter 19, when studied according to topics, reveals an interesting outline:

vv. 1-15 How to fail in life
vv. 16-23 How to succeed at life
vv. 24-29 More on "how to fail in life"

As usual, the arrangement of the proverbs is not exact and some positive synonymous proverbs are occasionally intersperse with the negative theme of failure.

III. Exposition

vv. 1-15 How to fail in life

Read through these proverbs and identify the failure activity:

v.1 _____ in speech. What does this mean?

v.2 makes _____ with his _____

v.3 his _____ brings his _____ to ruin.

his heart _____ against _____

v.5 2 qualities of speech:

1. a _____ witness

2. breathes out _____

v.6 He seeks the favor of a generous man.

The "Master of the Obvious" would say that he does this for what reason? _____

v.7 Here again poverty is shown to be a hindrance.
How is this true?

1. _____
2. _____

v.9 Again...2 qualities of speech:

1. _____
2. _____

v.13 Why would Solomon couple a foolish son with a quarreling wife in this proverb? _____

v.15 The fruit of sloth and idleness are _____ and _____.

Positive Verses in This Section:

vv.8 & 11 talk about good sense – wisdom, understanding, discretion

What are the results of these? _____

v.14 discusses the prudent wife

This is a counterpoint to the previous proverb which describes the quarreling wife.

Using the metaphor of v.13 as a contrast, describe the prudent wife.

vv.16-23 How to succeed in life

Choose the word that best completes the description of the successful path:

v.16 keeps the _____

v.17 _____ to the poor

v.18 _____ his sons

v.20 listens to _____ and _____ instruction

v.22 what is desired in a man is _____

v.23 the _____ of the _____

vv.24-29 More on How to fail in life

Choose the words that best complete the descriptions of the path of failure or the character of the one who will fail:

v.24 the _____

v.25 a _____

v.26 does _____ to his father
_____ his _____ away

v.27 _____ to hear instruction

v.28 _____ at _____
and _____ iniquity

v.29 He is a _____ and a _____.

IV. Comments by Verse

v.1 Personal integrity is better than folly

This proverb advocates the pursuit of honesty (lips that speak truth) even if it leads to poverty.

v.2 Zeal without knowledge

a synonymous proverb

Zeal without engaging the brain is a dangerous path to tread.

v.3 the character of the fool

He blames God for his ruin that he brought on himself by his own folly.

v.4 The effects of wealth (or the lack of it)

We've seen this before.

People are drawn to the rich, often for personal gain. The poor may be avoided because they provide no financial benefit.

v.5 The deceitful tongue

This is a general principle. Sometimes, liars get away with their transgressions. (but not in the end)

v.6 Many befriend those in authority, seeking the benefit of their favor.

v.7 The effect of poverty

Superficial friends and relatives will abandon the poor.

v.8 the profit of wisdom and understanding

spiritual benefits – a good kind of “self-liking”

v.9 the punishment of a false witness

This proverb is very similar to v.5. Here “perish” replaces “will not escape.”

v.10 Wealth and power

The fool and the slave are unfit and untrained for luxury and ruling.

v.11 the fruit of patience

This reminds me of Ja. 1:19 where James tells us to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger.

v.12 the favor and rage of a king

A king (ruler) has the potential to be terrifying or benevolent.

v.13 the ruin of a family

The folly of a fool and the bitter mouth of a quarrelsome wife do not a desirable home make.

We will see later that it is better to live on the corner of a roof than to dwell with a quarrelsome wife. (Pro. 21:9, 25:24)

v.14 the prudent wife

The prudent (shrewd in the management of practical affairs, cautious, discreet, frugal) wife is a precious gift from above.

Blessed is the man who discovers that he has one. (my comment)

v.15 the reward of laziness

idle 7423 (*remiyah*) slack, slothful
soul 5315 *nephesh*

Sloth and laziness are repetitive themes in proverbs.

This is a person to be avoided, lest you catch his disease. (my comment)

v.16 obedience and disobedience

an antithetical proverb

Obedience is contrasted with contempt.
959 despise, contempt, disrespect

In this proverb, responses to instructions (from God) are described for the wise and for the disrespectful.

Being obedient to God is being “kind to yourself.”

v.17 the reward of kindness

a synthetic proverb...the 2nd line adds to the information of the first line

The Lord will reward those who are kind to the poor.

The reward is not necessarily that he will get his money back.

v.18 the reward of discipline

discipline 3256 chastise, reprove, punish, correct, admonish

This proverb exhorts us to discipline our children because it gives hope. The hope is that he/she will not come to an early death due to bad behavior.

v.19 the hot-tempered man

Rescuing a hot-tempered man from a predicament will not save him from coming to the same place again because his heart has not been changed. (my comment)

Better not to get involved in the rescue.

v.20 accepting advice and instruction

The path to wisdom is clearly identified.

v.21 the Lord's purposes

If you want your plans to succeed, align them with God's counsel (His Word).

Here we see the sovereignty of God at work.

v.22 loyalty

Kindness is what draws people to a person.

The 2nd line tells us that it's better to be poor than one of lying lips.

The benevolence of a man in his kindness may provide significant gifts.

The poor man is better off not making large promises.

Therefore, be who you are and don't pretend to be what you are not.

v.23 the fear of the Lord

The fear of the Lord brings contentment into our lives.

v.24 the sluggard exposed

a clever metaphor, perhaps hyperbole (exaggeration for effect)
a humorous picture

It is likely that even the sluggard will gather enough strength to feed himself. It means his survival.

v.25 the reward of discipline

This proverb, in general, says that different people learn different things when observing discipline.

v.26 the disgraceful son

Perhaps this son did not learn from youthful disciplines such as we read about in v.25.

v.27 listening to instruction

If you stop listening to instruction you will stray from the path of the wise.

Rhetorical Question: Is there ever a time in our lives that we can stop listening to instruction? _____

v.28 the wicked witness

1100 worthless, wicked (from Heb. beliyyaal)

A wicked witness deliberately distorts the facts and corrupts justice.

v.29 the reward of mockers

mockers 3887 (deride, scorn)

fools 3684 (stupid, silly)

This is different than a wicked fool.

Mockers and fools need an attention-getting wake-up call.

V. Some Elements of a Virtuous Life

- keep commandments and listen to advice and instruction vv. 16,20
- generosity towards the poor v.17
- discipline your children v.18
- stay away from people of wrath who are lacking in self-control v.19
- submit to God's purposes v.21
- steadfast love v.22
- the fear of the Lord v.23

PROVERBS 20

I. Review of Chapter 19

There were 2 primary topics in Chapter 19:

How to fail in life
How to succeed at life

As usual, the arrangement of the proverbs was not exact and some positive synonymous proverbs were occasionally interspersed with the negative theme of failure.

This, as we studied in earlier chapters, is reminiscent of our life experiences, i.e. sometimes it seems as though our lives consist of random events with no obvious theme or purpose.

As we reflect on this “randomness,” we must acknowledge that it is God who is in control of the events of our lives. And though we may not see the purposes of our encounters, we know that God is working according to his great plan. A great comfort in this scenario is that His purposes are for our good and will not be thwarted.

II. Chapter 20 Introduction”

The underlying themes of the proverbs in this chapter may be similar to chapter 19...how to succeed or fail in life.

Solomon continues to show us the virtues and vices of the good and the evil and the accompanying results of each behavior.

III. Charting Chapter 20

v.	Subject	Action	Result	Lesson
1	Strong drink	Led astray, reduces/weakens the will	Not wise	Avoid strong drink
2	King’s terror	Provoke to anger	Life is forfeited	Don’t provoke the ruler.
3	Conduct -strife	Quarreling	Strife	Avoid strife
4	Laziness	Laziness	No harvest	A harvest requires effort
5	Counsel	Draw out	Gains counsel	It takes a discerning man to seek out the wise counsel of the heart
6	faithfulness	Searching	Difficult to find	It is rare to find someone you can depend on.
7	A man of integrity	A blameless life A life of holiness to the Lord	His children are blessed	Children reap the benefits of righteous parents.

8	A king's discernment	Sifts out the evil	Righteous judgment	A just government roots out evil
9	Righteous conduct	Talking about one's self	In-working of humility	No one can say that he is pure in heart and deed.
10	Dishonesty in business	Dishonest weights	Abomination to the Lord	Be honest in your business dealings, not deceptive
11	The actions of a child	Displays his character	His character is revealed	Cultivate pure and righteous character in a child
12	The design of humanity	God did it.	We have the ability to see and hear	Given the gift, use it wisely and for good purposes
13	Diligence	Stay awake	Have extra food	Diligence leads to prosperity
14	Business ethics	Deceitful misrepresentation	Product is under valued	A warning to the inexperienced
15	Wise speech	Lips that speak knowledge	Rare to find	Knowledge is more rare than gold and jewels
16	Surety	Putting up security for a stranger	Make him keep his pledge	Avoid becoming surety for a stranger
17	Fraud	Securing food by deceit	Sweetness of fraud results in Dissatisfaction	Gain your goods by honest means
18	Plans	Seek sound advice	Success in ventures	Effective plans include getting sound advice from others
19	Gossip	Secrets are revealed	Confidential information is betrayed	Avoid the man who has "loose lips."
20	Disrespect for parents	Cursing his father or mother	His path will lead to darkness	Honor your parents
21	Prosperity	Quickly gained	Rather than bringing prosperity, it will likely be wasted	Work for prosperity through honest and diligent means.
22	Revenge	Getting back at someone for a wrong done	Leave retribution to the Lord	Do not seek revenge.
23	Honesty in business	Deceitful measures	Displeases God.	Be honest in your business dealings.
24	The sovereignty of God	God directs our steps.	How then can we understand our way?	Trust in the Lord.

