

Proverbs Lesson 10

Proverbs Chapter 10

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Introduction: Proverbs Chapter 10 marks the beginning of the next major section of the Book of Proverbs. Up to this point, the focus has remained primarily on the benefits of wisdom in opposition to the bitter consequences of sin. Now, the book becomes more practically focused, emphasizing the foolishness of sin and the wisdom of righteousness.

Though righteousness certainly has been addressed, now the mention thereof picks up noticeably. The focus also increases upon practical right. Whereas in the first nine chapters of the book, there has been some continuity of context; now, the format becomes lengthy lists of often unrelated proverbs—wise sayings. The one thread of continuity found throughout, however, is the wisdom of doing what is right and the folly of sin. This section continues through chapter 25.

I. A Proverb of Solomon

Pro 10:1 The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

After having introduced wisdom and righteousness in the first nine chapters of the book, now Solomon focuses on detailed 'proverbs' of righteous living. Indeed, a wise son will be pleasing to his father. To the contrary, a foolish son weighs heavily upon a mother. The thought is that a foolish son is a grief to a father and weighs even more heavily upon a godly mother.

The greatest Son of all was He in whom His Father was well pleased.

Mat 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

Mat 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

A fool is one who is arrogant, appears self-sufficient, and rebellious. A major goal of parenting is to ensure that one's children are trained in righteousness and wisdom and not allowed to become fools. The latter will come naturally if a child is left to his own devices.

Pro 10:2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth

from death.

Pro 10:3 The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.

The profit or gain from sinful ventures wind up evaporating in the end. In contrast, righteous living protects from death. How many fools to this day are seriously injured or die because of their sinful living; be it automobile accidents late at night caused by intoxication, violent reprisals for adultery, a big mouth or drug deals gone sour. The list could go on at length. But the long and short of it is that righteous living is a great protection in life.

The wisdom of righteous living brings about great benefits. Here, the Lord Himself intervenes to bless the righteous. God will not allow those who live righteously to be altogether impoverished. See Psalm 37:25 and Matthew 6:33. To the contrary, God, in due season, will deal harshly against those who live in sin. Far better to be on the side of His blessing than the side of His judgment.

Pro 10:4 He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

Pro 10:5 He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.

Two categories of individuals are described here. One is lazy. The other is diligent. Laziness leads to poverty. Diligence leads to prosperity. Much of the 'poverty' in our modern culture is caused by nothing more than a lack of self-discipline and laziness. He (or she) who rises early and works long and hard, conscientiously and diligently, will quickly rise above the poverty level.

A major illustration of this principle is found in the refugees in America from southeast Asia in the latter portion of the twentieth century. They arrived in extreme poverty, but they worked hard every waking hour of the day, and today many have become prosperous and even affluent. In fashion similar to the aforementioned principle, one diligent in putting in his crops and carefully tilling them is wise. He will have a good crop come harvest time. However, the lazy man sneaks off and sleeps whenever he can, even in harvest. He is not only shameful, but will always be on the bottom of the economic ladder.

Even investing slow and steady is mentioned in verse 11 of chapter 13.

Pro 13:11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.

Pro 10:6 Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

Pro 10:7 The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall

rot.

Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked. The word translated as just (qydu tseddiqq) is a basic Hebrew word for 'righteous.' A theme repeated throughout the Word of God is that God blesses the righteous. Moreover, natural benefits accrue from righteous living as well. They are multiple.

In contrast, the wicked (unjust fools) suffer violence. Part and parcel with the wicked usually is a foul mouth. That often generates violence. See Proverbs 18:6.

Pro 18:6 A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.

Righteous men are long remembered. Their just lives remain a blessing for posterity. Witness the great men of God throughout Scripture who remain a blessing by their righteous example to this day. In contrast is the history of wicked men. Their memory stinks. No one names their son Judas, or Pontius, or Cain, or Benedict. The memory of these stinks to this day. The stark contrast between the blessings of righteousness and the curse of wickedness is apparent.

