**Proverbs Chapter 15 (Lesson #16)**

**33** Additional Proverbs from the Pen of Solomon

As we have discussed, the book of Proverbs is broken into **Seven** different sections.

We finished **section I** chapters 1-9, months ago and we have started our journey in **SECTION II,** this is the largest section of the Proverbs and extends from **10:1** all the way to **22:16**. So it is a little longer than Section I.

Scholars tell us that it contains **375 proverbs**. So far we have looked at (32+31+28+25+35) **151** of those proverbs. Today we look at an additional **(33 proverbs).**

**As we discussed our last time together, there is a great deal of wisdom in these 13 chapters that make up SECTION II.**

Like the first **151** proverbs from chapters **10 - 14**, most of the proverbs we will review today are 1 verse **contrasting statements**.

Also, as we discussed, at times, the Proverbs can seem thrown together. But, nothing could be further from the truth, there is always form and there is always a driving theme or themes.

**The major themes in chapter 15 are:**

The Power of Well-Chosen Responses (Vs 1-4)

The Need for Instruction (Vs 5-12)

The Blessing of a Cheerful Disposition (Vs 13-18)

The Secret of a Successful Path (Vs 19-24)

The Favor that Comes to the Humble (Vs 25-33)

Also, this chapter is marked by the **frequent use of God’s covenant name (Yahweh)**. It is used **9 times** in this chapter which is almost twice the preceding five chapters.

In chapters 10-14 a great deal was said about moral behavior. Here in chapter 15 our behavior is being connected to the God of the Bible.

Once Again, we are going to spend about a **minute** on each of these proverbs, **just scratching the surface**, for each is a **treasure chest** worthy of our **individual** **meditation**.

**OK Ready?**

**I The Power of Well-Chosen Responses (Vs 1-4)**

**Vs 1 ¶ A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.**

This is one of the Proverbs that I memorized a long time ago and have tried to live out.

A soft answer, a soft response, a response that is seasoned in with time and bathed in grace, a gentle response, a tender response even in a disagreement, even when the charges leveled are wrong. A soft answer turns away, turns down, cools down wrath.

This Hebrew word is normally translated fury.

**BUT...** Harsh words, a harsh response, an angry response, a hurtful response stirs up anger. In the Hebrew it increases anger.

Fighting fire with fire but be a sound doctrine in combat, it is not good advice as far as interpersonal relationships go!

Consider:

“"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Mt 5:9 ESV)

“38 ¶ "You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.” (Mt 5:38-42 ESV)

“A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.” (Pr 15:18 ESV)

**Vs 2 ¶ The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly.**

The tongue of the wise not only dispenses knowledge **it makes knowledge look attractive**, it makes knowledge look appealing.

We can say the wrong thing at the right time and even the right thing at the wrong time. Wisdom dispenses knowledge on time making it appealing.

**BUT...** The mouth of a fool **pours out folly**. The mouth of a fool is like a backed-up sewer system. It pours out filth and folly.

The wise builds relationships by what they say and even when they say it. The fool, on the other hand destroys relationships with his lips.

CONSIDER:

“The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.” (Pr 15:28 ESV)

“27 ¶ Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. 28 Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.” (Pr 17:27-28 ESV)

“11 If the serpent bites before it is charmed, there is no advantage to the charmer. 12 ¶ The words of a wise man’s mouth win him favor, but the lips of a fool consume him. 13 The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is evil madness.” (Ec 10:11-13 ESV)

**Vs 3 ¶ The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.**

Here is wisdom and a good reminder for all of us. **God sees everything**. He sees us at work and He sees us at home, He sees us in play time and he sees us when we are on the Internet.

The eyes of the Lord are in every place and he is watching.

**This should be reassuring** for the believer for God sees your struggles, He sees your heart, He understands your motives and intentions. He sees and understands even when no one else does.