25	Rash vows	Dedicating something without carefully considering the possible result	A man is caught in a trap	Give careful consideration to the commitments of your lips.
26	Removing wickedness	The wise king winnows out the wicked	Justice will be served.	Pray for godly rulers in high places.
27	Searching our inmost being	God does it.	He reveals the inner motives of the heart.	Be submitted to the things He reveals.
28	Establishing a throne	Love and faithfulness	A realm of ruling is made secure	Faithfulness and love bring stability to a society.
29	Honor	At different stages of life, men are honored differently.	Each one, in his time can have their commendations.	Give right respect where it is due.
30	Discipline	physical punishment/ discipline	Purges the inmost being	Learn to receive discipline.

IV. Exposition of Chapter 20

In this chapter, we will see: the effect of strong drink, the wrath of the king, avoiding strife, laziness, deep waters (of the wise), the tests of purity, diligence, honesty in business, the value of wise speech, the responsibility of surety, dishonesty in business, seeking advice, gossip, honor to parents, sudden prosperity, revenge, providence, rash vows, justice of a king, knowing the inner man, security in ruling, the glory of man and the value of discipline.

Quite the lineup of topics, wouldn't you say?

v.1 The Effects of Strong Drink

wine 3196 - *yahyin* "to effervesce" wine (as fermented),
by implication - intoxication

strong drink 7941 *shekar* an intoxicant i.e. intensely alcoholic

mock 3887 *luts* to mock, to deride, to scorn "to make mouths at"

brawler/raging 1993 *hamah* to make a loud sound, to be in great commotion, to rage, war, moan, clamor

Scripture acknowledges the lawful use of wine (I Tim. 5:23) i.e. medicinal purposes.

But it easily becomes a temptation and a snare that weakens and reduces the will and ends up destroying lives.

Even the godly can be led astray by it. See Noah Gen. 9:20-21

v.2 The Wrath of the King

Solomon begins by making a very memorable simile about the king's anger – the roar of a lion.

This proverb does not state that the wrath of a king is justified, but simply that it can be deadly and fatal.

The master of the obvious concludes: “Don't provoke the king to anger.”

For our application, a king represents a realm of ruling, of authority. We may not have a king, but everyone has a boss, civil laws, a president, etc.

v.3 Avoiding Strife

quarrel/meddling *gala'* 1566 to be obstinate, to meddle – to interfere without right or propriety (socially acceptable conduct)

The wise person restrains his speech and actions from meddling in affairs without propriety.

This is not to say that the wise person will always be able to avoid strife.

A wise man knows how and when to “lay down his rights” to avoid strife.

v.4 Laziness

sluggard 6102 *'atse/* indolent, slothful, sluggard
synonym: idler, loafer, slug, slouch

The sluggard (the lazy man) is a reoccurring theme in Proverbs and is always remonstrated (reproved)

The natural consequence of one who does not work is an empty hand during the time of harvest. “You will reap what you sow.” If you sow nothing, you reap nothing. (seems like a “no-brainer,” doesn't it?)

v.5 Deep Waters

Deep in his heart, as in a well, lies the hidden counsel of wisdom. It takes a man of understanding to draw out these “deep waters.”

v.6-12 The Test of Purity

There is a moral connection unifying these 7 proverbs, the question of purity:

- v.6 the faithful man
- v.7 the just man and his integrity
- v.8 the king who winnows out the evil (impurities) within his reign
- v.9 a pure heart
- v.10 honest (pure) measurements (scales)
- v.11 the actions of a child (or youth) reveal whether they are pure and upright.

Obviously, no man is pure in and of himself.

v.12 He must rely on God to give him the seeing eye and hearing ear so that he can discern God’s voice and do His will. With these we can discern the impurities of our own hearts and learn to “do righteously.”

v.13 Diligence

The implication of the second line is that the “awake” person will work with diligence and secure an abundant crop. (reaping what he sows – see v.4)

v.14 Honesty in Business

Shrewdness in business is one thing but deceitful misrepresentation in a transaction is unethical.

This proverb does not condone the action of the buyer, it merely acknowledges that this type of business transaction is common.

This proverb is also a warning to the inexperienced.

v.15 The Value of Wise Speech

The contrast of this proverb is designed to display the true value of “lips of knowledge” which is of greater value than “mere stones.”

v.16 The Responsibility of Surety

The person who becomes surety for a stranger or an immoral woman must be held accountable. In this way, he will learn the folly of “becoming surety,” especially for these characters. (also see Pro 27:13)

This drastic measure may open his eyes to the folly of his actions.

v.17 Dishonesty, its resultant effects

This verse applies to anything gained by deceitful means.

The pleasantness of a deceitful action is momentary and fleeting.

Its true consequence will be reaped in a time to come. (mouth will be filled with gravel)

v.18 Advice, Seeking it

This proverb applies to making preparations for war but can be extended to peace time applications.

The admonition is to think through your plans and seek the help of competent advisors in the process of planning your enterprise.

v.19 Gossip

7400 *rakiyl* scandal-monger, carry tales, tale bearer

The succinct advice of this proverb is: “Don’t go about (hang out) with gossips.”

v.20 Honor to Parents

One who dishonors his parents will be destroyed.

dishonor 7043 *qalal* “to make small” (treating lightly, with contempt)

v.21 Sudden Prosperity

The implied sense of this passage is that the inheritance is gained in an unlawful or unrighteous manner, e.g. Jacob when tricking his brother Esau.

In the end, its early, apparent blessing will be replaced by a “troubled heart.”

v.22 Revenge

Vengeance belongs to the Lord. (Rom. 12:19)

v.23 Business, Dishonesty

This is a reoccurring theme in Proverbs. An earlier proverb (11:1) also stated that this was an abomination, something that greatly displeases our Lord.

v.24 Providence, God's Sovereignty

The activity of God's plans and purposes in our lives is beyond our ability to comprehend. We will do well, therefore, to follow His leadings, not "leaning on our own understanding." (Pro. 3:5-6)

v.25 Vows (Rash)

This proverb encourages us to carefully consider any vow before our lips rush into it.

v.26 Justice of a King

This proverb shows a king who is wise and discerning to the extent that he is able to separate out those who would bring evil into his empire.

v.27 Knowing the Inner Man

spirit 5397 *neshamah* a puff of air, a breath

lamp 5216 *nir* light, lamp - It pertains to small bowl-like objects that contain oil and a wick for lighting.

innermost 2315 *cheder* apartment, chamber

parts 990 *beten* belly, inmost part, the bottom of the heart

God gave every man a spirit which can evaluate his own motives and actions. (I can know and understand the motivations of my own heart.)

v. 28 Security in Ruling (government)

A reign with loving kindness and faithfulness at the core will bring stability to a society. (What if the "right to rule" is gained by deceitful means?)

v.29 The Glory of Man

Both young and old have their glory...
the youth – their strength, the aged – their gray hair.

In the Hebrew culture, gray hair symbolized the things valuable about old age – dignity, wisdom, honor, respect, experience.

v.30 Discipline, the Value of

stripes/blows 2250 *chabbuwrah* black and blue mark, blueness, bruise, hurt, stripes, wound

cleanse 8562 *tamruq* scouring, precious ointments, remedies, purifications

Blows and wounds certainly indicate a physical beating.
(These words are literal)

These wounds and blows (black and blue) have a very positive effect on the inner parts of a man and are spiritually valuable.

This proverb shows the connection between the flesh and the spirit of a man.
(Physical action results in a spiritual effect, e.g. spanking a child).
Unfortunately, our generations have not learned the art and form of administering “godly discipline.” This must be done in love and with much godly wisdom.

PROVERBS 21

I. Review of Chapter 20

The underlying themes of the proverbs in chapter 20 were similar to chapter 19...how to succeed or fail in life.

Solomon continues to show us the virtues and vices of the good and the evil and the accompanying results of each behavior.

II. Chapter 21

Chapter 21 continues with seemingly individual proverbs although a large look at the chapter (esp. vv. 4-13) reveals a dominant theme related to the actions of the wicked. The wicked are described as haughty, proud, quarrelsome, a scoffer, loves pleasure, wine and oil, is a traitor and is a sluggard.

Interspersed within these proverbs are an occasional contrast with the righteous and their behavior.

III. Exposition

v.1 The Sovereignty of God

This is a synthetic proverb in which the 2nd line adds to the information of the first line.

This maxim tells us that the decisions of the king are in God's hands and he guides them in the directions that please Himself.

v.2 God's Omniscience

This is an antithetic proverb, shown by the word "but." This verse moves from the sovereignty of God in v.1 to the Omniscience of God.

We may think we are right in our ways and actions, but God sees what's really going on inside the hidden parts of our heart.

v.3 Acceptable Righteousness

God is more concerned about what is righteous and just then He is about our sacrifices and offerings.

Recall Jesus' "in your face" rebuke of the Pharisees. They gave great attention to the formalities of a ritual but lacked righteousness

and justice. In one instance, He referred to them as “white-washed tombs.” (see Mt. 23)

vv. 4-13 Character Traits of the Wicked

This cluster of proverbs provides a stunning picture of the character of the wicked.

Review this cluster and fill in the words descriptive of the wicked.

