

Proverbs For Living

Section 3 9 weeks

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Proverbs For Living

This study of Proverbs groups the Proverbs by subject or topic. I have used it several times in a small group setting in the churches where I was Pastor. We always had good discussion from those in the group. There are a few things I feel I should share with you before using this material:

First: I had no intent of sharing or publishing this material until encouraged to do so by some friends. While I did consult several commentaries as I was preparing the original sermon series, I did not make notes of the references used in the messages. There was not in the beginning, nor is there now, any intent to plagiarize. Should you see anything you feel is the original thought of another, I ask for your grace and mercy.

Second: In my notes for teaching (or preaching), I tend to spell certain words phonetically for the purpose of emphasis. When transforming these notes from sermon notes to teaching notes, I felt inclined to leave a number of these phonetic spellings. They help me to make emphasis in the lesson at particular points.

Third: In my notes for teaching (or preaching), I make little effort to conform to rules of grammar. One example is that I often use a hyphen (-) to indicate a point where I may want to pause slightly and to keep certain thoughts connected as I speak. Another example is that I will use local colloquialisms to make points in the message.

Please accept that these notes are not an academic work. But I do hope they will help the preacher or teacher to be able to more quickly prepare their own sermon or teaching.

Proverbs For Living – 23 – Honesty / Integrity

Read Proverbs 29:18 and make notes:

An individual's, as well as a nation's, overall well being depends to a great degree upon their obedience to divine revelation. The first part of this proverb comes at this point from the negative view. When there is "no revelation" or when there is no vision, the people (or person) will cast aside the protective restraints. This is the idea of a person who would toss their life preserver out of the boat instead of putting it on when they are starting their trip of white water rafting. The original word translated "revelation" or vision is the word that refers to divine communication prophets of God received directly from Him.

This proverb has been a problem to those who have noticed the most troublesome time for Israel in the Old Testament was also perhaps the time when the prophetic visions were at their greatest frequency. This proverb does rightly declare if there is no vision or divine leading coming from God then the people will cast aside their protective boundaries. But the other side of this point is even if the prophets are faithfully and clearly stating the divine vision, the people must receive it or the result is exactly the same. Whether the willing people have no divine vision or an unwilling people refuse to hear it, the result is the refusal to consider and make use of protective boundaries or safety restraints.

It is also important to take note in the Old Testament God sent the prophet with a divine word most often in response to the calamity and harmful situations the people created for themselves. Throughout the Old Testament, the prophet was usually in a ministry of calling the people back to God instead of leading them ahead in God's plan and purpose for them.

The most simple application for us today might be if we fail to retain the divine revelation which has been provided for us already, we are headed for trouble. The second line of this proverb presents the summary of the situation from the positive point of view. Those who "keep the law" will be blessed.

Read Proverbs 20:7 and make notes:

The word translated "righteous" in the original language referred to a person who believed in the True God and would daily strive to live up to God's standards. The word translated "blameless" was a word which meant no one was able to find an area where this person failed to live up to God's standards within the community of believers. God knew that a loving parent would gladly give up some comfort or blessing just to make sure their children were blessed. The promise from God to the person of Honesty and Integrity is their children will be blessed.

The One Who Keeps The Law Will Be Blessed - Also Their Children !

Read Proverbs 28:9 and make notes:

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This should be a sobering thought! If you refuse to listen to the law, God will not listen to your prayers. If a person chooses to be deaf to God's instructions, then God will choose to be deaf to that person's pleas and requests. One point to consider is the person who does not know what God's Word says is not likely to pray in accordance to God's Word or God's Will. This will most often be the person who prays for physical things and usually in a demanding tone, and when not demanding then in a whimpering and complaining tone. What this proverb is pointing out to us is this: If a person will not give consideration and obedience to God's Word, then that person is 'detestable' to God even if they are a person of prayer.

Ignore God's Word And Your Prayers Are Detestable !

Read Proverbs 28:7 and make notes:

The person who "keeps the law", or is obedient to what they understand of the Law, will at least be discerning enough to lead a life separated from sin to a large degree. The person who gives attention to the Law and makes some effort to keep the Law will not be a disgrace to their family. The person who takes for their companions the people who have no self control (such as gluttons) will bring shame and disgrace to those whom they love and who love them. In the most direct application, the person who would make gluttons their companion has already violated the law. This shames their father (and The Father as well) while it causes the person to become more unruly and engage in antisocial behaviors. The person who does not keep the Law shows disrespect for their family and brings disgrace upon The Heavenly Father.

Read Proverbs 23:10-11 and make notes:

A person would not be likely to move a boundary stone unless they felt sure the neighbor was unable to defend themselves. This is a warning that God defends the cause of those who are helpless. Do the right thing and don't try to take property or possessions from those who are weak or in need. We don't want God coming against us.

Read Proverbs 22:28 and make notes:

Moving boundary stones marking property is nothing short of stealing. The ancient tradition concerning this verse is that it pertains to much more than property boundaries. The laws handed down should not be changed. That would be moving the boundaries of what is right and wrong and certainly would be the most grievous type of boundary moving.

Keeping The Law Helps Us Be Discerning !

Read Proverbs 28:4 and make notes:

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Our obedience to the Law is the greatest determining factor of our attitude toward those who break the Law. Those who do not keep the Law are the ones who will praise the wicked. Praising the wicked includes such things as calling what they do as good, and losing our ability to distinguish between what is right and wrong. Those who forsake the Law have no standard by which to measure any activity. Without the Law there is no moral right or wrong. To the person who has no law, then everything is permissible.

The second part of this proverb is of no small consequence. Those who keep the law will be able to resist the wicked. Keeping the Law is your greatest help in being able to resist the wicked.

Keeping The Law Helps Us Resist The Wicked!

Read Proverbs 16:11 and make notes:

Honesty comes from God. Our Heavenly Father is The Source of honesty and justice. If honesty is found in any human endeavor or enterprise, while it may have come through any number of avenues, the honesty ultimately came from God. In much the same way as a contemporary criminal might keep two sets of books in order to defraud their customers and the government, the criminal of ancient days carried two sets of weights to defraud those with whom they dealt.

For the Believer to engage in transactions which are not completely honest is to pervert that which God has saved us to be and to do. The "weights", or the standards, which have been given to us from our God are the standards of honesty and integrity; at all times and in all things. Since Honesty comes from God, should the Believer discover they are dealing with another person in a way that is not honest, then where and who did this dishonesty come from? Are you sure you want dis-honesty in your life?

Honesty Comes From God!

Read Proverbs 24:26 and make notes:

In many ancient cultures it was customary to greet one another with a kiss. This kiss, however, was on the cheek or forehead. In almost all of these ancient cultures where the customary greeting involved a kiss, the kiss upon the lips was reserved for the very closest of friends. For the ancients to declare something to be like a 'kiss on the lips' is for them to say this is like greeting a very close and dear friend. This is comparing it to something sweet and pleasant or pleasurable. A truthful answer is clearly the mark of a good friendship.

Read Proverbs 19:22 and make notes:

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The word translated "love" referred to the loyal commitment between those in a covenant relationship. They were expected to faithfully speak the truth to one another. The idea was that those who love you will be honest with you. No one in a covenant relationship would be poor because their covenant partner would share their goods with them. It would be better to be poor and not have the benefits of a covenant relationship than to be a liar. The word translated "liar" also is used to refer to a mirage in the desert as well as words that are not true. This highlights the contrast between the faithful love and the false image of a friend.

Honest Answers Are Sweet And Pleasant to the Honest Person !

Read Proverbs 14:25 and make notes:

The honest witness in a court helps to bring swift justice. It is the honest witness who will deliver the innocent person from the death of execution. When false charges are brought against an innocent person, it is extremely important that the honest witnesses come forth. When the false witness is left unchecked or unchallenged, ruin and harm comes to the accused and to those whom they love. There is a plentiful supply of false witnesses for Christ. Are you a witness for Christ? If so, are you an honest witness for Christ?

Honest Witnesses Saves Lives !

Read Proverbs 12:17 and make notes:

If a person gives testimony which is not honest, then they are not a truthful (or honest) witness. This may seem too simple of a principle to even slow down and consider, but it isn't. Suppose an honest person comes forth to testify that the accused did not do the thing they have been accused of. Suppose the honest person is telling the truth about the innocence of the accused. Suppose the honest person tells more than actually happened in an effort to help the accused to look even more innocent. Suppose it is discovered the witness has told a little bit of untruth - does it not bring into suspect even that part which was true? The average person of this world, and surely the court, will question if you lied about this part, then why shouldn't we believe you lied about the other parts of your testimony as well?

The Believer today needs to take great care not to try to enhance the testimony of what God has done in their life. It seems all too frequent today that a Believer has truly been blessed by God, but when compared to the testimony of another Believer they feel their personal testimony needs a little help, so they add a little bit here and there. God does not ask for, need, and certainly does not tolerate us adding anything to what He has done in our life to help His cause. Testify only to what you see and know, regardless of how little that may appear to you. The smallest amount of truth is by far better than great abundance of lies. Are you being a truthful witness for Jesus Christ?

Proverbs For Living – 23 – Honesty / Integrity

Read Proverbs 19:5 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 19:9 and make notes:

Those who are not honest (false witness) will certainly be punished. If not in this life, then in the one to come, but, rest assured, they will not go unpunished. Those who bear false witness instead of telling the truth have God's assurance of eventual punishment. If they do not repent they will perish.

Read Proverbs 21:28 and make notes:

This verse warns not only will those who are dishonest perish, but those who pay attention to them will be destroyed also. We need to be very careful in choosing to whom we will listen.

Honest People Give Truthful Testimony !

Read Proverbs 15:27 and make notes:

The person of greed is in a hurry to get rich quick and doesn't care what it takes to make it happen. The bribe is considerably different from a gift. The bribe is given with the intent of getting a person to do what the giver wants them to do while a gift is given to show appreciation and asks for nothing in return. God gives gifts and encourages us to give gifts to each other. It is important for us to recognize the difference. It is also important for us to realize that hating and refusing bribes helps assure life.

Read Proverbs 17:8 and make notes:

It is unfortunate that we have so many examples both in our contemporary society as well as in history. Bribery has been quite successful. The "charm" is seen as something that gives one power and influence over others. The person who gives bribes witnesses things coming out the way they had desired and they begin to look at the bribe as the thing that caused the outcome to go their way. After the bribe becomes a "charm" in their mind, it becomes their usual means of doing business. Sometimes we call them things like "rebates" or "kickbacks" but it is still the giving of something with the expressed purpose to get another to do what we want.

Proverbs For Living – 23 – Honesty / Integrity

Read Proverbs 19:6 and make notes:

The phrase translated "curry favor" literally means "stroking the face." Many people will do what they think will give the person in charge the feeling that they are "stroking them" in an effort to get favor and hopefully influence the decisions the ruler makes. The person who "gives gifts", be it a bribe or actually a gift, will have many people claiming to be their friend. The giving of gifts causes people to give you attention.

Read Proverbs 28:21 and make notes:

Showing favoritism is wrong. It is a type of dishonesty. This is a warning that a person in need can be bribed fairly easily. It might only take something to eat. This may be more a warning for us to be careful in our times of need or distress that we don't allow ourselves be bribed into showing partiality.

Honest People Hate Bribes !

Read Proverbs 16:13 and make notes:

Honest people who will tell the truth are always considered valuable to those in leadership. We have all no doubt heard or read of government leaders who were corrupt and considered the Godly Religious leader to be a threat. Some of us probably believe we have seen government leaders in our country who were morally corrupt and appeared to surround themselves with counselors and aides who were equally immoral.

It is interesting that even among Presidents of our nation whom we have considered to be lacking significantly in their moral values, they have in times of serious trouble called upon men known for their moral integrity (such as Billy Graham) for counsel. While it has appeared on occasion they have ignored the truthful counsel, they at least valued the honesty they knew they would receive from such a person.

The honest leader would refuse to allow one to remain in their counsel unless they did tell the truth. If we lived in an ideal world the leaders would be righteous people who not only liked honest people but would themselves be honest persons. Even the immoral leader will seek out the honest person when they desire serious honest testimony. Does The King of Kings look favorably on your testimony?

Read Proverbs 22:29 and make notes:

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The implication of this is more than simply a person who is good at their trade. It also speaks of the person who does good work and does it with integrity. This person doesn't hide little imperfections, use inferior materials, or cut corners just to increase profits. Those who are truly "skilled" do not need to do such things in order to sell their services or product. People, the community, even the civil authorities will recognize and appreciate integrity.

Honest People Are Favored By Those In Leadership !

Read Proverbs 13:11 and make notes:

Trying to acquire financial security through honest means can appear to be too slow and can leave some with the question as to whether it is even possible. There are too many stories in our society of the young people who don't seek to finish their education or job training so they can qualify for an honest occupation. Instead, they answer the invitation to engage in the trading of contraband substances such as drugs, because the money to be made is of such a significantly large quantity.

Dishonest people lack the ability to look into the future and see where such earnings lead. The ancient wise men may not have been able to foresee or even imagine some of the social demons we are fighting today. But they did understand what God's Word says, "dishonest money dwindles away." Honest money will continue to grow, even if it is little by little, this is the opposite of 'dwindling away.'

Read Proverbs 20:14 and make notes:

In our contemporary society many people accept the concept of haggling over prices or "horse trading" as the normal mode of doing business. It is not uncommon to hear Christians expound the necessity of doing this in order to get a good deal. If we say "it is no good" just to get the price lowered when we know "it is good" then we are guilty of being dishonest. God does expect His children to be shrewd but to misrepresent something when buying or selling is to be deceitful.

Read Proverbs 28:8 and make notes:

Charging exorbitant interest rates is a type of dishonest business practice. If the poor need help, God expects those experiencing prosperity to help them, not to make a profit from their situation of being poor and in need. The promise is that if a person acquires wealth by dealing dishonestly with those in need, it will be given to someone else who will give it to the poor.

Honest Money Grows While Dishonest Money Dwindles !

Proverbs For Living – 23 – Honesty / Integrity

Read Proverbs 29:10 and make notes:

'Bloodthirsty' men refers to those who are wicked. Since the wicked despise that which is decent they despise not only the upright person, they even despise the integrity of the honest person. This proverb should help to serve as a 'wake up' call or at least a caution for the Believer to be careful about aligning any part of their life with the wicked. The wicked actually seek continually for a way or means to 'kill' the honest person who has integrity. This could be the taking of their physical life or the killing of their reputation & standing in the community.

