

Proverbs

The chapters in Proverbs which we will be studying primarily compare wise and foolish people, who are acting accordingly in common situations, and experiencing the outcomes God's people, or the wise, should expect.

Proverbs 15

1. A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.
 - a. **Vs 18:** A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger calms a dispute.
 - b. A **gentle answer** is one that is not rough, harsh, or stern, but rather mild, considerate, or conciliatory.
 - c. A **harsh word:** is one that is rough, repulsive, severe, or abusive.

2. The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, But the mouth of fools spouts folly.
 - a. Alternative translation: **New King James:** The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.
 - b. **Vs 28:** The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.
 - c. Our choice of words and tone of voice are important. We can speak the truth in a way that makes it hard for the other person to accept it, or we can speak the truth in love – in a way that makes it easier for them to hear and accept it. This is the way of wisdom.
 - d. The way of wisdom includes knowing truth so that we go beyond cliches or generalizations to presenting the truth in clear, sensible, and understandable ways – for that is what helps the listener.
 - e. However, not everyone listens to truth, clearly spoken. **Ezekiel 33:30-33**, But as for you, son of man, your fellow citizens who talk about you by the walls and in the doorways of the houses, speak to one another, each to his brother, saying, ‘Come now and hear what the message is which comes forth from the LORD.’ [31] They come to you as people come, and sit before you as My people and **hear your words, but they do not do them**, for they do the lustful desires expressed by their mouth, and their heart goes after their gain. [32] Behold, you are to them like a sensual song by one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument; for they hear your words but they do not practice them. [33] So when it comes to pass—as surely it will—then they will know that a prophet has been in their midst.

3. The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.
 - a. **Proverbs 5:21**, For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He watches all his paths.
 - b. **2 Chronicles 16:9a**, For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.
 - c. **Vs 11**: Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD, How much more the hearts of men!
 - d. **Jeremiah 16:17**, For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity concealed from My eyes.
 - e. **Hebrews 4:13**, And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

4. A soothing tongue is a tree of life, But perversion in it crushes the spirit.
 - a. **Soothing tongue**: True; faithful; trustworthy; To assuage; to mollify; to calm; to comfort. Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary.
 - b. **Tree of life**: produces fruit accordingly. In this case it produces life.
 - c. **Perversion**: a turning or diverting from truth or right; a change to something worse; a turning or applying to a wrong end or use. To turn from truth or propriety; to lead astray; to corrupt. Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary.

5. A fool rejects his father's discipline (*correction*), But he who regards reproof (*listens and acts accordingly*) is (*or becomes*) sensible.
 - a. **Proverbs 10:17**, He is on the path of life who heeds instruction, But he who ignores reproof goes astray.

6. Great wealth is in the house of the righteous, But trouble is in the income of the wicked.
 - a. **Vs 27**: He who profits illicitly troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live.
 - b. **Note**: the household is affected by the character of the ones responsible to provide **and** by the means they use (*righteous/wicked*) for earning the income necessary to provide for the needs of the household.
 - c. The **wealth** brought into the home of the righteous goes beyond money and possessions to include godly character, godly behavior, and godly example which brings God's blessings in every area of family life.
 - d. The trouble brought into the home of the wicked goes beyond ungodly character, ungodly behavior, and ungodly example to include legal

troubles, possible jail time, possible threat of life via reprisals from those cheated by the breadwinner, and God's judgment for being dishonest.

7. The lips of the wise spread knowledge, But the hearts of fools are not so.
 - a. This appears to contrast the lips of the wise with the hearts of fools. However, it is who we are on the inside – our character, what we value, and who we are serving (*God/ourselves*) that directs what we say and why we say it.
 - b. **Principle:** The heart of the wise wants to spread knowledge for the good of all. The heart of the fool seeks the good of self, not the good of all, and therefore has no interest in spreading knowledge.
 - i. **Matthew 12:34-35**, “You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. [35] The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil.”
 - c. **Warning: Proverbs 4:23**, Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.

8. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight.
 - a. When a sacrifice is an **abomination** to the Lord, it means it is extremely disgusting, abhorrent, loathsome to Him.
 - b. **Principle:** Religious activity practiced by one who knowingly and willingly practices sin is an abomination to God. Religious activities – including prayer – practiced by the godly delights God. In other words, religious activity contradicted by one's life-style is an abomination, while religious activity supported by one's life-style is a delight to God.
 - i. Note: **Isaiah 1:10-15**
 - c. Clearly, how we live, day-to-day, matters to God and has a profound effect on our relationship to God and our standing with God. Note **vs 29**.

9. The way (*life-style, choices, behavior*) of the wicked is an abomination (*extremely disgusting, abhorrent, loathsome*) to the LORD, But He loves one who pursues (*intentionally goes after*) righteousness.
 - a. Here we see that God not only loves the prayer of the righteous, He loves those who pursue righteousness.