- v.4 _____ and _____
Their plowing (or lamp) is _____. (see note below - v.4)
- v.5 _____
- v.6 a _____ tongue
- v.7 _____
refuse to do _____
- v.8 Their way is _____.
- v.9 _____
- v.10 Their soul desires _____.
They show no _____.
- v.11 _____
- v.13 _____ to the cry of the poor.

v.4 Character Trait: Pride

A key to this proverb is the Hebrew word *nivr*:

* 5215 *nivr* plowing, tillage, fallow ground

The LXX and Aramaic translate this “lamp.”

But this doesn’t provide a clear connection to the first part of the verse.

What is the meaning of this verse? _____

In general, we see that pride is portrayed as sinful.

vv.5-6 A Brief Focus on Prosperity

v.5 Gaining Profit or Poverty

The hasty person does not take time to plan.

This verse contrasts planned industriousness and unproductive haste.

v.6 Treasures by Deceit
Two figures of speech

Note the colorful figure of speech “a fleeting vapor,” an excellent choice of words to describe the flaw of a fortune made by fraudulent means.

A second figure of speech “the deadly snare” is a picture that the hunting culture of this time knew quite well.

v.7 Just Retribution

violence 7701 *shodh* violence, severity, oppression of the weak, havoc, destruction

Picture the irony of the artwork of this proverb: the wicked being dragged away by their own violence.

v.8 What our Ways Reveal

Our behavior will reveal what is truly in our heart.

v.9 The Quarrelsome Wife

A simple accommodation such as a corner of a housetop (roof) is more desirable than a fine home with a woman who is contentious (4079 *midyan* – also brawling)

Peace and quiet is better than riches with contention and strife.

v.10 Character of the Wicked

desires 183 *’awah* covet, crave, lust after

Simply put: They pursue evil and not mercy.

v.11 The Effects of Discipline

simple 6612 (also foolish)

The contrast is between the wise and the simple.

The wise learn by being instructed.

The simple learn by example, by seeing discipline rightly applied. He needs to see the “rod of correction” to gain wisdom.

v.12 The Righteous Who Will Judge

saddiq 6662 – This is possibly God, the righteous judge, or it could be a righteous man who is a judge or ruler.

Whichever definition you choose, the truth expressed still stands...the righteous will observe the wicked and bring his house to ruin.

v.13 Character – Unmerciful

Those who do not show mercy will not receive mercy.

End of v.4-13 cluster

Miscellaneous proverbs:

v.14 The Power of a Gift

gift 4976 *mattan* gift, present

secret 5643 *sether* secret

bribe 7810 *shachad* reward donation, bribe, reward, gift

A gift can sooth wrath and anger.

It needs to be done in secret so its intended use cannot be misconstrued.

Even a bribe can deflect wrath.

v.15 The Effects of Justice

Law-abiding citizens are pleased with justice.

Those who are not (evil-doers) are terrified because it may bring a prick of reality to their evil deeds. (They too may be the recipients of justice.)

v.16 The Importance of Staying on the Path of Wisdom

rest 5117 *nuwach* remain, stay, dwell

If a person departs from the ways of truth, he will come to dwell/remain in the company of the dead (7496 *rapha*, It describes the flaccid (lacking firmness), weak and feeble persons living in Sheol, “place of the dead”)

v.17 The Price of Pleasure

A life lived in self-indulgent pleasures leads to poverty.

v.18 The Wicked, a Ransom for the Righteous

Haman (see book of Ruth) may be a good example of this to us. It was the hanging of Haman in the place he had constructed for Mordecai that appeased the king's anger.

v.19 The Quarrelsome Wife

She was seen earlier in v.9. This verse adds "fretful" (or "angry") to her character. 3708 sorrow, vexation, anger, provocation, fretfulness, spite. (not someone you want to live with)

v.20 The Frugality of the Wise

This proverb simply says that the wise are frugal and prepare for the future. The fool consumes what he has without regard for times to come.

v.21 The Rewards of Pursuing Righteousness

Pursuing righteousness is the sure road to all that is good...life, righteousness and honor.

v.22 The Strength of Wisdom

Wisdom is better than strength.
In warfare, it is often the skillful tactician who is lauded for the victory over a more powerful enemy.

v.23 Guarding our Speech

This is another proverb extolling the virtues of guarding our speech. This can be in the way we speak, in our choice of words and in the restraining of the number of words we employ.
Note the reward: keeps his soul from troubles.

v.24 The Character of the Proud

Proud, arrogant, overweening pride, mocker...sure doesn't sound like someone that I want to spend time with. (not a friend to be sought)

v.25/26 The Sluggard's Cravings

v.25 This proverb tells us that the lazy person will die because he refuses to work.

v.26 The sluggard continues to crave/desire for more.

But it is the righteous who are generous.

The sluggard doesn't give because he only desires but does not work. He has nothing to give.

The righteous work and have something to give to those in need.

v.27 Unacceptable Sacrifices

The wicked think to use the sacrificial offering as a way to "get something from God." Their sacrifice is not just unacceptable, it is an abomination to God because it is not conceived and then offered in righteousness.

Their evil motives are likely for gain and not adoring worship.

v.28 True and False Speech

This proverb has some difficulty in the interpretation. We will need to establish the subject of the contrast.

This proverb contrasts the man who speaks falsely as a witness with a man who listens. The false witness will perish but the one who listens (presumably a righteous person) will still be speaking in eternity.

2nd line literal translation: A man who listens shall speak forever - 5331 *netsach* - always, forever, constantly, unceasing, until eternity.

v.29 Pretense vs. a Righteous Life

The pretentious (wicked) person does not have sound character so he manufactures a "bold front" 5810 to be stout, harden, impudent 6440 face. He has hardened his face.

The righteous person has given thought to his ways and cultivated godly character. He doesn't need to be a "pretender."

If we use the rule of contrasts, what is it that a wicked man doesn't do?

vv. 30-31 The Sovereignty of God

v.30 This verse says that if our wisdom, insight or plan is contrary to the purposes of God, it will not succeed.

v.31 Our success in any venture will come from God and not by human effort.

“The horse is made ready for battle” indicates that we have our part to do, our preparations.

If the horse is not prepared, there will be no battle, only losses and defeats.

PROVERBS 22

I. Review of Chapter 21

Chapter 21 continued with seemingly individual proverbs although a large look at the chapter (esp. vv. 4-13) revealed a dominant theme related to the actions of the wicked. The wicked are described as haughty, proud, quarrelsome, scoffers, lovers of pleasure, wine and oil, are traitors and sluggards.

Interspersed within these proverbs are an occasional contrast with the righteous and their behavior.

II. Chapter 22

The initial verses of chapter 22 (1-16) continue in a format similar to Ch-21. These verses address a diversity of issues such as reputation, equality, being watchful, rewards, training a child, finances, injustice and generosity, to name a few.

Verses 17-21 introduce a new section in which the author encourages the reader to apply his heart to knowledge. Further, he introduces his “30 Sayings” which are designed to “...make you know what is right and true, that you may give a true answer to those who sent you.”

Verses 22-29 provide the first five of his thirty sayings. The thirty sayings continue to 24:22.

An outline of this chapter is as follows:

1-16 Further proverbs on diverse topics

17-21 Introduction to the “30 sayings”

22-29 The first 5 sayings

III. Exposition

vv.1-16 Further proverbs on diverse topics

v.1 Reputation

This is a synonymous proverb as the 2nd line states the same thing as the first line but in a different way.

The point: “A good reputation exceeds other blessings of life such as wealth.”

v.2 Equality in life

Regardless of our gifts, social status or other distinguishing characteristics of society, we stand before God as equals.

We do well to treat all people with respect. God is easily able to raise up some and depose others.

v.3 Avoiding the dangers of life (also see Pro 27:12)

The prudent are watchful and, when discerning danger, are wise and able to take steps to avoid it.

v.4 The reward of humility and reverence

Riches do not necessarily mean wealth as in gold and silver. The author has already established that there are many things in life of greater value than silver and gold; e.g. see 22:1 reputation.

v.5 Guarding your soul

A similar theme as v.3 on guarding and watching.

This proverb focuses on the soul, an internal issue whereas v.3 spoke of “seeing” implying the use of one’s physical eyes.

v.6 Training a child

A reoccurring theme in Proverbs. (see 19:18)

child 5288: boy, from the age of infancy to adolescence

Scripturally, there are only two ways of life:

1. wise and righteous

2. fool and wicked

v.7 The effects of poverty

Again, the theme of poverty is visited.

The poor or borrower becomes a servant of the lender (wealthy).

v.8 The Law of Sowing and Reaping

The wicked will get the appropriate crop from the seed he has sown.

The “rod of his fury” represents his power to do evil.
Once he reaps trouble, he will no longer be able to unleash his fury.

v.9 The blessing of generosity

v.19:17 also speaks of the one who is generous to the poor.

The generous man is one who has a “good eye” (2896) as opposed to an evil eye.

v.10 The source of strife

This is a synonymous proverb. The parallels are strife and quarrels and insults.

What does this proverb instruct us to do? _____

Here is authority for removing a heckler or one who would disrupt a meeting.

v.11 The rewards of a pure heart

A person with a pure heart will have gracious speech because his mouth speaks from the store of treasures in his heart.

Even a ruling authority would have such a person as this to be a friend and confidant.

v.12 The Sovereignty of God

An antithetical proverb

This shows how God deals with truth and error.

He watches over knowledge but frustrates (overthrows - 5557) the words of the transgressor (898).

The teaching: God will act to vindicate His truth.

v.13 The Sluggard

The sluggard reappears on the pages of the proverbs.
How many times, so far, has proverbs addressed the lazy person?

The sluggard, well practiced in the art of “excuse-making,” betrays himself with this one.

