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Description automatically generatedProverbs Chapter 14 (Lesson #15)**

**35** 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, four months ago and we have started the journey in **SECTION II,** this is the largest section of the Proverbs and extends from **10:1** all the way to **22:16**.

Scholars tell us that it contains **375 proverbs**. So far, we have looked at **116** of those proverbs. Today we look at an additional **(35 proverbs).**

Like the first **116** proverbs from chapters **10 - 13**, most of the proverbs we will review today are 1 verse **contrasting statements**.

Also, at times, the Proverbs can seem thrown together. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Here in chapter 14, it seems Solomon’s thoughts break into these four topics:

1. Walking in Wisdom (14:1-7)
2. Not Walking in Wisdom (14:8-15)
3. Contrasting Behaviors and Consequences (14:16-32)
4. Wisdom and Righteousness (14:33-35)

**WALKING IN WISDOM (14:1-7)**

***Vs 1 The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down.***

In the midst of wisdom for men, Solomon provides advise about woman. The wisest of women builds her house. Her house is being used to describe her family, her children, her estate.

Picture in your mind, the opposite, you drive into our subdivision and a woman is tearing boards of her house and slinging them in the yard. You would think she was crazy.

The wisest of women are always building their house, always teaching, always training, always loving.

**BUT... The foolish woman tears it down.**

Foolishness in all its forms threatens to destroy a woman’s home and, in the end, it was destroyed by her own hands!

Men although this is given to a woman, we should never forget that it is true for us as well.

***Vs 2 Whoever walks in uprightness fears the LORD, but he who is devious in his ways despises him.***

Talk is cheap, and our walk really reveals who we are. A **reverent fear of the Lord,** as revealed by the fact that we have given our life to Christ, should create a man who seeks to follow and obey Christ, and repents when he fails. Remember (Pro 1:7).

**BUT...** The one who is **devious** (**perverse** or **crooked**) still in his sins, not resisting his flesh, falling constantly to his flesh, he does not fear the Lord in fact, Solomon says, that man despises the Lord.

**YIKES...** That is tough medicine, but we need to hear the warning and take a review of our lives (Mat 12:33-34).

***Vs 3 By the mouth of a fool comes a rod for his back, but the lips of the wise will preserve them.***

Solomon would tell us our speech has consequences. This reality is woven into God’s creation, that foolish speech leads to a rod for the back. Harsh and foolish speech brings trouble, often from God and man.

**BUT...** Wise men are quick to hear, slow to decide, and slow speak. The lips of the wise preserve them for they bring forth knowledge rather than folly. Consider (Pro 25:11-12).

***Vs 4 Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox.***

Here wisdom is practical as it gets and like all proverbs as you meditate on this, it keeps getting deeper and deeper. If you do not have any oxen, the manager will be clean. Sounds great.

**BUT...** abundant crops come from having oxen. That of course is true, but there is more to the proverb.

Here too is a proverb about working smarter not harder. For the oxen is a work multiplier. Here too is a proverb about investing. For if the farmer can save and purchase the oxen, he can work a much larger field.

***Vs 5 A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness breathes out lies.***

The surface meaning of this proverb is obvious, and no one would argue. A faithful witness does not lie. A faithful witness can be trusted.

**BUT...** A false witness “breathes out” lies, a false witness is like a lying fountain that simply spews out lies.

A quick reminder, **God hastes liars and lying (Pro 6:16-19).**

***Vs 6 A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, but knowledge is easy for a man of understanding.***

A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, for when he finds it, he rejects it outright. The scoffer wants to define knowledge and hates correction, thus when he seeks wisdom his search is in vain. (Pro 15:12).

**BUT...** Knowledge is easy, and it comes easy, for a man of understanding. Who is a man of understanding. It is a man who is humble, who understands he does not know everything and submits himself to God’s wisdom.

***Vs 7 Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge.***

The fool is one who rejects God (Jesus Christ) and rejects God’s word. In the presence of fools, we will not meet “words of knowledge.” One of the things that marks a fool is marked by what they say, we should not seek wisdom from fools for we will not find it there. Consider (Pro 13:20).

**But there is one more truth.** We are to go into this world of fools (of which we were once members) and share the gospel of Christ.