Pro 10:8 The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.

Pro 10:9 He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.

Pro 10:10 He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow: but a prating fool shall fall.

Pro 10:11 The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

The theme of the wisdom of righteousness and the foolishness of sin continues. A wise man will accept orders. Implied is that a fool will not. Furthermore, a fool will shoot off his mouth in complaint when given orders. The word translated as prating (hps saphah) literally refers to one's lips. The thought is how that fools are 'mouthy.' And their mouth will bring them trouble.

The word translated as shall fall (jbl labat) actually has the sense of being 'thrown down.' A fool who back talks over orders, winds up being thrown out (of a job or even worse). Righteous living produces secure living. Righteous living will keep one out of many troubles and produces stability of life. Implied is that unjust fools face a lifetime of instability. Moreover, crooked dealings are eventually found out.

The word translated as perverteth {vqe 'aqash} essentially refers to crookedness in the modern unethical sense. The greater thought is how that righteous dealings produce stability of life. Crooked dealings produce the opposite. One who deviously winks at another, signaling some corrupt practice, will cause

sorrow (if not to themselves, certainly to the victim of their scheme). Once again, a prating fool is described. Implied is that those who are devious also have a big mouth. They go together. In contrast, the mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

The mouth of a truly righteous man is just, gracious, wise, and in short, good. Like cool water from a well, so the comments of a righteous man are refreshing. Implied is that the mouth of a wicked man is the opposite.

II. Hatred Stirs up Strife

Pro 10:12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

Hatred causes conflict whether between individuals or between nations. In contrast, love will endure all sin. When we truly love someone, we will overlook their faults. We will be willing to forgive. We will be inclined to be merciful to them. See I Corinthians 13:7 and I Peter 4:8 as well as Romans 13:8,10.

1Pe 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

Pro 10:13 In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.

Pro 10:14 Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.

Another major theme is already underway and is now being developed more fully. That is the matter of the tongue, for better or for worse. When one understands an issue, he can make a wise decision. Therefore, wisdom emanates from the mouth of one with good understanding. A broader principle is that wisdom derives from understanding. The former follows from the latter. In contrast, one void of understanding (and by extension, wisdom) will face trouble. The analogy is of being chastised for stupid remarks or actions.

In a related fashion, wise men keep their mouths shut. Fools don't. Though we might know the answer, there are times when it is better to not say anything. Fools open their mouths and blab only to have it backfire upon them. A big mouth leads to trouble.

Pro 10:15 The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty.

Pro 10:16 The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin.

Pro 10:17 He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.

A rich man considers his wealth his protection. Conversely, the ruin of the poor is a consternation to them. Implied is that though a wealthy man may consider his riches great protection, really they are not. Confidence in their riches likely may wind up as poverty.

In verse 16, the diligent work of a just man indeed tends to life (i.e., prosperity). In contrast, the fruit (the natural product) of the ungodly leads to sin, poverty and even death. Once again, the wisdom of accepting correction or criticism is at hand. The thought parallels that of Proverbs 9:8-9 and 10:8. In contrast, fools reject reproof and err thereby. A simple test as to whether we are wise or a fool is how we react when criticized, corrected, or rebuked. A wise man will receive it. A fool will bristle. To receive instructions and correction is a pathway to life.

Pro 9:8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.

Pro 9:9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

Pro 10:18 He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool.

Pro 10:19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

Pro 10:20 The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth.

Pro 10:21 The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.

Another sequence of contrasts between the mouth of the just and fools is set forth. The first thought is of devious pretense of one who pretends to be a friend but is not. Biblical examples are of Absalom to Ammon, Joab to Amasa, the men of Anathoth to Jeremiah, and Judas to Christ. Lying to deceive or hide true intentions is folly and wicked. Moreover, only fools will slander another.