- v.14 The wages of association with an adulteress
“a deep pit” – most likely a reference to a “hunter’s pit” which would have been difficult for a trapped animal to escape.

The seductiveness of the adulteress is difficult to escape. She is at no loss for words. And she’s very skillful with them.

- v.15 Parental discipline

We are again reminded of the need for parental discipline. In this case, the rod of discipline is needed to drive folly out of his heart.

What response should we give to one who says it’s wrong to bring this kind of discipline to a child? _____

- v.16 Extortion and bribery

Those who engage in these activities will eventually become poor although, in their current state, they are already destitute with regard to the true riches of a righteous life.

- vv.17-21 Introduction to the “30 Sayings”

What does this section exhort us to do:

v.17 _____ and
_____ to the sayings of the wise;
_____ your _____ to what is being taught.

v.18 We are to keep them _____ and
have them ready on our _____.

v.21 Why is this exhortation important?

So we can know what is right and true

So we can give _____ to the one who sent us.

- vv.22-29 The first five sayings

vv. 22-23 First Saying: Have regard for the poor

The Lord takes up the case of the poor and needy.
He will plunder those who plunder them.

The Lord is their Defender.

Interesting that the 1st of the 30 sayings has to do with a proper respect for the poor.

vv. 24-25 2nd Saying: Dangerous Associations

Don't hang out with those who have "hot" tempers 639 (anger expressed in the flaring of the nostrils) lest you get their disease.

If you did, who or what would you become ensnared to? _____

***An important question: who are your friends?**

vv. 26-27 3rd Saying: Surety

Certainly a topic we've seen several times already.

If you foolishly pledge yourself, you might lose everything, even your bed which might be one of the last things to go in your home.

Solomon's advice: "Don't do it."

v. 28 4th Saying: Respect for property

The boundaries were sacred because God had established them when Israel came into the land.

To enlarge your property at the expense of others was a violation of the covenant.

v. 29 5th Saying: The Value of Skill

He who is "good" at a skill will earn recognition in high places.
His skillful work will not be lost on obscure (2823 insignificant) men.

1. He will not _____.
2. You will save his soul from _____.
What is this talking about? _____

vv.15-16 12th Saying: Bringing joy to the parent

What two parts of the human anatomy are addressed in these verses? _____ and _____.

What is the connection between the heart and the mouth?

vv.17-18 13th Saying: Fear of the Lord

What are the rewards of “the fear of the Lord?”

1. _____
2. _____

To envy sinners who may be prosperous in their evil ways is not good since they are on the road to destruction.

It is not even good to allow the mind to focus on their ways.

What the sinner hopes in will someday be removed.
What the righteous hope in will come to pass and not be lost.

vv. 19 Being wise

This is likely an exhortation in the light of vv. 17-18.
This is a repeat (but reduced) exhortation given in 4:25-27.
We must choose wisdom and apply ourselves to getting it.

vv.20-21 14th Saying: Be wise in your associations/friendships

Drunkards and gluttons are feeding their bodies in excess.
They will become poor.

These persons display their lack of _____.

Note the synonymous repetition of the poverty theme in 21a and b.
This proverb advises us to be careful about who we “hang with.”
We will become like them.

v.22 15th Saying: Honoring our parents

From this verse, how are we to honor our parents? _____

Why should we do as this proverb advises? _____

vv.23-25 16th Saying: Exhortation to “get wisdom”
Pleasing your parents

_____ and _____ in the hearts of
children fill their _____ with _____.

Note this synthetic cluster of proverbs. The first advises the children to become wise. The 2nd and 3rd proverbs give us more information regarding the result of the children getting wisdom and its effects on the parents.

vv. 26-28 17th Saying: Heeding parental instructions

This cluster is similar to the previous cluster in that the 2nd and 3rd proverbs add information to the 1st proverb rather than repeating the proverb but with different words.

What does the figure of speech “a narrow well” mean? _____

What does the prostitute do? She _____ the number
of _____ men.

Recall the earlier proverbs esp. chapter 7 regarding the prostitute.
How does she “work her wiles?”

vv. 29-35 18th Saying: The folly of drunkenness
***Note the increased attention to drunkenness**

What effects does excessive drinking have on the human body?

v.29. _____

v.32 _____ like a _____

v.33 your eyes and mind will _____.

v.35 _____ to physical abuse*

_____ for _____

*This does not imply that there was no damage to the physical body
of the drunken.

In short, excessive drinking is harmful to the body. (not in the verses)

A summary from the Expositor's Bible Commentary on the Book of Proverbs:

"The sage gives a vivid picture of the one who drinks too much:

he raves on and on,
picks quarrels and fights,
poisons his system with alcohol,
gets bloodshot eyes,
loses control,
is confused,
is unable to speak clearly,
imagines things, and
is insensitive to pain.

While alcoholism is a medical problem, it is also a moral problem because it involves choices and brings danger to other people."

PROVERBS 24

I. Review

Chapter 22

Proverbs 22: 17-21 introduced a new section of Proverbs in which the author encouraged the reader to apply his heart to knowledge. He told us that he had provided “30 Sayings” which were designed to “...make you know what is right and true, that you may give a true answer to those who sent you.”

Verses 22-29 gave us his initial installment of the first five of his thirty sayings. These thirty sayings are recorded for us in Proverbs 22:22 through 24:22.

Chapter 23

This chapter continues the listing of 30 Sayings beginning with saying #6 and continuing through the 18th Saying, a cluster of 7 verses on the troubles of excessive drinking. (The author has much to say about excessive drinking.)

II. Exposition of Chapter 24

Chapter 24: 1-22 provides the remainder of the 30 Sayings.

Verses 23-34 provide further sayings.

vv. 1-2 19th Saying: Warning regarding associations with wicked persons

v.2 1897 *haghah* to murmur, to mutter, to growl like a lion when he has trapped his prey. Sometimes it refers to plotting.

These are dangerous men. They don't merely “fall into” trouble but their evil hearts plan their misdeeds resulting in violence.

This verse encourages us to guard the company we keep...lest we become like them. A query: “who are your friends?”

vv. 3-4 20th Saying: Building and furnishing your home

A sad commentary on our current culture...the replacement of book shelves with television sets and game stations.

The modern couple would fill the rooms with expensive furniture rather than the treasures of wisdom and understanding.

Wisdom, knowledge and understanding are certainly rare and beautiful treasures. Previous proverbs advise us that these treasures are more valuable than silver and gold.

Rare today are the couple that can fill their home with these treasures.

vv.5-6 21st Saying: Preparing for War

We have seen this theme in previous proverbs: 11:14, 20:18 and 21:22.

This proverb again states the need for wise council before going to war.

A man may be strong, and that is needed. But his strength must be coupled with wisdom which comes from many advisors.

v.7 22nd Saying: The fool with nothing to say

“too high” – a figure of speech – It is out of his reach. He cannot attain unto it.

“assembly at the gate” - Gates were often the place of public speech-making and of the dispensing of justice.

In either case, the fool will have nothing to say because he has no heart for wisdom. (Pro 17:16)

vv.8-9 23rd Saying: The evil schemer

schemer: 4209 device, plot, intrigue
a scheming, conniving man

detest 8441 *to'evah* morally disgusting,
an abomination

The scorner/mocker is an abomination to men.

men 120 *adam* mankind in the collective sense

He will be known for what he is...morally repulsive.

Question: How does one come to this place in his life? (of being a scorner/mocker) _____

v.10 24th saying: The test of strength

Adversity tests the strength within a man.

We should ask ourselves: How well do we stand up under the tests of adversities? _____

vv.11-12 25th Saying: The responsibility for rescuing those in danger

God holds us responsible to rescue those in grave danger. "I didn't know about this danger" is not an acceptable excuse.

vv.13-14 26th Saying: Future hope in wisdom

Just as honey is sweet to the taste (physical senses) so wisdom is sweet to the taste of the immaterial part of man.

v.14 know 3045 *yadha* - to perceive, understand, acquire knowledge, know, discern, to be familiar

This is a very important root word in the Hebrew and has a variety of meanings.

To acquire wisdom is to acquire hope which will not disappoint. Again, we see that we must seek wisdom.

vv.15-16 27th Saying: Respect for the righteous

The righteous will arise from difficult calamities while the wicked will be brought down.

calamity: 7451 *ra'* severe, hurtful, injurious, misfortune

The righteous will survive calamities.

Question: Why is this so? _____

Why will the wicked be brought down? _____

This is certainly a strong encouragement to live a righteous life.

No one plans or hopes to fail in their adventure of life.

vv.17-18 28th Saying: Rejoicing over the misfortune of an enemy
A simple instruction: Don't do it.

God may see your wrongful attitude and stay the misfortune of your enemy.

But...shouldn't we have compassion on our enemy and be glad if his misfortune ceases? _____

Why is it wrong for us to take pleasure in the misfortune of our enemy? _____

What are we to do? _____

vv.19-20 29th Saying: Do not envy the wicked.

fret 2734 *charah* to burn, be kindled, glow with anger, be incensed, grow indignant

As we have seen earlier, (3:31ff) they are already under a curse.

What is the end of the wicked? _____

He has no _____ and his _____ will be snuffed out.

Here, what does "lamp" represent? _____

vv.21-22 30th Saying: Fearing God and Rulers

Question: According to this verse, why should we fear God and rulers?
They can remove those who are given to change (of allegiance).

This proverb contains (implicitly) another exhortation to be careful who we "hang out with."

This is the end of the "30 Sayings" from the teacher (which are designed to make us wise).

The rest of chapter 24 contains some additional sayings of the wise.

vv:23-25 Showing partiality in judgment

What advice do these 3 proverbs give to magistrates?