**This should be alarming** for the person with a secret life. God sees!

**Consider:**

“**1** ¶ « To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. » O LORD, you have searched me and known me! **2** You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. **3** You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. **4** Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. **5** You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. **6** Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.” (Ps 139:1-6 ESV)

“**7** ¶ Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? **8** If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! **9** If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, **10** even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. **11** If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," **12** even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.” (Ps 139:7-12 ESV)

“Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD; how much more the hearts of the children of man!” (Pr 15:11 ESV)

“The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD’s throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man.” (Ps 11:4 ESV)

“For a man’s ways are before the eyes of the LORD, and he ponders all his paths.” (Pr 5:21 ESV)

**Vs 4 ¶ A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.**

Here again another proverb about our speech, about the tongue. Here Solomon says a gentle tongue is a tree of life. The Hebrew word is **health**, **healing**, or **curing**. The wholesome tongue is a tree of life, and it brings forth fruit that is life to the hearers.

**But...** Perverseness, a crooked and deceptive tongues breaks the spirit, a perverse tongue crushes the spirit. A wicked tongue wounds those it engages.

**Summation: Our speech can nourish or it can crush.**

**Consider:**

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.” (Pr 18:21 ESV)

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Pr 15:1 ESV)

“There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.” (Pr 12:18 ESV)

“The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of sense.” (Pr 10:21 ESV)

“The lips of the wise spread knowledge; not so the hearts of fools.” (Pr 15:7 ESV)

**II The Need for Instruction (Vs 5-12)**

**Vs 5 ¶ A fool despises his father’s instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.**

Here is one to live our lives by! A fool is one who despises his father’s instructions (this is true for an earthly father and more importantly for our heavenly father. A fool despises correction and instruction from his father.

**BUT...** Whoever heeds reproof, he who hears and obeys reproof (correction or rebuke) is prudent.

The author of the Message translated the second half like this: welcoming correction is a mark of good sense.

The theme of the wisdom in hearing the father’s instructions is woven throughout the Proverbs and is why we are here.

Do not bristle at correction, do not bow at reproof, for the ones who are truly wise, will respond in a positive way to instruction, for to do otherwise is the mark of a fool.

**Consider:**

“A wise son hears his father’s instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.” (Pr 13:1 ESV)

“Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is honored.” (Pr 13:18 ESV)

“Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.” (Pr 19:20 ESV)

“Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and forsake not your mother’s teaching,” (Pr 1:8 ESV)

“My son, keep your father’s commandment, and forsake not your mother’s teaching.” (Pr 6:20 ESV)

**Vs 6 ¶ In the house of the righteous there is much treasure, but trouble befalls the income of the wicked.**

In many of the proverbs, the full depth of the proverb is only understood when the whole proverb is considered, half does not tell the whole story.

Here a house is contrasted against revenue, righteous contrasted to wickedness, and treasures contrasted to troubles.

In the **house of the righteous** are the **real treasures** (faith, hope, love, peace, joy, righteousness, and forgiveness) to name a few.

**BUT...** the earnings of the wicked are filled with troubles. Wicked men, in spite of the earnings that may be pouring into their house, their homes are filled with trouble (fear, hopelessness, anger, malice, frustration, etc).

The wicked may prosper materially in this life, but often in the life and for sure in the next life, they will find trouble.

**CONSIDER:**

“Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice.” (Pr 16:8 ESV)

“16 ¶ Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble with it. 17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox and hatred with it.” (Pr 15:16-17 ESV)

“Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than a rich man who is crooked in his ways.” (Pr 28:6 ESV)

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?” (Mt 16:26 ESV)

**Vs 7 ¶ The lips of the wise spread knowledge; not so the hearts of fools.**

Communication and the ability to communicate is an amazing gift. With this gift comes an amazing opportunity and an incredible responsibility.

For the lips of the wise spread knowledge. Such a small little organ in our body, yet the wise, use that organ to spread knowledge, all for the glory of God.

NOT SO, the heart of fools.

If you are wise your words will be to the benefit of the community, if you are a fool what begins in the heart, but ultimately comes out of your lips will benefit no one.