People Of Integrity Are Hated By The Wicked !

Read Proverbs 10:9 and make notes:

'Integrity', as it relates to character of an individual, speaks of the state of being of sound moral principle; being honest; being sincere; and being upright about everything. Integrity speaks of your determination to do what is right even if no one would ever see it or know that you didn't. This is not referring to the person who does what is right because they are convinced God sees everything and He would know they messed up and might punish them for it. This is referring to the person who desires in their heart to do what is right, because it is right, and even it were possible that God wouldn't see it, they still want to do what is right.

Even in years of long ago, it was evident those who live their life with Integrity seem to live out their life in a secure and safe path. In the contemporary world in which we live, there are so many reasons for people to feel insecure. And yet, here is a word of ancient wisdom which declares the honest person with integrity will be able to walk on with the assurance that the path will be kept safe for them; regardless of what dangers may lie ahead.

People Of Integrity Walk Securely Through Life !

Read Proverbs 16:8 and make notes:

It is better to have little in the way of earthly possessions and be honest than to have many possessions and be dishonest. The contrast is between honest and dishonesty. There is no biblical problem with having earthly possessions. The issue is maintaining our integrity.

Read Proverbs 29:4 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 23 – Honesty / Integrity

When there is honesty in government, the nation will be stable. When the government begins to allow bribes to be received, the nation begins to be unstable.

People Of Integrity Value Integrity More Than Possessions !

Read Proverbs 13:6 and make notes:

The 'righteousness' in this proverb refers to that which conforms to the Law and to the order of the law. The 'guards' in this verse speaks of the kind of protection one is afforded by being inside a mighty fortress. This verse helps us see how it is possible for the person of integrity to walk securely as declared in the previous verse. The fact that this person keeps the law and conforms everything they do to fit the law (or what is right) is the very thing that surrounds them like a mighty fortress and keeps them from the intended harm of the wicked.

People Of Integrity Are Guarded By Righteousness !

Read Proverbs 11:3 and make notes:

To the wicked, traveling the path of life is one fearful turn of the corner after another. Each time they go over a hill on the path of life they experience great apprehension as to what peril might be lurking 'just over that hill.' It can seem confusing to the wicked why the person of integrity can walk along the path of life with such confidence and with the absence of fear. The wicked will frequently declare the Honest person to be naive and ignorant of possible dangers life can present. The primary reason the Honest person can walk so confidently along the path of life is the fact that Integrity will be their guide. When they arrive at a fork in the path of life and one way will lead to success while one way will lead to great harm and suffering, they will allow Integrity to be their guide as to which way to go. The wicked person has no such guide and is left to devise some method of the flesh to choose which way to go. There is a way that seems right to man but the end of it is destruction. What is guiding you along the path of life ?

Integrity Is A Safe Guide Along The Path Of Life !

When we speak of someone's reputation we sometimes use the phrase "they have made a name for themselves." The person who is Honest and has Integrity acquires a "name" for themselves as does the person who is dishonest and has little or no integrity.

Read Proverbs 18:10 and make notes:

God has proven His Name throughout man's history. His Name is a secure place. Those who are "in His name" are truly safe and secure. (Jesus is the name of God that is above every name.)

Proverbs For Living – 23 – Honesty / Integrity

Read Proverbs 3:1-4 and make notes:

God has a "good name" for Himself. He has emphasized over and over how much He desires for us to be more like Him. It shouldn't surprise us to discover in His Word that IF we will keep His commands and live a life of faithfulness that we too can have a "good name." It is significant that the person of Honesty and Integrity is promised not only a "good name" among men, but with God also.

Read Proverbs 22:1 and make notes:

A "good name" is better to have than great wealth. This is not to say that wealth, especially great wealth, is undesirable. Accepting the fact that wealth is worthwhile and can be extremely beneficial, a "good name" is even better than that. A "good name" far exceeds almost every other physical blessing on this earth. When a person has a "good name" with God then it is reasonable to state that this same person has a "good name" among the Angels of Heaven.

Honest People and People Of Integrity Receive A Good Name !

Read Proverbs 4:23 and make notes:

The heart must be guarded because it is the starting point of all that we do. Every deed, whether great or small, began with a thought. The condition of our heart determines the nature and kinds of thoughts we will have.

Read Proverbs 18:17 and make notes:

In order for us to maintain honesty and integrity, there must be cross examinations and verification of a witness's testimony. The word translated "questions" literally means "to investigate." There at least two sides or views to every dispute and as God's children we must get all the facts before coming to a conclusion on any matter. If we make hasty decisions after hearing only one side of an issue, we will lose our integrity in the community because of the faulty decisions we make.

Read Proverbs 21:3 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 23 – Honesty / Integrity

The Lord desires honest living from His children more than He desires for us to give all the appropriate sacrifices. This doesn't say that it was acceptable for a Believer to ignore the required sacrifices. It says even if all the sacrifices were made but the lifestyle was one of being dishonest, the believer has missed it with God. It also points to the possibility that if a person was unable to make the required sacrifice but was living an honest life and was honest about their situation, God would find them acceptable.

Read Proverbs 28:13 and make notes:

An important aspect of being an honest person is admitting when we have been wrong. The person who conceals their mistakes and won't admit to them is basically being dishonest and this person will not be able to prosper. The person who admits their failings and repents (renounces) will find God pouring out mercy to them.

Read Proverbs 17:03 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 20:27 and make notes:

God is more concerned with the heart of a person than He is with their deeds or words. We need to strive to guard our heart since it is the heart that God examines.

Maintain Your Integrity!

Please write down the questions you would like to ask the group – and any insights you have regarding “Honesty & Integrity” in this lesson so that you can share them when we meet:

Proverbs For Living – 23 – Honesty / Integrity

(this page for additional notes)

Proverbs For Living – 24 – The Path We Take 1

"What am I to do now?", "Which way are we supposed to go?" Questions like these come to each us along our path of life. A police officer was overheard telling a homeless person, "It doesn't matter which way you go as long as you just keep moving." Understanding the officer wanted them to leave the airport terminal, it hardly seems worthwhile to critique his words in that matter. The sad part is many people today appear to have a similar attitude toward their life in general: "It doesn't matter which path of life they follow, as long as they just keep moving." The book of Proverbs has a great deal to say about the paths we choose and the paths we travel.

It does make a difference which paths we travel, or which way we go!

Read Proverbs 14:12-13 and make notes:

There are a number of things that can just "seem right" to man because it seems to bring profit or maybe even happiness. There are far too many who have traveled the path that "seemed right" to them, only to find out later they traveled a one way street to death. The word translated "death" in the original text speaks of mortal ruin and destruction. This sounds much more harsh than just ceasing to live. Even if this particular path appears to bring laughter and happiness, it can still be a road to destruction. Life has many of these pathways that claim to offer happiness and satisfaction, and who among us doesn't want both of these. Any pathway that is not according to God's way is a pathway to complete destruction (or mortal ruin).

Not every way that seems right turns out to be wrong. But there is "a way", while it promises to deliver one to happiness, power, or the good life, actually delivers one to death and destruction. This is a clear warning not to follow just any path. And even more, don't follow just any path that appears to be a right path. The possible result is just too risky!

Read Proverbs 16:2 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 21:2 and make notes:

The ways (paths, methods) we choose in our own wisdom just naturally seem "right" to us. It is so common to hear people say "I don't understand why it didn't work out like I planned!" When we consider the problem of self-deception, faulty reasoning, and the not knowing what the future holds, we simply are not up to the task of determining which path to take. We need the Lord's guidance and direction. It isn't enough to "luck out" and just happen to get the right path. God "weighs" (evaluates) the motive or intent we had in taking that particular path. Was it our motive "not to submit" to the leadership of the Heavenly Father?

Many Paths Seem Right !

Proverbs For Living – 24 – The Path We Take 1

Read Proverbs 2:18-19 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 19:16 and make notes:

There are some paths which lead to death. If we knew nothing else than the simple fact that some paths lead to death, this in itself should be sufficient reason to give some consideration to the path we choose to travel. This text is speaking of the harm and dead end of those who spend their time with the adulterer. Those who spend time with the adulterer will arrive at the place of death and not the good life as is often advertised. Those who follow in the foot steps (paths) of the adulterer will wind up in the place where the spirits of the dead hang out. The specific message to stay away from the adulterer should not be dropped or ignored, but the larger message at this point is "some paths lead to death."

Some paths are a "one-way" path to death from which there is no return.

Read Proverbs 22:5 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 22:25 and make notes:

Thorns speak of the things which inflict us with annoying pain and tear away at our flesh or our covering. Snares are those things which take hold of us and prevent us from going further, they hold us back. God desires for us to be aware that some paths will tear away our protective covering and some will hold us back from receiving His full promises or blessings for our life.

Some paths are very hard or unpleasant to travel and some trap us.

Read Proverbs 1:15 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 7:25 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 4:14 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 24 – The Path We Take 1

The "do not go" advice of those in spiritual authority is given to counter the "come along with us" enticement of those who are evil or wicked (such as the adulterer). This might be a basis for stating the "just say no" message is actually thousands of years old. It is noteworthy, the advice includes not letting your "heart turn" toward the ways of the sinner and make sure you don't "stray into" their paths. This speaks clearly of our taking actions to insure against these paths appealing to us (our hearts) and to insure we don't travel down those paths even by way of "straying."

Also, it is worth a few moments of meditation on the idea of the sinner's house leading to death. This isn't to say their house is the grave but it surely leads to death. The path to death being analogous to the sinner's house is interesting because few lives are ruined in a single instant. They are usually ruined gradually over a period of continuing with the sin. Much like one does not arrive at their destination all at once, but gradually nears their destination by continuing to travel the pathway there. The pathway of the sinner gradually eats away at the real life of a person, so slowly sometimes that they aren't even aware they are losing their life until it is all gone.

Read Proverbs 4:15-17 and make notes:

Be sure and avoid the lifestyle of the wicked and if you find yourself already upon that path, then turn from it immediately. The reason given is the wicked lifestyle is enslaving those who go this way. The wicked will be so addicted to evil that they will not be able to rest until they have fulfilled the drive to commit evil. Evil becomes like a food and drink to the wicked, they feel they cannot live with eating and drinking of evil. Could one be more perverted than to take pleasure and find peace at the price of another person's suffering and misfortune?

Some paths we are clearly instructed not to travel.

Read Proverbs 2:13-15 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 5:6 and make notes:

One immediately noticeable characteristic of the "crooked" path is the inability to see what lies ahead. A "crooked" path is one which has limited visibility. The more "crooked" the less one is able to foresee what is ahead. Those who are wicked and sometimes those who are perverted find some kind of delight or thrill in traveling a crooked path. They enjoy the excitement of the uncertain future, maybe willing to risk some harm, but seldom if ever considering the possibility of destruction or not being able to return from this path.

Proverbs For Living – 24 – The Path We Take 1

This is not always the result of one who is sadistically evil, it may be only that their conscience has been dulled and they have forgotten the counsel of the Godly. This might be a good description of the person who's path is crooked but they "know it not." Those who delight in doing wrong and evil are continually and repeatedly traveling very crooked paths.

Some paths prevent us from looking ahead.

Read Proverbs 2:9 and make notes:

God desires for us to have the capability to determine (understand) what is the right path; the path of justness and fairness. He desires that we not choose just any path and hope things turn out well; but to always choose the good path. Write some personal examples from your life where you chose the path that "seemed right" and it turned out to be a bad choice.

Read Proverbs 14:2 and make notes:

A noticeable characteristic of those who have a reverence for the Lord is the fact they live their life in an "upright" manner. The "walk" is the lifestyle of the individual. It speaks of the way they handle the everyday things of life, family, business, neighborhood, etc. One who's walk is upright is a person who is traveling the "straight" path the Lord exhorts all of His children to travel.

Read Proverbs 14:8 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 21:29 and make notes:

The Bible, over and over, portrays those who are wise as the ultimate in being a practical person more so than some lofty super-intelligent one. The wise person is one who gives careful consideration to all of their actions before they engage. This picture of the wise giving thought to their ways is much like the person who has decided to have a garden. They take the time to consider what kinds of vegetables they would like to grow, what kind of soil is needed, seeds or plants, fertilizer, the way in which the rows or beds will be laid out, etc., before they actually begin planting the garden. This is contrasted with the fool who gives no thought at all regarding the cost, resources needed, time required, and possible side effects of their choices.

Proverbs For Living – 24 – The Path We Take 1

The "bold front" of the wicked makes them appear strong and sure of what they are about to do or where they are going. The time taken by the wise person to think things through can be interpreted by those of the world to show signs of uncertainty as compared to the "bold front" of the wicked. But the lack of giving "careful thought" to our ways (paths or actions) is declared to be folly in the book of Proverbs. We need to be less concerned about how others might interpret our taking the time to think things through and more concerned about how we appear to our Heavenly Father.

When we as "God's people" begin new activities (or even ministries) and do not take time to think them through, we are acting more like the foolish sinner than we are the wise Christian.

God's People Should Think Things Through Before They Act !

Read Proverbs 5:21 and make notes:

Sometimes when we fail to think things through, they just turn out right and we may feel "lucky" or "blessed." We even accept the praises of those around us for knowing what to do or how to do it. We seem to only have regrets about not having thought things through when they don't turn out well. It is important for each us to remember that even if we don't think things through, everything we do is in the "full view" of God. For things to be in the "full view" of God means He saw or planning and preparation as well as our execution of the project. God is fully aware of the times when we knew in advance that this would not be acceptable to Him even though we are now telling others that we didn't know it was wrong. He is fully aware of the times when He had to intervene to make things work out because we failed to give careful thought before we acted.

Our Planning And Our Actions Are In God's Full View!

Read Proverbs 14:14 and make notes:

Our "ways", or the pathway we choose, will bring us punishment or reward. If the "ways" are bad or evil, then there will be retribution in punishment. If the "ways" are upright, then there will be reward for our faith and faithfulness. The phrase "fully repaid" declares even the smallest of wrong deeds will not go unpunished. To keep this in balance, the smallest of good deeds will not go unrewarded. This can be guaranteed because all of our ways are in "full view" of the Lord. He doesn't miss a thing!

Everything We Do Will Bring Punishment Or Reward !