1. _____ v.23

What does this mean? _____

2. _____ v.24a

3. _____ v.25

These 3 instructions set a standard that clearly distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked.

v. 26 Honesty

“a kiss on the lips” A figure of speech...a simile

A succinct, unique and very descriptive figure of speech regarding friendship.

This comes from Babylonian and Egyptian documents.

Historical records indicate that “kissing on the lips” was a sign of true friendship among the people of ancient Persia.

A small “side trip”: How many times do the Scriptures talk about kissing on the lips? My word study bible lists 18 references.

v.27 Ordering your priorities

In this proverb, preparing the fields is given a higher priority than building your house.

Wouldn't you think that it would be necessary to first get your living quarters prepared before doing other work? In our culture, it's much easier to find an existing house to rent or buy.

What would be the advantage of getting your fields prepared first?

What is the teaching of this proverb? ordering your

v.28 Being a witness against your neighbor

What is the primary teaching of this proverb? _____

v.29 Revenge

We should not seek _____ against someone who has done something (presumably bad) to us.

Why is this? _____

Who is responsible for vengeance? _____

Why is this a good thing for us? _____

vv.30-34 “The sluggard”

What are the evidences of a sluggard in these verses?

1. _____ v.30

2. _____ v.31a

3. _____ v.31b

4. _____ v.31c

What is a one-word summary of the sluggard? _____

What one result can this character weakness yield? _____

Note the two similes in v.34.

What are these similes saying?

You won't see it _____; and
You will _____.

PROVERBS 25

I. Review of Chapter 24

Chapter 24: 1-22 provided the remainder of the 30 Sayings (19-30) which began in chapter 22.

Verses 23-34 provided further sayings.

II. Introduction to Chapter 25

The next section of Proverbs, chapters 25-29, provides a collection of Solomon's proverbs collected by king Hezekiah's men which occurred approximately 250 years after the time of Solomon.

Historical:

Read II Chronicles, chapters 29-32 for descriptions of his reign.

Read the following:

II Chron. 29:2,10 "Did what was right"/make a covenant with the Lord that
His wrath may turn away from them
30:26 Great joy in Jerusalem
31:20-21 ...Did what was good, right and true

At some time during his reign, Hezekiah commissioned a group of men to collect the Proverbs of Solomon.

What was his motivation to undertake this task? (II Chron 29:10) _____

Their collection of proverbs is provided in the book of Proverbs, chapters 25-29.

Chapter 25 and 26 make much use of the simile "like" in providing striking comparisons.

Chapter 27 provides comparisons and antithetical statements.

Chapter 28-29 are mainly contrasts using the "but" which we have become very familiar with.

Literary:

When we examine the proverbs, we are interested in not only the "what is being said" but also how does the author communicate his message.

In this and the next chapter, we will see that the primary literary form is Hebrew poetry replete with parallelisms and collections of similes and metaphors.

The author also employs “concreteness,” the use of words depicting elements of every day life in Israel. Hebrew proverbs are rooted in the everyday cultural human experience.

Note: Jesus often illustrated spiritual truths by references to observable events and objects in everyday life. (e.g. sowing seeds, soldiers, highly valued pearls)

The aim of using a proverb, which is not our usual form of speech, is to make them striking and memorable. “A fine gold ring in a pig’s snout” is a very striking and memorable, yet terse evaluation of the beautiful woman without discretion.

So...another method of evaluating a proverb is to determine what form is used to make it “striking and memorable. e.g. “A man without self-control is like a city with broken down walls,” “Living on a corner of the roof.”

It contains a variety of individual and clustered proverbs.

III. Exposition of Chapter 25

Summary of Chapter 25:

v1.	proverbs of Solomon collected by the servants of king Hezekiah
vv.2-7	regarding kings
vv.8-10	going to court
vv.11-15	about speech
v. 16-17	moderation
vv.18-19	enmity (ill will, hatred)
v.20	sympathy
vv.21-22	responding to an enemy
vv.23-28	advice about everyday life

v.1 a simple statement of the collection of these proverbs

vv.2-7 Regarding kings

v.2 A contrast between God and kings
“conceal” 5641 *cathar* to hide, keep in a closet, keep secret

“thing” 1697 *dabar* word or matter or thing

What kind of things does God conceal?

It is God's glory to conceal a matter.

But kings must search out that which may be hidden (e.g. the will of God) and reveal it to their subjects.

v.3 The King's counsel

A reality – those in places of authority don't always reveal the reasons for their decisions.

What reasons might a ruler have for concealing his heart regarding a matter? _____

vv.4-5 Establishing a reign

This couplet provides an instruction, then an illustration. (emblematic parallelism)

First we learn that it is necessary to purify a vessel in order for it to be useful.

Then the application to humanity is made, basically stating that the wicked are not fit to be the king's counsel.

What application can we make for our present society?

vv.6-7 Promotion

What is the primary lesson of this proverb? Don't _____ yourself.

What is the heart attitude that is promoted in this couplet?

vv.8-10 Going to court

This proverb instructs us to keep our personal quarrels private.

If we have a dispute with a neighbor, we should go to the neighbor, not involve others.

A person who quickly runs to court may be avoiding personal interaction.

vv.11-15 About speech

4 similes – apples of gold, a gold ring, the cold of snow,
clouds and wind without rain

v.11 the beauty of a word “well-spoken”

Do you have an example of “a word well-spoken?”

v.12 Wise reproof

A wise rebuke, if properly received, has great value.

v.13 A Faithful messenger

A faithful messenger is _____.

v.14 The empty boast

The lesson: Don't make _____ promises.

v.15 Friendly persuasion

By patient speech, a ruler can be persuaded.

“a soft tongue” 7390 *rak* soft, tender (hearted)

The bone represents strong opposition.

We would do well to keep our speech calm and patient.

vv.16-17 Moderation

v.16 Self-control

The lesson: Moderation in the pleasures of life is needed.

Overindulgence leads to distastefulness.

Can you think of examples of this lesson?

v.17 Moderation in relationships

Too much of you in your friend's home will wear out your
welcome.

- vv.18-19 Ill will (enmity, hatred)
2 similes: a war club, a bad tooth
- v.18 False testimony is likened to weapons of warfare that wound.
- v.19 Trusting an unreliable man in your time of trouble is like chewing on a bad tooth and walking on a foot that it is out of joint.
- vv.20 Sympathy
Singing songs to one who has a “heavy” heart can only make matter worse.
This calls for discernment.
- vv.21-22 Responding to an enemy
We are instructed to respond to our enemies with kindness.
This kindness may do a work of contrition in their heart.
(burning coals on his head)
Our reward is that God will _____ us.
- vv.23-28 Advice about everyday life
- v.23 Deceptive speech
backbiting 5643 covert, disguised
As sure as the north wind brings rain, deceitful words will make people angry.
- v.24 The quarrelsome wife (same as 21:9)
- v.25 Good news
another simile
The difficulty of getting news from other lands during this time heightened the refreshment from it.
Not so today with our instant communication abilities world-wide.
This proverb meant much more to those of Solomon’s day than it does to us.

v.26 Character weakness

A righteous man who gives way to iniquity loses his usefulness. (People don't drink from a muddy or polluted spring.)

v.27 Glorifying self

It is not honorable to seek your own honor.

There are some textual problems with this proverb. One commentator maintains that each line has been separated from its original companion.

v.28 Self-control

The person without self-control is vulnerable and has no defenses. (a very visual illustration)

PROVERBS 26

I. Review of Chapter 25

Chapter 25 began the collection of proverbs copied by the men of Hezekiah.

In this chapter, we saw much use of the simile “like” in providing striking and memorable comparisons. (a goal of proverbs)

II. Chapter 26

The comparisons of this chapter have to do with the negative side of humanity (persons with whom it is wise not to cultivate an intimate relationship with):

vv.1-12	the fool
vv.13-16	the sluggard
v.17	the meddler
vv.18-19	the joker
vv.20-22	the gossip
vv.23-28	the deceitful (esp. lips)

III. Exposition

vv.1-12 the fool (the word occurs 10 times)

Fill in the blanks below to identify the fool’s character deficiencies.

v.1 Just as snow is not fitting for summer and rain the harvest, so it is not _____ to give honor to a fool.

Why is this so? _____

v.2 A curse that is baseless (has no just cause) will not come to rest.

v.3 Fools need strong _____ in order to be appropriately guided. (discipline normally reserved for animals)

vv.4-5 Giving an answer to a fool

Just as “There is a time for reaping and a time for sowing” there is also a time to _____ a fool and a time _____ a fool.

It will take a _____ man to know which response is appropriate.

- v.6 The fool is a useless _____.
- v.7 Just as legs that hang limp are of no use, so a _____ is useless in a fool's mouth.
- v.8 Just as it is counterproductive to tie a stone in a sling, so giving _____ to a fool is counterproductive.
- v.9 As a drunkard holding a thornbush is harmful, so a fool trying to use a proverb is harmful.
- v.10 God will bring just consequences to the fool and the transgressor.
- v.11 A dog, returning to his vomit, is disgusting. So also is a fool with his folly. He will repeat his disgusting actions.
- v.12 There is more hope for a fool than a man loaded with self-conceit. The "man who thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think" is almost impossible to help.

He is not someone you want to "hang" with. You might catch his disease.

v.13-16 the sluggard

What are 3 characteristics of the sluggard that are identified in this proverb cluster:

v.13 He makes _____.

v.14/15 He is _____.

v.16 He is loaded with _____.
see also v.12

v.17 the meddler

Most dogs in the ancient world were not domesticated but wild like jackals. A Hebrew would instantly have a mental picture of the result of grabbing a dog (or a wolf) by the ears.

