**Proverbs Chapter 17 (Lesson #18)**

**28** 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+33+33) **217** of those proverbs. Today we look at an additional **(28 proverbs).**

In the first **217** proverbs from chapters **10 - 15**, most of the proverbs were **contrasting statements, this but not that**.

In chapter 16 Solomon shifted from contrasting statements to comparisons. The “but, but, but” from chapters 10-15 was replaced with “and, and, and.”

In this chapter we find a few contrasts, a few comparisons, but most are simple and direct proverbial statements.

**Today’s themes are: Harmony and Restraint**

Notice how the chapter opens! “Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife.” Solomon is right, regardless whether you’re a father, son, brother, friend, old or young, harmony is always more favorable than strife.

Understanding the value of harmony, the question for us this morning is how do we foster harmony? Keep that question in mind, for chapter 17 helps provide an answer.

**Chapter Design:**

The first fourteen proverbs in Chapter 17 conclude with a vivid and thought-provoking image of self-control: *“Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.”* The next fourteen proverbs build on this theme, offering even deeper wisdom about the power of restraint—especially in our speech. Solomon reminds us that our words can easily lead to conflict, and that often, saying less is wiser than saying more.

Much of the wisdom in this chapter is directed toward the fool, particularly the foolish son. Chapter 17 suggests that the household is the natural environment where foolishness can either take root or be transformed. Instead of allowing folly to grow, let’s make our homes laboratories of wisdom. As we reflect on this chapter, consider how our home can become a place that cultivates self-control and wise speech.

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?**

**Vs 1 - Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.**

This is a proverb that is repeated multiple times with various comparisons, but a single lesson.

Having a house full of strife is not good.

In this proverb the comparison is: it is better to have a dried up piece of bread, it is better to have a meal comprised of saltine crackers than any meal you might imagine (feasting) if that meal includes strife!

Here Solomon reminds his sons and us of the value of harmony, and our need to pursue harmony.

**Srife is the destroyed of peace in the home, consider:**

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

“As charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.” (Pr 26:21 ESV)

“A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression.” (Pr 29:22 ESV)

**Vs 2 - A servant who deals wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully and will share the inheritance as one of the brothers.**

Let this sink in, for it flies in the face of everything our culture says.

A slave who deals wisely, a slave who acts and operates with wisdom, will ultimately rule over the legitimate heir who acts shamefully and will come to share the inheritance as if he were a true-born son.

Today’s context. What is holding people back in most cases is not their color, age, sex, or nationality.

For Solomon would tell us, men in positions of authority (for the most part) could care less about those things. They are looking for someone who is wise and spends his day executing his job wisely.

A wise servant will ultimately be promoted over a foolish son and may even end us receiving an inheritance as a son.

**Consider:**

“He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.” (Pr 10:5 ESV)

“A servant who deals wisely has the king’s favor, but his wrath falls on one who acts shamefully.” (Pr 14:35 ESV)

**Vs 3 - The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and the LORD tests hearts.**

Silver and gold are both precious metals that are separated and isolated from ore by fire.

The heat separates the metals from the dross and allows the metals to be isolated.

As fire separates silver and gold from dross.

So too, the Lord (Yahweh) tests the hearts of all.

This means God will test our faith. He has many furnaces in which to test us.

The furnace of temptation, the furnace of prosperity, the furnace of adversity, just to name a few.

**CONSIDER:**

“But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.” (Job 23:10 ESV)

“Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction.” (Isa 48:10 ESV)

“**9** But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. **10** For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2Co 12:9-10 ESV)

**Vs 4 - An evildoer listens to wicked lips, and a liar gives ear to a mischievous tongue.**

According to Solomon, listening to lies makes one a wicked person.

Now listen to the second clause of the proverb, liars are the ones who listen to those who speak wicked things.

If we were to convert this to a modern proverb we might say something like this: “Birds of a feather flock together!”

Solomon would say that and the ones who give ear to wicked speech are themselves wicked!