10. Grievous punishment is for him who forsakes the way; He who hates reproof will die.
 - a. **Grievous punishment:** punishment that is distressing, continually painful, hard to bear. Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary.
 - b. **Die:** We all die physically, but there is the death of eternal separation from God – which is the worst death of all. And there are numerous troubles that we bring upon ourselves in this life by willfully living a selfish, sinful, foolish life. These present-day troubles can be considered a form of death, just as Adam and Eve experienced being put out of the Garden and their eldest son murdering his brother were forms of death.
 - c. **Principle:** If someone knows the right way, walks in it for a time, and then knowingly and intentionally departs from it, he will be punished – with the goal of bringing such a one back to their senses and godly living. The one who refuses to be corrected and shown the right way so as to continue living an ungodly life, dies – that is, removed from the rest of the group for the good of the group because he refuses to change his way for the sake of the group.

11. Sheol and Abaddon (*uh BAD uhn*) lie open before the LORD, How much more the hearts of men!
 - a. **Sheol:** underworld, possibly hell. **Abaddon:** the destroyer, possibly what happens to those in Sheol.
 - b. Scripture
 - i. **Job 26:6**, Naked is Sheol before Him, And Abaddon has no covering.
 - ii. **Revelation 9:11**, They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is **Abaddon** (*destroyer*), and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon (*destroyer*).
 - c. **Jeremiah 17:10**, “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds.”
 - d. **Principle:** If God can see what is in Sheol and the destruction of those in Sheol, then He can see what is in your heart. Though hidden from many on the outside, we cannot hide who we are on the inside from God.

12. A scoffer does not love one who reproveth him, He will not go to the wise.
 - a. **Proverbs 9:8**, Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you, Reprove a wise man and he will love you.
 - b. A **scoffer** is driven by conceit (*an inflated view of self*), arrogance and scorn (*looking down on others with contempt*). His view of self, mindset,

and attitudes stand in the way of going to someone who could give him wise counsel or teach him wise ways of thinking and living.

13. A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, But when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.
 - a. **Principle:** It is hard to hide on the outside (*one's countenance as seen in one's face, posture, and voice*) the joy or sadness (*or fear, or confident trust in God*) we feel on the inside. By observing a person's countenance, we can gain some understanding of how they are feeling on the inside.
 - b. **Example: Nehemiah 2:1-3,** And it came about in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine was before him, and I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. [2] So the king said to me, "Why is your face sad though you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of heart." Then I was very much afraid. [3] I said to the king, "Let the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies desolate and its gates have been consumed by fire?"

14. The mind of the intelligent (*discerning*) seeks (*intentionally pursues*) knowledge, But the mouth of fools feeds (*grazes*) on folly.
 - a. The **intelligent** or **discerning** are those who use their intellect, understanding, and ability to reason and distinguish right from wrong, good from evil, wise from foolish, humility from conceit, and the value of gaining more knowledge rather than thinking you know it all.
 - b. The fool grazes on folly because it is in keeping with his mindset.

15. All the days of the afflicted are bad, But a cheerful heart has a continual feast.
 - a. The reality is, hard times are hard – they often bring pain and suffering. The condition of the heart does not change that reality. However, if we value what is truly valuable, then we can have inward joy, or a cheerful heart, which enables us to find joy in the midst of the hard times because of the enjoyment or gain of what is truly valuable.
 - b. For example:
 - i. **James 1:2-4,** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, [3] knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. [4] And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
 - ii. **Romans 5:1-2,** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, [2] through whom

also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

16. Better is a little with the fear of the LORD Than great treasure and turmoil with it. (*Vs 16 and 17 go together*)
 - a. **Principle:** Though you may be poor, it is better to live a godly life so that God is on your side caring for you, than to have great wealth accompanied by the troubles, concerns, anxieties, fears, and damaged relationships that come from trusting in yourself and your riches to ensure a good life.
 - b. Scriptures
 - i. **Proverbs 17:1**, Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it Than a house full of feasting with strife.
 - ii. **Matthew 6:33**, But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
17. Better is a dish of vegetables where love is Than a fattened ox served with hatred. (*Vs 16 and 17 go together*)
 - a. **Principle:** Better to have little or even want in a loving environment than to have much in an environment filled with hatred and all the troubles, conflict, and damaged or broken relationships that come with hatred.
18. A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger calms a dispute.
 - a. **Proverbs 29:22**, An angry man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression.
 - b. **Ephesians 4:26-27**, Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, [27] and do not give the devil an opportunity.
 - c. **James 1:19-20**, But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; [20] for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.
 - d. **Proverbs 16:32**, He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.
19. The way of the lazy is as a hedge of thorns, But the path of the upright (*conscientious*) is a highway.
 - a. To be lazy is to avoid action or exertion as much as possible or as much as deemed necessary to have a happy, contented life. The lazy person does not like to work, and shirks what he sees to be labor intensive activities when possible. However, in time, this makes life far more

difficult (*like trying to walk through a hedge of thorns*) because things that need to be done do not get done so that when you need them you have to work that much harder to get them done, or do without.

i. **Proverbs 20:4**, The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, So he begs during the harvest and has nothing.

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

b. To be upright or conscientious is to be responsible in doing what needs doing when it needs doing so that you have what you need when you need it – thus removing last minute efforts or want, which makes life easier and more pleasant.