**CONSIDER:**

“11 ¶ A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. 12 Like a gold ring or an ornament of gold is a wise reprover to a listening ear.” (Pr 25:11-12 ESV)

“To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!” (Pr 15:23 ESV)

“Righteous lips are the delight of a king, and he loves him who speaks what is right.” (Pr 16:13 ESV)

**Vs 8 ¶ The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him.**

Here is a **shocking truth**, and to bring this parable into a modern understanding let’s substitute the word sacrifice with worship.

God **hates** the worship of the wicked, it is an abomination to Him.

Now we live in a day and age where in the minds of men, many have neuter God, and they cannot imagine a God who hates anything. But we should hear the words of Solomon.

Does this surprise you that God hates those are pretending to worship Him, because actually their hearts are far from Him. Ritual with righteousness is odious to our God.

It is the height of folly to play church and never submit to God!

**BUT...** Here is a **good but**, the prayer of the upright, the prayer of the saved, the prayer of those who have placed faith in Jesus is acceptable to Him.

Now the ESV translators choice of acceptable in my opinion misses what Solomon is saying. The Hebrew word is **רצון ratsown *raw-tsone’*** It means pleasure, delight, or favor.

The prayer of the upright is a delight to our God! For those who have placed faith in Jesus and are ordering their lives by God’s word, God is pleased with their prayers!**What a contrast! CONSIDER:**

“« A Prayer of David. » Hear a just cause, O LORD; attend to my cry! Give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit!” (Ps 17:1 ESV)

“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; how much more when he brings it with evil intent.” (Pr 21:27 ESV)

“If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.” (Pr 28:9 ESV)

**Vs 9 ¶ The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but he loves him who pursues righteousness.**

The thought that was began in vs 8 is further developed here in vs 9. Here Solomon says: The way of the wicked is an abomination to Yahweh.

The ways, paths, lifestyles of those who reject God’s Son and reject God’s word, are an abomination to Yahweh!

But God love is on those who **pursue** righteousness, which by the way is only found in Jesus Christ, after all Isaiah is correct when he wrote: “We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment...” (Isa 64:6a ESV)

**CONSIDER:**

“for the devious person is an abomination to the LORD, but the upright are in his confidence.” (Pr 3:32 ESV)

“Those of crooked heart are an abomination to the LORD, but those of blameless ways are his delight.” (Pr 11:20 ESV)

“If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.” (Pr 28:9 ESV)

**Vs 10 ¶ There is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way; whoever hates reproof will die.**

I have bad news and some more bad news. First the bad news, there is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way.

Ultimately, severe discipline is coming for those who reject God, reject God’s Son, and reject God’s wisdom.

OK, one more piece of **bad news**. The one who hates reproof, the one who hates correction, that person will die, and the death Solomon has in mind is eternal death, eternal separation from God, under the wrath of God. To reject correction, to hate to be corrected is the mark of a fool who will one day perish.

Now the good news. God disciplines those He loves, at times that discipline can be harsh, it can be severe, but God disciplines those He loves!

No one likes discipline, but it serves an important function in the life of a believer.

**CONSIDER:**

“Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof leads others astray.” (Pr 10:17 ESV)

“Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.” (Pr 9:8 ESV)

“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.” (Pr 12:1 ESV)

“Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence.” (Pr 15:32 ESV)

**Vs 11 ¶ Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD; how much more the hearts of the children of man!**

Sheol, the abode of the dead, hell and Abaddon, the place of destruction or destruction itself, lie open and naked before God.

God sees into even the deepest and darkest recesses of hell. Even in the darkness of the grave and the torments of hell, God sees.

**How much more** does he see into our hearts. He knows it all, the good, the bad, and the ugly. He sees the secret motives and the hidden activities good and bad.

God sees your heart. This can bring great anxietry or it can bring great comfort. God knows what is motivating and animating us.

 **Consider:**

“If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!” (Ps 139:8 ESV)

“"I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."” (Jer 17:10 ESV)

“The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.” (Pr 15:3 ESV)

“Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD.” (Jer 23:24 ESV)

“Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.” (1Co 4:5 ESV)

**Vs 12 ¶ A scoffer does not like to be reproved; he will not go to the wise.**

How we respond to correction say a great deal about us. Are we open to correction, do we consider that we can be wrong? A scoffer, a fool, one who scoffs at wisdom does not like to be reproved.

