**Proverbs 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 have finished **section I** chapters 1-9, three 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) **116** of those proverbs. Today we look at an additional **(35 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 **116** proverbs from chapters **10 - 12**, 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.

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)

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?**

**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 for woman.

The wisest of women builds her house. Her house is being used to describe her family, her children, her estate.

For a moment, picture the opposite, you drive into your 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, they are always investing in those in their home, 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. The wisest man invests and builds his home, while the fool tears it down.

**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: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Pr 1:7 ESV)

**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 quick review of our lives.

Which man are we?

**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.

“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)

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

Here wisdom as practical as it gets and like all proverbs as you meditate on it the water gets much 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, assuming he has the land, he can work a much larger field.

Bless the Lord and pray for guidance on how to work smarter not harder and how to invest in the future.

**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:**

“**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)

**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.

“A scoffer does not like to be reproved; he will not go to the wise.” (Pr 15:12 ESV)

**BUT...** Knowledge is easy and it comes easy for a man of understanding. **So 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.

For that man, knowledge comes easy.

**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 what they say, we should not seek wisdom from fools for we will not find it there.

But there is a greater truth:

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

**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.

“The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.” (Pr 22:3 ESV)

**The wise lives by God word, BUT... the fool chooses all the wrong paths lust, peer pressure, expediency, chance etc. The way of 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 trespass, **fools mock sin!**

Yet, 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.

While the fool may laugh at the whole idea of sin, **BUT...**

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

**There is favor, with the upright. And to 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.

“16 ¶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."” (Ro 1:16-17 ESV)

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

This proverb is an observation that King Solomon made and a conclusion he came to:

Only you know your own sadness and joy. Others may say they sympathize with you in your bitterness or they rejoice with you in your sorrow.

As believers we should weep with those that are weeping and rejoice with those who are rejoicing.

But there something else we should do.

First be sensitive to their pain and second 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. So weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice and always point men and women to Jesus in sadness or in joy.

“28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Mt 11:28-29 ESV)

**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.

But 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!**

“19 ¶ "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores,” (Lu 16:19-20 ESV)

**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 one example:

“Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.” (Pr 28:26 ESV)

**But the Bible is crystal clear:**

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Ps 119:105 ESV)

**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. For people who do not know God, their **laughter is masking a much deeper aching**.

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):

“13 ¶ The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.” (Ec 12:13-14 ESV)

**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.**

**First a warning**. Slipping spiritually, backsliding is a subtle and serious 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:

“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” (Pr 4:23 ESV)

**Then the reminder,** for those who follow the leading of the Spirit, for those who keep their hearts with all diligence or vigilance will be filled.

**The antidote 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. The simple, believe everything, and let’s be honest 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.

**We were just told in verse 8:** “The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way, but the folly of fools is deceiving.” (Pr 14:8 ESV)

**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, contrasts a wise man and a fool, both in attitude and action.

The wise man is cautious, thus 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 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.

Here is the lesson for most, if not all of us this morning, we are wise, we have turned to God through Jesus.

**BUT David would remind us not to act the 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 deices and 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 and our hearts.

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

**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. His wrong choice lead him 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.

Ohh that you and I would hear Solomon’s teachings and follow King Jesus.

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

The notion of verse 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.

Or 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!

Honor God in this life and you will find yourself honored 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 they **dislike the poor** ones for they can get nothing from them, while the rich have many friends (because of their money).

The poos is disliked by his neighbor.

BUT... The rich has many friends.

Remember: “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” (Pr 17:17 ESV)

**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, complete the thought of verse 20.

To despise your neighbor is sin, for we are called to love our neighbor as ourselves.

BUT... blessed is the man who is generous to the poor.

While sinful men hate the poor, God says “blessed” is the man who cares about the poor.

“Whoever mocks the poor insults his Maker; he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.” (Pr 17:5 ESV)

**You will see this in a moment:**

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

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

What are we **thinking** and what are we **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.

**Not but is mentioned,** but the juxtaposition is obvious: Those who hearts and minds are set on good things, meet, encounter, steadfast love and faithfulness!

“"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)

**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 benefit, 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.

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

**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; he 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!

**BUT...** Folly also gets results! A fool may be slothful or wasteful; he may hastily or ignorantly pursue vain ideas. He does not fear God or keep His commandments and chases foolish pursuits and it only leads 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 and witnesses. The hidden lesson is the power of truth or lies 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, which should provoke you to love the truth and hate lies.

**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; He is their confidence, security, and refuge.

Ps 34:8 Oh taste and see that Jehovah is good: Blessed is the man that taketh refuge in him.

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

Scholars disagree on who the “His children” are.

The children of the righteous or the righteous themselves who are God’s children.

I would just say this, if you fear the Lord, you are showing your children where they too can find a **“strong refuge”!**

**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 is a fountain of flowing (life giving) water!

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, one of whom will one day rule the kingdom an important lesson.

A growing and expanding kingdom is a glory to the king. Expansion is good, growth is good, a kingdom that is growing is a kingdom who GDP should be increasing. A real blessing to a king.

**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, a shrinking kingdom is a kingdom whose GDP is on the slide.

This proverb is not dealing with out of control expansion or expansion that exceeds the ability of a kingdom to provide basics necessities, but the general principle that a growing kingdom is a thriving kingdom, while a shrinking one is a problem!

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 the Proverbs.

The one who rules his emotions (through the power of the Spirit), and the one who 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.

Anger is not always wrong and we find examples where even Jesus was angered by evil behavior, But God is slow to anger and calls His people to be the same. Keep in mind though, most of the time anger is not helpful and can cause us to misread and overreact. Often, the source of our anger is wounded pride.

“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 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, a whole heart, a sound 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:

1. **We must pay attention to what is happening in our hearts** (Pro 4:23), are we a person that is content and satisfied with God’s provisions for our life?
2. **Recognize that a spiritual problem** (a jealous heart) can impact us physically (rottenness to the bones).

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

**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 most needy and most vulnerable and it is to insult our God.

“Whoever mocks the poor insults his Maker; he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.” (Pr 17:5 ESV)

**BUT…** He who is generous to the needy, he who shows compassion on the needy, not only mimics his God, but honor his God.

“Whoever gives to the poor will not want, but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse.” (Pr 28:27 ESV)

**Remember Jesus’ words (Mat 25)…** In as much as you have done it to one of these the least of my brothers, you have done it unto me.

**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, that refuge is God Himself!

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” (Joh 5:24 ESV)

**UPHOLDING 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.

**Have we seen this play out in America lately?**

**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 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.**