Read Proverbs 16:7 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 24 – The Path We Take 1

When we live our life in such a way that it pleases God, then He disarms the social hostility toward us. This is an excellent place to remind ourselves that it is not the specific things we do, but the way in which we go about the things we do. It is not the things we do but the lifestyle that pleases God. The lifestyle that is pleasing to God is one which is above reproach and it finds favor with others.

Lifestyles Which Please God Are Rewarded With Peace !

Read Proverbs 10:9 and make notes:

While there is the promise of insecurity (will be found out) for those who walk crooked paths, those who walk with integrity are promised "security." Those traveling the "crooked" paths of life are continually in a fear of having their practices revealed. They live in constant fear of being exposed. Those who walk with integrity have no fear because nothing is hidden.

Lifestyles Which Please God Are Rewarded With Security !

Read Proverbs 28:26 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 3:23-24 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 3:26 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 10:9 and make notes:

Anyone who has ever had the experience of trying to sleep when they were afraid or troubled would certainly appreciate this promise. We will be able to lie down without being afraid and when we do sleep, it will be "sweet." No more restless nights, no more times of sleep where we are not able to go fully asleep because of the things our mind continues to consider and re-think.

The only real security along the journey of life is found in the life of wisdom. The life of self-sufficiency is one for the fool. The plans, strength, and resources of man simply are no match for life and all of its circumstances. Even more than this, the things of this physical life are no match for the Wisdom which comes from the Heavenly Father.

Proverbs For Living – 24 – The Path We Take 1

Read Proverbs 2:21 and make notes:

It is a promise of God that taking the path of righteousness will allow you to live safe and secure in the land. (refer to the promise of obedience found in Deuteronomy)

Read Proverbs 4:12 and make notes:

This is speaking of more than a literal walk or run. It is speaking of our lifestyle (the path we take). We won't be hindered along our path of life and even in the times when our path is moving quickly (run) we will not be caused to stumble.

Those Who Walk In Wisdom Are Kept Safe !

Read Proverbs 2:7 and make notes:

There is a shield of protection in store for those who walk the path suggested by God. This promise of having some protection from ambush is in addition to the promise of a straight path.

Those On The Blameless Path Are Given A Shield !

Read Proverbs 28:10 and make notes:

While destruction is the certain end of the path of evil, a good inheritance is at the end of the path of innocence (or being blameless). List some reasons you would give to a New Christian as to "why" we want to choose "the right" path.

Read Proverbs 11:20 and make notes:

A "blameless life" is not one where you never did anything wrong. A "blameless life" is one where the motives and intentions were right and upright. If one wishes to live a life that pleases God, then we need to make sure our motives and attitude are right.

Read Proverbs 3:31 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 24 – The Path We Take 1

Not only are we to refrain from envying the person of violence, we are told quite plainly we should not choose "any" of his ways (or methods). This is more than simply refraining from doing the acts of violence this person commits. This is saying to refrain from following any of their examples of lifestyle, even if it doesn't appear to be violent. The person of violence is a perverse person and the Lord "detests" them. Why would anyone who is a child of God want to pattern their life or actions after those who are detested by God?

Do Not Pattern Your Life After Any Of The Actions Of The Violent Person !

Please write down the questions you would like to ask the group – and any insights you have regarding “Proverbs of the Path We Take” in this lesson so that you can share them when we meet:

Proverbs For Living – 25 – The Path We Take 2

Read Proverbs 9:6 and make notes:

The proper direction (way) in which we should be traveling along the pathway of life is in the direction of "understanding." We are to "leave our simple ways" of not considering the way in which we are about to embark. We are to walk the way of understanding. It is difficult to say you understand something until you have first given it some consideration.

We Are To Choose The Way Of Understanding !

Read Proverbs 6:6 and make notes:

We are to cease to be a " sluggard " and are to become one who is wise. A " sluggard " is a person who is habitually lazy or habitually inactive. God did not create mankind to sit around and do nothing. It is a primary part of our makeup to need to accomplish something. It is important that each of us do something, but it is equally important that we chose what we do with care and consideration.

There is a whirlpool of danger which exist for the " sluggard ." The person who does nothing for a long enough period will become depressed. Once the person is experiencing depression, they have little or no will to do anything. It almost always takes the intervention of another person to pull someone out of this relentless whirlpool of sluggard-depression-sluggard.

Don't Allow Yourself To Become A Sluggard !

Read Proverbs 25:16-17 and make notes:

The sweet taste of honey refers to all those things that bring pleasure to our physical bodies. Regardless to how wonderful the taste or feel, we should partake in moderation. This applies to visiting friends and neighbors. We can spend so much time with them that they have no private time for themselves and this will lead them to despise our presence.

Moderation In All Things!

Read Proverbs 21:17 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 25 – The Path We Take 2

This is a little different from the sluggard. The person who loves pleasure may be very active, but only in things that bring or promote pleasure. This proverb sounds a clear prediction that such a path will lead to being poor. Also, the person who loves intoxicating substances will never become rich. The problem is that regardless of how prosperous our job may be, the love for (or addiction to) intoxicating substances continually cries for “more” and the price of this “love” is always going up. This path clearly leads us away from being rich.

Read Proverbs 13:20 and make notes:

The main point to this ancient word of wisdom is simply that we become like those with whom we spend time. Many parents may have failed to express it but they have known in their hearts the truth of this matter as they have pleaded with their children to refrain from spending time with certain people. Each of us needs to make an examination from time to time to see exactly who it is that we are allowing to influence us. Do we really want to become like this person?

We Become Like Those With Whom We Spend Time !

Read Proverbs 18:24 and make notes:

We can't have so many friends that we can't come to ruin. There isn't any number of friends that can completely protect us. The words translated "come to ruin" literally speak of being shattered and crushed. The other side of this discouraging note is the good news that while there are enough friends to protect us from all harm, there is a friend that will be faithful to us even beyond the ties of family and blood. Don't put your confidence in the traveling along life's path in the fact that you have many friends, instead seek out that one who is closer than a brother.

Read Proverbs 20:6 and make notes:

A caution for us as we travel life's path. There are many who will claim to be a friend, but they will quickly reveal they are not faithful. Few there be who find a faithful friend along life's travels.

We Can't Place Our Confidence In The Number Of Friends!

Read Proverbs 11:27 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 25 – The Path We Take 2

We are told that we “will find” that which we seek; whether it is “good or evil.” In the New Testament we are told to “seek and we will find.” If it is for certain that we will find what we are seeking, then it makes sense that we should seek “good” rather than seeking evil.

Read Proverbs 23:26 and make notes:

It is so very important to heed the Teacher's warnings about following after right ways. We should “keep” our eyes upon what is right instead of allowing them to view temptation. This proverb instructs us to "keep" our eyes on the ways (pathway or method) of wisdom. Don't allow yourself to look at any other way than the way of wisdom.

Read Proverbs 4:25 and make notes:

We must keep our focus on where we are going. Those who are looking in too many directions will have difficulty staying on the right path of life. Not only is there the danger of viewing something so tempting that it leads us astray, but by not looking straight ahead we may veer off the path without realizing it.

Keep Your Eye On The Pathway Of Wisdom !

Read Proverbs 16:33 and make notes:

In the culture of the days when this proverb was given, they believed divine leading determined the outcome of casting lots. They saw the casting of lots as the most pure way to remove the mind of the flesh from the decision making process. While we may disagree that God controls every roll of the dice, we do agree that the Lord will control every decision which we give over to Him. That was the heart of what those casting lots were attempting to do. The decision making process may be so personal as to be in our lap, but we can and should turn every decision over to the Lord for His divine wisdom and guidance.

Read Proverbs 16:9 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 25 – The Path We Take 2

It is a wonderful gift from God to allow us to determine what course or path we will follow in life. The "course" is like the destination at which we would like to arrive, or the occupation we would like to develop, or the degree we would like to acquire. It is also like where in the world we would like to live or what kind of transportation we prefer. The Lord allows us to choose the major direction or goal, but He reserves the right to direct our steps along the way. We are not to determine each step of the journey. We are to submit to the Lord's direction of where we go from here and how long we remain at each location along the way. He knows where we wish to go and will help us arrive there in the best possible condition and at the best time.

Read Proverbs 21:31 and make notes:

We may put forth many efforts, but the ultimate success comes from God. It is important for every individual to acknowledge that we are dependent upon God for our success. If it were hard work that brought success, then everyone who works hard would be successful. If it were intellect that brings success, then every intelligent person would be successful. If it were physical strength that guaranteed success, then every strong person would be successful. The possible analogies along this vane could be quite lengthy. Every person who experiences success should acknowledge God's making it possible. We may not be able to give a good answer as to why God chose to make this person successful, but He is the source of real success.

Read Proverbs 19:21 and make notes:

The ultimate success of our plans depends upon God. That's one of the reasons it is so sad when someone doesn't allow God to be a part of their plans and to direct their steps. They are ignoring the one upon whom all success depends.

Read Proverbs 20:24 and make notes:

If a person is following the steps the Lord has laid out for him, it just may be beyond our ability to understand how this is the right thing or the right way. It requires an attitude of being dependent upon the Lord every step of the way, not only that this is a safe and right way, but that He will show us where to go from here.

Read Proverbs 21:1 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 25 – The Path We Take 2

To the people who believed divine direction of the casting of the lots, it was also easy to believe the Lord directed every decision by the king. We may disagree with this concept, but consider the principle being expressed here. If God controls the decision making process of the highest civil authority in the land in much the same way as a farmer controls and regulates the flow of water on his farm, then how could anyone believe himself to be supreme? It is important and healthy that we acknowledge the existence of a higher power who can and does control our lives.

Read Proverbs 8:32 and make notes:

Those who "keep" to the pathways (or methods) of wisdom are blessed. Any of the alternative paths lead to harm and danger in varying degrees. A very distinct contrast to life and favor are ahead on the paths of wisdom.

Those Who Keep On The Path Of Wisdom Are Blessed !

Read Proverbs 4:26-27 and make notes:

The translation of this verse from the original language to our modern English is difficult. The original text gives an admonition to give careful consideration to the removal of everything which is preventing you from reaching your goal. We need to take careful purpose to remove anything that might be a moral hindrance as well as a physical hindrance toward us attaining our intended goal. "Make level paths" and "take only ways that are firm" is basically saying we need to make sure that each and every path we choose is the straightest path to our intended end. (can you find a New Testament Scripture which speaks of casting off that which hinders?)

Stay On A Sure Path !

Read Proverbs 3:6 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 4:11 and make notes:

When we "acknowledge" God along our pathway of life, He will make sure our paths are "straight." This is an intended contrast to the crooked paths of the wicked. What this is saying in it's simplest terms is God will make adjustments as necessary to ensure the path we are on will be a "straight" path as long as we are giving Him the "acknowledgment" He rightly deserves in our daily life.

Proverbs For Living – 25 – The Path We Take 2

If we allow the Lord to be our "guide" then we can rest assured that we will be "led" along the straight paths. There is no need for fear, or even concern, about the straightness of the pathway which lies ahead when our guide is the Lord.

God Will Make Our Path To Be Straight !

Read Proverbs 2:20 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 8:20 and make notes:

Those who follow the paths of wisdom will be enabled to do what is right and to enjoy God's favor along the journey of life. Wisdom rewards those who are faithful to her. Verses 14-21 speak of the precious fruits, honor, and wealth which come to those who follow the way of wisdom. Wisdom takes the pathway of righteousness and the pathway of justice. It is along these paths that wisdom rewards those who travel with her.

Read Proverbs 20:11 and make notes:

The inner make up of a person, even a young child, can be assessed as to that of a heart of purity or of evil. This isn't referring to the occasional or short term conduct, but to the conduct as revealed on a day to day basis. The conduct that is characteristic of an individual tells us much about the purity of the heart.

Walk The Path Of Wisdom !

Read Proverbs 3:17 and make notes:

Wisdom is spoken of as the lovely lady that she is. This is the testimony of those who have found her. She is better than earthly wealth or riches. It doesn't matter how the path may appear at the beginning; any path which wisdom should lead you along will be a pleasant path and one of peace.

The Path Of Wisdom Is Pleasant !

Please write down the questions you would like to ask the group – and any insights you have regarding “Proverbs of the Path We Take” in this lesson so that you can share them when we meet:

Proverbs For Living – 26 – Lazy / Diligent

Ask a variety of people to describe exactly what constitutes a lazy person (a sluggard) and you will probably get a number of different answers. Each of us will tend to measure "laziness" as something less than what we do ourselves. To the work-aholic almost everyone else is lazy. In the book of Proverbs there is a rather distinctive and clear description of the characteristics of a lazy person. From this we should be able to standardize exactly what a lazy person is or who is lazy.

Characteristics Of Lazy Person:

#1:

Read Proverbs 6:9 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 26:14-15 and make notes:

A lazy person simply spends too much time in bed. They almost always sleep far too much. In much the same way as a door may move many times on "its hinges", the movements of a lazy person takes them nowhere. Most of their movement is simply back and forth upon their bed as if they were fastened to it by hinges. Maybe they spend too much time in a reclining chair rather than an actual bed.

Even if you give the lazy person provisions, it will not help them. The concept is a little more complex than a lazy person simply placing their hand in a bowl of food and them being too lazy to put it to their mouth. The idea is one of providing the lazy person with the means to feed himself and they are too lazy to put their hands to the tasks and so, they don't bring the food home where it can provide nourishment. The ancient wise were declaring the contemptible idea that the lazy person wanted others to feed them so they didn't have to raise their hands even to that important task.

#1

Lazy People Spend Too Much Time In Bed !

#2:

Read Proverbs 20:4 and make notes:

It is noteworthy that this proverb doesn't say the lazy person didn't plow (or plant). It says they didn't plow at the proper time (in season). In the era when the book of Proverbs was written, almost everyone understood that regardless of whether the farmer felt like it or not, if they didn't plant when it was the season to plant, there would be nothing to harvest. Even today, those who like to have a garden understand that there is a proper season when the garden must be planted. It simply will not work to plant when you feel like it. It must be done at the proper time if we are going to be able to receive from it.

Proverbs For Living – 26 – Lazy / Diligent

It is also noteworthy that it says the lazy person looked for something from his field. The lazy person knew they didn't do the job at the right time and yet the still expected to receive. This is typical of the average lazy person. They want to receive the benefits of work, but they are willing to do what it takes at the proper time in order to bring about the desired income. This concept of doing their appointed work at the proper time can apply to any career.

#2

Lazy People Don't Work At The Proper Time !