The greater issue is righteous control of the tongue. It is better to be candid and forthcoming than to deceive. It is folly to slander another. With advice that is eternal, there is great wisdom in keeping our mouths shut. The more said, the more likely it is that sin will follow. In contrast, there is great wisdom in saying little. How often idle conversation turns to gossip about others and degenerates into slander of character. Truly, the less said the better.

A just person uses his or her tongue discreetly. It is of great value. Implicit is that fools do the opposite. The fool is indiscreet and what is said is often worthless. Notice the subtle shift between the tongue of the just and the heart of the wicked. In either case, what comes out of the mouth has originated in the heart. Consequently, the worthlessness in the heart of the wicked finds its way out through the tongue.

Furthermore, the comments of the righteous can be very productive and edifying whereas the blather of fools is empty and often destructive. Implied is the wisdom of the righteous and the lack thereof in fools. The lives of the fools are miserable and often shortened.

Pro 10:22 The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

Pro 10:23 It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom.

When God sends His blessing, it leads to prosperity. That certainly is true spiritually and extends even to physical wealth. Moreover, when God blesses, there is no trouble with it. It is all good. When people place themselves in the place of God's blessing, they will be greatly prospered in every area of life. Rich indeed are the blessings of God.

Fools think it a credit to self to do mischief. The word so translated (hmz zimmah), though referring to evil in general, lends itself more specifically to lewdness or sexual sin. Implied is that a wise man will abhor the same.

Once again, the thought at hand is how that wisdom derives from understanding. When one has understanding, wise decisions or statements will follow.

Pro 10:24 The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

Pro 10:25 As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.

Pro 10:26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.

That which a wicked man fears will eventually descend upon him. In contrast, that which a righteous man desires will eventually come to pass. What a contrast! Wickedness is foolish and righteousness is wise. Whirlwinds come and are gone. So are the wicked. They are here for a short time and then wake up in hell.

In contrast, those truly righteous are solid, stable, and everlasting. They wake up in heaven (when clothed with the righteousness of Christ). Sinful living leads to instability and brevity of life. Righteous living lends itself to stability and eternal reward.

Verse 26 teaches that a sluggard refers to one lazy and irresponsible. Such a subordinate is sour and disagreeable to his superior. Clearly implied is that such a fellow will never advance or be promoted. He will be consigned to the bottom echelons of life. See also 10:5.

Pro 10:27 The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

Pro 10:28 The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.

Pro 10:29 The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

Pro 10:30 The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.

Pro 10:31 The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out.

Pro 10:32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.

Various applications of the contrast between the righteous and the wicked are described. A just man, fearing the Lord, will find long life. An ungodly man, living in sin, will find his life shortened. This remains true to this day whether one's life is shortened by accidents or violence brought on by sin or by the disease from the habits of sin. By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil. They accordingly live longer.

Those who live righteously can look forward to happiness. Implied is that those who live an ungodly life cannot. Furthermore, the hope of the wicked will not be fulfilled. Truly, ungodly, sinful living pays a terrible dividend. There might be fun or pleasure for a short season, but the long-term consequences are awful.

The things of God provide strength and encouragement for the upright to continue therein. Those living in the world could care less. The wicked will sooner or later face destruction—if not in this life, certainly in the next. Those who live godly and righteously in this life may seem to be the underdogs, but they will continue over the long run. The righteous will inherit this earth in the Millennium and the Eternal Kingdom to follow.

The ungodly and wicked will not be so blessed. They may seem to have the upper hand for the moment, but their time is short. Again, the direct connection between righteousness and wisdom is found. A just man will speak wisely. Implied is that the wicked do not. Furthermore, the mouth of a fool (i.e., a froward tongue) will face nasty consequences. A sharp tongue is a blessing to no one.

The chapter concludes by contrasting the mouth of the righteous and that of the wicked. A righteous man knows what is appropriate and speaks accordingly. By contrast, a wicked and foolish person speaks perversely. A righteous person is careful and discreet with his (or her) mouth. A fool is not.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.