THUS... The scoffer will not go to the wise, he will not seek God’s wisdom found in His Word, he will not seek out God’s wisdom manifested in his son.

The scoffer hates to be reproved and will never seek it out. But the opposite is true too. The wise desire to be corrected by God and His word even if that correct comes via a fellow brother and sister in Christ.

How we respond to correction, says a great deal about us!

**CONSIDER:**

“Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.” (Pr 9:8 ESV)

“They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks the truth.” (Am 5:10 ESV)

“**20** For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. **21** But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."” (Joh 3:20-21 ESV)

“**5** ¶ Better is open rebuke than hidden love. **6** Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.” (Pr 27:5-6 ESV)

“The thoughts of the righteous are just; the counsels of the wicked are deceitful.” (Pr 12:5 ESV)

**III The Blessing of a Cheerful Disposition (Vs 13-18)**

**Vs 13 ¶ A glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed.**

Here Solomon reminds his sons that you can see the heart of a man by looking at his face. A glad heart has a cheerful face.

BUT... By sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed.

So what is the lesson, beyond the simple and the obvious.

You and I need to rule our hearts.

CONSIDER:

“A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.” (Pr 17:22 ESV)

“A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.” (Pr 25:28 ESV)

“Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.” (Pr 16:32 ESV)

**Happiness and contentment are choices, and real joy is found only in Jesus Christ.**

**Vs 14 ¶ The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on folly.**

Wise men, men of understanding are men who love learning and seek after knowledge. The man who is on a quest for knowledge a quest to know God and His desires for our lives is a man of understanding.

**But...** The mouth of fools only feeds on folly. He is foolish and he is happy with more foolery.

How does one know which one you are? Look at your pursuits. Is it God and the things of God or is it the passing things of this world.

Compare your time with God with your amusement time, that likely says a great deal about our real pursuits and passions.

**CONSIDER:**

“Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.” (Pr 9:9 ESV)

“Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” (Ac 17:11 ESV)

“A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaims folly.” (Pr 12:23 ESV)

**Vs 15 ¶ All the days of the afflicted are evil, but the cheerful of heart has a continual feast.**

I would like to start with the second clause and then work my way to the first.

The one with a cheerful heart, the one with a contented heart, the one with a joyful heart has a **continual feast**. It turns out our **attitude** is much more important than the **money** we make or even the **circumstances** we find ourselves in.

A man with a joyful and contented heart is a man who is feasting at an on-going, never ending feast.

**BUT...** All the days of the afflicted are evil. Following evil pursuits is not the path to happiness, instead it is the path of trouble misery and woe.

**CONSIDER:**

“A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.” (Pr 17:22 ESV)

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” (Ps 16:11 ESV)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,” (Ga 5:22 ESV)

**Vs 16 ¶ Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble with it.**

Beginning here is verse 16, Solomon will provide back-to-back this is better than that. Both fly in the face of what the world says is better, yet both are absolutely true and foundational to real joy.

Here Solomon provides his sons the secret to living the good life.

It is much better to have a little and live a life that reveres God and serves his son Jesus Christ. By the way this is coming from one of the richest, if not the richest man who ever lived.

The life with the fear of the Lord is a life of peace, happiness, contentment, and joy.

A life with little that serves God is much better, than a life with great treasures and no relationship to the Lord.

That second life will not be a life of peace, joy or happiness. Instead that will be a life of trouble that will end in the greatest trouble of all!

Solomon, after trying every form of pleasure under the sun, came to this conclusion: “The end of the matter; after all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” (Ec 12:13 ESV)

**CONSIDER:**

“Better is the little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked.” (Ps 37:16 ESV)

“But godliness with contentment is great gain,” (1Ti 6:6 ESV)

“No ill befalls the righteous, but the wicked are filled with trouble.” (Pr 12:21 ESV)

“The fear of the LORD leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied; he will not be visited by harm.” (Pr 19:23 ESV)

**Vs 17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox and hatred with it.**

Continuing with the theme, this is better than that. Which by the way once again is the opposite of what the world tells us.