#3:

Read Proverbs 12:27 and make notes:

The image is one of a person who captured and killed the game, but didn't take the time to cook it. The natural result of this is that it spoils and is of no benefit to anyone.

Read Proverbs 19:24 (also 26:15) and make notes:

This exaggeration of the height of laziness is to point out how the lazy person will start to do the right thing but is simply too lazy to finish what they start even to the point of going hungry. It is hard for most of us to imagine someone who is hungry reaching into the bowl of food and then not putting some of the food in their mouth. But that is a primary characteristic of a lazy person, they have the resources to do what needs to be done, they know what needs to be done, and they even set out to do what needs to be done; but they don't finish the job.

#3

Lazy People Don't Finish What They Start !

#4:

Read Proverbs 10:26 and make notes:

Vinegar which is not diluted is unpleasant and makes the mouth very uncomfortable. Most of us have probably experienced the discomfort of having smoke get into our eyes. Either of these experiences is universally unpleasant and irritating, sometimes emotionally as well as physically. This is the resulting experience for those who depend upon a lazy person to carry out a task.

Read Proverbs 25:19 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 26 – Lazy / Diligent

Unfaithful is another descriptive term for the lazy person. They don't finish what they start. The opposite of a lazy person is a diligent person who is also known as a faithful person. Anyone who has ever had a serious cavity in one of their teeth understands how much you are prevented from doing because of the pain it causes, regardless of how important the task may be.

While many people today may never have experienced a bad tooth, most of us have experience a sore foot or have seen someone else trying to cope with one. Should an emergency arise, the person with a lame foot simply could not be relied upon to bring help or to rescue those who may be in danger. This is same with a lazy person, you simply cannot rely upon them to help during an emergency.

#4

Lazy People Cannot Be Relied Upon !

#5:

Read Proverbs 26:16 and make notes:

A lazy person suffers from self-deceit and they see themselves as much wiser than reality. Regardless of how many wise counselors may try to advise them, they are unteachable because of the own self determined wisdom.

Read Proverbs 16:25-26 and make notes:

The "way of death" just "seems right." The lazy person is always looking for the easy way for everything. The way that seems right to the "un-wise" person is in reality almost always the way of death and destruction. The risks is too great to settle for the way that seems right to the simple and especially to the lazy person. Today's contemporary society needs to contemplate the insight found in verse 26. The ancient wisdom noticed it was a person's hunger that drove them to work. We probably do more harm than good when we are too quick to help eliminate hunger from the lazy person. We may display great wisdom if we allow a lazy person to experience some hunger.

#5

Lazy People Think They Are Wiser Than Everyone Else !

Proverbs For Living – 26 – Lazy / Diligent

Results Of Being Lazy:

#1:

Read Proverbs 10:4 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 19:15 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 6:10-11 and make notes:

You can find someone from time to time who inherited great wealth and they are lazy. It will not likely happen that you will find someone who is lazy and became wealthy while practicing their lazy lifestyle. God's Word is very clear in stating laziness will make you poor. Laziness causes one to become lethargic. As already established, the lazy person sleeps too much. This laziness wastes the time which should be used in making provision for oneself and one's family. Those who are lazy will not have enough, and it is appropriate to apply this principle to other areas other than just enough food.

Everyone needs sleep and rest. There is a clear danger in too much of a good thing like sleep or rest. It doesn't take all that much sleep or rest to allow oneself to be robbed by poverty as surely as if a bandit ambushed you along the way. The emphasis should be placed on the unexpected time and nature of the attack which is characteristic of the bandit.

Read Proverbs 24:30-31 and make notes:

The field, the vineyard, the wall; everything about the lazy person's life was showing signs of his lack of judgment and his being a lazy person. The lazy person is unable to keep that fact a secret for long. It doesn't take very long until it is evident to all who pass by that this person is lazy.

Read Proverbs 20:21 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 26 – Lazy / Diligent

The phrase "inheritance quickly gained" does not convey the original meaning of this proverb. In the original language, this phrase spoke of an inheritance which was taken before it was time. This is in the same vein as the wayward child which takes control of the family possessions and even sometimes drives the parents from the property. The lazy person is frequently the one who will give in to such temptations. The thinking is usually along the line that it is going to be mine someday, and if I could get it now, then my suffering and hard times will be eased. It will not help the lazy person, and their actions will not be blessed. It will become part of their overall suffering and hardship.

#1 - Will Become Poor !

#2:

Read Proverbs 12:24 and make notes:

We don't have actual "slaves" in our contemporary society as was the case when this proverb was written. We do, however, have people who work for what could be called slave wages. This would be wages that are not only sufficient to live from but are also less than what the work is worth. This proverb couldn't be more clear. The lazy person will slide to the bottom of the labor market. This might be partly the result of their employers discovering that they can't be relied upon and they frequently don't complete their jobs. Whatever the cause, this proverb declares the lazy person will wind up having to work more and receive much less for it.

#2 - Will Become Slaves !

#3:

Read Proverbs 15:19 and make notes:

The Lazy person will find their path along life's journey repeatedly being blocked with obstacles and difficulties which make it unpleasant, uncomfortable, and difficult to keep going (thorns).

Read Proverbs 21:25 and make notes:

The wishful thinking (craving) of the lazy person will be the very thing that gets them to follow the way of death. The lazy person simply lacks the drive to put their hands to work. Sometimes it might be the excuse that they are waiting for the right work to come along, but most of us understand that you can be doing something while you are waiting for the right job. The point is hands that are doing are not only better than hands that are idle, they are safer as well.

#3 - Will Have A Hard Life !

Proverbs For Living – 26 – Lazy / Diligent

#4:

Read Proverbs 11:6 and make notes:

Again, in this proverb, the unfaithful are also the lazy. Their desire to receive and continually finding nothing coming in, may play a major part in their being attracted toward evil desires. The sad note from this proverb is the declaration that the lazy person will become trapped by their evil desires.

#4 - Will Become Trapped !

#5:

Read Proverbs 13:2 and make notes:

There are those who believe in a "universal" justice which proclaim that eventually everyone will get what they deserve. Those who say and do good things will receive and enjoy good things. Those who say and do bad things will receive bad things. This particular proverb is not saying that we all get what we deserve as much as it is warning the lazy person (unfaithful) about the inevitable craving for violence which becomes a part of the lazy person's life. There is an all too familiar consequence to the life of violence.

Read Proverbs 18:9 and make notes:

Lazy people are always trying to take shortcuts that diminish the quality of the work or product. They don't complete all the tasks assigned to them and call the work finished. The work is slack, it has gaps in it, and is unable to pull it's load. A lazy person is not only harmful to themselves, they hurt others. The term brother signifies two people who are of the same family and heritage. If we remember that Satan is the one who has come to steal, kill, and destroy, then it helps us understand the ominous insight in this verse. The lazy person is a brother to Satan. This is a sharp contrast to the person who is brother to Jesus Christ.

#5 - Are Drawn Toward Violence !

#6:

Read Proverbs 22:12 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 26 – Lazy / Diligent

Almost everyone has at some time in their life experienced the frustration of having their words come out differently than what they intended. When this happens, we can become not only frustrated, but embarrassed and harmful to ourselves or others. The lazy person (unfaithful) will experience having their own words become frustrated, unclear, and confusing. It won't be their enemies or opponents which cause this communication problem for the lazy person; it is God who will cause this to come about. While anyone can have this experience on occasion, the lazy person will have this experience continually throughout their life.

#6 - Will Have Their Words Frustrated !

#7:

Read Proverbs 13:4 and make notes:

The lazy person spends a great deal of their time wishing and hoping for things they do not have. It is realistic for everyone to have dreams, hopes, and wishes. The lazy person has very strong wishes and hopes; in fact the lazy person "craves" things and substance. Regardless of how strong their craving may be, they will live a life of getting nothing. It isn't true that if you want something bad enough that you will get it. In order to receive and acquire, one has to do something in accordance with their desires. The lazy person wants things to the point of craving, but they either don't do anything, don't do it at the right time, or don't finish what they start. Their life is one of continually craving but getting nothing.

Read Proverbs 27:20 and make notes:

If "Death and Destruction" could be satisfied, then there would at some point in time have been enough deaths and enough destruction and these would cease. Regardless of how many people die, "Death" is still wanting to take more. Regardless of how much destruction comes upon the earth, "Destruction" is still wanting more to destroy.

Read Proverbs 30:15-16 and make notes:

These things which can't be satisfied take a great deal of joy out of the lives of those who experience them. "The grave" refers to the place where the dead reside. It is difficult to imagine anyone being joyful about having to live there. "The barren womb" speaks of the place where life should be and is expected but none is found. For those with a strong desire for children, this is not a pleasant thought. "Land which is never satisfied with water" speaks of the thirst and exhaustion which cries out for refreshing, but receives none. Who could be joyous without the hope of relief? "Fire" speaks of those things in life which continue to consume and destroy until something or someone stops it. Those who have lost a home or business to fire can testify to the joy which is lost due fire.

Proverbs For Living – 26 – Lazy / Diligent

These are the things to which the lazy person is compared. The lazy person is no more satisfied in life than the grave, barren womb, drought stricken land, or fire.

#7 - Don't Have Desires Satisfied!

#8:

Read Proverbs 22:13 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 26:13 and make notes:

The lazy person makes what seems like absurd and ridiculous excuses to others for not getting out and doing something. "I might be killed by something or someone." "Oh, I can't take a morning job, I'm not a morning person." "I can't do that, I just know they would take advantage of me." Remember one of the characteristics of the lazy person is their high opinion of their wisdom. They don't think they are making ridiculous excuses. They think they are being realistic. The lazy person sometimes actually sees himself as sticking to what they know is right and not willing to work for less than their value or dignity. Sometimes the lazy person is responding out of real fear and worry. Anyone who has been experiencing the first seven results of the lazy person has a reason to be fearful and worried.

#8 - Live In Continuous Worry !

Diligent:

The opposite of the lazy person is the Diligent Person. Review the characteristics of the lazy person and opposite of each will be the typical characteristics of the Diligent Person. The Diligent person experiences basically the opposite of the results of the lazy person. The contrast is so clear one can't help but wonder why it doesn't serve as a wake-up call to shake the lazy person out of that life style.

#1:

Read Proverbs 10:4 and make notes:

#1 - Receive Wealth!

Proverbs For Living – 26 – Lazy / Diligent

#2:

Read Proverbs 12:24 and make notes:

#2 - Become Rulers!

#3:

Read Proverbs 12:27 and make notes:

#3 - Have Prized Possessions!

#4:

Read Proverbs 13:4 and make notes:

#4 - Have Desires Satisfied!

#5:

Read Proverbs 21:5 and make notes:

#5 - Receive Profit From Their Efforts!

#6:

Read Proverbs 2:8 and make notes:

#6 - Are Protected By God !

#7:

Read Proverbs 28:20 and make notes:

#7 - Are Blessed !

Proverbs For Living – 26 – Lazy / Diligent

What Is Expected:

Read Proverbs 24:27 and make notes:

There is a right priority for things. There is a right way to attend to our livelihood. In the days when this proverb was beginning to be passed along, almost everyone understood the business of agriculture. The planting and cultivating had to be done in a particular time period or there would be no harvest, no income, and no provision. The building of the house could be done at anytime during the year. How would a person or family survive, if they had completed a fine house but had missed the planting time and would have no harvest? When the harvest begins to come in, there will be provision for food but also provision for buying materials and goods to supply the home.

Even for those of us today who do not make our living from agriculture, this proverb offers great advice for our financial stability. It is important that we take care of those things which need to be done at a particular time and after this tend to those things which can be done at any time. We need to take care to provide for the income before we begin to spend for the lifestyle.

Read Proverbs 27:23 and make notes:

We are to pay attention to our means of making a living and our investments. We need to be conscious of any area that needs special attention or adjustments that might be needed.

Read Proverbs 27:25-27 and make notes:

When you have completed the work and taken care of all that you are supposed to do, then you will have plenty to feed and care for your family. Being attentive to what needs to be done and careful to do so will insure you have clothing, ability to buy (price of a field), and plenty to nourish your family. Even those who are in your house but not family (servant girls) will have plenty to eat.

Please write down the questions you would like to ask the group – and any insights you have regarding “Proverbs on Lazy & Diligent” in this lesson so that you can share them when we meet:

Proverbs For Living – 27 - Poverty

Poverty itself is not inherited, passed along, or caught like some disease. The attitudes and lifestyles which result in poverty certainly are frequently inherited, passed along, or caught from spending time with those who are afflicted with it. Being poor is nothing to be ashamed of. Being poor is a temporary circumstance and can be remedied. Poverty, on the other hand, is like a disease that attacks the mind and the heart and cannot be cured. It is important to recognize the causes of Poverty and if you are currently headed toward Poverty - TURN AROUND and make the necessary changes before it is too late.

Source Of Poverty :

#1:

Read Proverbs 20:13 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 24:33-34 and make notes:

Everyone needs sleep. When we don't get enough sleep, we tend to do poorly at our assigned tasks. Sleep is necessary, so sleep is good. The problem comes when someone "loves" sleep and spends too much time there. Regardless of your occupation, it is difficult to produce, sale, or administrate when you are sleeping. One who sleeps too much cannot take care of things around the home which may need attention and could be attended to before they become costly. Too much sleep or too much resting is a sure path to poverty.

#1

Poverty Comes From Too Much Sleep !

#2:

Read Proverbs 28:19 and make notes:

Fantasies can be a delightful way to relax and play as long as they remain moral and wholesome. It is not enough to simply refrain from sleeping "too much" and being busy. The person who spends much of their time and resources chasing after nothing more than fantasies is also on a sure pathway to poverty as surely as the one who sleeps too much. Our efforts, investments of time, energy, and money need to put forth toward realistic task that can be accomplished tasks.

#2

Poverty Comes From Chasing Fantasies !

Proverbs For Living – 27 - Poverty

#3:

Read Proverbs 21:5 and make notes:

The person who responds in haste to invest their money is sure to lose much of it. The person who responds in haste to take on certain jobs or responsibilities is certain to experience much disappointment and failure. When we don't take the time to evaluate what we are about to do, we are sure to make costly mistakes and serious errors in judgment. In addition to the mistakes which cost us directly, our ability to produce income can be severely affected by the reputation we develop in the community. Others will be reluctant to employ us or buy our services or product.

