

Proverbs Lesson 11

Proverbs Chapter 11

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Introduction: The contrast between righteousness and sin continues. Again, the point is that righteousness is wise and sin is reckless.

I. God Loves a Just Weight

Pro 11:1 A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.

A balance is a scale which in times past was a basic means of weighing commodities in the market place. The issue at hand is honesty. A crooked merchant would manipulate his scale to cheat customers by falsifying the weights used to weigh the commodity being sold. The fact is that dishonesty is an abomination to the Lord, but honesty is His delight.

Pro 11:2 When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

Pride manifests itself in many ways. Stubbornness, arrogance, insolence, and self-righteousness all emanate from pride. Pride causes all sorts of trouble. It leads to shame, disgrace and dishonour. In contrast, there is great wisdom in humility. The word translated as lowly (enu tsana) essentially refers to a humble or modest person. Accordingly, understatement is usually more forceful than overstatement.

Pro 11:3 The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.

The thought once again returns to the principle of honesty. Inherent in the word translated as integrity (hmt tummah) is the sense of honesty and truthfulness. These becoming guiding principles for the upright in character.

The crookedness of those who continue to deal with others' dishonesty will become more evident over time. It will eventually lead to their downfall. Sin has a way of catching up. It may be later than sooner, but it always does catch up. When corruption is found out, it usually leads to fierce anger. Riches in that day will not pacify such anger. However, righteous living is a remarkable protection from an untimely death.

Pro 11:4 Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from

death.

The thought seems to follow from the preceding verse. Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death. When corruption is found out, it usually leads to fierce anger. Riches in that day will not pacify such anger. However, righteous living is a remarkable protection from an untimely death.

Pro 11:5 The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.

Pro 11:6 The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.

The thought here is not of sinless perfection. Rather, the idea is of being wholly dedicated or of a heart wholly given to God. The word translated as perfect (Mymt tamiym) in its most basic sense means 'whole' or 'complete.' Implicit is a direct correlation between being dedicated to God and being upright of life. The upright character of a dedicated person will provide direction in life. In contrast, a wicked man (one hostile to God or content to live in sin) will fall by his own sin.

The greater thought is how that righteousness and dedication of life leads to direction and stability in life whereas ungodly and sinful living leads to serious trouble. Two words are used for righteousness here. The first, righteousness, is translated from the Hebrew word hqdu (tsedaqah) which refers to righteousness as a principle. The second, upright, is translated from the Hebrew word rvy (yashar) which refers to righteousness of practice.

The greater thought is how that the principle of righteousness will lead to the practice of doing what is right. Moreover, this is the essence of Christian character which delivers from all manner of trouble. Righteousness is a great shield from trouble. However, transgressors shall be taken in their own wickedness.

The word translated as transgressors (dgb bagad) has the idea of 'treachery' or 'deviousness.' The word translated as naughtiness (hwh havvah) in this context has the sense of 'mischief' or 'wickedness.' The greater thought is that those who are devious or treacherous will be caught in their own trap.

Sin has a nasty way of backfiring. It tends to blow up in one's face—if not sooner, surely later.

Pro 11:7 When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.

Pro 11:8 The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.

When an ungodly man dies, so does all his hopes. Though not stated, when a godly person dies, a glorious future is ahead with great hope. For the ungodly, all hope resides in this life. For a born-again Christian, living for the Lord, our hope is yet ahead. For the unjust, this life is all there is. For God's people, this life is but a stepping stone to the greatest of life in eternity ahead.

"The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead."

The thought is somewhat elliptical but has this sense: righteousness precludes and prevents much trouble. However, trouble follows after the wicked. Illustrations of this might be seen in Mordecai and Haman or Daniel and his false accusers. Laying traps has a nasty way of ensnaring the one who laid the trap.

II. Hypocrites Destroy their Neighbor

Pro 11:9 An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.

How damaging can one's tongue be? It surely can ruin another's reputation. The word translated as hypocrite (Pnx chaneph) can also have the sense of a godless, profane, irreligious person. The word here translated as knowledge (ted da'ath) can also have the sense of discernment and understanding.

Knowledge leads to understanding which leads to wisdom. Again, the broader principle is how that wisdom is a great shield from trouble for a righteous man.

Pro 11:10 When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth: and when the wicked perish, there is shouting.