Only a salad and no salad dressing for dinner, sounds like it is going to be a light dinner! Yet Solomon says if love is there it is better than a fattened ox and hatred in the home.

Here is his point, **love** is better than hatred or apathy

**Peace** is better than fighting or arguing

**Contentment** is better than unhappiness and complaining.

Men, we must hear Solomon’s words and constantly choose the better way.

**CONSIDER:**

“Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.” (Pr 17:1 ESV)

“for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.” (Pr 8:11 ESV)

“Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice.” (Pr 16:8 ESV)

“Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than a rich man who is crooked in his ways.” (Pr 28:6 ESV)

“Better is the little that the righteous has than the abundance of many wicked.” (Ps 37:16 ESV)

**Vs 18 ¶ A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.**

Not only does a “hot tempered” man stir up strife he is easily offended, and he reacts immediately against the person who offended him. A hot-head and can elevate a discussion into a full blown argument in an instant. This is all part of the fallen nature, some men (and women) are hot heads.

**BUT...** The one who can rule his spirit and his emotions, the one who is slow to anger quiets contention. Wisdom call for us to be slow to speak and slow to anger, the Spirit gives us the grace to do so.

**CONSIDER:**

“Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.” (Pr 14:29 ESV)

“A man of quick temper acts foolishly, and a man of evil devices is hated.” (Pr 14:17 ESV)

“19 ¶ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (Jas 1:19-20 ESV)

**IV The Secret of a Successful Path (Vs 19-24)**

**Vs 19 ¶ The way of a sluggard is like a hedge of thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway.**

The way, the path of the sluggard (lazy) is a difficult and even painful life. The way of the one who refuses to work is a rough path. Laziness in life creates unnecessary hardships.

BUT... The path of the upright is a level highway. This does not mean that difficulties do not come to the righteous, but it does mean overall a person who is righteous and is pursuing righteousness is a much easier path. Equally, God promises to deliver the righteous out of trouble, the slothful have no such promise.

**CONSIDER:**

“The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.” (Pr 13:4 ESV)

“The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing.” (Pr 20:4 ESV)

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.” (Ps 34:19 ESV)

“for the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity.” (Pr 24:16 ESV)

**Vs 20 ¶ A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish man despises his mother.**

A son who acts in wisdom brings great joy to His Father.

BUT... A son who acts foolishly actually despises his mother.

We understand how a wise son brings great joy to his father, it brings us great joy when our children act with wisdom.

But how does a foolish son despise his mother?

A foolish son brings pain and hurt into his mother’s life (Pr 10:1). A foolish son brings bitterness and misery into his mother’s life (Pr 17:21), surely we see that anyone who would bring these type of things into his mom’s life actually has very little care for her!

**CONSIDER**

25 ¶ A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him.” (Pr 17:25 ESV)

“24 The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him. 25 Let your father and mother be glad; let her who bore you rejoice.” (Pr 23:24-25 ESV)

“The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.” (Pr 10:1 ESV)

**Vs 21 ¶ Folly is a joy to him who lacks sense, but a man of understanding walks straight ahead.**

Folly and foolish behavior is a joy to the one who lacks sense. It is sad to watch countless men swallow the hook of Satan and run into various forms of evil. It is sadder still to see them do it with joy and revelry.

**BUT...** A man of understanding, a man seeking to live his life according to God’s precepts will use God’s word and the enabling of the Holy Spirit to walk on a narrow path.

**CONSIDER:**

“Doing wrong is like a joke to a fool, but wisdom is pleasure to a man of understanding.” (Pr 10:23 ESV)

“Fools mock at the guilt offering, but the upright enjoy acceptance.” (Pr 14:9 ESV)

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!” (Ps 111:10 ESV)

**Vs 22 ¶ Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.**

**Men, here is wisdom.** Are you planning something? Do not make decisions in your own personal vacuum. Do not rely solely on your own research.