Read Proverbs 22:26-27 and make notes:

Do not put up security for the debts of others. Even if we feel certain that we have the resources at this time to be able to afford to do so – or we feel certain that the person for which we are doing this will be faithful to fulfill the debt. There are so many unexpected things that can happen that can make it impossible for the person to pay their debt – and can happen to us to take away our ability to take care of the debt.

#3

Poverty Comes From A Life Of Hasty Decisions !

#4:

Read Proverbs 22:16 and make notes:

It is interesting that the same painful punishment awaits the person who oppresses the poor as does the person who bribes those in authority. As we will see a little later, the oppressing of the poor is seen as immoral by God and He promises to punish the one who does this. The giving of bribes is at the very least a waste of your finances.

Read Proverbs 28:3 and make notes:

A driving rain which leaves no crops, destroys not only the crops but all the people who needed those crops to survive. This destroys the person who needed the income the crops would bring when they were sold and it destroys those who needed the crops for personal use; perhaps food. The ruler who would oppress the poor destroys the very means of the ruler being able to be a ruler. Oppressing the poor will ultimately bring the ruler to poverty as well.

#4

Poverty Comes From Oppressing The Poor !

Proverbs For Living – 27 - Poverty

#5:

Read Proverbs 28:22 and make notes:

The person who is stingy has their eyes upon all the wrong things in this life. We might see them as having no compassion when they refuse to give to those in need especially when we are sure they can afford to give. This proverb declares the real problem to be that they are eager to get rich. They may not even be conscious of their motive for being stingy. Whether they are aware of their real motive or not, this one thing is sure; poverty awaits them.

Read Proverbs 11:24 and make notes:

God's math is a little different from the conventional math of man. In God's economy, you must give in order to increase.

#5

Poverty Comes From Being Stingy !

Results of Poverty:

#1:

Read Proverbs 22:7 and make notes:

Poverty forces a person to depend upon others. Those who borrow are by necessity of the debt being ruled by those who made the loan to them. In ancient days, it was not uncommon for a person to sell themselves into slavery in an effort to satisfy a debt. Sometimes it was not voluntary at all. When they were unable to meet the obligations of the debt, they were forced into slavery. How often today are people forced to do things they would rather not do because of the debt they have incurred? Poverty takes away the independence of it's victim by bringing it's victim to the place of servant and making them dependent upon the creditor.

#1

Poverty Makes Us A Captive !

Proverbs For Living – 27 - Poverty

#2:

Read Proverbs 10:15 and make notes:

Poverty is as much an enhancement to the ruin of the poor as the strong walls of a fortified city are a safeguard for its inhabitants. The attitude and lifestyle of Poverty is the very thing which ruins the poor; it isn't any of the outside influences or circumstances.

#2

Poverty Brings Us To Ruin !

#3:

Read Proverbs 13:23 and make notes:

Even when it appears the poor person will have enough, injustice will come and "sweep" it away. It has happened frequently throughout history that injustice comes and sweeps away what someone has worked very hard to achieve. Some believe this proverb is saying the poor person loses what they worked hard to accrue because they practiced injustice. If a person should practice injustice, it is reasonable to expect such a result; but that isn't what this proverb is saying. It is declaring that the person who is in a poverty mentality can expect injustice to take away even that which they have.

#3

Poverty Makes Us Susceptible To Injustice !

#4:

Read Proverbs 18:23 and make notes:

Those who remain poor have no alternative but to beg and plead for mercy. They cannot influence others with their wealth or status in the community. Very few would dare ask for justice but most will beg for mercy.

#4

Poverty Makes Us Beg For Mercy !

Proverbs For Living – 27 - Poverty

#5:

Read Proverbs 14:20 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 19:4 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 19:7 and make notes:

It is a sad reality of life but frequently our popularity is a result of our possessions. Those in Poverty will experience being shunned by their neighbors. Many people will claim to be the friend of the person of wealth. Not many at all will claim to be a friend to those in poverty. To make matters worse, even those who confess to be the friend of the poor person will often times desert them. In 19:7, the word translated "shunned" has a much stronger meaning in the original language; it is closer to "hated." If the poor person is so strongly disliked by his relatives, it is only natural that their friends will avoid them as well. A poor person will have great difficulty finding friends, even if they beg for them.

#5

Poverty Takes Away Our Friends !

Read Proverbs 13:8 and make notes:

Perhaps the only positive result of being in Poverty is the absence of worry about being held hostage for ransom. It would be hard to imagine anyone would think poverty to be a good thing because of this when the other results are considered.

Christian View Of Poverty:

Read Proverbs 30:7-9 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 27 - Poverty

Perhaps the majority of people would state their plans and desires to avoid poverty. There isn't likely to be many that you could find who would gladly accept the lack, discomfort, and inconvenience of poverty. For the Believer, poverty is certainly something to be avoided. The reason to avoid poverty is not the discomfort of being without but the temptation to steal and in so doing, dishonor the name of our God. It is interesting that the same word of wisdom which prays God would not allow them to be in poverty also asks God to keep them from having too much of this world's goods. And this is for much the same reason as for not being poor. They don't want to do anything which dishonors God. Here is the heart of the matter altogether. It isn't the wealth or lack in this world's goods; but do we live our life in a manner that brings honor and glory to our God.

It Is Right To Avoid Poverty !

Read Proverbs 29:13 and make notes:

Even if a person should find themselves in a place and opportunity to oppress the poor, they need to be very careful about this. This proverb makes it clear that it is God who gives life and existence to both of them. To give "sight to the eyes" speaks of much more than physical eye sight. It is God who gives the poor man the ability to see things as they really are just as surely as He gives this ability to the person of means. It is God who gives insight to poor and rich alike. If it were not for God, all men would surely be in darkness. It would do each of us well to remember that we are only a few steps from being poor. There are a multitude of people alive in this present generation who can attest to how quickly one can go from the top, or near the top, of the career ladder to the bottom.

Keep A Gracious Attitude Toward The Poor !

Read Proverbs 14:31 and make notes:

It might come as a shock to some people; but the attitude we have toward the poor displays to the whole world what kind of relationship we have with the Heavenly Father. If someone is oppressing the poor, then they have contempt in their heart toward God. As a Believer, this isn't acceptable. For a true Believer, it won't be possible.

Read Proverbs 17:5 and make notes:

It seems too often people will rejoice over the misfortune of another person more quickly than they will for their success. Those who make fun of the circumstances of the poor are demonstrating their heart of contempt toward God. To make sport of the plight of the poor is to hold God in reproach for the way He is overseeing the world.

Proverbs For Living – 27 - Poverty

Read Proverbs 22:22-23 and make notes:

Those who decide to oppress the poor are placing themselves in a dangerous position. Don't accept the idea that this poor person is poor because of God's justice; or that they deserve and have earned their poverty. How would you hold up if God should take up the poor person's case and plunder and oppress you as a result?

Read Proverbs 21:13-14 and make notes:

If we show no mercy to the poor, then we will receive no mercy. Verse 14 gives both the negative and positive side of secret gifts. A “gift” given to the poor person who is angry can help soothe their anger and given in secret prevents it appearing to be done for public favor. A “bribe” by its very nature is given in secret; and while it may soothe the wrath of a judge, if it keeps mercy from the poor then we will not receive mercy.

Read Proverbs 28:27 and make notes:

The person who closes his eyes to, or refuses to see, the plight of the poor will receive "many curses."

Read Proverbs 19:17 and make notes:

This proverb opens our eyes to a bigger picture than the specific poor person we are being kind toward. It isn't the poor person we are ministering to, it is our Heavenly Father. When we give to the poor, we are giving to God. When we are gracious to the poor, we are being gracious to God.

Read Proverbs 22:9 and make notes:

God is the one who will reward those who are generous to the poor. When we share with the poor, it isn't necessarily that we will receive an amount of money or material goods in return as a reward from God. Those who are generous to the poor will be blessed.

Read Proverbs 29:14 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 27 - Poverty

God even promises rules (kings) security if only they will judge the poor with fairness.

Read Proverbs 31:7 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 31:8 and make notes:

Alcoholic drinks were practically the only means available to the average person to help relieve physical pain. While strong drinks were declared to be out of place for the ruler, it was suggested they be made available to those in poverty to help ease their pain. The biggest issue in this text: those in authority are expected by God to speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves. The persons in places of authority need to avoid taking advantage, in any way, of those who are destitute. Instead become their champion to fight for their rights and their just cause.

Read Proverbs 31:9 and make notes:

It is not only the responsibility of the king to judge the poor fairly, it is every believers responsibility to stand up for the rights of the poor. Some believers may have become so involved in trying to help the poor that they have neglected the preaching of the Good News of Salvation In Jesus Christ. But there are many more who have tried to preach the Gospel of Jesus without any compassion or interest in helping the poor.

The Poor Should Be An Object Of Ministry Rather Than Scorn !

There are a number of Scriptures in Proverbs which make it clear that Poverty has come upon people because of moral slackness and bad work ethics. But the Scriptures we have looked at which make it very clear that God also expects His people to minister grace and love to the poor at the same time they may be receiving the administration of justice for what they have done in the past. The Believer who sees the poor as only people receiving justice is failing in a tragic way. The poor also are being used by God to judge His people. Those who can be lifted out of poverty, need to be.

Please write down the questions you would like to ask the group – and any insights you have regarding “Proverbs on Poverty” in this lesson so that you can share them when we meet:

Proverbs For Living – 28 - Prosperity

A common attitude found among people is having prosperity will solve most, if not all of their problems. For a great number of people, when they think of prosperity, it means having more than enough finances. Before going through this lesson, take a few minutes and consider carefully what you think about prosperity. What is prosperity? Is there prosperity in areas other than finances? If so, can a person be very prosperous in one area and have little or no prosperity in another? If you think so, then give some examples and explain how.

Webster defines "prosperity": advancing or gaining in anything good. The word translated "prosperity" in the book of Proverbs means "abundance; prosperity." The use of the contemporary word "prosperity" is completely in alignment with the original message being communicated in Proverbs. Prosperity is the advancing or gaining "in anything good." We can be considered prosperous in any area or anything which is good.

Read Proverbs 17:16 and make notes:

Money IS NOT the answer to our problems, regardless of what our problems are. Even for the person who suddenly realizes they are in a tremendous financial debt, money is not the answer to their problem. Should they suddenly get enough money to meet the demands of this immediate debt, that would only postpone or delay having to deal with the same or a similar dilemma. The real problem is what caused them or allowed them to get so far into debt in the first place, not the debt itself.

It would be useless and senseless for the fool to be able to be successful in the obtaining a large sum of money. The fool is unable to hold onto material wealth. Prosperity would be completely wasted on the fool. Since the fool has no desire or willingness to obtain wisdom, then the fool does not have that which is necessary to maintain and keep the prosperity. Don't expect the fool to be prosperous. Even if they should have what appears to be prosperity handed to them, it will not remain with them.

Since the fool has no interest in obtaining wisdom, money will be of little or no use. What is needed to resolve problems (and to avoid problems) is wisdom. Money in the hands of those who are without wisdom is useless and usually remains for only a very short time. So, what use is money in the hands of a fool?

Jeremiah spoke of people who didn't see prosperity when it did come (Jere 17:6). What good is prosperity to those who are so foolish they don't even recognize it has come?

Prosperity Is No Help To The Fool!

Read Proverbs 22:2 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 28 - Prosperity

Whether a person has great wealth or none of this earth's riches, there is something all people have in common. Every person, regardless of social status, educational level, physical strength, talents, or financial strength, was created by God. Neither the rich nor the poor are a result of God having made a mistake. Both exist because that is part of God's plan. It is good to serve and minister in an effort to aid and assist the poor where we can. It is to place yourself at odds with the plan of God when you set out to completely do away with all the poor. This is true whether you decide to literally destroy the poor or to bring everyone out of poverty and into plenty. Instead of making value judgments based upon a person's level of prosperity, treat everyone with a level of respect due to someone who is a creation of God. Isaiah, Jeremiah, & Daniel - all stated that prosperity comes from the Lord. We need to be very careful to treat with respect those who are not prosperous as much as we do those who are prosperous. God can surely change us from being prosperous to non-prosperous since He is the maker of both. Let us respect the other person because they are a part of God's creation and not because they have prosperity.

Jeremiah also declared to the people of his day that even if calamity should fall upon someone, it doesn't mean they won't prosper (Jeremiah 32:42). That should serve as encouragement to those who find themselves experiencing present calamity.

Prosperity Is Not A Yardstick!

Read Proverbs 13:7 and make notes:

There are very few people who are truly what they appear to be, especially when it comes to the area of prosperity. Many who are in need of finances, pretend to be wealthy when they are in the presence of other people. Others who have no need of any additional finances pretend to be poor when they are in the presence of others.

The world's wisdom gives us logical reasons to pretend. In the business world, people are often encouraged to pretend to be prosperous; believing people would rather deal with those who are prosperous. Those who are prosperous are frequently encouraged to conceal their wealth to prevent being a target of the thief or robber. Obviously, this is not something peculiar to our generation or society, since the book of Proverbs deals with this issue. This proverb is not condemning or promoting this kind of pretending. It is simply stating the fact that very few people are honest in regards to their prosperity or the lack of prosperity.

Few People Are Honest About Their Prosperity!

Read Proverbs 14:20 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 28 - Prosperity

It is rather sad, but it appears that the amount of personal possessions one has determines how popular they are in the community. It is a reality of life that the poor are often shunned by the ones who are closest to them (neighbors) and best able to help them in their area of need. At the same time, those who appear to be rich have many people who claim to be their friend.

People Determine Their Friends Based On Prosperity!

Read Proverbs 18:23 and make notes:

Our level of prosperity too often sets the tone of our voice. Many who are lacking in prosperity, basically because they feel they have no choice, will speak in a gentle, pleading tone; hoping to receive mercy and not what they deserve. Then there are those who are experiencing abundant prosperity who will answer such pleas with a harsh cold tone of voice. Maybe some respond this way because of a previous experience when they discovered the real attitude of the poor person was quite different from the appreciative tone they presented. Maybe it is from a hardened heart and general attitude that each person gets what they deserve.

Prosperity Affects Our Compassion!

Read Proverbs 13:8 and make notes:

It is seen by some that having prosperity only opens one up to the possibility of attack and their conclusion is it is better not to be prosperous. Another view of this proverb is that those who are prosperous can use their wealth to pay for sufficient legal advice against ruthless enemies. While it is true that a poor person doesn't have to worry about someone taking them for ransom, it also means they don't have the means to hire sufficient legal counsel to defend against enemies. Perhaps the average poor person doesn't hear threats because they know you "can't get blood from a turnip."

