**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)

As we work our way thought this chapter pay attention to how Solomon weaves devotion to Yahweh into these life principles.

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**.

***15:1 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 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, it cools down wrath.

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

Fighting fire with fire but be a sound doctrine in combat, it is not as far as interpersonal relationships go! **Consider:** (Mat 5:9; Mat 5:38-42; Pr 15:18).

***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** (Pr 15:28; Pr 17:27-28; Ec 10:11-13).

***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 our 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:** (Ps 139:1-12; Ps 11:4; Pr 5:21).

**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 tongue 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.**

*“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.” (Pr 18:21 ESV)* **Consider also:** (Pro 15:1; Pr 18:21, Pr 12:18; Pr 10:21; Pr 15:7).

***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 instruction & correction 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 of this proverb 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.

*“A wise son hears his father’s instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.” (Pr 13:1 ESV)* **Consider also:** (Pr 13:18; Pr 19:20; Pr 1:8; Pr 6:20).

***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) just 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, frustration, etc).

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

*“Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice.” (Pr 16:8 ESV)* **CONSIDER also:** (Pr 15:16-17; Pr 28:6; Mat 16:26).

***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.

*“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)* **CONSIDER also: (Pr 15:23; Pr 16:13).**

***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 neutered 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 who are pretending to worship Him? Ritual without righteousness is odious to our God. It is the height of folly to play church and to have never submitted to God!

**BUT...** Here is a good but, the prayer of the upright, 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)** meaning 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** (Ps 17:1; Pr 21:27; Pr 28:9).

***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’s love is on those who **pursue** righteousness, which by the way is only found in Jesus Christ. 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. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.” (Isa 64:6 ESV)* **CONSIDER:** (Pr 3:32; Pr 11:20; Pr 28:9)

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

I have bad news and some bad news. First the bad, 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.

Second, the other 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.

A piece of good news: God disciplines those He loves, at times that discipline can be severe, but God disciplines those He loves!

*“Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof leads others astray.” (Pr 10:17 ESV)* **CONSIDER also:** (Pr 9:8; Pr 12:1; Pr 15:32).

***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, Abaddon (hell) 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 place and the torment, 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 anxiety or it can bring great comfort. God knows what is motivating and animating us.  **Consider:** (Ps 139:8; Jer 17:10; Pr 15:3; Jer 23:24)

***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 ccould 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 or sister in Christ.

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

*“Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.” (Pr 9:8 ESV)* **CONSIDER also:** (Am 5:10; Joh 3:20-21; Pr 27:5-6; Pr 12:5).

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

*“A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.” (Pr 17:22 ESV)* **CONSIDER also:** (Pr 25:28; Pr 16:32;

***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 we are? We should look at our pursuits. Is it God and the things of God or is it the passing things of this world that we are perusing?

*“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)* **CONSIDER also:** (Ac 17:11: Pr 12:23).

***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, a contented heart, 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 enjoying 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:** (Pr 17:22; Pr 16:11; Gal 5:22).

***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. Ready?

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.

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 und 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 also:** (Ps 37:16; I Tim 6:6; Pr 12:21; Pr 19:23)

***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. This one again is the opposite of what the world claims.

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.

*“Better is a dry morsel with quiet than a house full of feasting with strife.” (Pr 17:1 ESV)* **CONSIDER also:** (Pr 8:11; Pr 16:8; Pr 28:6; Ps 37:16)

***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 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 calls for us to be slow to speak and slow to anger, and the Spirit will give us the grace to do so.

*“Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.” (Pr 14:29 ESV)* **CONSIDER also: (**Pr 14:17; Jam 1:19-20).

***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 on a much easier path. Equally, God promises to deliver the righteous out of trouble, the slothful have no such promise.

*“The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.” (Pr 13:4 ESV)* **CONSIDER also:** (Pr 20:4; Ps 34:19; Pr 24:16).

***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, for 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!

*25 ¶ A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him.” (Pr 17:25 ESV)* **CONSIDER also:** (Pr 23:24-25; Pr 10:1).

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

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.

*25 ¶ A foolish son is a grief to his father and bitterness to her who bore him.” (Pr 17:25 ESV)* **CONSIDER also:** (Pr 14:19; Ps 111:10)

***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.”

*“Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.” (Pr 11:14 ESV)* **Consider also:** (pr 20:18; Job 24:6)

***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)* **Consider also:** (Pr 16:13; Eph4:29).

***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. 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. Choice by choice we are putting ourselves on a path that leads upward or one that turns towards destruction. **CONSIDER:** (Pr 6:16-19; Pr 26:16; Pr 14:16; Ps 139:23-24)

***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 widow’s boundaries. He not only keeps the widows house, but he watches her lot lines!

*“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Pr 16:18 ESV)* **CONSIDER ALSO:** (Pr 29:23; Ps 146:9)

**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.

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...** The words of those who are gracious are pure and are seasoned with grace. **CONSIDER:** (Pr 15:2; Pr 15:4; Ec 10:12)

***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:** (Pr 11:29; 17:23) Remember Achan, his greed troubled his house and the 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?

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 matter 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. 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.

*“If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.” (Pr 18:13 ESV)* **CONSIDER also:** (Pr 13:16; Pr 29:20)

***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 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.

*“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)* **CONSIDER also:** (Ps 73:27; Ps 34:15; Ps 145:18)

***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)*

***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.

*“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)* **CONSIDER also:** (Pr 9:9; Pr 13:20; Pr 15:5)

***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 heard God’s correction and grew in God’s wisdom!

**CONSIDER:** (Pr 1:25-26; Pr 9:8; Pr 19:20)

***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 honor, one must be humble.**

*“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)* **CONSIDER also:** (Job 28:28; Ps 111:10; Pr 29:23; Lu 14:11)

May we embrace God’s wisdom contained here in Proverbs 15!