**Consider:**

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

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

“Cease to hear instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.” (Pr 19:27 ESV)

**Vs 5 - Whoever mocks the poor insults his Maker; he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.**

A rich boy makes fun of a poor boy, your neighbor to the left makes jokes about your neighbor to the right who lost his job.

Do these things seem offensive to you? They should for they are not only offensive to God. He responds to these things.

For the person who does these things will not go unpunished.

We should never make fun of or mock those who are poor. Nor should be ever rejoice when calamity strikes another.

If it is God’s judgment or even God’s chastisement let us not rejoice, but rather pray that it would have its perfect work.

**CONSIDER:**

“Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles,” (Pr 24:17 ESV)

“Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him.” (Pr 14:31 ESV)

“But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?” (1Jo 3:17 ESV)

**Vs 6 - Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their fathers.**

Now we must be honest, this is speaking about God’s design.

Grandchildren are meant to be a crown to the aged. Grandchildren who are following Christ bring grandparents great joy. While grandchildren who are following the ways of the world bring great sorrow and even pain.

Now for a moment think of your children, name them in your mind.

The glory of our children, **should be** their father.

Let that sink in... This is God’s perfect design.

Today, this week, this month, from hear out, let’s be a glory to our children, be a fountain of living water, be a peace maker, be a blessing, be a forgiver, live out your faith and talk about your Savior.

In these and other ways, be a glory to your children.

**Vs 7 - Fine speech is not becoming to a fool; still less is false speech to a prince.**

According to Solomon our speech should be compatible with our position. But more than that, our speech is a window into our hearts and our spiritual condition.

Because this is true, fine speech, excellent speech is not becoming, it is not proper, it is not appropriate for a fool.

Even less so is false speech, even less so is lying appropriate for a prince.

Jesus is Himself the personification of truth and His princes are to rule over their tongues and be men of truth.

**CONSIDER:**

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

“Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.” (Pr 12:19 ESV)

**Vs 8 - A bribe is like a magic stone in the eyes of the one who gives it; wherever he turns he prospers.**

Here is a general observation and one we have seen play out many times.

A bribe, is like a magic stone in the eyes of the one who gives it.

His bribe causes things to work out, for the one who gives it.

Never forget that bribes corrupt justice and God hates them.

**CONSIDER:**

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

“And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.” (Ex 23:8 ESV)

**Vs 9 - Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats** a matter separates close friends.

To forgive and forget is to love.

Oftentimes forgetting is impossible, but forgiving, covering the offense is how we show love to our friends.

**BUT**, the one who repeats a matter separates close friends.

But, continuing to bring up the past, rather than forgiving and moving on destroys friendships.

Forgive and keep quiet, for he who covers an offense is acting in love.

CONSIDER:

“Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.” (Pr 10:12 ESV)

“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.” (1Pe 4:8 ESV)

“Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly I will destroy. Whoever has a haughty look and an arrogant heart I will not endure.” (Ps 101:5 ESV)

**Vs 10 - A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding than a hundred blows into a fool.**

Are you a spiritual person, are you a wise person? I am talking about biblical wisdom.

Solomon has a test to determine our wisdom, to determine if we are a man of understanding.

**How well do you take reproof? How do we respond to being rebuked?**

**For a single point of correction, goes deeper into the wise person than a hundred blows into a fool.**

**CONSIDER:**

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

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

**Vs 11 - An evil man seeks only rebellion, and a cruel messenger will be sent against him.**

Because evil men hate authority (both man’s authority and more importantly God’s authority). Because evil men hate authority they only seek rebellion, they act in rebellion.

Because that is true...

A cruel messenger will be sent to them.

Rebellion of the heart leads to destruction in the end.

**CONSIDER:**

“The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.” (Pr 8:13 ESV)

“Whoever is steadfast in righteousness will live, but he who pursues evil will die.” (Pr 11:19 ESV)

“Disaster pursues sinners, but the righteous are rewarded with good.” (Pr 13:21 ESV)

**Vs 12 - Let a man meet a she-bear robbed of her cubs rather than a fool in his folly.**

**Pop Quiz!** Which is more dangerous to run into:

1. A female grizzly bear who was just robbed of her cubs?
2. A fool in the midst of his folly?

Do not miss Solomon’s point, some fools are dangerous. In fact they can be very dangerous.