Pro 11:11 By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

Though the human heart is distorted by sin, for even in people of the world there is an innate sense of justice. When those who are innocent and just are vindicated, there is general rejoicing. And when those clearly guilty of crimes are judged, men cheer. God blesses uprightness. And that blessing often extends to the community in which the just live.

Consider that God considered Lot's proposal to spare Sodom for the relative righteousness of Lot. Laban was blessed because of Jacob. A loose tongue can bring serious trouble. In time of war, loose tongues have given enemy spies vital information. A busy mouth has more than once brought retribution upon many. As in verse 9, a loose tongue is usually associated with evil.

Pro 11:12 He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour: but a man of

understanding holdeth his peace.

*Pro 11:13 A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit
concealeth the matter.*

Those who run around despising others or with a contemptuous attitude are void of wisdom. One who has no heart despises others. The word translated here as wisdom (bl leb) is the common Hebrew word for 'heart.'

Implied is that of a fool. Moreover, the continuing context implies this fool is mouthy. By contrast, a man of understanding holdeth his peace. Once again, the implicit wisdom of keeping one's mouth shut is apparent. It reflects who is wise. In like fashion, a gossip cannot keep his or her mouth shut. By contrast, one with a faithful spirit keeps his or her silence in a matter. Fools tell everything they know. The wise are discreet.

III. Safety in Multitude of Counsellors

*Pro 11:14 Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of
counsellors there is safety.*

*Pro 11:15 He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth
suretiship is sure.*

Wise counsel is an asset to individuals, homes churches, businesses and all manner of governments. This is by no means a complete list of those who benefit from wise counsel. Without sound counsel, failure is likely. Moreover, multiple counselors only add further insight. Wise men seek counsel. Fools think they don't need advice.

Verse 15 talks of surety. The modern sense of surety is that of being a 'co-signer.' The thought at hand is that one who co-signs for someone they do not know well will be stung. To the contrary, one who loathes co-signing will be on solid ground. A friend may tug at our heart strings to co-sign with him. Yet, if we would pause to consider why he is not credit worthy, then why yoke ourselves to his irresponsibility. Wise is the person who avoids co-signing at all costs.

Pro 11:16 A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches.

*Pro 11:17 The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel
troubleth his own flesh.*

A gracious woman retains honor as a strong man retains his wealth. The greater point is that an honorable woman will strive to be gracious. Clearly implied is that an ungracious woman lacks honor. The thinking here pertains particularly to one's attitude and how one's tongue is used. Gracious use of the tongue from a sincere heart builds a positive reputation in the minds of others. A sharp and caustic tongue does the opposite.

Verse 17 teaches that the merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh. Being merciful to others brings an investment which pays large dividends. By being kind to others, we bring the same upon ourselves. In contrast, being cruel or harsh to others usually will bring the same back to us.

The golden rule surely is in view. Goodness brings goodness and cold-heartedness brings the same.

Pro 11:18 The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

Pro 11:19 As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death.

The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward. Wicked men are devious. However, doing what is right inevitably brings true compensation. The contrast is of dishonesty versus honesty. The former is devious. The latter is true. Wicked men are devious. Just men are honest.

As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death. One who lives uprightly tends to live longer. Those who pursue evil tend to die a premature death. Sin frequently leads to violence, disease, and accidents—all of which can bring about premature death. Consider the quality of life or the lack of as well. What a person sows has a great impact on life.

Pro 11:20 They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight.

Pro 11:21 Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

One who is whole-hearted or dedicated to God. And, such an attitude of heart leads to upright living. God delights in these. God abhors the perverse of heart. He loves the upright of heart. There are a number of words in Proverbs which are translated as froward. Here, the Hebrew word so translated (vqe 'iqqesh) has the sense of 'twisted,' 'distorted,' 'crooked,' , 'perverse,' or 'perverted.'

Perhaps in this context, the thought of being 'crooked' is what is most in view. Likewise, several Hebrews words are translated as upright. Here the word is (Mynt) tamiym and literally means 'complete' or 'whole.'

Two inviolable principles are at hand. (1) The wicked will be punished. (2) The children of the righteous will be delivered. Sinners will be judged but the family of the righteous will be blessed. See Psalm 112:2.

Psa 112:2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

Pro 11:22 As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

Pro 11:23 The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

Pigs sometimes had iron rings placed in their noses to prevent them from rooting up the ground. The word translated as jewel (Mzn nexem) applies to a ring or nose ring. A nose ring of gold on a pig was unseemly. So is an attractive woman lacking good judgment or discretion. The verse refers to either (1) moral discretion, (2) a sharp tongue, or (3) both. Just as a gold ring in a pig's nose is foolish, so is a woman who is not discreet.