Prosperity Affects Our Feelings Of Security!

Read Proverbs 11:28 and make notes:

How secure we feel is often dependent upon where we place our faith. The "green leaf" was used in reference to the prosperity of the fertile agricultural land. A prosperous land had many green leaves. Those who are righteous place their trust and confidence in the Lord and they are assured of prospering as surely as a fertile land has many green leaves. Those who place their trust and confidence in finances WILL FALL. The avenue to prosperity is not obtaining earthly riches but is the acquiring of righteousness.

Proverbs For Living – 28 - Prosperity

Read Proverbs 23:5 and make notes:

Finances can disappear so quickly. The image of a bird flying away is of losing control, but the eagle flies to such heights that we cannot hope to climb to him to retrieve our fleeing riches. How foolish to make yourself a slave to working and striving toward something which can be gone with such ease and swiftness.

Read Proverbs 27:24 and make notes:

The text in which this verse is found speaks of being a good steward of what you have. This verse in particular declares riches to be temporary. Take good care of what you have and use it wisely because you will only have it for a short time. This is a good place to remind ourselves that man is going to exist forever. The span of life on this earth, even for those who live very long lives, is but a spot in time when compared to forever. The riches most of us have today will be in our control for only a short time. That is why many of us feel we must continue to seek more.

Earthly Prosperity Is Temporary !

The writer of Ecclesiastes declares even if a person had hundreds of children and could live many years - if he couldn't enjoy his prosperity - it simply wouldn't be worth it (Eccles 6:3-6). Take a look at this text and write your thoughts about how this can be applied to our daily lives.

Read Proverbs 28:20 and make notes:

There is real danger in one taking on the attitude of being "eager" to get rich. The person who is eager to get rich will not put God first, nor serving God. The eagerness to get rich will put everything else, especially the ministering to others, after the efforts to get rich. This is a sure way to receive punishment.

Eagerness To Get Rich Is A Detriment To Prosperity !

Read Proverbs 18:11 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 28 - Prosperity

Not every person who has earthly riches believes it to be unfailing security. It is truly a sad note when a person looks at riches and "imagines" it to be security against the evil of this world. Imagining yourself to be in a safe place doesn't mean you are safe. The imagined security of earthly riches is contrasted against the real security mentioned in the preceding verse which comes only from God. Our wealth can certainly bring some comfort to life and can surely relieve some suffering, but it is temporary. It is much like drinking water to quench thirst. We cannot drink enough water to permanently satisfy the need to drink again. Earthly material possessions are much the same, there will always be a need for more, if only to replace that which wears out or expires. It is important to remember, riches are temporary, so even if they could provide some level of security, it won't last. It is important that our security be in the Lord and not in our prosperity.

Prosperity Can Bring A False Security !

Read Proverbs 13:21 and make notes:

Prosperity should not be written off due to its temporary nature. Throughout history there have been those who have taken vows of poverty in an effort to avoid the spiritual excesses which have come to many who have experienced prosperity. This proverb begins a chain of thought which might argue against this philosophy. Misfortune, calamity, and hard times is the sure reward for the sinner. This, though misapplied, is the concept Job's visitors used on him. But just as surely as ruin is the reward for the sinner is the concept that prosperity is God's planned reward for those who are righteous. God intends for man to be prosperous. Prosperity is declared to be a reward which those who are righteous will receive.

Read Proverbs 21:21 and make notes:

The person who "pursues" (chases after with great zeal and intent) righteousness and love is promised to find life, honor, and Prosperity. Surely, it would be enough to receive life and honor as a reward for the virtuous pursuit of righteousness and love. But God promises to reward such a person with prosperity as well. This is a good time to reflect upon the definition of prosperity discussed at the beginning of this lesson. Prosperity doesn't only apply to earthly riches, it can refer to "anything good." When God promises to reward a person with prosperity and doesn't qualify the specific area - it is reasonable to expect to prosper in all or many areas of life.

Jesus said those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled. This was not part of the new covenant relationship but was part of the ancient wisdom handed down from generation to generation. Those who pursue (chase after with the intent to catch it) righteousness will not only receive life and honor, but they will also be rewarded with prosperity. The receiving of life and honor speaks of the being filled spiritually and emotionally. The receiving of prosperity speaks of being filled in regards to physical and material needs.

Proverbs For Living – 28 - Prosperity

Read Proverbs 16:3 and make notes:

There are a great many books and tapes available today that claim to be the plan and program to help people become successful (and prosperous). If any plan is to be truly success and remain successful, then it must be a plan that is committed to the Lord. It takes a spirit and attitude of humility to be able to declare that our plan depends completely upon God for it's success. The concept of the phrase "commit to the Lord" in the original language also has the concept of the plan having God's approval. All of our plans are not going to be pleasing to God and it is not reasonable for us to expect God to make a plan successful which is not pleasing to Him. We can expect to be prosperous when we put into practice those plans which please God and when we give Him all the credit for making them succeed.

Solomon was told by God that since he had not asked for wealth but instead asked for wisdom, God was going to reward him with prosperity (2 Chron 1:11).

Prosperity Is Part Of God's Promise !

Read Proverbs 8:18 and make notes:

This verse is found in a text speaking of the value of wisdom. It is noteworthy of the way in which wisdom speaks of the prosperity which is found dwelling with wisdom. The prosperity which dwells with wisdom is said to be "enduring" prosperity. Since we have already determined that earthly riches are temporary, this must be prosperity in areas other than earthly riches even though earthly riches are probably included in the promise.

There Is An Enduring Prosperity !

Describe the differences you see between earthly prosperity and the "enduring" prosperity the Lord offers.

Please write down the questions you would like to ask the group – and any insights you have regarding “Proverbs on Prosperity” in this lesson so that you can share them when we meet:

Proverbs For Living – 29 – Righteous / Hope / Joy

Righteous Living:

Read Proverbs 16:8 and make notes:

Fortunately, to be righteous and poor or to be wealthy and dishonest are not our only options. People can be poor and dishonest just as easily. Hopefully you have met some who are wealthy and honest, for there are many. The original word translated "little" in this text does not signify the state of being in poverty. It simply refers to the situation where one has a moderate income, maybe having their basic needs met but having no excess.

The real contrast in this text is between those who live a "righteous" lifestyle and those who live a lifestyle of "injustice." The message from the wise in this verse is saying regardless of how much you may acquire, it will not be sufficient, or pleasant, or enjoyable. The dishonesty by which you gain is the very thing that contaminates your "much" and renders it un-enjoyable. The lifestyle of the righteous is far superior and to be desired because even when the righteous have only modest resources; they are happy and blessed.

Read Proverbs 14:22 and make notes:

Those who plot evil go astray, or they find themselves becoming lost and disoriented. By contrast, those who plan to do good find themselves in a place of love and faithfulness. The way of the righteous is by far the better path.

Righteousness Is The Superior Lifestyle !

Read Proverbs 11:4 and make notes:

This "day of wrath" could be referring to a divine day of wrath poured out by God or it could be any time when you are under attack by an enemy. It seems more in line with the message of the book of Proverbs to consider this an attack by one who has chosen to be our adversary and intends us harm. The question being addressed in this verse is: which is better when you are under attack, having lived a righteous life or having great wealth?

History records a number of times when a person or a nation has ransomed themselves by giving their adversary great sums of wealth. But in most of these cases, the adversary returns again for even more. The adversary who has been rewarded before is not likely to believe the report that there is no more wealth and then inflict harm and destruction upon their victim. Those who have lived a righteous lifestyle, thus having pleased God, has every reason to expect God to come to their aid, defense, and deliverance. This is better than wealth.

Proverbs For Living – 29 – Righteous / Hope / Joy

Read Proverbs 16:12 and make notes:

This insight comes from a time when those in leadership understood that a kingdom established by treacherous and dishonest means would not be able to stand. The only thrones which can last are those established by righteousness. While the thugs, thieves, and evil minded people may well try to establish some type of kingdom through dishonest means, a real king would only try to set up a kingdom based upon righteousness. This applies equally well to a home, a business, or any organization.

Read Proverbs 16:17 and make notes:

Those who travel the way of integrity and righteousness simply avoid the paths which take one through the places of destruction and ruin. The concept of a "highway" was that of a raised roadway covered and paved with many stones so that there were no places where one would get caught in the mire even in the rainy weather. The highway is also the way of many travelers so one is not as likely to be the victim of thieves. This was an understood contrast to those who take the paths, or shortcuts, which lead through the wilderness and are subject to the traps of bad road conditions as well as the criminals. The person who travels the way of the upright actually protects (guards) himself by taking the highway of righteousness.

Righteousness Delivers From Harm!

Read Proverbs 4:18 and make notes:

For anyone who has had the joy of doing some primitive camping, this is a graphic picture. Primitive camping is where you don't take the modern conveniences including such things as bright lanterns. After having spent the night in the natural darkness of the wilderness one's eyes have adjusted to the dark. As soon as the dawn begins to come forth, there is more than enough light to be able to see to prepare a meal and gather your things for the new day. Over the next one to two hours after that first glimmer of dawn, the brightness of the day continues to increase to greater degrees of illumination. This is what the lifestyle of the righteous is like. They enjoy an ever increasing illumination of the path of life. They have less and less confusion and greater and greater insight. A person in darkness can grow increasingly insecure as every hour passes and noises are heard. The person walking in ever increasing light feel more secure with every hour.

Righteousness Lights Our Path !

Proverbs For Living – 29 – Righteous / Hope / Joy

Results of Righteous:

Read Proverbs 11:31 and make notes:

This is a significant jewel among the gems of wisdom found in the book of Proverbs. If there has been any doubt in regards to present rewards for living a life of righteousness, this verse should help. Part of the emphasis in this verse is on the "how much more" the sinner will receive punishment in this life than the righteous will receive rewards. This takes the message out of the category of an allegory and puts it into the place of physical reality. The righteous have a Biblical reason to expect to be blessed right here in the earthly life.

Rewards For Righteous Lifestyle Are Received In This Present Life !

Read Proverbs 11:25-26 and make notes:

One of the rewards of the righteous is the promise to prosper because they are generous to others. The phrase "a generous man" in the original text refers to "a person who brings a blessing" or "a person who does a special favor." The word translated "prosper" in the original text speaks of one coming to have abundance. While prosperity does apply to areas other than financial resources, this verse is speaking of the person being rewarded with an abundance of physical resources because they have shown themselves to be faithful in sharing with those in need.

The second part of this verse literally says those who have refreshed others can expect to be refreshed. The original text speaks literally of one who has given good water to one who is desperately thirsty. This person will be given good water when they need it. This illustration is also one of physical resources (water).

The Righteous Will Prosper !

Read Proverbs 11:19 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 16:31 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 20:29 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 29 – Righteous / Hope / Joy

The ancient wisdom was very clear on the fact that life and death results from the moral choices we make as individuals and as nations. The original words of this text speak of one who "pursues, strives after", or is steadfast in striving for righteousness. The one who attains life is not the person who simply was fortunate enough not to have done too much bad. This is the person who has set their purpose to live a life of righteousness. The contrast is the one who "pursues" evil will, without a doubt, go to death. To have "gray hair" indicates one who did not die young. Young men usually put their trust in their strength and agility; but older men have learned to trust in the wisdom more than physical strength.

The End Of A Righteous Lifestyle Is Life !

Read Proverbs 12:28 and make notes:

This verse takes the understanding of the reward for the righteous lifestyle to extend beyond the present physical life and into eternity. How much the ancients understood or thought of the concept of Believers going to live with the Heavenly Father for ever and ever we can't say. But they had come to understand the righteous lifestyle had rewards of life beyond physical limits (immortality). Having the benefit of the New Testament teachings and the gospel message of believing on Jesus as Savior helps us grasp the implications of this ancient word of wisdom.

Righteousness Leads To Immortality !

Characteristics of Righteous:

Read Proverbs 21:26 and make notes:

Many people will give to another person when they are moved by a tremendous need in that person's life. The righteous are different in a couple of ways. First, it isn't necessary for them to be moved by some great tragedy. Secondly, they have the Lord's help in being able to have something to give. Generosity is a common characteristic among the righteous. A person may have some generosity and not be righteous; but a person cannot be righteous and not be generous.

Read Proverbs 10:21-22 and make notes:

The words spoken by the righteous bring nourishment, edification, building up, and encouragement to those who hear them. The blessing of the Lord doesn't just bring wealth, but it brings wealth without anxiety or without the need for worry. The righteous have much with which to be generous, nourishing words, wealth, and the absence of anxiety.

Proverbs For Living – 29 – Righteous / Hope / Joy

Read Proverbs 25:21-22 and make notes:

Giving food to a hungry enemy and water to a thirsty enemy will “heap burning coals” upon their head. It is a common interpretation to take this to be a “consuming” or “destroying” fire. I believe the better view is to see this as a “melting” of his thoughts and attitudes. Placing hot coals upon metal or rock does not destroy but softens and makes it easier to change it's shape.

The Righteous Are Generous !

Read Proverbs 21:15 and make notes:

Those who live a righteous lifestyle have nothing to fear when someone suggests justice will be done in a matter concerning them. The idea that justice will be done in the affairs only brings joy because their conscience is free from guilt and they expect rewards. Those who are guilty of evil activities experience more than fear, they have "terror", at the threat of justice. Even the most evil person understands that wrong doing deserves punishment. To assure an evil person that justice will be done is not a comfort and is in fact a severe threat to them.

This verse helps to bring understanding to the efforts of ungodly people trying to get laws changed which punish for sin. The "evil doers" don't want justice, so they work hard to prevent justice from being applied in their society. Those who live a righteous lifestyle look forward to justice and embrace it.

Righteousness Rejoices At Justice !

Read Proverbs 10:29 and make notes:

Some believe "the way of the Lord" is referring to the divine providential direction God interjects into the life of those who are righteous. If this is true it would be more in the concept that God works all things out to our good rather than His working us like puppets and we have no choice in where we go and what we do. The more likely meaning in this proverb is that the "way of the Lord" is the way of righteousness, wisdom, and knowledge.

