**Proverbs Chapter 10 (Lesson #11)**

31 Proverbs from the Pen of Solomon

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

Our last time together we completed **SECTION I.** The first section starts inchapter 1 and goes all the way to chapter 9. In it we have **ten speeches** or **ten appeals** from a **father to his sons**. Also in the first section are **four appeals** or four **monologues**, where **wisdom is personified as a lady**, we will call her **lady wisdom**.

Today we begin **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**. These are the proverbs that are designed like what you think about when you think about Proverbs.

**Section III -** Beginning in 22:17 – 24:22 we have **30 sayings** of **“the wise”** These are **30 discreet teachings** to the wise.

**Section IV -** Beginning in **24:23-34** we have **“additional sayings of** **the wise.”**

**Section V -** Beginning in **25:1-29:27**, we encounter a section of Proverbs that were written by Solomon, but they were compiled by King Hezekiah’s men.

Solomon ruled from 971-941BC, Hezekiah was a Judean king who ruled from 715-687BC. So, this is roughly **250 years later.**

**Section VI -** **In Proverbs** **30:1-31** we find yet another section of Proverbs, these are **accredited to Agur**, the son of Jakeh.

**Section VII - Then in chapter** **31:1-31** we encounter another section of the Proverbs that are accredited to King Lemuel.

But today, we come to the first **31 of the 375** proverbs of **SECTION II**.

Many commentators have commented that the number 375 corresponds to the numerical value of the **Hebrew consonants of Solomon’s name.**

**FIRST,** the Proverbs we will review today are all one-liners. **SECOND,** **26** of the 31 contrast **two things**, they are juxtaposing two very different issues to show us the wise path compared to the foolish path. The word **but** will jump from most of these Proverbs.

BUT (catch that) there are five that do not contrast, these are Proverbs 10, 15, 18, 22, and 26. They will be obvious when we hit them for, they stand out in their difference.

Also, as we study these you will see that there is arrangement and many of the individual proverbs are coupled creating a similar thought or point.

Finally, we will find today and in the coming months many themes are repeated. We should see that repetition as the way God highlights or underlines in the Proverbs.

***“1a ¶ The proverbs of Solomon.***

Just a reminder that Solomon is the author of this section of Proverbs. Keep in mind we are told in I Kings 4:32 that Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs. So, we only have a sampling of his work.

Scholars hold that the book of Proverbs contains 915 Proverbs. About 800 are attributed to Solomon.

**The Wise and the Fool Related to Wealth and Speech (1b-16)**

Here we will find three subunits (vs 2-5, 15-16) both address wealth and poverty, and these form a frame around the second subunit communications (vs 6-14) which addresses the effects of our speech.

All three contrast the righteous with the wicked. We learn that the stakes are high and one’s conduct with wealth and speech are matters of life and death.

***1b - A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.***

Our first Proverb, the introductory Proverb for this section, contrast a wise son, against a foolish son.

A wise son, Solomon tells us makes his father glad. As parents we all know this to be true, when we see our children walk in God’s wisdom, it brings us great joy. **BUT,** a son who is foolish (refusing to walk in God’s wisdom), brings sorrow to his mother. This too, we know is true.

**Wisdom and Wealth (vs 2-5)**

***2 ¶ Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death.***

This first subsection has to do with the acquisition of wealth. Vs 2 and 3 are standalone proverbs but they also form a couplet, notice the repetition of wicked and righteous.

First, wealth gained by wickedness (does not profit), by this as you will see, Solomon means **eternal profit**. These will not save you on the day of judgment. **BUT,** righteousness is what saves a person from death.

Here you and I must be reminded that the righteousness that saves from eternal death is the perfect righteousness of Christ (Rom 3:21-22).

***3 The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.***

Here we are reminded that ultimate destinies are not controlled by fate, luck, or karma. Rather, Yahweh does not let the righteous go hungry. Destinies are in the control of the sovereign God, He does not let the appetite of the righteous go unsatisfied! **BUT,** what the wicked crave, Yahweh will ultimately thrust aside. This is the ultimate end of those who spend their lives in pursuit of wealth, in the end is a mirage that Yahweh pushes beyond their reach in eternity!

***4 ¶ A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich***.

Verse 4 and 5 are individual proverbs, but they form a couplet that focuses on the one who works and the one who is lazy.

This is an oxymoron, for a slack hand cannot bring anything, well with one exception. A slack hand, a sluggard, one who is able and refuses to work will bring upon himself poverty. **BUT,** the hand that is diligent makes that person rich.

***5 ¶ He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.***

The final Proverb in this subsection on wealth. Once again Solomon is contrasting the sluggard with the industrious worker.

The one who works and works at the right time, in this case gathering in the summer, when gathering should occur, is a wise son. **BUT,** the one who sleeps (the sluggard) during this harvest is a son who brings shame. He brings public shame on his family, failing to work and provide for his family.

**The Effects of Speech on ONESELF and Others (vs 6-14)**

Notice how Solomon references various body parts in this section! The structure, as you will see, is about one’s speech.