This person is interfering in a quarrel or fight that is not his.

What counsel would the "Master of the Obvious" give to such a person? _____

vv.18-19 the joker

The person who practices deceit and then tries to explain it away by saying "I was only kidding" is immature, irresponsible and dangerous. He is also a liar.

vv.20-22 quarreling

This cluster identifies the quarrelsome and the gossip as those who ignite strife.

A quarrelsome man kindles strife.

Solution to maintaining the peace: _____ the quarrelsome.

v.22 _____ which goes down into the innermost parts of a person
(See the study notes on Prov. 18:8 of this workbook)

vv.23-28 the deceitful mouth

This final cluster in chapter 26 identifies several forms that the deceitful mouth will take:

v.23 _____ speech with a _____ heart

These lips conceal evil plans.

v.24 His _____ disguise his true intentions.

v.25 There are seven _____ in his heart.

v.26 His _____ lips cover his hatred.

v.27 How does this proverb about digging a pit fit in this cluster? Digging a pit was often used to capture an animal. Here, the wicked person is trying to encapture his opponent. His evil scheme will "backfire."

v.28 A _____ tongue emanates from a hateful spirit.

A _____ mouth seeks to work the ruin of the hated object.

What can we say about this cluster which deals principally with deceitful, hateful, lying lips?

1. These are not the kind of persons we want to hang with.
2. These are persons to be avoided.
3. _____

PROVERBS 27

I. Review of Chapters 25 & 26

Chapter 25 began the collection of proverbs copied by the men of Hezekiah. This collection of proverbs ends with chapter 29.

In chapters 25 and 26, we saw much use of the simile “like” in providing striking and memorable comparisons. (a goal of proverbs)

The comparisons of chapter 26 had much to do with the negative side of humanity: the fool, the sluggard, the meddler; the joker, the gossip, and the deceitful (esp. lips)

II. Chapter 27

Chapter 27 provides a collection of miscellaneous proverbs reflecting both evil and righteous ways.

III. Exposition

v.1 The uncertainty of the future

Since we don't know what tomorrow holds, how then, can we boast of it's accomplishments.

v.2 Humility

The better course is not to seek your own praise. If praise is due, then let another bring it.

What do we call it when someone boasts about themselves?
self-seeking, self-promoting

And what does this do? Alienates people from the boaster.

v.3 Being provoked by fools

provoke: 3708 ka'as vexation, anger, wrath, spite, grief

(synonym: repeated annoyances)

MW dictionary: to stir up on purpose

The mental weight of a fool's provocation is heavier than a load of sand or stone.

Why is this? _____

v.4 Jealousy

Jealousy is a far greater opponent than anger or fury.

See 6:32-35.

v.5,6 Reproof

v.5 As love:

open 1540 *galah* strip, unveil, disclose, reveal, uncover

reproof 8433 chastisement, pleading, justification, correction
rebuke

synonym: reprimand

An open, honest rebuke is better than "hidden" love which may not be love at all if it is too timid or fearful to express itself.

v.6 As of value:

In this proverb, the insincere expressions of affection from an enemy are contrasted with the wounds of a friend.

Here, that which is painful is good and valued while that which is seemingly pleasant is not good and of no value.

v.7 Need as opposed to desire

This verse provides a contrast between the one whose need has been fulfilled versus the one who has great unfulfilled needs.

It simply states that the one with great need will show more appreciation than those whose needs are satisfied.
(Even bitter is sweet to the taste).

v.8 Loss of security

The reason for straying is not given.
But the fact remains, one who wanders lacks the security that a home provides.

v.9 Pleasant counsel of a friend

This proverb likens the pleasantness of earnest counsel with the effects of perfume and incense.

v.10 Relationships

This proverb contains some difficulties. One commentator maintains that the 3 lines were put together but have no immediate connection.

If we take the proverb for what it says, it could be restated as follows:

“Don’t neglect to maintain your relationships with family and friends, but also understand that a neighbor who is nearby will be of more help in your time of need than a relative far away.”

v.11 Vindication for the father or teacher

A wise son or disciple will behave in such a way as to provide vindication for a father or teacher against whom false accusations may have been made.

v.12 Watchfulness (also see Pro 22:3)

The prudent are watchful and see danger coming. They take action to avoid dangerous consequences.

The fool doesn’t see the danger and continues walking right into it, thereby suffering the consequences that could have been avoided.

v.13 Surety (committing yourself for someone else’s debt.)

This verse is essentially the same as 20:16.

v.14 Inappropriate greetings

This verse instructs us that how and when we greet someone is important.

v.15,16 The quarrelsome wife

v.15 see also 19:13b

A quarreling wife can be really irritating.

v.16 This verse adds the dimension that the quarrelsome wife is not only irritating but also uncontrollable.

v.17 Shaping character

Literally “sharpens the face of his friend”

This indicates it is the personality or character of the friend who is being sharpened.

How does this occur? _____

v.18 Rewards for service

Those who serve another faithfully will also be rewarded in a similar manner as the service rendered.

v.19 Character reflected

A simple statement of this proverb is: “As clear water gives an accurate reflection of the face, so a man’s heart reveals the man.”

v.20 Unsatisfied desires

Just as death and destruction are always looking for their next victim, so also a man’s eyes (his desires) are never satisfied.

v.21 The testing of man

Just as the crucible and furnace test silver and gold, so a man is tested by the praise he receives.

v.22 Removing folly

It is impossible to remove folly from a fool.

vv.23-27 Attending your work

This cluster of proverbs, embedded in the culture of an agrarian society, simply tells us to give careful attention to your means of making a living.

It also reminds us of the transitory nature of riches.

PROVERBS 28

I. Review of Chapters 25–27

Chapter 25 began the collection of proverbs copied by the men of Hezekiah. This collection of proverbs ends with chapter 29.

In chapters 25 and 26, we saw many similes in which the key word “like” was used. These proverbs especially display a key characteristic of proverbs, that they can be stunning and memorable.

The comparisons of chapter 26 had much to do with the negative side of humanity: the fool, the sluggard, the meddler; the joker, the gossip, and the deceitful (esp. lips) (people who are not recommended for close friendship)

Chapter 27 provided a collection of miscellaneous proverbs reflecting both evil and righteous ways. In these proverbs we saw a mixture of comparisons and contrasts

II. Chapter 28

In chapter 28, we will mainly see contrasts using the key word “but.” (18 times)

III. Exposition

v.1 The courage of the righteous

Why do the wicked flee when no one is pursuing? _____

The righteous life gives a clear conscience; hence, no need to be watching to see if iniquities are discovered.

v.2 Stability in government

A wise man who is discerning and knowledgeable has the skill to maintain order and justice.

When wickedness prevails, self interests guide many governmental decisions instead of wisdom and understanding.

The northern kingdom, after they rebelled against Solomon’s son, is an example of the political instability that comes from rulers who do not walk in righteousness with wisdom and discernment.

What does this proverb tell us about the responsibility of those electing governmental officials? _____

v.3 The poor man oppressing the poor (oppress: 6231 defraud, violate, deceive)

Some translations say “A ruler who oppresses the poor...”

However, it is clearly the poor who oppress the poor in this proverb. (This is a good example of the importance of looking up key words.)

Poor - first use 7326 *ruwsh* poor, destitute, needy

Poor - second use 1800 *dal* low, poor, weak, thin

Why would one who is poor, and knows the experiences of being poor, choose to oppress someone else who is poor? _____

I would think that they would have sympathy towards a “fellow sufferer” but he thinks only of his own needs.

v.4,5 Respect for the Law

v.4 The contrast in this proverb is between those who keep the law and those who don't.

What important “thing” has happened to those who depart from the Law? Their ability to discern right and wrong has deserted them (they do not understand justice).

v.5 This verse, which I've combined with verse 4, provides the answer to the question above.

v.6 Esteem

A poor man with integrity is better off than a crooked rich man.

Whose standard of judgment is it that makes this a valid conclusion? _____

v.7 The evidence of our conduct

The contrast in this proverb is between a discerning son who keeps the law and one who doesn't.

In this case, it's clear who brings honor or who brings disgrace to his father.

Here, the glutton's social choices reveal his true character.

So...what do your social choices reveal about you? _____

v.8 Ill-gotten gain

This proverb speaks of the person who gains his wealth by exorbitant (NT – usury) interest.

This proverb tells us that, ultimately, the gain from unjust measures will go to the poor.

v.9 The prayer of the lawless

If we turn a deaf ear to the words of God, then He will turn a deaf ear to our words in prayer.

What does it mean to turn a deaf ear to the words of God?

v.10 Reward for conduct

Again, we see a person being rewarded (or punished) according to his behavior.

Those with evil intent who would lead the righteous astray will fall into the trap they have constructed while the righteous receive the good reward that is commensurate with their behavior.

v.11 Self discernment

Here is another contrast between the rich and the poor.

The rich man is filled with his own self-conceit while the poor man with discernment is not fooled. He “sees through” the pretensions of the rich man.

v.12 Power in government

People, in general, are pleased when the righteous are in positions of leadership. Governments will flourish under their wise leadership.

People also recognize the impending results of the wicked being in positions of power. They look for “a hiding place” where they will be unaffected by the results which they perceive will be imminent.

v.13 Dealing with sin

Confession and renunciation are needed to usher in God's mercy and forgiveness.

This verse on forgiveness is unique in Proverbs.