Proverbs For Living – 29 – Righteous / Hope / Joy

The "way of the Lord" is God's way of doing things. His "ways" and plans for mankind are laid out in the Old and New Testaments. The righteous find these "ways" of living to be profitable, pleasant, and protecting. Those who are intent on doing evil see the "ways" of the Lord to be a threat to their income, their pleasure, and a path to ruin for all they want. This contrast is so sharp and distinct. The very same lifestyle that is rewarding to one is a ruin to another. This helps to explain why the wicked are so vigorously against those who try to live a lifestyle of righteousness. The righteous lifestyle, knowledge, and wisdom are declared throughout the Proverbs to provide a shelter and refuge for those who find them. The righteous do not need to be too concerned about finding refuge, they walk in it daily.

The Ways Of The Lord Are A Refuge For The Righteous !

Write down your thoughts concerning these "Proverbs about the Righteous":

Hope:

Read Proverbs 13:12 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 18:14 and make notes:

A person who feels they have no hope is most discouraged and depressed. When the physical heart is sick, the whole body is slowed and impaired. When the spiritual heart is sick (no hope), the whole person is slowed and impaired. People can bear with frustration and hard times when they have hope of it ending, even if it is some time away. People can't bear even minor frustration when they have no hope of it ending. Believers have the real message of real hope for the future. Sharing this "hope" that is found only in Jesus Christ can defer a lot of sickness by encouraging the heart.

Read Proverbs 13:19 and make notes:

Even though having a "longing fulfilled" brings us joy and happiness, the fool isn't willing to turn from their evil ways in order to be happy. Even a fool wants to have their desires and longings fulfilled. The fool is the one who would rather declare "no one is going to tell me how to live my life" than to receive fulfillment.

Proverbs For Living – 29 – Righteous / Hope / Joy

Read Proverbs 20:28 and make notes:

Love and faithfulness are the only things that can bring security. It is not possible to put into place enough soldiers, alarms, traps, security fences, etc. to protect oneself from those who do not love you and plan to harm you. Even if there are few physical defenses, one can feel secure when in the company of those who love them and have proven their love to be faithful. There is no love greater or more faithful than the love the Heavenly Father has for His children. We can rest assured of the reality of our security when we are in His presence. Our Hope is in the Lord!

Hope Makes The Heart Strong !

Read Proverbs 29:20 and make notes:

It is easier to help a fool than it is to help a person who is too quick to speak (speaks in haste). It is foolish to speak before having thought things through. As bad as it is for the fool, it is even worse for the one who speaks in haste.

There Is No Hope For Those Who Speak Hastily !

Read Proverbs 11:16 and make notes:

This verse doesn't deny that wealth can be acquired by ruthless and dishonest means. It also doesn't say that kindheartedness and wealth are at different ends of the spectrum. The "kindhearted" person may very well gain wealth, they will certainly gain "respect". The "ruthless" person can gain wealth, but they cannot gain "respect." It is possible to be poor with respect and it is possible to be wealthy with respect; but this comes only to those who are "kindhearted."

The Kindhearted Person Will Be Respected !

Write down your thoughts concerning these "Proverbs about Hope":

Proverbs For Living – 29 – Righteous / Hope / Joy

Joy:

Read Proverbs 15:30 and make notes:

One source of Joy is a "cheerful look." It is also true that "good news" literally brings health to our bodies. Isn't it interesting that just a look could make a person joyful? This is easily proven. If everyone in a group agreed to give a certain person a "hard look" or a "mean look" every time they saw them for a couple of days, even if they didn't speak; it would probably only take one day. The test person could even be aware of the experiment. By the end of the first day the test person is most likely going to be significantly discouraged just from the way the people they worked with have looked at them. If these same people agreed to give this test person a "cheerful look" for a couple of days; again, it would probably take only one day. Before the first day is ended, the test person will probably be extremely happy and joyful.

Even those of us who may not have physical resources to spare, can give another person a cheerful look. How easy it would be for each Believer to bring some joy into the lives of those we meet.

Joy Comes From A Cheerful Look !

Read Proverbs 15:23 and make notes:

An "apt reply" speaks of timely advice, or words spoken at the right time, or words appropriate for the situation. This is an interesting verse because it doesn't say that the person who receives an "apt reply" finds joy. It says the person who gives "an apt" reply finds joy. When we discover that what we said, was appropriate and timely and it benefited the recipient, we find joy filling us up from the inside. To be able to say something that really helps another person is truly a satisfying experience. The person who has knowledge and wisdom is naturally in a better condition to be able to do this. The person who is in the best condition to be able to speak an "apt" word to another person is the one who is in a personal relationship with God and "hears" Him.

Joy Comes From Giving An Appropriate Word !

Read Proverbs 15:20 and make notes:

A "wise" child brings great joy to the parents. What parent doesn't feel pride and joy when they see or hear of the good things their children do or have accomplished. This isn't true only when the children are growing up in the home. It is still true when the children are grown and are living on their own. Parents find joy in hearing or seeing their children exhibit wisdom.

Proverbs For Living – 29 – Righteous / Hope / Joy

Read Proverbs 17:21 and make notes:

The grief that comes to the parents of a foolish child is almost indescribable. Practically every parent finds it a joyous occasion when a child is born to them. How quickly and thoroughly this joy is destroyed when the child begins to do foolish and destructive things. Most parents look forward to the day when their child will be a credit to the family and perhaps to the community as well. A foolish child depletes the parents of joy.

Joy Comes From Wise Children !

Read Proverbs 17:22 and make notes:

There are numerous studies today to substantiate what this proverb said many years ago. The emotional and psychological condition has a direct bearing and effect upon our physical health and well being. The positive and healthy outlook on life (cheerful heart) brings good healing. The depressed and dejected (crushed heart) bring destruction to the very core of our physical body, even to the point of drying up the bones. Dry bones pictures a body that is beyond death and has lost all the muscle, organs, skin, hair, tissue, etc.; being utterly destroyed of all life.

Joy Brings Health To Our Physical Body !

Please write down the questions you would like to ask the group – and any insights you have regarding “Proverbs on Righteous, Hope, & Joy” in this lesson so that you can share them when we meet:

Proverbs For Living – 29 – Righteous / Hope / Joy

(this page for additional notes)

Proverbs For Living – 30 - Adultery

“Adultery” Is A Married Person Having A Relationship With Someone Other Than Their Marriage Partner.

Read Proverbs 2:17 and make notes:

A covenant is legally binding. The Adulterer is the person who is acting outside the legal boundaries of marriage. This person is breaking their word which was given with God as a witness.

The Adulterer is spoken of in the feminine pronouns of "she" and "her" but the wisdom and instructions concerning the Adulterer apply equally to the husband and the wife (male adulterer and female adulterer).

Read Proverbs 6:26 and make notes:

This proverb does not say prostitution is a less offense than adultery. What it is saying is the prostitute only desires to have your finances. The adulterer, on the other hand, whether conscious of it or not, is feeding upon your life as surely as a bird of prey would tear away parts of your flesh. The prostitute may very well cost you dearly when it comes to your finances or physical resources, but the adulterer will cost you your life.

Read Proverbs 23:27-28 and make notes:

Both the prostitute and the adulterer are dangerous. The deep pit can certainly be difficult to escape and may at times require assistance from someone else. The narrow well is a different picture. This is speaking of the well that is so narrow there is no room in which to turn around. The person who falls into the narrow well will definitely perish if someone else does not pull them out and rescue them.

This proverb speaks of the adulterous wife but the truth applies equally to the adulterous husband. The person who is unfaithful to their marriage partner "multiplies the unfaithful" or causes many more to become unfaithful. There is a common stereotype of the unmarried single person who causes a married person to commit adultery. The reality is at least as many, if not more, married persons are committing adultery with other married persons. The habitual adulterer seems to wind up with another person's spouse more often than they do a unmarried person.

Adultery Is Very Expensive !

Proverbs For Living – 30 - Adultery

Read Proverbs 6:32 and make notes:

How can you improve on such a simple and straightforward statement? The person who commits adultery "lacks judgment." The person who commits adultery destroys their own life. They do this to themselves. In the ancient world this offense was punishable by death. What the wise ones observed was the fact that even if the society didn't dispense capital punishment to the adulterer, their social life and often their business life became destroyed.

Adultery Is Failure To Use Judgment !

Read Proverbs 5:3-5 and make notes:

The warnings are to be alert because the adulterer is very seductive. Their words are so flattering as to give the image of honey dripping from their lips that are covered with oil. There is a grave danger hidden beneath this dripping honey rolling off the smooth oil slicked lips. The end of the relationship with the adulterer is an experience like that of gall in the mouth and stomach. It is like wrestling with a double-edged sword. It is capable of inflicting damage as it moves in any direction. The lifestyle of the wayward spouse is one that leads to death. This speaks of both the death of marriages as well as death of the physical body.

Read Proverbs 5:7-10 and make notes:

The warning from the caring father to the child that he loves is to stay away from the path that goes near where the adulterer is found. Don't even go near where the adulterer can be found. To associate with the adulterer can cost you your health as well as your prosperity. Far too many in our society have lost the best years of their life and the best strength of their life to the adulterer. Some have lost their family, some their career, some have lost their physical health, others their emotional and spiritual health.

Adulterers Are To Be Avoided !

Read Proverbs 5:11-14 and make notes:

When the time is gone and your life is near its end, you will be depressed and experience anguish for your participation with the adulterer. The terms "flesh" and "body" are used to express the complete exhaustion of the person over this matter. The guilty conscience will play over and over for this person such things "if only I had accepted discipline", "if only I had receive correction", "if only I had obeyed what I had been taught" until they find no rest inwardly or outwardly. To avoid the adulterer requires discipline, correction, and obedience.

Proverbs For Living – 30 - Adultery

Adultery Leads To Destitution:

Read Proverbs 6:27-31 and make notes:

Surely most of us can understand the inevitable result of scooping fire into our lap, we will be burned. We also understand that we will get our feet burned if we decide to walk on hot coals. It is not different for the person who decides to have intimate relations with a person who is not their spouse. They will be burned! The analogy is given of the thief who steals because he is hungry. While people understand the motivation behind the action, they still require the penalty be paid. The person who commits adultery may have a justification that others might sympathize with, but the penalty will still be required.

Adultery Will Cause Harm !

Read Proverbs 6:33-35 and make notes:

It has been observed how difficult it is to get a husband or wife to forgive and release from guilt the person who committed adultery with their spouse. They may forgive and accept their spouse back into relationship, but the contempt they hold for the other party remains intact for very long periods of time.

Adultery Brings Long Lasting Shame And Guilt !

Read Proverbs 7:6-9 and make notes:

The observation is that it is those who are simple, those who lack judgment, who go near where the adulterer is found. They are seen as though they are young and without the wisdom that the mature adult would be expected to have.

Those Who Are Wise Don't Go Near The Adulterer !

Read Proverbs 7:10-12 and make notes:

The seductive adulterer dresses in a fashion to attract and to advertise, much like what the prostitute does. The "crafty intent" speaks of their hiding the real motives and plans and perhaps speaking only of fun. The adulterer finds many reasons to stay away from home and defies all the pleas to do what is right.

Proverbs For Living – 30 - Adultery

Read Proverbs 7:13-20 and make notes:

The steps taken by the adulterer are frequently well calculated. In the pattern described, there is first the bold kiss to demonstrate "I am not ashamed and this is okay." This is followed by a flattering invitation, "I came looking specifically for you and I found you." Perhaps this is to help show the divine approving of this liaison. The next step is to show how they are prepared, "I have a bed and I have meat." Then comes the direct invitation, "come let's enjoy ourselves." Then there is the plea for pity or understanding, "My spouse has left me for a long time, I am lonely."

Here we find the basic ingredients of an invitation that appeals to any youthful in-experienced person. The proposition is bold, exciting, and claims to be safe. It is clearly expected that those who use mature judgment would not associate with the adulterer.

The Adulterer Has A Calculated Plan !

Read Proverbs 7:22-23 and make notes:

When the wise see someone following after the adulterer, the image that comes to their mind is so graphic as to need no interpretation. It is like an ox going to slaughter, a deer stepping into a noose, an arrow piercing the liver, a bird darting into a snare, without realizing this is the end of their life.

Read Proverbs 7:26-27 and make notes:

Listen and pay attention to the warning to stay away from the adulterer. In much the same way as wars have laid many people in graves, so has the adulterer placed many people in ruin throughout history. Her house is not the grave but it is the highway, or the express lane, to the grave.

The Adulterer Has A History Of Destroying Others !

Read Proverbs 22:14 and make notes:

The words of the adulterer (mouth) is a deep pit from which is extremely difficult to escape. Those who fall into the pit of the adulterer's words are not only in sin but are subject to punishment from God for He has wrath set aside for the adulterer and those align themselves with the adulterer.

Proverbs For Living – 30 - Adultery

Read Proverbs 27:7-8 and make notes:

The straying from the nest speaks of a bird that is too young to be on its own. Mature birds do not "stray" from the nest. They leave the nest to acquire materials or food and return to the nest with provision. When a young bird strays from the nest, it is very vulnerable. Unable to fly and ignorant of the things which can harm it, it usually ends its life as food for a predator. So is the danger for the person who strays from their home and away from their spouse. They don't realize how much danger they are in.

The person who is extremely hungry can find even "bad food" to be appealing. This is every bit as dangerous as the young bird that strays from its nest. The message is the danger of trying to satisfy our desires in a wrong way or place.

The Adulterer And Those Who Associate With The Adulterer Are In Danger !

Read Proverbs 31:1-3 and make notes:

Jewish legend says Lemuel was a pet name for Solomon by his mother Bathsheba. There is no evidence to support this identification. It was normal among the ancient wisdom literature of several nations to address wise saying to the king. The specific identity of Lemuel is not the issue of this text. The main point of this text is the admonition not to spend yourself enjoying the pleasure of the opposite sex. It would certainly be easy for a king in the ancient culture to spend all their time and energy enjoying the women in his court, but it would be a very unwise thing to do. This is the point being made by a person who cares deeply for the long term well being of this person.

Adultery Is Not For Those In Leadership !

Read Proverbs 7:5 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 7:24 and make notes:

Read Proverbs 6:24-25 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 30 - Adultery

The words of wisdom and knowledge will protect one from the immoral person and from the married person who has strayed from the proper path. The word translated "lust" is the same word used in the 10 commandments for "covet." This is addressing our heart and thoughts prior to any action or activity on our part. Don't even desire what they have, covet their pleasure, or lust for them.

No One Should Desire Anything Of The Adulterer !