**NOT WALKING IN WISDOM (14:8-15)**

***Vs 8 The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way, but the folly of fools is deceiving.***

The wisdom of a prudent man. The wisdom of the sensible. The wise man (one submitted to Jesus and God’s word) are the ones who can examine their lives and chooses the right path. Consider (Pro 22:3).

The wise lives by God’s word, **BUT...** The fool chooses all the wrong paths lust, peer pressure, expediency, chance, etc. The way of the fool is itself deception.

***Vs 9 Fools mock at the guilt offering, but the upright enjoy acceptance.***

Fools mock at the trespass offering or literally, fools mock at trespasses, **fools mock sin!** But, sin is not a joke, yet for the fool that is exactly what it is. In fact, the fool laughs at sin, the fool flaunts sin. Sin ruined paradise and continues to wreck man lives today. Sin is NO joke.

**BUT...** With the upright, with those who order their lives according to **God’s word,** there is **acceptance!**

There is favor, with the upright. Bring this into the New Testament context the only way to be upright before God is to be perfectly righteous and the only way that is possible is by placing faith in Jesus. (Ro 1:16-17).

***Vs 10 The heart knows its own bitterness, and no stranger shares its joy.***

This proverb is an observation that Solomon made and a conclusion he came to. Only you know your own sadness or joy. Others may say they sympathize with you, but only you know your own sorrow or joy.

As believers we should weep with those who are weeping and rejoice with those who are rejoicing. But there is something else we should do.

Be sensitive to the pain of others and always point people to Jesus, the one who in all points was tempted, yet did not sin, the one who loves the with an everlasting love. Weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice and always point men and women to Jesus in sadness or in joy. (Mat 11:28-29).

***Vs 11 The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish.***

How successful is your life? How is your family doing? Are you leaving a legacy? These are all good questions. Here is what Solomon wants us to never forget: Ultimately, the house of the **wicked will be destroyed!**

**BUT...** Ultimately the tent of the upright **will flourish!** Remember (Luk 6:19-20).

***Vs 12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.***

We need to learn this lesson well. We can be our own worst enemy and our thoughts and feelings if not guided by the Word may seem like the right path.

**BUT...** What seems right to a man, in the end, is actually the way of death! This idea is repeated multiple times in Proverbs (Pro 12:15; 28:26). But God provides the true path (Ps 119:105; IITim 3:16-17).

***Vs 13 Even in laughter the heart may ache, and the end of joy may be grief.***

This verse is a very deep well with many applications of its simple yet profound truth.

For people who do not know God, there may be a great deal of laughter, but even in laughter their heart is aching. Never forget this truth.

One other lesson: Appearances can be deceptive, and true reality is revealed in the outcome.

Thirdly, for those who do not know God, the end of joy, will be grief. Solomon summed this line of application in (Eccl 12:13-14):

***Vs 14 The backslider in heart will be filled with the fruit of his ways, and a good man will be filled with the fruit of his ways.***

Here is a warning. Slipping spiritually, backsliding is a subtle danger, it normally happens little by little and its consequences can be terrible. Solomon taught his sons this simple truth that you and I must also heed this warning (Pro 4:23).

Then the reminder, for those who follow the leading of the Spirit, for those who keep their hearts with all diligence or vigilance. The antidote to backsliding is to constantly draw close to God (Jam 4:8), it is to constantly be being filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18).

***Vs 15 The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps.***

One commentator said this:*“Skepticism is a virtue, caution is a sign of nobility, demanding proof is wisdom.”*

Let’s be honest, only a fool believes everything he reads or hears. Simply, believe what they like and reject what they do not like.

**BUT...** the prudent gives thoughts to his steps, the prudent considers and searches out the truth (Pr 14:18).

**CONTRASTING BEHAVIORS AND CONSEQUENCES (14:16-32)**

***Vs 16 ¶ One who is wise is cautious and turns away from evil, but a fool is reckless and careless.***

Here Solomon juxtaposes, he contrasts a wise man and a fool, both in attitude and action. The wise man is cautious, because he has a reverent fear of the Lord, because he understands God’s hatred of sin, empowered by the Holy Spirit, he labors to turn away from evil.