The contrast of this verse is between those who conceal or confess their sins.

Note that confession and forsaking are linked together in securing forgiveness.

v.14 The consequences of the condition of the heart.

The contrast of this proverb seems to be between choosing fear or choosing to be hardened.

v.15,16 Wicked rulers

v.15 A wicked ruler is a danger to the poor and an evil oppressor.

v.16 The contrast is between one who lacks understanding and one who hates unjust gain. Therefore, the one who lacks understanding is involved in unprincipled business ventures.

v.17 The guilt of murder

The guilt of murder will not be resolved in this life.

What kind of help can the murderer get? _____

v.18 The security of integrity

Our walk in life is made sure by the working of integrity.

crooked 6140 perverse

One who is perverse inflicts the calamity of insecurity upon himself. (We are our own worst enemy.)

v.19/20 Diligence in business

These two proverbs address personal practices in matters of business.

One man chases fantasies and is eager to get rich.

The other works his land and is faithful in his business practices.

What kind of fantasies might one chase?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

v.21 Showing partiality

Showing partiality does not work justice.

The second line indicates that a man can be bribed for a very small price, such as a slice of bread.

How does the partiality of line one connect with the bribery of line 2? _____

v.22 Stinginess

This verse is also translated “He that makes haste to get rich has an evil eye.”

This evil eye is a covetous eye which will neglect the weightier matters of righteous business practices to achieve his financial goals.

His reward is poverty, the very thing he is seeking to avoid.

v.23 The reward of a rebuke

The bottom line is that an honest rebuke is better than flattery.

What is the duration of flattery? _____

What is the result of flattery? It will provide no useful help, and may cause harm.

Note: The reward for giving a rebuke may be delayed in coming.

v.24 Dishonoring parents

How does he rob his father? He takes that which does not rightfully belong to him at this time. (see story of the prodigal son in Luke 15)

How might a son try to rob his parents? _____
_____ (See Mark 7:11-12)

How does this proverb describe the son who has done this?

A _____ of one who _____.

v.25 The path to riches

The greedy person is contrasted with one who trusts in God.

The greedy person has a “large appetite.” He stirs up strife because of his devious actions.

enriched/prospered 1878 “to become fat” “to be made fat” well fed

He will prosper.

Note: “a good kind of fat” (he who trusts in the Lord)

v.26 Righteous vs. self-sufficient conduct

The person who trusts in himself relies on his own mental and physical resources.

The alternate approach is to trust in the wisdom that comes from above (which we’ve been learning in the book of Proverbs).

v.27 Generosity versus indifference

This proverb shows a stunning difference between generosity and indifference:

The generous will lack nothing,
the indifferent will be cursed.

v.28 Stability in a righteous government

This proverb is similar to v.12.

Both proverbs have people hiding when the wicked are in positions of power.

The variation in v.28 to v.12 is that the proverb of v.28 has the righteous increasing when the wicked perish.

PROVERBS 29

I. Review of Chapter 28

In chapter 28, we saw contrasts using the key word “but.”

We also saw a wide range of topics: courage, rulers, the poor, justice, integrity, ill-gotten wealth, dealing with sin, the fear of the Lord, to name a few.

II. Chapter 29

In chapter 29, we are coming to the end of the collection of the proverbs that were collected by the men of Hezekiah.

In addition, we are fast-approaching the end of the book of Proverbs.

In this chapter we will see a microcosm of the book of Proverbs:

- the basic unit of individual proverbs
- a wide-ranging list of subjects
- differentiation between the wise and the foolish
- Hebrew poetry in the form of parallelisms
- small, snapshot views of real life, and
- a system of values including virtues to be sought and vices to be avoided.

This chapter consists entirely in 1-verse proverbs. No clusters were identified during the reviews.

III. Exposition

v.1 Refusing reproof

The obstinate (stiff-necked) person who refuses to respond to reproof will suddenly be destroyed. There will be no remedy to his demise.

This is a sobering thought to those who do not allow wise counsel to identify their need for correction.

v.2 Righteous vs. wicked rulers

This verse restates the message presented in chapter 28:12,28

A. The people thrive and rejoice when the righteous rule.

B. The people look for a place to hide when the wicked ascend to positions of power.

v.3 Guarding your affections

Here, the wise and the companion of prostitutes are contrasted.

What element of wisdom is contrasted here? _____

Wisdom brings joy to the father and hence to the family.

Companions of the lustful find their wealth being wasted away.

v.4 Justice vs. bribery

The king whose reign is characterized by justice gives his subjects stability

A king who can be swayed by bribes (or “taxes heavily”) tears down his kingdom.

v.5 Flattery

The “flatterer” works by deception and guile.

net 7568 *resheth* net for catching, trap for man

Who is his words preparing a trap for? _____

v.6 Rewards to the evil and to the righteous

As we have seen in previous proverbs, the wicked cannot rest with security because they never know when their past evil actions will catch up to them.

The righteous don't fear because the trail they have left behind consists of right actions. They do no evil to anyone, therefore, they do not fear retribution.

v.7 More on the righteous and the wicked

A righteous man is concerned for the needs of the poor.

The wicked most likely have no “poor” in their company or circle of friends. Even if they did, they would have no concern for them. They give the poor “no consideration”

v.8 Scoffers vs. the wise

The wise man maintains peace in a society while the scoffer is busy disrupting the peace and creating strife.

v.9 The Wise vs. the fool in court

Alternate translation: “If a wise man goes to court with a fool...”

8199 to litigate

Restated: Don’t go to court with a fool, you will only encounter objectionable and unreasonable behavior.

What then, can you do? _____

v.10 The enmity (hatred) of the wicked

What is a “bloodthirsty” man? _____

Why does he hate the righteous? The righteous man’s life brings conviction for sin.

v.11 The wise and the fool

The wise man is in control of his emotions, the fool isn’t.

The fool is the man of 25:28...he is like a city with broken-down walls.

v.12 Ruling

A ruler will be affected by the people he listens to.

The twist on this proverb is that since this person listens to falsehood, his counselors (the ones he chooses) will be persons who speak falsely and therefore, are wicked.

v.13 The poor and the oppressed

Key question: What does giving light to the eyes indicate/mean?

(Is it literal or figurative?) _____

The imagery of this proverb, giving sight, indicates that it is God who gives the light of life. He does this without partiality.

v.14 The faithful king

Fair and just treatment should be given to all regardless of their circumstances in life. If a king dispenses justice in this way, especially to the poor, his throne will be secure.

v.15 Administering discipline

As we have seen before, a child who is undisciplined will bring shame upon his mother.

Why is it that the mother is shamed? Mothers were responsible for training the children.

This proverb identifies two sources of wisdom, the rod of _____ and the lips of _____.

v.16 The prevailing righteousness

This verse teaches that no matter how much the wicked prevails in the land, righteousness will still prevail. (Note that it doesn't tell you when.)

v.17 The value of discipline

This verse encourages the parent to discipline his child.

This will bring _____ and _____ to your home.

v.18 The need for a vision

If there is no prophetic revelation or vision, the people will cast off restraint.

What is this restraint? _____

Note the references to a prophetic vision and the Law.

v.19 Discipline

This proverb tells us that discipline cannot be achieved by mere words alone.

Why does the 2nd line say: "though he understands, he will not respond?" _____

v.20 Hasty words

Restated: It is easier to train a fool than a man who speaks in haste.

Why? because he is not inclined to _____ to you. (He is too busy rattling his own lips.)

v.21 Treatment of servants

A servant who is not disciplined will bring grief.

He will expect to be treated as a son
son 4497 grief, progeny, thankless one

When should the discipline begin? _____

v.22 Wrath and anger

This man stirs up dissension and commits many sins.
(The man of line 1 is the same man of line 2.)

v.23 Pride vs. humility

This verse contrasts the results of pride and humility.
Pride leads to abasement; humility leads to honor.

v.24 Partnering with a thief

The second line is also translated: "he is put under oath and dare not testify."

He will likely perjure himself.

v.25 The fear of man vs. trusting in the Lord

In this verse, the fear of man is contrasted with trusting the Lord.
One leads to safety, the other to a snare.

What is the snare? The fear of _____. This fear of man likely has become a point in a person's life when others control their life.

v.26 The source of justice

This proverb contrasts the "favor" of a ruler with the justice that comes from God.

The fault comes when we assume that getting justice depends upon a person (e.g. a judge) and we seek him first instead of the "Judge of Heaven."

v.27 The unjust and the righteous

This verse provides us a reciprocal:

The unjust person is an abomination to the righteous.
The righteous is an abomination to the wicked (unjust.)

PROVERBS 30

I. Review of Chapter 29

In chapter 29, we came to the end of the collection of the proverbs that were collected by the men of Hezekiah.

In addition, we are fast-approaching the end of the book of Proverbs.

In chapter 29, we saw a microcosm of the book of Proverbs:

- the basic unit of individual proverbs
- a wide-ranging list of subjects
- distinction between the wise and the foolish
- Hebrew poetry in the form of parallelisms
- small, snapshot views of real life, and
- a system of values including virtues to be sought and vices to be avoided.

This chapter consisted entirely of 1-verse proverbs.

II. Chapter 30

Chapter 30 (and 31) are epilogues that were added to the book of Proverbs by the person who compiled the book of Proverbs.

The author of this chapter is identified as “Agur,” a man who, according to his own assessment in the early verses, has not ascended into heaven nor gained the “knowledge of the Holy One.”

However, in reading his words, it appears that he has gained some measure of wisdom and has words worth hearing and applying.