Often plans drawn up with no counsel from other believers fail.

BUT... With many advisors they succeed.

One Commentator said: “A sure rule for success in life is to submit decisions to the review of wise counselors.”

Of course Solomon is assuming wise advisors, he is assuming spiritual advisors. You see when we bring Godly men into the equation to help us seek and understand God’s will and His wisdom are plans are much more likely to succeed.

This theme is woven throughout Proverbs.

“Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.” (Pr 11:14 ESV)

“Plans are established by counsel; by wise guidance wage war.” (Pr 20:18 ESV)

“They gather their fodder in the field, and they glean the vineyard of the wicked man.” (Job 24:6 ESV)

Keep in mind the best counselors are the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

**Vs 23 ¶ To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!**

Providing Godly wisdom at the right time is a blessing, both to the one who does it and more importantly to the one who receives it.

Solomon is saying the right answer at the right time is a joy and it is good!

Solomon also said this about a good answer at the right time:

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.” (Pr 25:11 ESV)

“Righteous lips are the delight of a king, and he loves him who speaks what is right.” (Pr 16:13 ESV)

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.” (Eph 4:29 ESV)

**Vs 24 ¶ The path of life leads upward for the prudent, that he may turn away from Sheol beneath.**

Consider your choices. For the path of life leads upward for those who follow wisdom, and God has provided his wisdom that we turn away from the various destructive paths including, foolishness, pride, slothfulness, lies, sexual immorality, anger, etc.

This study in Proverbs is all about our choices; that choice by choice are putting us on a path that leads upward or one that turns towards destruction.

**CONSIDER:**

“16 There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, 19 a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.” (Pr 6:16-19 ESV)

“The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.” (Pr 26:16 ESV)

“One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless.” (Pr 14:16 ESV)

“23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! 24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” (Ps 139:23-24 ESV)

“1 ¶ If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” (Col 3:1-3 ESV)

**V The Favor that Comes to the Humble (Vs 25-33)**

**Vs 25 ¶ The LORD tears down the house of the proud but maintains the widow’s boundaries.**

YIKES... Pride is not only destructive, but it also brings destruction and that from the Lord!

Pride is dangerous business and something we need to, empowered by the Holy Spirit root out of our lives.

For the Lord tears down the house of the proud!

BUT... He maintains the widows boundaries. He not only keep the widows house, but he watches her lot lines!

**CONSIDER:**

“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Pr 16:18 ESV)

“One’s pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.” (Pr 29:23 ESV)

“The LORD watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.” (Ps 146:9 ESV)

**Vs 26 ¶ The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD, but gracious words are pure.**

The mouth is the vent for the heart, every time we speak we show both men and God what is really in our hearts.

Speech is one of the best indicators of the heart.

But, here Solomon backs it up to an even better indicator. The thoughts... The thoughts are an even better indicator, for they really indicate what is happening in the heart.

Here God says the thoughts of the wicked, connected to a wicked heart, are **an abomination to God**!

The thoughts of the wicked are for the most part loaded with vile and wickedness thus God abhors them.

**BUT...** Gracious words are pure, for they have been seasoned with time and with grace.

**CONSIDER:**

“The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly.” (Pr 15:2 ESV)

“A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.” (Pr 15:4 ESV)

“The words of a wise man’s mouth win him favor, but the lips of a fool consume him.” (Ec 10:12 ESV)

**Vs 27 ¶ Whoever is greedy for unjust gain troubles his own household, but he who hates bribes will live.**

To have an unhealthy desire for riches is a danger to a man’s family. Greed drives men to make **very bad decisions**, like taking a bribe or compromising their principles, these things can not only destroy them, but destroy their families.

**BUT...** The one who is not greedy, the one who hates a bribe will not only live, but is a blessing to his family.

Compromise often leads to calamity.

**CONSIDER**

“Whoever troubles his own household will inherit the wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise of heart.” (Pr 11:29 ESV)

“The wicked accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the ways of justice.” (Pr 17:23 ESV)

Remember Achan, his greed troubled not only his house but the entire nation of Israel

**Vs 28 ¶ The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.**

Which is better a **quick answer** or the **right answer**?