Righteous individuals look forward to that which is good. In contrast, the wicked can only expect the wrath of judgment upon them, whether from human authorities or from God Himself. The fun and pleasure of sin inevitably will bring judgment. Though people of the world think they are getting away with their sin, they either forget, don't know, or don't care that they will someday stand before God.

Godly and righteous individuals can expect good to come. Having the Holy Ghost who abides within to lead, guide and correct the believer along with the promises of God allows the believer to have true peace and much joy as he or she walks in this life.

Pro 11:24 There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

Pro 11:25 The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

Pro 11:26 He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.

Here we find the thought is of being generous versus being a cheapskate. Those who give will eventually find their giving comes back to them. Jesus clearly taught this in Luke 6:38.

Luk 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

When we give to others, eventually others will give to us. When we give to God, He in turn will return blessings in even greater proportion than what we gave. Conversely, those who are tight in their giving wind up losing even more. God blesses generosity and withholds His hand from those who are selfish.

The thought is how a giving or generous person will be blessed. What we give tends to come back again upon us. Water in the Middle East was always scarce. The simple illustration was how that one who gave water to another would in due season receive that water back.

Giving is always blessed whether it is the natural recompense of others or by God Himself. The picture is of times of scarcity. He who has food and will not make it available to others will be cursed. Rather, if this same individual is willing to sell his surplus to those who need it, he will be blessed certainly by those who need it and without doubt by God Himself. The greater truth in these three verses is the wisdom and blessing of being generous in contrast to the folly of being a miser.

Pro 11:27 He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.

Pro 11:28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

One who diligently seeks that which is good will find goodwill. In contrast, one who stirs up trouble will find it comes back on him. We reap what we sow. When we seek that which is good for all involved, it generates goodwill. Resorting to malice will only return the same.

To rely on one's portfolio will eventually end up with a crash. Those who trust in their wealth will sooner or later find it an empty trust. Again, the word translated as fall (lpn naphal) most commonly is translated as 'fail.' In contrast, those who pursue righteousness as a principle and practice of life will flourish. The analogy is of a branch on a healthy tree in the spring. First comes the blossom and later the fruit.

Implicit is that righteousness pays off in the long run. Harvest always comes later. Those who trust their money will eventually fail. Those who live uprightly will eventually be blessed. Neither comes immediately. But both are inevitable. Money will fail. God will bless righteousness.

Pro 11:29 He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.

Pro 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

Profound indeed are the truths at hand. One who troubles his own family will inherit the wind. The thought is of inheriting nothing. A son or daughter who causes great grief to his or her parents may wind up receiving nothing in their will. Foolish is a son or daughter who stirs up trouble in their family. Similarly, the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart. He who is a fool will wind up working for the wise.

Fools are undisciplined and live for the present. The wise are disciplined and prepare for the future. As a result, the wise become the employers and bosses. Fools become the employees and underlings. There are real-world consequences to the issues of wisdom and folly.

Two significant thoughts are at hand in verse 30. The first is that the fruit of righteousness is life-giving. The analogy is of the tree of life spoken of in Genesis 3. The metaphor is of vibrancy and life. Righteousness tends to life. See Proverbs 10:16 and 11:19.

Pro 11:19 As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death.

The harvest of a righteous man leads to further life. Even as the seed for another tree lies in the fruit, so righteousness leads to further life. The second thought is “and he that winneth souls is wise”. We often import a New Testament application of this blessed truth. However, the immediate Old Testament sense likely was not of evangelism. The thought likely is of winning the friendship or confidence of others.

It speaks of winning others over to ourselves rather than alienating or offending them. However, the New Testament sense of winning people to Christ certainly is a valid application. Wise indeed is one who wins others to Christ. See Daniel 12:3.

Dan 12:3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Pro 11:31 Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.

We often think of being rewarded in heaven for serving the Lord and that is certainly true. However, the promise at hand is that righteous living will be rewarded even in this life. Righteousness brings blessing both by natural dynamic as well as direct blessing of God. One will never go wrong to do right. It pays both now and forever. It is also well pleasing to God.

Those who live sinfully and wickedly will be recompensed not only in eternity to come but in this life as well. Sin brings nothing but trouble and grief. Moreover, sinners will someday stand before God and receive their final recompense.

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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.