As men, be careful who you bring into your inner life.

**CONSIDER:**

“A stone is heavy, and sand is weighty, but a fool’s provocation is heavier than both.” (Pr 27:3 ESV)

“Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.” (Mt 2:16 ESV)

**Vs 13 - If anyone returns evil for good, evil will not depart from his house.**

**A proverbial warning...**

It is wrong and a sin to repay evil with evil, for vengeance belongs to God.

It is something much worse to repay good with evil.

God will judge such behavior. Solomon describes it as “evil” will not depart from that person’s house.

The Hebrew word means translated evil means, wickedness, mischief, hurt, or evil. To behave wickedly to people who have shown nothing but good will bring upon the person the same thing, but from God.

Trouble will not depart from that person’s house.

Remember Judas and Jesus:

“12 For it is not an enemy who taunts me —  then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me —  then I could hide from him. 13 But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend.” (Ps 55:12-13 ESV)

Remember what God did for you when you were His enemy: “8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.” (Ro 5:8-10 ESV)

**Vs 14 - The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out.**

**Great advice with a perfect metaphor...**

**The beginning of a fight is like the release of a flood.** The start of a fight is like the moment when water starts to break over the top of a dam.

So, quit before the strife, before the argument gets started. Walk away, walk off, step out of the room, for to continue will be like the water when it crests over the dam.

**CONSIDER:**

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

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

“A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression.” (Pr 29:22 ESV)

**Vs 15 - He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD.**

**Two sins, different on the front, but seemingly identical to God and both are an abomination!**

1. Those who justify the wicked, rather than condemn their wicked behavior.
2. Those who condemn the righteous rather than justify and rejoicing in their righteous behavior.

**CONSIDER:**

“Whoever says to the wicked, "You are in the right," will be cursed by peoples, abhorred by nations,” (Pr 24:24 ESV)

**Vs 16 - Why should a fool have money in his hand to buy wisdom when he has no sense?**

God offers wisdom in in the person of Jesus Christ (the wisdom of God) and in His word. But wisdom is not acquired by accident, or chance.

Wisdom requires action on our part. It requires us to buy wisdom (faith and following God’s word).

All this to be true: A fool does not have the correct money in his hand to buy wisdom, because he is a fool and for wisdom to be purchased one must first set aside his foolishness.

**CONSIDER:**

“A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, but knowledge is easy for a man of understanding.” (Pr 14:6 ESV)

“"But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me.” (Ps 81:11 ESV)

**Vs 17 - A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.**

Oh, that we would be friends and have friends like this.

Oh, that we would have brothers and be brothers to others like this.

Of course, all of this should point us to our ultimate friend and our ultimate brother the Lord Jesus Christ.

**CONSIDER:**

“A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” (Pr 18:24 ESV)

“13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you.” (Joh 15:13-14 ESV)

**Vs 18 - One who lacks sense gives a pledge and puts up security in the presence of his neighbor.**

In multiple places the Proverbs warn about putting up security, or putting up a pledge for another. It puts you on the hook for their financial decisions.

It is a person who lack sense who puts up security for his neighbor.

**CONSIDER:**

“Whoever puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer harm, but he who hates striking hands in pledge is secure.” (Pr 11:15 ESV)

“Be not one of those who give pledges, who put up security for debts.” (Pr 22:26 ESV)

**Vs 19 - Whoever loves transgression loves strife; he who makes his door high seeks destruction.**

Two clauses in this proverb:

1. Men who love to fight, love to sin. Here Solomon links these two behaviors together.
2. He that makes his door high, he that exalts himself (KJV), He who is making high is entrance is seeking destruction.

It seems in this second clause is about pride and the one who sets his door high, the one who makes his entrance high is really seeking destruction.

**CONSIDER:**

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

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

“for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (Jas 1:20 ESV)

**Vs 20 - A man of crooked heart does not discover good, and one with a dishonest tongue falls into calamity.**

Again, two clauses:

1. A man with a wicked heart does not discover good.

A man with a wicked hear will never find good.