Read Proverbs 30:18-20 and make notes:

Nature presents many things that are amazing and beyond our complete comprehension. There are three things that are just too amazing but there are four things that are beyond understanding. It is truly amazing how an eagle soars in the wind. It is amazing how a snake can propel itself along just by wiggling back and forth. It is amazing how big ships float and move along in the water, especially the large metal ships of today. But more amazing than any of these is the way a man and woman interact with each other. How can a person involve themselves with an adulterer when the danger is so great? How can a person allow themselves to get involved with someone who is not their spouse when so many have already come to ruin through such experiences. It is amazing how so many people seem to be unable to recognize that which is so abundantly clear, even to common sense.

The adulterer partakes of their adultery and then gets up and declares nothing is wrong, as one would wipe their mouth and rise from the table after a meal. It is truly amazing that people can engage in sexual activities with persons they are not married to and so easily dismiss the whole thing as nothing of consequence, responsibility, or guilt. To do so, shows a complete disregard for God's plan and design and totally devalues and degrades the divine plan for human sexuality.

The Adulterer Is Irrational And Can Not Be Understood !

Read Proverbs 30:21-23 and make notes:

Most of us can probably understand how much trouble it can bring on the community when someone is allowed to take a place which is not theirs to take. The servant who becomes a king can cause the whole kingdom to tremble. The fool who is full of food can cause the whole community to tremble in concern.

The ancient wise also noted a married person who is not loved can be cause for a community to be concerned. When a family is not stable neither is the community around them. When a person outside the marriage is allowed to take the place (displaces) of the spouse, this too is reason for the whole community to be alarmed.

Proverbs For Living – 30 - Adultery

A review of Genesis chapters 16 & 21 shows the problems that came into the home when Hagar was given the place of Sarah (the spouse). Later text in the Old Testament show how this activity caused the entire Jewish nation to suffer as a result of the offspring which came from this relationship.

The Adulterer Causes Others To Be Concerned !

Read Proverbs 5:20 and make notes:

Common sense dictates that any liaison with an adulterer can come to no good. Think about this before you engage. What good can come of this? What harm can come from this? What good can come to you or them from embracing another person's spouse? The implication is that it doesn't take a brilliant mind to figure this one out. Just think about it and you will find enough reasons not to engage in any relationship with someone to whom you are not married.

Read Proverbs 27:13 and make notes:

Hold a person accountable to their obligations, especially if they have involved themselves with an adulterer. The person who shows this lack of judgment is surely a bad business risk. Don't set them free from their responsibility (hold their garment in pledge) until it is fulfilled. Maybe this will help them to understand the risks they have placed themselves in by having a relationship with an adulterer.

Read Proverbs 5:15-17 and make notes:

Our own legal spouse is to be the only source of our sexual gratification and pleasure. We are to seek this from no other person (cistern). The images of cistern, well, and spring are appropriate for our spouse because the spouse, like water, can refresh and satisfy. Our resources are not meant to run in the streets in full view to everyone and available to just anyone. We are neither to partake of another person's spouse nor are we to make ourselves available to anyone but our spouse.

Read Proverbs 5:18-19 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 30 - Adultery

The advice and instruction is plain and clear so that all can understand. We are to take pleasure and find all our fulfillment in our own marriage partner. The concept of our "fountain" being "blessed" recognizes the God given appointment and even anointing to find delight in the sexual relationship of our marriage partner and them alone. The imagery that follows speaks of the gracefulness and exquisite beauty we find in our spouse. We are expected by God to be "captivated" by the love of our spouse. One possible translation of this phrase says we are to be "intoxicated" with the love our spouse.

Please write down the questions you would like to ask the group – and any insights you have regarding “Proverbs on Adultery” from this lesson so that you can share them when we meet:

Proverbs For Living – 31 – Spouse of Noble Character

Read Proverbs 31:10 and make notes:

This verse asks a rhetorical question. Not just anyone could find a wife of such noble character as is described in the following verses. It would truly be a "rare find" to have a spouse who possessed all of these virtues. A spouse with such honor and strength is surely worth more than rubies or other fine jewels.

As we read the following verses, it is clear this spouse derives these noble characteristics from Godly wisdom. Such a one is truly a marvelous benefit not only to their family but to the community as a whole. This text has been recited on many different occasions by Jews and Christians alike. Many have used this as some standard by which they measure a potential wife.

After a careful study of this text, it becomes difficult to accept it as speaking of a specific individual. In the original language, this is a poem which is arranged alphabetically. The first word of each line begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This made the poem easy to memorize.

The "wife of noble character" exhibits the ideals and virtues of wisdom that have been expressed throughout the book of Proverbs. It is more of a summary of the value of having made Wisdom your life's companion than it is a standard of an ideal physical wife. The woman in this poem would be very wealthy, be the overseer of an entire estate with servants, conducts business affairs of vineyards, various products, and even real estate, and at the same time tending to domestic affairs and giving to charity. She would have the ideal home, live in an ideal society, and be the ideal wife. This would indeed be quite an extraordinary woman, and the majority of women would hardly identify with her. Her standard would be within the reach of very few if any.

This poem doesn't address her personal relationship with her husband. This would be important if it were intended to be a blueprint for the ideal wife. Neither does this poem address her emotional strengths or her religious involvement. This too would be very important if it were intended to be a blueprint for the ideal wife.

This poem personifies the Godly wisdom which has been addressed throughout the book of Proverbs. While the women of folly and adultery are to be avoided even at great cost and effort, this lady is to be embraced and sought out. It is only natural that wisdom be personified as a woman since the word itself is a feminine noun. Again we state that Wisdom, like an excellent wife, is of great value and benefit not only at home but in the market place, in business and in the community. In the ancient world, women were typically seen as something decorative; having beauty and charm, but no substance for the real issues of life. A good wife would be of benefit at home and in domestic affairs but not in any heroic events such as national battles. This poem strikes hard at the traditional views toward women. If Wisdom in the person of a woman could be of such heroic value and benefit in so many aspects of life, maybe the view toward women should be re-evaluated.

Proverbs For Living – 31 – Spouse of Noble Character

Since this text is a personification of Wisdom, then it sets a pattern and standard for men and women alike. This poem summarizes the concept that the fear of the Lord will cause people to become faithful stewards in every area of their life. Having a personal relationship and commitment to Wisdom causes one to be of benefit to their family, community, and their nation.

The encouragement is to make Wisdom your life partner (your spouse). Become so intimately involved with Wisdom as to know wisdom as well as one would know the spouse to whom they are married.

Read Proverbs 31:11-12 and make notes:

The word translated "value" in the original text literally means "plunder" as in taking home all the bounty from your enemy. Not only did they plunder the enemy but all of the plunder is theirs (lacks none of the plunder). This would be more than just a few valuable things or finances. This says she brings all kinds of useful and interesting things to the place where they live. Since the wife is not the one in the family who traditionally plundered the enemy, this phrase stands against the concept of this text applying to a super woman as wife and more toward the generic benefit of having Wisdom as your mate.

Because the noble spouse brings only "good" things to the family, they inspire the rest of the family (spouse and children) to have "full confidence" in them. In a society such as the current one, when accusations fly as freely as the wind, what a tremendous blessing for a person to have the full confidence of their family. This is one of the things that becomes ours when we make Wisdom our mate in life and involve Godly Wisdom in our every activity and decision.

Read Proverbs 31:13-15 and make notes:

The picture begins to emerge of a large household not only where the family of this woman lives but servants as well. In this poem, it is the noble woman who selects the materials and works eagerly with her hands to make things. She is the one who brings food, even imported foods (from afar). She gets up early and provides food for her family as well as the servants. This passage also supports the personification as opposed to an individual. In reality, if this were a wealthy home with servants, it would most likely be the servants working with the materials and providing food for the household. The analogy of being like the "merchant ships" speaks of her ability to provide a continuous supply for the family.

Read Proverbs 31:16-18 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 31 – Spouse of Noble Character

The noble spouse is a wise and effective business person. They make wise investments and there is no hint of foolish spending or indebtedness. The phrase translated "sets about her work" in the original text says "she girds up her loins for work." This is an action taken by those about to engage in serious endeavors which might include heavy or messy work, or even war. This picture of the noble woman "girding up her loins" to engage in the dirty and hard work is contradictory with the picture of the household with servants. This is another evidence that the noble woman in this poem is the personification of Wisdom.

The phrase "her lamp does not go out at night" in verse 18 suggests this is one who "burns the midnight oil" in tending to business. Just like the husband who works day and night is not very pleasing to his wife, neither would the wife who worked day and night instead of spending time with her husband. Wisdom, as personified in this poem, works to our benefit day and night. Wisdom doesn't take a break or a vacation. Wisdom is dutifully performing for us 24 hours a day every day and night of the year.

Read Proverbs 31:19-21 and make notes:

The noble spouse is faithful to do all that needs to be done in order for the family to have what it needs. Not only does the family of the noble spouse have all the things they need, but they have enough to share with those in need. Not only is this noble spouse industrious and a hard worker, but they make it possible for the family to be very generous and charitable to the community.

The word translated "scarlet" in verse 21 in the original text meant literally "double garment." Since only the most wealthy could afford "double garments" and scarlet, it was not unusual for the scarlet garments to be of double thickness. A scarlet robe would likely have a lining or a double layer which made it not only lovely to look upon but warm in cold weather. When the cold or threatening weather comes, the family of the noble spouse not only has clothes but has very adequate clothing both for appearance and for comfort and protection from the elements.

Read Proverbs 31:22-24 and make notes:

The "coverings" in verse 22 is the same word as in 7:16 where it is speaks of the eye catching colors used to decorate the bed. The noble spouse decorates the place of rest and makes it appealing to the eye and they clothe the family in attractive looking apparel as well (fine linen and purple). There is no reason not to apply this to the physical things such as household furnishings and wardrobe. But there is equally no reason not to apply this to every area of our life. The family of the noble spouse will have an attractive countenance emotionally and spiritually as well.

Proverbs For Living – 31 – Spouse of Noble Character

The person who has a noble spouse, such as described in this poem, will be respected by the community (at the city gate). Having Wisdom as your life mate will make you a desired leader among the people.

Again the busy and productive attitude of the noble spouse is declared. Not only is the noble spouse industrious to the good of their family but others will come to them for help (supplies the merchants).

Read Proverbs 31:25-27 and make notes:

There is a confident facing of the future because of the presence and influence of this noble spouse within the household. Words of Wisdom and faithful instructions come forth from this noble spouse. This speaks of the practical and common sense kind of helpful instructions that the wise pass along to those who will listen.

The household of the noble spouse is clothed not only in strength, but in dignity as well. From the household of the noble spouse others get words which are helpful and beneficial, rather than condescending or condemning words of judgment. This noble spouse (Wisdom) watches over the affairs of the "household" and is never found idle. This says specifically that not only is the immediate family "watched over" but any who are in the house - the whole household is being watched over by this noble spouse.

Read Proverbs 31:28-29 and make notes:

Those who know this noble spouse the best (husband and children) will take the necessary steps to praise them for their words of wisdom and faithfulness. Many people today receive praise from those outside their family or close friends; basically from people who do not know them well. Those who know them best find them non-praise worthy. The praise of strangers doesn't speak as highly of an individual as does the praise from those close to them. But the family of the noble spouse finds them to be of such integrity that they feel compelled to sing their praises.

There is no spouse better than this one - verse 29. This could sound just like a very proud husband or wife.

Read Proverbs 31:30-31 and make notes:

Proverbs For Living – 31 – Spouse of Noble Character

This poem is like a summation of the whole book of Proverbs, these last two verses are a summation of the poem. There are things which may seem delightful to have, such as charm and beauty; but to have a spouse who fears the Lord is something to praise the Lord about. It isn't that physical beauty is undesirable but it is not something that will endure like those who reverence the Lord. The noble spouse will be respected and praised in the places of authority and leadership (city gate).

If the poem in chapter 31 was truly regarding a specific woman or the few who meet this standard, then only a few men could have such a wife and few children could know such a home. This life mate, Wisdom, is available to everyone. Every husband who's wife reverences the Lord and seeks His Wisdom will have such a wife. Every wife who's husband reverences the Lord and seeks His Wisdom will have such a husband. The children who's parents (or parent) reverences the Lord and seek His Wisdom will have the benefits and security as described in this poem.

Read Proverbs 18:22 and make notes:

A good marriage is truly a gift from God. The intent of this proverb is considered by most Bible scholars to refer to finding a "good wife" and not just a wife. To find a good spouse is to have received favor from the Lord. Using the rationale that if this proverb is true then the opposite is true also; we can say to have a bad spouse is a bad thing and it is to be outside God's favor. In Genesis 2:18, God said it is not "good" for man to be alone. The word "good" speaks of that which is pleasing to God and beneficial for life. It is in this same context that we speak of a good spouse.

Read Proverbs 12:4 and make notes:

The moral conduct and character of a spouse has a direct affect on a person's ability to enjoy life. The crown is a symbol denoting honor, respect, and renown. The shame and disgrace experienced by the person with a immoral spouse experiences in varying degrees a decreasing of physical health and life. When we live a moral lifestyle and live a life of reputable character, we can actually bring health to our spouse as well as joy, peace, and security.

Read Proverbs 11:17 and make notes:

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The most common application of this proverb is to the community at large. Consider carefully how appropriately it applies to the marriage relationship. A person who is cruel to their spouse may get by for a season without retaliation, but there will come a day, whether unconscious or consciously, when the spouse will give back to them in a similar manner. The person who is kind and considerate of their spouse will surely reap the benefits of kindness and consideration from their spouse.

Read Proverbs 4:8-10 and make notes:

These verses were spoken in regards to wisdom. The intent of bringing them to this study on a noble spouse is not to take them out of context. Rather, it is to point out the additional application they have. In much the same way as esteeming wisdom will cause wisdom to exalt you, so it is with the noble spouse. This is speaking of a lifestyle rather than a one time occurrence. When, in our lifestyle, we esteem our spouse, this will encourage them to exalt us. When, in our lifestyle, we embrace our spouse this will encourage them to honor us. There are studies which indicate those who have meaningful relationships live longer than those who are alone. Esteeming and embracing our spouse could actually add years to our life.

Please write down the questions you would like to ask the group – and any insights you have regarding “Proverbs on the Spouse of Noble Character” in this lesson so that you can share them when we meet:

Proverbs For Living

Other sections of the “Proverbs For Living”:

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 03. Knowledge 2
 04. Wisdom 1
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- Section 2 11 weeks
12. Strife
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