***6 ¶ Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.***

Verse 6 and 7 are standalone proverbs, but they too seem to form a couplet about the righteous and the wicked.

Blessings, (given by God) are on the head of the righteous. **BUT,** the mouth of the wicked, the speech of the wicked conceals violence! It is like a boomerang that returns to the sender. God will bring judgement on those who constantly speak evil.

***7 ¶ The memory of the righteous is a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot.***

For the righteous, even their memory, after they are long gone, is a blessing. The name of the righteous lives on in the community of faith and is a blessing (Abraham, Jacob, Spurgeon, Graham). **BUT,** the name of the wicked will rot (consider names like Jezabel, Judas, Hitler, Manson).

The first names bring pictures of faithfulness that inspire us, the second group of names bring horrific memories.

***8 ¶ The wise of heart will receive commandments, but a babbling fool will come to ruin.***

Verses 8 and 9 are stand alone proverbs that also seem to form a couplet that outline the way of the wise and the demise of the wicked.

The wise of heart will receive commandments. The wise are teachable. Ohhh that we would continue to be wise. **BUT,** a babbling fool, one who is constantly talking rather than listening, one who is not teachable, but much more interested in broadcasting their opinions, will come to ruin!

***9 ¶ Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out.***

The one who walks in integrity before God, walks securely. This person has no need to look over their back worried that prior words or deeds might catch up with them. **BUT,** the one who rejects wisdom and walks in a crooked way, will be found out!

***10 ¶ Whoever winks the eye causes trouble, and a babbling fool will come to ruin.***

This central proverb serves as the pivot and **centerpiece** of verses 10-14 and **it is not a contrast**.

**A** sly wink is a mark of trouble **AND,** foolish lips, foolish speech, will bring destruction!

***11 ¶ The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.***

This of course is true, the righteous man’s mouth is a fountain of life for it is filled with wisdom and speaks wisdom to others. May our mouths be fountains of living water.

**BUT,** the mouths of the wicked conceal violence. The speech of the wicked do not bring life, rather they bring withering and death.

***12 ¶ Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.***

Hatred stirs up strife, again it seems that Solomon has in mind speech that it hatred. Hatred speech brings the lynch mob together. Hatred speech stirs up strife. **BUT,** lover covers all offenses. Love is a balm, and rather than stoking the fires of hatred, love absorbs the wrong and seeks reconciliation. I Cor 6:7 echoes the truth of this Proverb.

***13 ¶ On the lips of him who has understanding, wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks sense.***

Verses 13 and 14 are individual proverbs that seem to form a couplet that highlight the need for fools to be corrected.

Again, we are talking about the impact of one’s speech. For the one who has understanding, the person who has insight, the one who can look into the situation and provide insight is wisdom. **BUT,** those who lack sense, those who will not listen, those who know everything already. A rod is designed for those.

If you are going to reject wisdom, you had better be tough!

***14 ¶ The wise lay up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool brings ruin near.***

The wise lay up knowledge, they study and memorize God’s word, so it is in the ready when understanding is needed. **BUT,** the mouth of the fool keeps ruin near the door. The mouth of the fool keeps destruction close by.

**Wisdom and Wealth Part II (vs 15-16)**

***15 ¶ A rich man’s wealth is his strong city; the poverty of the poor is their ruin.***

Vs 15 and 16 are standalone proverbs, but are fully understood when they are viewed as a couplet.

**Notice this is not a contrast**, but instead teaching **one truth for both the rich and the poor**, that is **not obvious on the surface**.

The rich can wrongly think that wealth provides an unbreachable fortified city. Afterall the rich can hire lawyers to argue their case, guards for their protection. **A rich man’s wealth can give the mirage of a strong city.** Those without riches, the poverty of the poor, reminds them they have no strength.

***16 ¶ The wage of the righteous leads to life, the gain of the wicked to sin.***

The wage of righteousness is eternal life. Enduring wealth, that leads to life is not in earthly riches, but in righteousness. Earthly riches can seem like a strong city. But the strong city that leads to eternal life is righteousness. **In contrast,** the earnings (gain) of the wicked is sin which leads not to eternal life, but instead to eternal death. We find this truth echoed in Rom 6:23.

**Deeds and Destinies of the Righteous and the Wicked Contrasted (10:17-11:31)**

This new unit begins with a **single Proverb** to introduce the section. The proverb asserts this single point, to reject the sage’s wisdom will negatively **impact the destiny of others**.

If you are a parent or a spouse that is a heady statement. But one Solomon is clearly asserting.

***17 ¶ Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but he who rejects reproof leads others astray.***

Whoever heeds instruction (provided here by Solomon) is on the path of life. Solomon has been asserting that point in various ways. **BUT,** he who refuses the wisdom of the sage not only puts himself on the path to eternal ruin but he (knowingly or unknowingly) is leading others astray! If one path is the path of life, then by contrast the other is the path of death!