1. One who tells lies falls into calamity.

A man who tells lies will only find trouble.

Two clauses, yet the point is clear a person with a wicked heart or a person who lies **in the end will only find calamity.**

**CONSIDER:**

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

“The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.” (Pr 8:13 ESV)

“A fool’s mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to his soul.” (Pr 18:7 ESV)

**Vs 21 - He who sires a fool gets himself sorrow, and the father of a fool has no joy.**

Two clauses, but one overall point:

He who is the father of a fool is in for sorrow, both in the immediate and in the future.

This is why it is critical to train up our children in the way they should go. This is why it is critical to pour the gospel into our children, while we have the chance.

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

“A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish man despises his mother.” (Pr 15:20 ESV)

One commentator opened his comments on this proverb like this: “Do you want to mess up your life? Forfeit your joy, and face sorrow and shame? Then have a child that is a fool!”

**That is a little rough, but it is loaded with wisdom.**

**Vs 22 - A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.**

It turns out that it is generally healthy to have a good outlook, a positive attitude, and a joyful heart.

While the opposite is true also, a broken spirit, a crushed spirit is unhealthy to the body.

Knowing this, when you run into difficult circumstances remember who you are, remember God is in control, remember He will not give you more than you can handle.

Walk in joy (a fruit of the Spirit) even in difficult times.

**CONSIDER:**

“Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.” (Pr 12:25 ESV)

“A glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed.” (Pr 15:13 ESV)

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.” (Php 4:4 ESV)

**Vs 23 - The wicked accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the ways of justice.**

This is simple, those who take bribes (in secret) are wicked and they take those bribes for their own enrichment and to pervert justice.

Yahweh is a God of justice thus they are perverting His ways.

**CONSIDER:**

“And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.” (Ex 23:8 ESV)

**Vs 24 - The discerning sets his face toward wisdom, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.**

The one who is discerning, the one who has understanding, the one who is perceptive, will set his face will set his focus on obtaining wisdom **חכמה (Chokmah) (*khok-maw’)***.

This is why we are here, this is why we meet on a Saturday morning. To set our face, to focus our attention on God’s wisdom for our lives!

**BUT...**

But the eyes of a fool are never satisfied and are going from one thing to another thing never finding fulfillment or satisfaction.

But they discerning sets their focus on obtaining wisdom.

**CONSIDER:**

“The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on folly.” (Pr 15:14 ESV)

“23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1Co 1:23-24 ESV)

“Who is like the wise? And who knows the interpretation of a thing? A man’s wisdom makes his face shine, and the hardness of his face is changed.” (Ec 8:1 ESV)

**Vs 25 - A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him.**

Here is a simple reminder of one of the many reasons it is imperative that we train up our children in the way that they should go:

For a foolish son is a grief to his father and he is bitterness to his mother**.**

**CONSIDER:**

“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)

“A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish man despises his mother.” (Pr 15:20 ESV)

“A foolish son is ruin to his father...” (Pr 19:13a ESV)

**Vs 26 - To impose a fine on a righteous man is not good, nor to strike the noble for their uprightness.**

It is wrong to punish those who are doing right.

Governments and citizens would do well to learn this important lesson.

The corruption of right and wrong is not good and it leads to all sorts of problems.

**CONSIDER:**

“He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD.” (Pr 17:15 ESV)

“It is not good to be partial to the wicked or to deprive the righteous of justice.” (Pr 18:5 ESV)

**Vs 27 - Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.**

This is a proverb that is found a few times in the Proverbs, namely the wise are able to rule over their spirits.

**CONSIDER:**

“When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.” (Pr 10:19 ESV)

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

**Vs 28 - Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.**

Do you have a desire to improve your image and your reputation?

Learn to listen and hear well and to open your mouth thoughtfully.

Wisdom is not only displayed in what we say, it is also displayed in when we do not say.

**CONSIDER:**

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

“A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.” (Pr 29:11 ESV)

Here in chapter 17 wisdom focused on restraint and harmony.

May we live out God’s wisdom.