**BUT...** The fool, the one who rejects God’s word and God’s son, he is not cautious but reckless, he does not turn away from evil but is careless about his conduct and easily runs into every form of evil.

Also, David would remind us not to act like a fool.

***Vs 17 ¶ A man of quick temper acts foolishly, and a man of evil devices is hated.***

Here there is no contrast, but a warning about two different types of evil passions.

First, a quick-tempered man, a hot head, a man who easily explodes, that man does not rule his spirit, and thus he **acts like a fool.**

Then there is a man of evil devices, this is much more serious, for this is the plotting of evil. While the first man was foolish, this man is malicious. A man of evil devices, a man who devises evil in his heart will be hated, both in this life and in the life to come!

So, what is the lesson? By the power of the Holy Spirit, we must rule our emotions. Both in the immediate (Pro 15:18) and in the long-term (Pro 12:2).

***Vs 18 The simple inherit folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge.***

When it comes to wisdom, the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.

The simple, thus who reject God’s wisdom will inherit folly. Their wrong choices lead them further and further away from a life guided by wisdom.

**BUT...** the prudent, those who follow God’s word and obey God’s Son, God crowns them with knowledge, God crowns their life with more knowledge and wisdom. As we are obedient in the small things it prepares us to be obedient when the large things come.

***Vs 19 The evil bow down before the good, the wicked at the gates of the righteous.***

The notion of vs 18, the prudent being crowned with knowledge is escalated to the evil bowing down to the good. The righteous will ultimately finish first, and the evil will one day bow.

I have read the back of the book and Christ, and his people win! Those who have placed faith in Jesus are rewarded, sometimes in this life, for sure in the next!

***Vs 20 The poor is disliked even by his neighbor, but the rich has many friends.***

Here Solomon reminds us of the corrupting influence of money. Men who should love their neighbors, rather dislike the poor ones for they can get nothing from them, while the rich have many friends.

Remember (Pr 17:17).

***Vs 21 Whoever despises his neighbor is a sinner, but blessed is he who is generous to the poor.***

Clearly this proverb, although stand alone, completes the thought of verse 20. To despise your neighbor is a sin, for we are called to love our neighbor as ourselves.

**BUT...** blessed is the man who is generous to the poor (Pr 17:5; Pr 14:31).

***Vs 22 Do they not go astray who devise evil? Those who devise good meet steadfast love and faithfulness.***

What are we thinking and planning? Our minds are seldom at complete rest, so what are we devising.

Here Solomon asks a rhetorical question, the answer which we should all know: Do they not go astray, do they not stagger away, do they not wander from the path those who devise evil? Obvious answer yes, to scheme in our hearts and minds, to plan evil is a behavior that causes us to wonder from the path of life.

Although no but, the juxtaposition is obvious: Those whose hearts and minds are set on good things, meet, encounter, steadfast love and faithfulness! You meet what you devise (Jer 17:10).

***Vs 23 In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty.***

Here we find an often-repeated theme here in the Proverbs. There is great profit in hard work.

**BUT…** Mere talk, talk without work, bloviating without effort only tends to poverty!

One Commentator writes: *Dreamers and promoters fantasize about being successful; diligent and godly men go to their same old jobs with thankful hearts and find success through hard work.*

***Vs 24 The crown of the wise is their wealth, but the folly of fools brings folly.***

Wisdom normally gets results! A wise man works diligently and prudently; he avoids unnecessary risks and scams; and he normally achieves economic success and prosperity. He fears God and follows Christ, this behavior brings divine favor and blessings upon that person’s life. Normally in this life, always in the next!

Folly also gets results! The fool does not fear God or keep His commandments, and chases foolish pursuits which only lead to more folly!

***Vs 25 A truthful witness saves lives, but one who breathes out lies is deceitful.***

This proverb is an observation by Solomon about witnesses. The hidden lesson is the power of truth or lies is in a witness’s mouth. A true witness can rescue an innocent man from suspicion or false charges.

**BUT…** A lying witness can destroy an innocent man by deceitfully creating suspicion or confirming false charges. The damage done by false witnesses can be very great!