**I think we all know the answer!**

Here we find an oft repeated theme in the book of Proverbs, namely the wise are slow to answer, the wise considers what he will say.

Wise men hear the question, and consider the matters before answering.

**BUT...** The mouth of the wicked simply pours out evil, it is the exact opposite of the mouth of the wise, it airs its opinion with little to no thought or consideration. The foolish simply blurt out the first things that comes to mind.

I think back to how many times my words were not seasoned with time and thus were very unwise.

**CONSIDER:**

“If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.” (Pr 18:13 ESV)

“In everything the prudent acts with knowledge, but a fool flaunts his folly.” (Pr 13:16 ESV)

“Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.” (Pr 29:20 ESV)

**Vs 29 ¶ The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.**

Here let the whole proverb sink in. Yahweh is far from the wicked. He is not only far from them, but when the second half is considered he is far from them and does not even hear their prayers.

**BUT..** Yahweh is close to the righteous and hears the prayers of the righteous.

By the way: By righteous I mean perfectly righteous and that is only accomplished by faith in Jesus Christ and imputation of His righteousness.

**CONSIDER:**

“The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.” (Ps 34:16 ESV)

“For behold, those who are far from you shall perish; you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you.” (Ps 73:27 ESV)

“The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry.” (Ps 34:15 ESV)

“The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.” (Ps 145:18 ESV)

**Vs 30 ¶ The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and good news refreshes the bones.**

It seems what Solomon is saying is that light is absolutely necessary for the eye to function, a small amount of light rejoices the heart for man can see things he otherwise could not see.

**AND...** Good news refreshes the bones. Of course this is true and we have all experienced how good news can change and almost energize us.

As I consider this proverb, I am reminded that in the beginning God created light, and for the believers Paul highlights that truth like this:

“For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2Co 4:6 ESV)

The light that truly rejoices the heart is the light of knowing Jesus.

The good news that truly refreshes the bones is the good news of the gospel!

**Vs 31 ¶ The ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise.**

Here a wonderful reminder, and the reason we gather.

The ear that listens to and responds to God’s life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise.

Let’s state this truth a little differently. The one who dwells with the wise is the one who listens, the one who humbly receives godly reproof.

**CONSIDER:**
“If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you.” (Pr 1:23 ESV)

“Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.” (Pr 9:9 ESV)

“Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.” (Pr 13:20 ESV)

“A fool despises his father’s instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.” (Pr 15:5 ESV)

**Vs 32 ¶ Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence.**

Hear again one of the most common themes in the Proverbs. This a companion to the prior proverb. The one who ignores instructions, ignores corrections, refuses to humble himself under godly reproof, **actually despises himself**.

For his behavior is **guaranteeing his future ruin**. Resistance to godly correction makes one a fool.

**BUT...** The one who listens grows all the wiser.

I don’t know about you, but I want the final chapter of my life to be about a man who hears God’s correction and grows in God’s wisdom!

**CONSIDER:**

“25 because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof, 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when terror strikes you,” (Pr 1:25-26 ESV)

“Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.” (Pr 9:8 ESV)

“Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.” (Pr 19:20 ESV)

**Vs 33 ¶ The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor.”**

We end here, but what an amazing reminder. Let me ask a question. **How important is a reverent awe of the Lord in getting wisdom?**

Absolutely critical.

Another important question: **How important is humility in getting honor?**

Absolutely critical.

**To obtain godly wisdom one must have a reverent awe of God and to obtain godly honor, one must be humble.**

**CONSIDER:**

“5b "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,” (1Pe 5b:5-6 ESV)

“And he said to man, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.’"” (Job 28:28 ESV)

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!” (Ps 111:10 ESV)

“One’s pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.” (Pr 29:23 ESV)

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."” (Lu 14:11 ESV)

**Men, if we could live out the principles in the proverbs we would find our lives would glorify our Savior and we would steer clear of many traps, disasters, and woes.**

**I present to you proverbs 15.**