20. A wise son makes a father glad (*by living a life that honors/brings honor to his father*), But a foolish man despises his mother (*by living a life that dishonors/brings dishonor to his mother*).

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

b. You do not carelessly or foolishly continue to dishonor/grieve your parents unless you think so little of them that doing so makes no difference to you. Therefore, treating them with such disrespect as to live a foolish life is equal to despising them, just as disobeying Jesus' commands is equal to not loving/despising Him (John 14:15).

21. Folly is (*or, brings*) joy to him who lacks sense, But a man of understanding walks straight (*in the right way*).

a. Contrasts lacking sense with being sensible, and joy – or personal happiness and pleasure – with doing what is right/godly.

b. **Proverbs 9:17-18**, Stolen water is sweet; and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. [18] But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

c. **Micah 6:8**, He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

22. Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they succeed.

23. A man has joy in an apt answer, And how delightful is a timely word!

a. Good advice is a blessing to the one giving it and the one receiving it. It is a blessing to the one giving it because he knows it comes from the

work God has done in him and is doing through him, and if it is put to use, he rejoices that he has been able to help/serve in this way.

- b. It is a blessing to the one receiving it because it shows him the way of life and helps him on his way.
- c. **Proverbs 25:11–12**, Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances. [12] Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise reprove to a listening ear.

24. The path of life leads upward for the wise That he may keep away (*avoid*) from Sheol below.

- a. **Proverbs 12:28**, In the way of righteousness is life, and in its pathway there is no death.
- b. **Proverbs 4:18-19**, But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day. [19] The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know over what they stumble.
- c. **Romans 8:12-14**, So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—[13] for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [14] For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

25. The LORD will tear down the house of the proud, But He will establish the boundary of the widow.

- a. **Proverbs 3:33-34**, The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the dwelling of the righteous. [34] Though He scoffs at the scoffers, yet He gives grace to the afflicted.
- b. **Proverbs 12:7**, The wicked are overthrown and are no more, but the house of the righteous will stand.
- c. **James 4:6b**, Therefore it says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”
- d. **Principle**: Those who live as if they do not need God and His ways to have a good life will lose all they have gained – if not in this life, then certainly in eternity. Those who live dependent on God and His ways to provide for them and protect them will have what they need in this life and throughout eternity.

26. Evil plans are an abomination (*extremely disgusting, abhorrent, loathsome*) to the LORD, But pleasant words are pure.

- a. If we look at this proverb in light of the effect each one has on others, then the intent and outcome of evil plans is unnecessary harm done to

others, while pleasant words intentionally console, encourage, or in some other way help others.

b. Therefore, evil plans are an abomination to God.

27. He who profits illicitly (*taking bribes?*) troubles his own house, But he who hates bribes will live.

a. **Principle:** Sin brings trouble and God's judgement into our lives. Righteousness brings God's blessings and good into our lives.

b. **Proverbs 11:17-19**, The merciful man does himself good, but the cruel man does himself harm. [18] The wicked earns deceptive wages, but he who sows righteousness gets a true reward. [19] He who is steadfast in righteousness will attain to life, and he who pursues evil will bring about his own death.

28. The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.

a. Think before you speak – but before the time arrives when you need to think before speaking, learn the way of righteousness so that when you get to those times you will speak according to righteousness.

b. The wicked despise the way of righteousness, so though they may on occasion think before they speak, their thinking and hence their speaking is according to unrighteousness – or who they are inside.

c. **Luke 6:45**, The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

29. The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.

a. Sin pushes God away from us and closes His ears to our cries for help. Righteousness draws us near to God and opens His ears to our cries.

b. **1 Peter 3:12**, For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears attend to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

c. How we live, day-to-day, matters to God and has a profound effect on our relationship to God and His responses to us. Note **vs 8**.

30. Bright eyes gladden the heart; Good news puts fat on the bones.

a. Bright eyes possibly refers to having a reason to hope for a good outcome, especially where a bad outcome seems more likely.

b. Good news possibly refers to hope fulfilled.

- c. **Proverbs 17:22**, A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones.
31. He whose ear listens to the **life-giving** reproof (*correction, reprimand*) Will dwell among the wise.
- a. **Proverbs 10:17**, He is on the path of life who heeds instruction, But he who ignores reproof goes astray.
 - b. To dwell among the wise to be among those whose life-style is built on wisdom as opposed to foolishness – and that makes for a better life for all involved.
32. He who neglects discipline despises (*has a low opinion, scorn, dislikes*) himself, But he who listens to reproof (*correction, reprimand*) acquires understanding.
- a. To neglect learning and growing in understanding, wisdom, and godliness is to act as if you despise (*have a low opinion of*) yourself. To listen to correction and reprimands is to think well enough of yourself to make the effort to grow and mature in wisdom and godliness.
 - b. **Proverbs 8:36**, But he who sins against me (*wisdom*) injures himself; All those who hate me (*wisdom*) love death.”
33. The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, And before honor comes humility.
- a. **Psalms 111:10**, The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments....
 - b. **James 4:6b-10**, Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." [7] Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. [8] Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. [9] Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. [10] Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.