***Vs 26 In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge.***

The strongest men you and I will meet are those who fear the Lord, those who trust in God’s word and have placed faith in God’s Son. For those who truly trust in the Lord there is confidence, security, and refuge.

**AND…** That man’s children will have a refuge, they will have a true shelter when the storms of life, come into their lives!

***Vs 27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, that one may turn away from the snares of death.***

Here Solomon continues with the theme of the fear of the Lord. In verse 26, Solomon said in the fear of the Lord there is safety, security, and a refuge. Here Solomon says the fear of the Lord is a “fountain of life.” It is a fountain of living water. Flowing water in the arid regions of the middle east was a true blessing.

The fear of the Lord, rather than the fear of man is what allows one to turn away from the snares of death.

One commentator said this: *“You have learned many things in life to get where you are today, but this is better than all of them. There are many traps to destroy or kill you in a sinful world, but the lesson will save you.”*

***Vs 28 In a multitude of people is the glory of a king, but without people a prince is ruined.***

Here Solomon tells his sons, of whom at least one of them will one day rule the kingdom. A growing and expanding kingdom is a glory to the king. Expansion is good, and growth is good.

**BUT…** without people a prince is ruined. A shrinking kingdom is a problem, a shrinking kingdom is a kingdom that will accomplish less this year than last and is a ruin to the prince.

Isn’t it interesting how the Proverbs apply to such a wide range of life and the human experience?

***Vs 29 Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.***

This is a clear and repeated theme in Proverbs. The one who rules his emotions (through the power of the Spirit), and is slow to anger, is a person of great understanding, he is a man who exhibits **great wisdom!**

**BUT…** The one with a quick temper exalts folly. Stated another way he behaves foolishly (Pr 16:32).

***Vs 30 A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.***

How’s your health physically? How about spiritually? A tranquil heart, a healthy heart, gives life. A heart that is satisfied, a heart that is content, that type of heart is trusting God, believing in God, and is at rest.

**BUT…** The heart filled with envy, the heart filled with jealousy, makes the bones rot.

Two points worth quickly mentioning (Pro 4:23 and 17:22).

***Vs 31 Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him.***

To oppress a poor man, to defraud a poor man, to do violence to a poor man, is to insult our maker. To oppress the poor is to oppress one of the neediest and most vulnerable and it is to insult our God (Pr 17:5).

**BUT…** He who is generous to the needy, he who shows compassion to the needy, not only mimics his God, but honor his God. See also (Pro 28:27).

***Vs 32 The wicked is overthrown through his evildoing, but the righteous finds refuge in his death.***

The start of the proverb is similar to something we have discussed before, namely, be sure your sins will find you out! The wicked person, the one who has rejected God will in the end be ripped away, driven away from life because of his evildoing.

**BUT...** The righteous, those who have placed faith in Jesus and follow God’s word, will find a refuge at death. That refuge is eternal life in the presence of God, and that refuge is God Himself! (Joh 5:24).

**WISDOM AND RIGHTEOUSNESS (14:33-35)**

***Vs 33 Wisdom rests in the heart of a man of understanding, but it makes itself known even in the midst of fools.***

Wisdom resides in the heart of a man of understanding. The first picture is that of a man with wisdom, knowledge and understanding. He is swift to hear and slow to speak.

**BUT...** That same man and his wisdom makes itself known in the midst of fools, he is like lady wisdom calling to the foolish to turn from their foolish ways.

***Vs 34 Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.***

Those who fear God and have placed faith in Jesus follow a biblical moral compass, are good citizens and exalt a nation. They lift a nation up.

**BUT...** Sin and living a life of sin, following sinful ways and habits, that too impacts the nation, that too has far reaching impact. In fact it is a reproach, it is a disgrace and it will disgrace a nation.

***Vs 35 A servant who deals wisely has the king’s favor, but his wrath falls on one who acts shamefully.***

This proverb is a general rule about the exaltation of wisdom and the condemnation of folly. When a servant acts wisely, he gains the king’s favor.

**BUT...** The king’s wrath falls on the one who acts shamefully.

One commentator said this:*Character and conduct are keys to promotion or punishment, and you daily choose one of them for yourself!*

We end here with the reminder that both wisdom and foolishness pay. But Ohhh how much the payments differ. Let’s choose wisdom.