**The Speech and Expectation of the Righteous and the Wicked Contrasted (10:18-32).**

***18 ¶ The one who conceals hatred has lying lips, and whoever utters slander is a fool.***

Here verses 18 and 19 are stand alone, but they also form a **couplet.** The one who conceals hatred for another is the one who will be quick to speak with injurious slander against others. **AND**, the one who slanders others is a fool. One who rejects the wisdom of the sage.

***19 ¶ When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.***

This connects with verse 18 to remind us that when you find someone who multiplies speech, you have found one where transgressions are not lacking. **BUT,** the one who is swift to hear and slow to speak, the one who practices restraint is prudent (wise).

Even in situations that require us to speak, never forget what this proverb is teaching.

***20 ¶ The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is of little worth.***

Verses 20 and 21 although standalone also seem to form a couplet.

The couplet involves the heart and the mouth (tongue and lips). **Another contrast:** The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, the heart of the wicked is of little worth. Because that is true, the opposite is true.

The tongue of the wicked is corruption, and the heart of the wise is of great value.

***21 The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of sense.***

Following vs 20, the lips of the righteous feed many for the declare the wisdom of God and the heart of the wise is of great value. **BUT,** fools perish for a lack of sense.

The opposite is true by way of implication!

***22 ¶ The blessing of the LORD makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.***

Here a beautiful proverb, the blessing of Yahweh are the real wealth, eternal wealth, and with these blessings He (Yahweh adds not sorrow). It turns out Yahweh is the real agent of prosperity!

Of course, unstated the opposite is true. **AND,** he adds no sorrow with His blessings!

***23 ¶ Doing wrong is like a joke to a fool, but wisdom is pleasure to a man of understanding.***

Doing what one knows is wrong is a joke to one who rejects knowledge (the fool).

**BUT,** to a man who has understanding, gaining wisdom as opposed to doing wrong is the real pleasure.

***24 ¶ What the wicked dreads will come upon him, but the desire of the righteous will be granted.***

Although maybe not a couplet, it seems vs 24 nuances vs 23.

The fool takes pleasure in doing wrong, but what the wicked ultimately dreads will come upon him. **BUT,** the desire of the righteous shall be granted. The deep rooted hopes and dreams of those who love God will be granted!

The dread that the fool fears will be granted to him!

***25 When the tempest passes, the wicked is no more, but the righteous is established forever.***

Here the sage says there is a storm coming, a final horrible tempest that will sweep away the wicked. There is a judgment day coming, when all the tares will be gathered and burned!

**BUT,** the righteous, the ones who follow Yahweh, the ones who are righteous, will be established forever!

So firm and so secure is the standing of the righteous Solomon can say they are established forever, having a house that is built on a rock.

***26 ¶ Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him.***

Here Solomon takes two **physical irritations** and compares it to a relational or personal irritations.

Let’s follow his thoughts. Vinegar to people who had little dental hygiene would be an irritant, much like smoke to the eyes, both are physical irritants. **SO IS,** imagine you are the a, sending a vital message, but the person you choose is a sluggard. That would end up being like smoke to your eyes.

***27 ¶ The fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short.***

Here it seems although 27 and 28 are stand alone, they also form a couplet. You see the wicked mentioned in both verses.

The fear of Yahweh prolongs life, the sage has said this to his sons multiple times. **BUT,** the years of the wicked will be cut short.

***28 The hope of the righteous brings joy, but the expectation of the wicked will perish.***

The hope (expectation) of the righteous will bring joy. **BUT,** the hope of the wicked will perish.

***29 ¶ The way of the LORD is a stronghold to the blameless, but destruction to evildoers.***

Here we find what appears to be again two standalone proverbs that also form a couplet.

Following the ways of Yahweh is an unshakable stronghold to the righteous. **BUT,** total and absolute destruction awaits the evildoer!

***30 The righteous will never be removed, but the wicked will not dwell in the land.***

Amplifying on what Solomon just said, he says. The righteous will never be moved. **BUT,** the wicked will be finally and ultimately eradicated from the land!

***31 ¶ The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off.***

Here the chapter ends with two standalone Proverbs that seem to form another couplet around the righteous.

The mouth of the righteous brings forth water like a flowing fountain of wisdom. What a beautiful picture of what is meant to flow out of our mouths, life giving wisdom! **BUT,** the perverse tongue, the wicked tongue will be cut-down. By way of implication, that will never happen to the righteous.

***32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverse.”***

The speech of a righteous person is a clear fountain, and what flows from it is that which is acceptable (wisdom). **BUT,** what flows from the mouth of the wicked in perverse! What comes out of the mouth is all based on what is in the heart.

Today, Solomon has put a strong emphasis on the power of our words and he has discussed various aspects of wealth. Solomon has juxtaposed the righteous with the fool, the sluggard with the diligent. He want us to see the two very different destinies these paths lead to and choose wisdom, choose righteousness.

To bring this forward: *“21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it —  22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:” (Ro 3:21-22 ESV)*