III. Exposition

v.1 The Title of the chapter:

Agur introduces himself.

v.2-4 What is his opinion of himself? _____

His confession and request

What does he confess? “that he is _____.”

Keep this in mind as you read this chapter and see if this is a valid assessment of himself. _____

“He is certainly not _____ in his own _____, which is not a bad trait to have.

His 5 questions in v.4 are reminiscent of Job.

What is the purpose of focusing on divine acts?

A suggested answer: Demonstrate that it is not wise to think that a mere man can explain God’s works or compare themselves with the Almighty.

vv.5-6 God’s Word

v.5 The word for pure (6884) relates to the process of purifying metals.

What does he maintain about God’s Word?

1. His words are _____ and are a _____ for those who seek Him.
2. Why are we commanded not to add to God’s Words?

What is the implied danger in this verse? Man will ascribe _____ to himself.

vv.7-9 His 2 requests

What does he request?

1. _____
2. _____

Why is he concerned about these 2 issues?

v.10 A domestic situation

How is he (the accuser) related to the slave-master situation? He has no relationship other than a bystander observing a servant’s actions.

How can we summarize the teaching of this proverb?
Don’t insert your opinion in someone else’s business.

vv.11-14 4 detestable things

What are the 4 things we should not engage in?

v.11 _____ for parents

v.12 _____ in their own eyes

v.13 _____ themselves

v.14 teeth like _____ and _____ to _____ the poor

vv.15-16 4 things not satisfied

What are the four things?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

v.17 Disrespect for parents

A very forceful image – “the eye”

The point is that the eye reveals the inner heart attitude.

The punishment is severe...the eye will be removed.

vv.18-19 4 Amazing things

Are there some ways that these 4 things have in common?

What is the teaching of this cluster? _____

vv. 20 The way of the adulteress

The key to this proverb is knowing that “eating and wiping her mouth” is a Hebrew euphemism for sexual activity.

The extraordinary thing about her is that she can engage in sin and easily dismiss any thought of guilt or responsibility for what she has done.

She has become calloused, hardened, to the workings of her conscience. Through her continued sin, she has hardened the arteries of tender feelings.

vv.21-23 4 intolerable things

In most of these cases, the dynamic is that of people whose hearts aren't changed, and thus unprepared for the elevation in status.

The fool full of food is likely one who has become prosperous but continues in his foolish ways.

The unloved woman is somewhat different. It is unknown why she is unloved. Perhaps she married a person who is incapable of showing love. Or she may have been married to someone not of her or his own choosing, i.e. an arranged marriage.

vv. 24-28 4 things small but wise

What is the principle teaching of this cluster?

Wisdom is better than _____ or _____.

vv.29-31 4 stately things – Qualities of leadership

What is the focus of this proverb cluster? _____

What is its application for us? _____

vv. 32-33 Concluding comments

Acting or speaking with evil intent provokes strife and anger.

What character quality does this cluster encourage? _____

And thus, a fitting conclusion to the words of Agur.

PROVERBS 31

I. Review of Chapter 30

In chapter 29, we came to the end of the collection of the proverbs that were collected by the men of Hezekiah.

Chapter 30 (and 31) are epilogues that were added to the book of Proverbs by the person who compiled the book of Proverbs.

Agur, the author of chapter 30, identified himself as a man who, according to his own assessment in the early verses, has not ascended into heaven nor gained the “knowledge of the Holy One. He did not describe himself as a person having wisdom.

However, in reading his words, we saw that he had gained some measure of wisdom and had words worth hearing and applying.

II. Chapter 31

The first verse tells us that this final chapter of Proverbs consists of the words of King Lemuel telling us things that were taught to him by his mother.

There are two primary sections:

vv. 2-9 Instructions to Lemuel from his mother

vv.10-31 The virtuous woman described

III. Exposition

vv.1-9 Instructions to Lemuel from his mother

Lemuel means “dedicated to God”

v.1 Introduction

v.2 What are you doing? (note 3 times in v.2)

His mother evidently is strongly questioning some of his behaviors.

What is her demeanor/attitude? _____

What behaviors does she question?

v.3 _____

vv.4-7 _____

What words of counsel does she have for him?

vv.8-9

v.8 _____

v.9 _____ the rights of the _____ and _____.

vv.10-31 Description of an excellent wife

Who needs a "Proverbs 31 wife?" every man

Who deserves a "Proverbs 31 wife?" no man

How do you get a "Proverbs 31 wife?"

1. Look for her (v.10) ("find" implies looking)
2. Pray, ask God for her.
3. Look in the church. (You won't find her at a bar.)
4. Become a Proverbs man through and through.
Devote yourself to wisdom.

One way to do this is to read/study and learn to apply a Proverb a day.

In concluding our study of Proverbs, let's identify the virtues of the excellent wife that are extolled in the following verses:

v.10 of great _____

v.11 She is _____.

v.12 She does _____ and not _____ to her husband.
(She is a faithful, fruitful wife.)

v.13 She is a diligent _____.

v.14 She is a skillful _____.

v.15 She is not _____.

v.16 She is _____.
She is not afraid of _____.

- v.17 She is _____ in character and in body.
- v.18 She is a diligent, _____ worker.
- v.19 She makes _____ for her household.
- v.20 She is _____ to the _____.
- v.21 She prepares in advance for _____.
- v.22 She is an excellent _____.
- v.23 Her husband is highly respected in the gates.
She chooses her husband wisely. (She knew what she was looking for.)
- v.24 She makes fine clothing and _____ it.
- v.25 She is _____ and _____ and is _____ for the future.
- v.26 She exhibits _____ and _____.
- v.27 She is not _____.
- v.28-29 Her children _____ her and her husband _____ her.
- v.30 She has the _____ of the _____.
- v.31 Her accomplishments gain her _____ in the city gates.

What are two general words that describe this woman? wise, godly

Who would not want such a woman? _____

Food for thought: If the church is the bride of Christ, and the bride of Christ includes men, how might this chapter apply to men?

Suggestion: Seek to develop the same wise and godly characteristics demonstrated by the woman above. (But not necessarily demonstrated in the same activities, e.g. making clothing for her household.)

ABOUT PASTOR DAVID

I grew up in Illinois, my wife, Brenda, in Oregon. It was a path of many twists and turns to get the two of us connected in California! We entered into our marriage covenant in 1986 after she had agreed to my proposal for a life of adventure. Brenda claims that she scarcely comprehended the adventure that our life would be simply by saying those two little words (I do).



We had both been Christians for a number of years and determined to make God the center of our marriage. In order to make a good beginning, we structured our wedding vows around the instructions of Scripture. We are convinced that this is the reason for our successful, growing relationship.

I received my BS in Civil Engineering in 1966 from the University of Missouri. Having taken ROTC in college, I next served as an officer in the U.S. Army, stationed in Germany.

After returning home to the states, I attended Golden Gate Seminary in California and received a Master of Divinity in 1972.

I worked for three Engineering companies before settling in with GE Nuclear Energy in San Jose, California. I finished my engineering career with 25 years of service at GE.

I was ordained a minister of the gospel in 1991.

Brenda is blessed with musical gifts and has played numerous instruments, e.g. bassoon, flute, guitar, piano, bass. She taught piano to children for 14 years until our move to Wilmington, NC. I also had some musical inclinations, growing up in a musical family in which everyone played at least one instrument. Brenda also has a heart for and is involved in a local "Special Touch" ministry, a ministry to people with disabilities.

Several years ago, we began attending Calvary Chapel San Jose, CA where Don McClure was pastoring. The emphasis on God's Word and the presence of God's Spirit in the worship kept us coming back until we felt confident that this was to be our church home.

Brenda became involved with the Praise team playing flute and singing. She also led the worship for two Women's Bible studies. I became involved in the teaching ministry working principally with the mature adults class (ages around 50-95, they called themselves the "Sonshiners") and also a young married couples class.

Even though we felt like we were settling into the San Jose Fellowship, in early 2004 we were presented with a company relocation, and we began to feel that God was leading us to a significant change, relocating from the West Coast to the East Coast. Little did we know what was in store for us in Wilmington, NC.

We often felt like Abraham who was told to leave his homeland but was given no information regarding what he would encounter when he arrived at his destination.

The next very shocking surprise was my early retirement, something we had not even considered when planning the move to the east coast. Nevertheless, God made it very clear that my engineering career of 37 years was soon to be ended. The retirement occurred almost 5 years in advance of my plan. But God had a bigger (and better) plan. One of my reoccurring supplications to God has been that I would rather be expending the main energy of my life teaching the Word of God than pouring it into the management of engineering projects and writing technical engineering reports. Now, God was giving me the desire of my heart.

I eventually came on staff with a local church and served for 7½ years as an associate pastor teaching Bible studies and ministering principally in the Equipping the Saints ministry. Brenda was involved in several ministries... Praise Team, Special Touch, hospitality/helps, Home Fellowships, to mention a few.

After a 1-year sabbatical in 2014, God has led us to begin a new fellowship which is called Safe Haven Berean Fellowship. Our focus is principally on the Word of God, with both Bible book studies and doctrinal teachings in progress at this time. Principal focuses are on the assurance of salvation, knowing what God in Christ has done for us, learning to live in a way that honors and glorifies God, and a continual focus upon our End Times preparations for our coming King.

Looking back now over the years that led us to this place in life, we are amazed at the Sovereignty of God and how he has orchestrated the events that have brought us to this place in this time. His loving and merciful hand has been seen time and again as he has opened doors and brought us quickly to where He wants us to be. He is, without question, an awesome God.

A painting of a ship on a stormy sea with a white text box overlaid. The text box contains the following text:

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